



Learning about Sounds: Rhyming and Singing

Your child was born to learn! From birth, your child is learning important language and literacy skills. She is learning to hear and play with sounds in words. Learning about sounds will help your child talk, read and write. Rhyming and singing are two ways to learn about sounds.

Rhyming and singing also teaches your child to speak smoothly. This will help her later to read more smoothly (with fluency). Fluency is an important skill that good readers have.

You are your child's first and best teacher. With your help, she can learn about the sounds in words. To help her become a good reader and writer, try these easy activities:

YOUR INFANT:

- ◆ Sing to your child. Some favorite songs include the "Itsy Bitsy Spider" and "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star."
- ◆ Play with the sounds that your baby makes. Imitate your child's coos, babbles, and baby talk. Wait for her to imitate you back.
- ◆ Read books to your child. Choose some books that rhyme or repeat words. Sing some of the book to your child. (She will love your voice!)

YOUR TODDLER:

- ◆ Sing or tell your child nursery rhymes such as "Jack and Jill" and "Humpty Dumpty." Once your child knows the rhyme, let her finish by filling in the word that you leave out. For example, start singing, "Patty cake, patty cake, baker's man, bake me a cake as fast as you ___." Stop to let your child say, "can."
- ◆ Sing songs that you know with your child. Sing along to CDs or tapes of other children's songs in the car. You can borrow them at your public library.
- ◆ Make up silly names for the people that your child knows, using the same beginning sound. For example, dancing dinosaur daddy, messy marshmallow mommy, etc.

YOUR PRESCHOOLER:

- ◆ Have fun and make up your own silly words together! Play, "The Name Game." For example, if your child's name is Nate, sing with your child, "Nate, Nate bo bate, banana fana fo fate, fee fi fo mate, Nate!" Try other names.
- ◆ Read books that rhyme and play with the sounds in words. Dr. Seuss books are a great choice! Poetry and nursery rhymes are also fun for your preschooler. Look for these books at your public library!
- ◆ Tell your child that rhyming words have a different beginning but they sound the same at the end. Tell your child that the words "bat" and "cat" rhyme. Play a rhyming game called "I Say, You Say." In this game, have your child finish the phrase you started with a word that rhymes. For example, "I say cat, you say ___ (your child may say hat, bat, or mat)."
- ◆ Help your child think of words with the same beginning. Say, "Let's see how many words we can think of that start with the "P" sound." (Your child may say pancake, pencil or plates.)