

KEYS TO GREAT PARENTING



Fun and
Learning
with Your
Baby or Toddler

Communication with Nursery Rhymes

Communication with your baby or toddler is a wonderful way to build love, respect, and language ability. Babies love hearing you speak words and make rhythmic sounds, especially when you gently stroke them, bounce them, or move their arms and legs in time with the beat. Always choose rhymes with non-violent themes; many times, because we are so familiar with them, we take for granted the negative imagery some of these rhymes contain. For example, consider these lines: “Little Miss Muffet sat on a tuffet, eating her curds and whey. Along came a spider and sat down beside her and frightened Miss Muffet away.” Here is a collection of positive nursery rhymes to get you started having fun with your child. You can improvise new lines as you sing them. Add your child’s name, favorite activities, and movements to the songs and rhymes for extra enjoyment.

ONE, TWO, BUCKLE MY SHOE

One, two, buckle my shoe.
(Hold up your fingers as you count)
Three, four, shut the door.
(Pretend you are shutting a door)
Five, six, pick up sticks.
(Pretend you are picking up sticks)
Seven, eight, lay them straight.
(Lay “sticks” straight)
Nine, ten, a big fat hen.
(Hold your arms as if embracing a large object)

PAT-A-CAKE

Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker’s man.
Bake me a cake as fast as you can!
(Clap hands together lightly)
Roll it.
(Roll arms)
And pat it.
(Touch hands together lightly)
And mark it with a B.
(Write “B” in the air)
And put it in the oven for baby and me.
(Point to baby and yourself).

I LOVE MY FAMILY

Some families are large.
(Spread arms out wide)
Some families are small.
(Bring arms together)
But I love my family
(Cross arms over chest)
Best of all!

THIS LITTLE PIGGY

(Have fun wiggling your baby’s toes!)
This little piggy went to market.
This little piggy stayed home.
This little piggy had roast beef.
This little piggy had none.
This little piggy cried, “Wee, wee, wee,
wee”
All the way home.

ROW YOUR BOAT

Row, row, row your boat,
Gently down the stream,
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
Life is but a dream.
(Great for rocking or swinging motions)

OPEN, SHUT THEM*(Suit your actions to the words)*

Open, shut them,
 Open, shut them,
 Give a little clap.
 Open, shut them,
 Open, shut them,
 Lay them in your lap.
 Creep them, creep them,
 Creep them, creep them
 Right up to your chin.
 Open up your little mouth,
 But do not put them in.
(Wag finger "no-no").

ANIMALS*(Suit your actions to the words)*

Can you hop like a rabbit?
 Can you jump like a frog?
 Can you walk like a duck?
 Can you run like a dog?
 Can you fly like a bird?
 Can you swim like a fish?
 Can you be still as can be?
 As still as this?

*(Stand or sit completely still).***TWO LITTLE BLACKBIRDS**

Two little blackbirds sitting on a wall.

*(Extend each hand in front of you with fingers**straight, palms facing your chest, and thumbs sticking up)*

One named Peter one named Paul.
 Fly away Peter, fly away Paul.
("Fly" extended hands behind your back)
 Come back Peter, come back Paul.
(Bring hands back to original position)

THE WHEELS ON THE BUS

The wheels on the bus go round and round,
 Round and round, round and round.
 The wheels on the bus go round and round,
 All through the town.
(Roll arms)

(Repeat using some of these other verses or make up some of your own)

The wipers on the bus go swish, swish,
 swish...
 The doors on the bus go open and shut...
 The horn on the bus goes beep, beep, beep...
 The driver on the bus says, "Move on
 back"...
 The people on the bus go up and down...

THIS IS THE WAY THE LADIES RIDE

This is the way the ladies ride,
 Nimble nim, nimble nim, nimble nim;
 This is the way the gentlemen ride,
 Gallop a trot! Gallop a trot! Gallop a trot!
 This is the way the farmers ride,
 Jiggety jog, jiggity jog, jiggity jog;
 This is the way the butcher boy rides,
 Trippety trot, trippety trot, trippety trot,
 Till he falls in a ditch with a flippity flop,
 Flippity-flop, flop, FLOP!

BAA, BAA BLACK SHEEP

Baa, baa, black sheep,
 Have you any wool?
 Yes sir, yes sir,
 Three bags full;
 One for the master,
 And one for the dame,
 And one for the little boy
 Who lives down the lane.

JIM ALONG JOSIE

Hey Jim along,
 Jim along Josie,
 Hey Jim along,
 Jim a long Jo.
 Hey Jim along,
 Jim along Josie,
 Hey Jim along,
 Jim along Jo.
 Walk Jim along,
 Jim along Josie
 Walk Jim along,
 Jim along Jo. *(repeat)*
 Hop Jim along,

Jim along Josie,
Hop Jim along,
Jim along Jo. (*repeat*)

(*Come up with your own rhythmic actions.
You can improvise variations to the words.
Try "tiptoe," "crawl," "swing," or
"roll."*)

SKIP TO MY LOU

Little red wagon, painted blue,
Little red wagon, painted blue
Little red wagon, painted blue,
Skip to my Lou, my darling.
(*Refrain*)

Lou, Lou, skip to my Lou,
Lou, Lou, skip to my Lou,
Lou, Lou, skip to my Lou,
Skip to my Lou, my darling.

CLOCKS

Big clocks make a sound like
TICK, TOCK, TICK, TOCK (*slow deep
voice*).

Small clocks make a sound like
Tick, tock, tick, tock (*usual speaking voice*)
And the very tiny clocks make a sound like
Tick-tock-tick-tock-tick-tock-tick-tock (*fast
high voice*)

THE HOKEY POKEY

(*Participants stand in a circle. Put body
parts towards the
center of the circle as indicated in the song.*)

You put your right hand in, you put your
right hand out,
You put your right hand in, and you shake it
all about.

You do the hokey pokey
and you turn yourself about—

RESOURCES:

Herr, Judy, and Swim, Terri. (1999). *Creative Resources for Infants and Toddlers*. Albany, NY: Delmar Publishers.
Seeger, Ruth Crawford. (1975). *American Folk Songs for Children*. New York: Delacorte Press.

(*Lift arms up and bend them at the elbows,
then turn completely around in your space.*)
That's what it's all about!

You put your left hand in....
You put your right foot in...
You put your left foot in...
You put your right elbow in...
You put your left elbow in...
You put your right hip in...
You put your left hip in...
You put your head in...
You put your whole self in...
(*Jump forward into the center of the circle.*)

THE NOBLE DUKE OF YORK

(*Begin the song by squatting
close to the floor, ready to stand up.*)
The noble duke of York, he had ten
thousand men;
He marched them up to the top of the hill
(*Stand up.*)
and he marched them down again. (*Squat
down again.*)
And when you're up, you're up; (*Stand up.*)
And when you're down, you're down; (*Squat
down again.*)
And when you're only half-way up, (*Stand
half-way up, knees bent.*)
You're neither up nor down. (*Stand up, then
quickly squat down close to the floor.*)

HEAD, SHOULDERS, KNEES, AND TOES

(*Touch body parts as indicated in the song.*)
Head, shoulders, knees, and toes, knees and
toes;
Head, shoulders, knees, and toes, knees, and
toes
And eyes and ears and mouth and nose;
Head, shoulders, knees, and toes, knees, and
toes.