

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: Nursery rhyme, fun time

Songs and rhymes are crucial in developing and supporting language and communication. Making nursery rhymes a core part of your daily routine helps children to learn and explore new vocabulary. Celebrate World Nursery Rhyme week in November to encourage a love of rhymes both in the setting and at home.

Learning aims

- Start to make a choice between two objects
- Be able to copy gestures or words
- Develop vocabulary
- Understand that print carries meaning.

Resources

- Lolly sticks
- Laminated pictures with titles matching nursery rhymes
- Basket or box
- List of nursery rhymes to choose from with examples of accompanying props (bold are the official rhymes for this year's World Nursery Rhyme Week).
 - **Old MacDonald had a farm – toy pig / sheep**
 - **Five currant buns - laminated bun**
 - **Incy Wincy spider – toy spider**
 - **Twinkle, twinkle little star - laminated star**
 - **The big ship sails on the ally oh - toy boat**
 - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 once I caught a fish alive – toy fish
 - Five little men in a flying saucer – flying saucer picture
 - Down in the jungle – toy lion
 - If you're happy and you know it – smiley face
 - One elephant went out to play – toy elephant
 - Down at the station – toy train
 - The grand old duke of York – soldier toy
 - Head, shoulders, knees and toes – person with arrows pointing to body parts
 - Miss Polly had a dolly – small world figure
 - The wheels on the bus – toy bus.



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Activity outline

Using props or cards so children can choose their favourite nursery rhyme to sing is a well-known and favoured way to support babies' and children's language development.

Choose three or four nursery rhymes that you are going to sing with the children. This could be a combination of a few they are already familiar with and a new one. You can slowly build up their repertoire week by week.

Place the items you have found to represent each nursery rhyme in a basket or attractive box and sit with a very small group depending on the needs of the children. Show them the nursery rhyme basket/box.

Offer it to the baby or toddler to explore. With babies you could offer them two objects to choose from and then sing the rhyme which matches the object they choose. Pause at key points of the song so the baby or toddler can add their own gesture or vocalisation. Repeat frequently so they begin to choose the items independently. For older children you can model the sentence, e.g. if they pick out a boat, "You want to sing the big ship sails on the alley oh."

Learn the Makaton signs to accompany the nursery rhymes (resources available at <https://www.worldnurseryrhymeweek.com>).

Extension ideas:

- Stick laminated pictures with the title of the nursery rhyme onto lolly sticks. Display them on a Velcro board or stand up in a jar. As the children become familiar with the pictures and matching rhymes you can point to the words on the cards and read the title to them. This will help them understand that print carries meaning
- Create an area to enable children access to the resources during their independent play, enabling them to practice key skills and reinforce the link between the picture or words and the rhyme
- Add a basket of musical instruments next to the picture basket so children can accompany themselves and make choices about which instrument best suits the rhyme. With babies you could offer them a choice of two instruments when they have the prop in front of them. Then sing and use the instrument to the corresponding rhyme.

NDNA products to support you with this activity:

- [Quality interactions with babies](#) - Live virtual classroom training
- [Power of play with babies](#) - Live virtual classroom training
- [Developing vocabulary and early language skills](#) - Online training.