



**National
Literacy
Trust**

Change your story

Sing With Me

Nursery rhymes for you and your little one


It's never too early – or too late – to start singing with your little one.

Singing songs with your baby helps to build their language and communication skills from the very start.

When they are little, this special time together allows them to recognise familiar sounds and rhythms, which are the first building blocks for language.

As they get older, these songs and rhymes will help your little one to learn new words and understand their meaning.

Your child will love sharing these little moments together.



If English isn't your first language, sing rhymes in your home language. The benefits will be just the same!

How to get the most out of this booklet

We've chosen eight popular nursery rhymes – each with simple tunes and lyrics. These can be enjoyed whether your little one is five weeks, or five years old.

We've included actions for each song (**which are written in blue**) to make rhyme time playful.

Adding actions helps your little one to understand the meaning of words.

Here are the videos of the nursery rhymes in this booklet. Scan this QR to sing along!



*Singing
nursery rhymes
works best when
you're face to
face with your
little one.*

1. Twinkle Twinkle Little Star

Twinkle twinkle little star

(Open and close your hands)

How I wonder what you are

Up above the world so high

(Point your finger up to the sky)

Like a diamond in the sky

(Make a diamond shape with your fingers)

Twinkle twinkle little star

How I wonder what you are

Singing at
bedtime is a great
way to bond with
your child, and it
can help them settle
down to sleep.

Scan to
sing along



2. Round and Round the Garden

Round and round the garden
Like a teddy bear

*(Use your finger to trace a circle on
your baby's hand or tummy)*

One step, two step

*(Walk your fingers up your
baby's arm as you count)*

Tickle you under there!

(Gently tickle your baby)

If you sing
this often, your
child will recognise
it and get excited
for the tickle at
the end!



3. Row, Row, Row Your Boat

Row, row, row your boat
Gently down the stream
Merrily merrily, merrily, merrily
Life is but a dream

Row, row, row your boat
Gently down the stream
If you see a crocodile
Don't forget to scream!

*(When your child is little, you can gently rock them.
Once they're older and can sit securely, hold their
hands to help them rock back and forth.)*

Adding
actions helps your
little one to join in
long before they
learn to talk.



4. 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 day long

(Move your hands in circles like the wheels on the bus.)



Sing this song while out and about to help your child learn new sounds and understand their world.

Scan the QR code to find other verses and actions to the song. Why not try:

- The horn on the bus goes beep, beep, beep
- The wipers on the bus go swish, swish, swish



5. Wind the Bobbin Up

Wind the bobbin up, wind the bobbin up

(Pretend you're winding up a ball of string)

Pull, pull, clap, clap, clap

(Move your hands away from each other and clap)

Point to the ceiling, point to the floor

Point to the window, point to the door

(Point to the things you're singing about)

Clap your hands together, one, two, three

(Clap your hands three times)

Lay them gently on your knees

(Place your hands on your knees)

When your child is little, you can help them by holding their hands and gently doing the actions. This shows them how to join in when they're older.



6. The Grand Old Duke of York

Oh, the Grand Old Duke of York

He had ten thousand men

He marched them up to the top of the hill

And he marched them down again

And when they were up, they were up

(Gently lift your baby up)

And when they were down, they were down

(Gently bring your baby down)

And when they were only half-way up

They were neither up nor down

(Gently lift your baby halfway)

When they
are walking, your
child can join in
by standing up,
crouching down and
marching along with
the song.



7. Hickory Dickory Dock

Hickory Dickory dock, the mouse ran up the clock

*(Run your fingers up your child's body,
from their toes to their chin)*

The clock struck one

(Clap your hands once)

The mouse ran down

*(Run your fingers down your child's
body, from their chin to their toes)*

Hickory Dickory dock

Look out for
noises, funny faces or
giggles your child might
make. This means
they're listening and
having fun.



8. Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes

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

*(As you sing, point to the different
body parts on your child that match
the words)*

Doing these
actions helps your
child to understand
the meaning of
the words.



Online support:

There are lots of ways to help your child learn new words and develop their communication skills. You're probably doing many of them already!

You'll find free, fun activities to try at home on our website:

[**wordsforlife.org.uk**](https://wordsforlife.org.uk)

In-person support:

Family hubs bring together local services and advice for parents with young children. This includes support for children's early speech, language and communication.

Find out about your local family hub here: [**familyhubs.campaign.gov.uk**](https://familyhubs.campaign.gov.uk).