

Disclaimer: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.

Activity: Shine together - Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star with EAL learners

All new children with English as an additional language (EAL), including refugees and asylum seekers, need to know and feel that they are welcome, valued and belong in our settings.

Nursery rhymes are an engaging way to introduce language and culture and to foster social interactions with others.

Learning aims

- To help EAL children feel welcome and included
- To introduce some basic English words and phrases
- To encourage interaction with peers and adults.



Resources

- 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star' book or poster
- Pictures/drawings depicting the actions (optional)
- Related props/objects, e.g. a globe, stars to show or for the children to hold.

Activity outline

1. Gather children together in a circle
2. Welcome everyone, use simple and clear language, visual aids and gestures to support understanding. Learn the word for 'hello' in the child's language and use it before you greet them in English
3. Ensure you have the correct pronunciation of the name/s of the newly arrived child/children. This will not only demonstrate your respect and value of the child, but your pronunciation will act as a good role model for other children
4. Introduce the nursery rhyme: Explain that you will be singing a rhyme together and learning the actions that go with it
5. Teach the actions: Display the pictures in the book/poster or drawings and demonstrate the actions one by one, encouraging the children to copy you, e.g. hold up a star or point to a picture of a star in

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the book, clearly say the word 'star', hold up an outstretched hand and open and close to indicate twinkling. Continue with the other actions, using any relevant props

6. Learn and sing the rhyme: Sing the nursery rhyme while performing the accompanying actions. Encourage the children to observe attentively and join in when they feel ready. Encourage and praise any participation however tentative it may be. Repeat the rhyme and its actions several times, using any props you may have
7. Emphasise key words: Identify some key words such as 'star', 'up above', 'world' etc. and help children to understand their meanings by using simple gestures or props (e.g. hold up a cardboard star when you say 'star' or a globe when you say 'world')
8. Repetition and reinforcement: Repeat the rhyme regularly or daily. Repetition helps children become familiar with the new words and phrases enhancing their confidence to use them
9. Create opportunities to practise: If possible, pair up native English-speaking children with EAL children to sing the rhyme together, without any pressure for the EAL child to join in or perform. Observation and listening play key roles in language acquisition and children will be working on their receptive language skills first. Sing the rhyme throughout the day as you go about your general activities to give children more opportunities to hear the rhyme and learn the words
10. Be patient: Every child is unique and the length of any settling in period will be different for each child. Continue to engage with the child as though you expect them to respond. Use positive reinforcement, celebrate their progress and any participation.

Extension ideas

- Create a 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star' display, including the book, props, and a device/headphones to listen to the rhyme
- Create a rhyme bag with props for the children to share at home
- Expand on the rhyme by telling a simple story related to stars or the sky at night
- Find out more about supporting children with EAL on the [National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum \(NALDIC\) website](#).

NDNA products to support you with this activity

- Online course – [Vocabulary and early language skills](#)
- Blog – [Supporting refugees](#).