

Preschool Phonics Phase 1.4 Rhythm and Rhyme

A Guide for Parents

Preschool and nursery phonics focuses on pre-reading skills. These are speaking and listening skills, being able to distinguish the sounds they hear, patterns of speech, and sounds of speech. Phase 1 of the phonics programme is split into seven aspects; each builds on the previous aspect.

This guide introduces the fourth aspect of Phase 1 Phonics: Rhythm and Rhyme.

Children learn to hear patterns in speech. They learn to tune into words that may start with different sounds but end with the same sounds. They are pleasing to the ear and fun to repeat.

You can start when your child is very young, by reading illustrated rhyming stories with your child. Very young children will respond to the pattern of speech, while older preschoolers will learn to anticipate the next rhyming word. Try to make it a cosy 1-1 time with no distractions.

Make rhyming a part of your everyday life. If a drink is spilt, say, "Spillage in the village," for instance, or when it's time to go out, hold up shoes and say, "Whose shoes?". Sing songs and nursery rhymes with your child (play them in the car when you are out and about).

At nurseries, preschools and childminders, the children will usually sit for story times, where they are encouraged to take part and predict the next rhyming words in stories they have heard before and can recall. They may also play rhyming word bingo and 'odd one out' games, where they identify the object that doesn't rhyme.

Visit your local library and look for songs and rhymes, then take time to read some in the library and choose some to take home too.

This aspect of phonics is also great for developing all-round speaking and listening skills. There are thousands of rhyming stories for your children to enjoy.



The most important thing you can do is make time to listen to your child. Switch off the TV, radio and mobile phones and really listen to them!