



Nursery Rhymes



What are nursery rhymes?

Nursery Rhymes are the popular rhymes of one's youth that have one or more of the following characteristics:

- ✓ A simple story line that encourages finger play;
- ✓ A story in a song with a repeated chorus;
- ✓ A verse with nonsense words; and,
- ✓ A description of daily actions.

Why are nursery rhymes important?

- ✓ Nursery rhymes help children to develop a sense of the rhythm of the English language. This sense of rhythm helps them to later read with greater fluency.
- ✓ Nursery rhymes help children to develop rich vocabularies. Often, rhymes contain vocabulary that is not used in everyday conversation such as the word, "fetch" in Jack and Jill.
- ✓ Nursery rhymes help children develop a sense of rhyme. Research shows that the ability to hear and produce rhymes positively affects reading and spelling development.
- ✓ Nursery rhymes provide early storytelling activities. Nursery rhymes tell a simple story with a clear beginning, middle and end. Children need to understand what elements are found in a story and they need lots of practice telling the stories before they can begin to write their own. Reciting and acting out nursery rhymes helps children to develop a sense of "story".

(Norton, D.E. (1995) through the Eyes of a Child. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.
Adapted from an article written by Sandy Giles – Community Alliance for York Region Education