

Did you know...



Play is the most age-appropriate way for young children to learn. In order for children to know letter sounds and rhyming words when they are older, it is important to play with words throughout the day.

Singing and playing with words will help your child begin to hear the smaller sounds in words. These *phonological awareness* skills are needed later on, as children learn to read.

Introduce your child to rhyming words through books, nursery rhymes, and making up nonsense words. Just have fun with words and your child's skills will keep growing.

Here's how...



- ✦ Sing or play songs about animals while you move like them— hop like a bunny, strut like a chicken, gallop like a horse. Encourage your child to make that animal's sound as they move around.
- ✦ Use rhyming words when you give directions to your child. Example: "There's milk in your cup. Now drink it up!"
- ✦ Catch your child's attention by repeating a word they like to say. Change the first letter to make a new silly word: *Doggie becomes roggie, hoggie, soggie and so on.*
- ✦ Sing songs with your child. Traditional nursery rhymes are a great source for rhyming words and new vocabulary.

Read



***The Real Mother Goose Board Book*, by Blanche Fisher Wright**



This sturdy board book, just the right size for little hands, contains 15 nursery rhymes your young child will love bouncing, clapping, and singing with you.

Nursery Rhymes

Nursery rhymes are a simple and easy way to help your child build rhyming skills. Research suggests that children who know lots of nursery rhymes before they begin school tend to find more success with learning to read. You can find more books of nursery rhymes at your local library.



Choosing Books



Types of books that help your child play with words...

Rhyming books

Dr. Seuss books

Mother Goose Nursery Rhyme books

Books that illustrate a familiar song

Books with a rhythm or beat

Books with animal noises

Books with sounds, such as "buzz," "zoom," or "pop!"

Talk



Babies respond to a higher pitched voice as you're talking together, but try to avoid using "baby talk."

- Use the correct words when referring to objects. *Are you ready for your bottle?* instead of *Is Baby ready for ba-ba?*
- Use correct grammar. *We're going to the store now!* instead of *We go to store now!*

Your baby or toddler will learn more about language from hearing it used correctly.

Ready to Write



In order to learn to hold a pencil later on, young children need to develop the small muscles in their hands and fingers. Give your toddler a clean sponge while she is in the bathtub or outside with a bucket of water. Show her how to squeeze the sponge in the water to soak it full, then squeeze it out in a large cup or bowl. Make it a fun game to play.

Play



Hickory, Dickory, Dock is a fun nursery rhyme to act out while your young child is taking a bath. You can use a bar of soap or washcloth to go up your child's arm when the "mouse ran up the clock" or down their arm and make a splash in the water as you say "the mouse ran down."

Hickory, Dickory, Dock!
The mouse ran up the clock;
The clock struck one,
The mouse ran down,
Hickory, Dickory, Dock!

Adapted from *125 Brain Games for Babies*, by Jackie Silberg



Sing



Many nursery rhymes are also songs. Sing this one with your baby or toddler:

Mary Had a Little Lamb

Mary had a little lamb,
Little lamb, little lamb,
Mary had a little lamb,
Its fleece was white as snow.

Everywhere that Mary went,
Mary went, Mary went,
Everywhere that Mary went
That lamb was sure to go.

It followed her to school one day,
School one day, school one day,
It followed her to school one day
Which was against the rules.

It made the children laugh and play,
Laugh and play, laugh and play,
It made the children laugh and play
To see a lamb at school.

Hear song:

[www.thelearninggroove.com/
mary-had-a-little-lamb](http://www.thelearninggroove.com/mary-had-a-little-lamb)



At your library...



Don't have access to a computer? Many libraries do not require a library card in order to use the computers. Some even offer free computer classes.