Nursery rhymes are important for young children because they help develop an ear for our language. Both rhyme and rhythm help kids hear the sounds and syllables in words, which helps kids learn to read! Here are some activities and recommended poetry books to aid your child's developing poetry, rhythm, and rhythm skills.

Today's children have screens everywhere they turn. Many of us know a toddler (perhaps our own!) who can operate an iPad. Things are surely different than when we were kids! Aren't nursery rhymes a thing of the past? They shouldn't be.

Nursery rhymes. These little poems and songs have been around for centuries. Despite all the changes the world has seen in the last 500 years, nursery rhymes are here to stay. Below are ten reasons why kids need to learn nursery rhymes. Nursery rhymes and other popular rhymes and songs are for kids of all ages!

1. Nursery rhymes are the perfect first stories. The bouncy rhythm catches their attention, and the short length means I might be able to finish a rhyme before little hands grab the book.

2. Nursery rhymes can boost early language development. Not only does the repetition of rhymes and stories teach children how language works, it also builds memory capabilities that can be applied to all sorts of activities.

3. Knowing nursery rhymes can build social skills and promote a sense of community. Children bond over a shared story, and when you have a classroom (or houseful) of children who know the same rhymes, they have fun reciting and singing together.

4. Loving nursery rhymes opens the door to a love of all books. Even before they can read, children can sit and learn how a book works. This extends to the pictures and music associated with nursery rhymes: it is a full visual and oral experience.

5. Kids who know nursery rhymes are equipped to be better readers. Listening to nursery rhymes strengthens kids' ability to hear the sounds in words.

6. Listening to nursery rhymes builds vocabulary. The more stories and rhymes kids hear, the larger their vocabulary. A strong vocabulary improves listening comprehension, social conversations, writing, and more!

7. A love for nursery rhymes opens the door to creativity. Act out rhymes, create nursery rhyme crafts, illustrate favorite rhymes, and write your own. Plus, listening to rhymes without pictures lets your child create mental images in his head.

8. Nursery rhymes connect us to the past. Don't you love reading a favorite picture book from your childhood to your own kids? When you share nursery rhymes that you knew as a child, you can have that same joy.

9. Singing nursery rhymes can improve fine motor skills and coordination. When children do finger plays (think “I'm a Little Teapot”) and act out other rhymes (like ‘Jack Jumped Over a Candlestick’), they can even improve muscle strength!

10. Nursery rhymes are just plain fun. Silly rhymes and nonsensical verse are appealing to kids. That's why these rhymes are still popular after 500 years!

Ten Top Nursery Rhymes for Young Children

1. Humpty Dumpty
2. Row Row Row Your Boat
3. Ring A Ring A Roses
4. Twinkle Twinkle Little Star
5. The Wheels On The Bus
6. Itsy Bitsy Spider
7. Old MacDonald
8. 5 Little Monkeys Jumping On The Bed
9. 9 Is The Way The Lady Rides
10. 5 Little Ducks Went Swimming One Day
**Infant's Quality Tip**

**Why Does My Baby Need Tummy Time?**

Tummy Time helps your baby develop the neck, back, and shoulder muscles needed to meet infant developmental milestones. It may also help prevent early motor delays and conditions such as flat head syndrome and scoliosis. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends placing babies on their tummies to play.

Tummy Time can begin as soon as your baby can sit up for a few seconds without support. Your baby should spend 20 minutes a day on their tummies to play.

**Preschooler's Quality Tip**

“Attitude of Gratitude”

Here’s a new way of looking at the child with behavior concerns. View the child as a valuable gift, as he will provide you with learning opportunities. You may learn about the causes of behavioral issues and new approaches to correcting the child. Understanding the “spirited child” may help you feel positive, and may be the single most important thing you can do to reduce the behaviors.

**Toddler's Quality Tip**

“Advent of Gratitude”

- You must complete entire course in order to get your credential at the end.
- You MUST have a working e-mail address and access to the internet to be able to take this course. If you are taking this course with a co-worker you will each need to have separate email addresses.
- The Essentials of High Quality Early Child Care (January 14 – February 25, 2019) - Class is designed to provide early child care education professionals with an overview of essential information for best practices in the early child care setting. This is a six-week course that includes practical guidelines for providing a high quality, safe and nurturing environment while promoting the physical, social, emotional and intellectual development of young children. Upon completion of this course participants will receive 15 training hours.

**Early Brain Development and the Lasting Importance of Caregiver-child Relationships**

This course consists of nine training sessions that are a guide for understanding child development and learning, and for implementing best practices in order to prepare children for success in school and in life. The Alabama Early Learning Guidelines Credential is an important milestone on the Career Lattice of Alabama Child Care and Education Professional Development System - Pathways to Quality Care and Education.

Please see the Montgomery calendar for the dates and times of the course.

The Dothan Child Care Education and Training Program will be offering the AELG Course in the Spring quarter. Please continue to check their calendar for the dates and times of the course.

**Online Training Opportunities**

- **Family Guidance Center** has once again partnered with ProSolutions Training. Through this partnership you are able to earn a portion of your training hours to meet the DHR requirements through their online courses.

**Three easy steps to enroll:**

1. *Call and talk to the FGC online training specialist and complete enrollment form*

2. *Verify that you have worked a full year in child care*

3. *Verify that you have at least half of your yearly required training hours as face to face classes at DHR*

*If you are interested in this training opportunity, please call the Training Department for additional information. For the Dothan area, please call 334-712-7777, ext. 227. For the Montgomery area, please call 334-270-4100 ext. 255. Please ask to speak to the Online Training Specialist, or, if necessary, please leave your name, phone number and a brief message and your call will be returned.*

**Montgomery's Child Care Education and Training Program will be offering the Alabama Early Learning Guidelines Course in March. TheAlabama Early Learning Guidelines Course is written to promote continuity of high quality care and learning for children from birth through five years of age.*

- **Infants:** Tape Resist Snowflake
  - Materials: blue non-toxic washable paint, tape, paper, zipper bag
  - Lay tape on paper in a snowflake pattern. Allow infant to finger paint on top of the paper and snowflake design. This can also be done inside of a zipper bag for young infants.
  - Once paint dries, peel tape to reveal snowflake pattern on blue background

- **Toddlers:** Handprint Snowflakes
  - Materials: white washable non-toxic paint, blue construction paper, optional glitter or salt
  - Make white handprints on paper centering, rotating and overlapping the palm to create a snowflake design in the center of the paper. Allow them to sprinkle salt or glitter to complete design (optional).

- **Preschoolers:** Fork Painted Snowflakes
  - Materials: white washable non-toxic paint, plastic fork, blue construction paper, cotton swabs, optional salt or glitter
  - Guide children to stamp snowflake patterns onto the paper, adding smaller dots with cotton swabs to fill in the page. Allow them to sprinkle salt or glitter to complete design (optional).

- **Schoolagers:** Salt Painted Snowflakes
  - Materials: card stock, pencil, school glue, table salt, liquid watercolors, eye dropper
  - Allow children to draw snowflake pattern on the paper with pencil. Have them trace over the designs with glue. Pour salt on the glue in a heavy layer. Allow to dry. Use watercolor paint and eye dropper to paint the snowflakes using winter colors in shades of blue and purple.

**AELG Face-to-Face - Montgomery**

- Pathways to Quality Care and Education.
- Career Lattice of Alabama Child Care and Education Professional Development System - Pathways to Quality Care and Education.

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