

Foundation Phase – Songs and Rhymes

Songs and rhymes are not just engaging and fun for children, but they can make a real difference to children's language and literacy. Songs and rhymes can support children's listening and speaking skills. The rhythm and repetition of sounds support children to notice patterns of speech and to distinguish different sounds and skills they will need for reading. Songs and rhymes can support the introduction of new words within context and allows children the time to hear them multiple times to support their understanding of the meaning and then use the words as part of their own vocabulary. For those children who struggle with their listening skills, actions as part of songs and rhymes can engage their interest and encourage them to take part. Most children enjoy the combination of music and action. Lots of songs and rhymes form little stories providing a great way to introduce children to simple stories. Consult with parents and families to find out if they use songs and rhymes at home and then use these as a starting point for introducing songs and rhymes into the setting. There is a wealth of further support and resources at the end of this factsheet, be sure to access these to continue to develop songs and rhymes within your setting.

Learning objective

- To engage with a song/rhyme
- To listen and join in using simple actions.

Areas of Learning - (Skills and Range)

Language, Literacy and Communication Development

Range:

- Experience a language-rich environment that immerses children in the spoken and written word
- communicate in a range of contexts for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Skills:

- Engage in sound and wordplay
- Recognise rhythm and rhyme in spoken words and join in with rhythmic activities
- Follow simple action words
- Listen and join in with songs, rhymes, and stories.

Numeracy - e.g. counting, matching and ordering, using mathematical language.

Resources

Songs and rhymes are an excellent activity for minimalist resources. This activity can be completed with just practitioners, the children and some time and space. However, practitioners may wish to use any of the following, depending on the individual needs, interests, and learning characteristics of the children.

- Copies of songs and rhymes e.g. laminated for children to use or on a large screen
- Visual aids, props, or cue cards
- Space to perform and complete actions
- Background music and/or instruments.

Top tips for practitioners when singing songs and rhymes:

- Set the scene with background music or instruments
- Sing slowly and clearly
- Use visual aids, actions, and props
- Be confident and have fun!

It is vitally important that practitioners are confident when singing songs and rhymes as this will impact the engagement levels of the children. Children will be more inclined to engage if practitioners are having fun!

Continuous and enhanced provision

Singing songs and rhymes throughout the day and during routine activities is a great way to continue to support children with opportunities to develop their communication and language skills.

- Count or sing as you go upstairs/downstairs or carry out repetitive tasks e.g. as you build a tower or pour sand and water
- Include rhyming books within the setting and make sure to read them with children

- Include rhyming resources within areas of provision e.g. in the small world area have a bat, cat, mat, rat, hat, splat...
- Sing songs and rhymes that use the children's own names to encourage turn-taking and engagement. Naming rhymes are great for children first getting to know one another
- Introduce songs and rhymes into everyday activities e.g. 'this is the way we wash our hands...put on our coats...eat our snack...' and have visual cues for the songs/rhymes in those areas
- Develop displays and areas linked to songs and rhymes the children are familiar with such as 'five little ducks' or create your own 'Wheels on the bus' area within construction or outdoors
- Have songs and rhymes available for children to listen to in the music area or book area
- Have the props/visual aids for songs and rhymes with some musical instruments in the setting. Encourage children to use their own rhythms, singing, clapping, or with musical instruments, from banging a drum to rattling some bells.

Focused task

Within this factsheet, the example of 'If you're happy and you know it' is used. This rhyme is very simple and repetitive, which makes it a great one to introduce to young children. There are lots of different versions of this, but the classic featuring body parts will encourage the children to get moving whilst having fun as well.

If you're happy and you know it,

Clap your hands!

If you're happy and you know it,

Clap your hands!

If you're happy and you know it,

and you really want to show it!

If you're happy and you know it,

Clap your hands!

- Within a small group, find a suitable space (maybe outdoors) and share with the children that you are going to be singing a moving! High positive energy will support getting the children engaged

- You can complete a 'warm up' type activity with the children first to prepare them for the singing and movement e.g. some simple stretches or vocal exercises to warm their voices up - lots of ooooooss and ahhhhhs
- Inform the children that they will need to listen and follow an action in this song, can they hear it
- Sing the song to the children and ask them to listen and complete an action If they hear it e.g. clap their hands
- Sing the song again and ask the children to join in with the singing
- Repeat 2/3 times with the children joining in with the singing and completing the actions
- Tell the children that they need to listen carefully as the action is going to change this time
- Sing the song again and change the action and body part being used e.g. touch your head, stamp your feet, jump up high, etc. You can use visual aids for these actions to support the children with listening and engaging with the movement. E.g. pictures/cut-outs of the different body parts
- Repeat with the children and continue to introduce new movements
- Once you feel the children are confident with the song and different actions, take it in turns with the children to choose the action e.g. everyone sings the first line and then they say the action, and everyone must follow. The child could also pick up the picture they are using too to support their understanding
- Ensure that you do not repeat until the children are bored of the song. Finish when their engagement levels are still high and then place the resources used within the setting to encourage the children to continue with the activity if they wish.

Welsh language development

- Move – **symud**
- Clap – **clapio**
- Stamp – **taro**
- Touch – **cyffwrdd**
- Bend – **plygu**
- Tap – **tapio**
- Hands – **dwylo**
- Feet – **traed**
- Head – **pen**
- Music – **ceddoriaeth**
- Dance – **dawnsio**
- Jump – **neidio**
- Song – **cân**
- Knees – **penglinliau**

- Nose – **trwyn**
- Happy – **hapus**
- Show it – **dangos**
- Singing – **canu.**

Extension activities

- Ask parents and families to share songs and rhymes from their childhood. This can support learning about different communities and cultures
- Promote the importance of songs and rhymes with parents and families and explain how they help children’s development
- Video yourself and/or the children singing to share with parents and families to sing at home
- Share links to song and rhyme websites. E.g. Bookstart Cymru and the BBC
- Create ‘Rhyme Bags’ for children to take home and explore, filled with rhyme-related objects such as puppets, small world characters, etc.

Further support and NDNA resources.

- Songs and Rhymes – NDNA Welsh Language Support factsheet - <https://bit.ly/3DizbxN>
- Transport songs - NDNA Welsh Language Support factsheet - <https://bit.ly/3oguO1Z>
- Parts of the body songs – NDNA Welsh Language Support Factsheet - <https://bit.ly/3ltIRze>
- Nursery Rhyme Sacks - myNDNA Activity - <https://bit.ly/3rvyKh5>
- Creating Sounds, Songs and Rhymes - myNDNA Activity - <https://bit.ly/3ogkren>
- Supporting Maths using Rhyme - NDNA Publication - <https://bit.ly/3rCSkrM>
- It’s Time to Rhyme! - Booktrust Cymru - <https://bit.ly/32Yhebr>
- Nursery Rhymes and Songs – BBC - <https://bbc.in/31rk9sl>.

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