



RYMES AND SONGS

New Words Old Songs

This can work both ways. Either you can sing new words to an old tune, or make up a new tune to words you already know. The first is easiest for most people, and doesn't have the same risk of confusing the children. You can make up words about anything, and when children get used to it, they will make up their own songs as they work and play.

Young Babies (0-11 months)

Baby songs should be about familiar things, people and events. Don't worry about getting the rhymes right, just keep the beat and the tune. You can even use nonsense words or 'la-la-la' to fill spaces. For example to the tune of 'Frere Jacques'

Hello baby, look at me
Hello baby, look at me
Hello, I can see you
Hello, I can see you
Here I am, here I am!
Here's your dinner, here's your dinner,
Here it comes, here it comes I It will taste delicious, it will Taste 'delicious
Yum, yum, yum, yum, yum, yum.

Babies (8-20 months)

Singing while you play simple games is a good way to get singing into the day as a permanent thing, not just for group times. As you sit with individuals, make up silly little songs about what you are doing together. Just hum a tune instead, if you feel shy!
To 'Wind the Bobbin'

Drive the lorry up, drive the lorry up, Stop, stop, at the top.
Drive it down again, drive it down again, Down, down, to the ground.
I Drive it up again, drive it up again, Stop, stop, at the top.
Drive it down again, drive it down again, Down, down, to the ground.

Young Children (16-26 months)

Using songs to introduce new or familiar activities. Calling children to you through a song or rhyme is a good way to attract their attention. You could also learn some songs for pack away times, or when you want them to come together. To 'Baa Baa Black Sheep'

'Children, children, will you come and play?
I've got some dough here, do you want to play?
We could make some snakes and pretty little cakes, We could make some snakes and
pretty little cakes, Children, children, will you come and play?
I've got some dough here, do you want to play?

Children (22-40 months)

Children love to have familiar songs personalised. they will listen carefully for their own name, and this is a good way to help them maintain attention when they have to wait for their turn. You can turn any routine into some fun and good listening practice. To 'Polly Put the Kettle on'

Katie, bring the orange juice
Katie, bring the orange juice,
Katie, bring the orange juice,
Katie, bring the orange juice,
Simon put the beakers out
Jodie pass the biscuits round...
Hitesh cut the apples up
Kylle pass the fruit around... .
Sean, collect up all the plates

Older Children (40-60+ months)

Songs for special occasions, such as festivals, parties, trips and picnics are all good reasons for making up songs together. *Going to the Zoo, Old MacDonald* or *Zippety Doo-dah* all have suitable tunes, and you will know many more. To Daddy's taking us to the zoo.

We're all going to the woods tomorrow, woods tomorrow, woods tomorrow, We're all going to the woods tomorrow, we can stay all day.
We're going to the woods, woods, woods, better be good, good, good.
We'll all be good, good, good, 'cos we're going to the woods.

The wheels on the Bus

Songs with lots of movements are popular with children and Adults. they help concentration, aid understanding and reinforce learning by combining movement words and music. Collect as many as you *can* and *add them to children's repertoires as they grow older and more physically adept.*

Young babies (0-11 months)

Babies love to watch and listen as you sing the songs that will become favourites for them. Sing during changing and feeding sessions, making eye contact as you do, and using simple movements to reinforce the rhythm and the words. Sing songs as movements are they sit on your knee or as you dance popular with children and adults. They help slowly round holding them in your, arms.

Rock a bye.baby, on the tree top
When the wind blows the cradle will rock
When the bough breaks the cradle may fall,
I'll catch the baby, I won't let him/her fall.

Babies (8-20 months)

As they begin to get more confident with sitting and standing, they will love joining in with movement songs, either on your knee or while you sing. Teach simple movements to start with, and don't expect them to sing and move at the same time! Get into the habit of clap- ping, waving or bouncing to all songs.

Horse, horse, don't you stop
Just let your feet go clippety clop
Your tail goes swish and the wheels go round
Giddy-up we're homeward bound

Young Children (16-26 Months)

Songs with lots of verses (and lots of actions) become very popular at this stage. Add more verses to any you already know, or make up new songs for familiar routines, seasonal activities and topics or themes you are covering.

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands,
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands,
If you're happy and you know it And you really want to show it,
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands...
Stamp your feet,
Nod your head,
Give a wave etc

Children (22-40 months)

Make a big bus from chairs or boxes a boat from the big bricks, or a castle from the climbing frame and use them as settings for movement songs, adding simple Props or costumes to help the play along Begin ring games at this stage too

The wheels on the bus! Go round & round,
Round and round, Round and round,
The wheels on the bus! Go round and round, , All day long, '
The wipers on the bus..
The lights on the bus..
The driver on the bus../
The doors on the bus.. I
The mums on the bus...
The dads on the bus..
The babies on the bus.. !.
The big boys on the bus

Older Children (40-60+ months)

Complex songs requiring more concentration and memory skills can be introduced at this stage. Old favourites such as Oranges and Lemons, Okey Cokey, Here we go round the Mulberry Bush, or In and Out the Dusty Bluebells are all good for movement and co-operation. Add new verses and words

We'll all join in the circle
We'll all join in the circle
We'll all join in the circle
And sing a song or two

We'll all clap hands together
We'll all join hands together
We'll all turn around together
We'll all stand still together
We'll all stand still together
We'll all sit down together
We'll all be quiet together
Now singing time is through.

Two of us Together

Songs encourage interaction between two or more children. Babies and some younger children may find it difficult to work in a pair, so they may need you to be the other player, helping them and modelling the way to collaborate and cooperate. They are also good ways of helping children to maintain eye contact, an essential communication skill.

Young Babies (0-11 months)

Sit on the floor with your knees raised and let the baby lean on your legs, so they are well supported. Gently hold both their hands and move to the rhythm of the song. Or prop the baby securely in a nest of cushions, so they are well supported as they watch you singing and rocking.

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

Face each other, hold both hands and rock gently back-wards and forwards.

Babies (8-20 months)

Add another verse and enjoy the sound effects. Now the babies can sit securely, they will be able to rock backwards and forwards as they hold hands, sitting on the floor. Some babies will be beginning to stand, and may be happier standing and swaying or doing 'baby knees bend' as they sing or watch and listen, joining in the scream!

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

Young Children (16-26 months)

At this stage, children will be able to work in a pair, either with an adult or another child (as long as the adult stays near) make up some simple songs, using the same tune, and with movements where children roll a ball or push a car to each other. Add new verse for passing a toy, rocking a teddy, waving a flag in the air.

Roll, roll, roll the ball,
Gently on the floor
Roll it to each other,
Gently on the floor.

The children will need to sit very close to each other.

Children (22-40 months)

Encourage children to sing songs together when they are playing indoors or outside. Role-play is a good activity for this. Make up words spontaneously with them about what they are doing. It doesn't matter if the words don't rhyme, just keep a rhythm and use a simple nursery rhyme tune or just clap in time to the song!

Have you seen the pizza man,
The pizza man, the pizza man?
Have you seen the pizza man?
I need a take-away!
Yes we've seen the pizza man,
The pizza man, the pizza man.
Yes we've seen the pizza man,
We'll send him on his way.

Older Children (40-60+ months)

Continue to sing during activities, and model the way to involve someone else in the song. Use songs and rhymes to help with recall and memory at snack time, group times, small group activities right across the curriculum. Music, beat and rhymes will help all sorts of learning.

What does a bee do, bee do, bee do?
What does a bee do? Zz, zz, zz.
What does a snake do snake do, snake do, snake do?
What does a snake do? Ss,ss,ss.
What does a fish do, fish do, fish do?
What does a fish do? P, p, p.
What does an owl do, owl do, owl do?
What does an owl do? Hoo, hoo, hoo.

Five Little Speckled Frogs

This well known and well loved song for young children can be expanded for bigger numbers or by substitution of different animals, birds, fish or reptiles. The concept of 'one less' is an important one, and practicing with songs and rhymes that count backwards helps this concept to develop.

Young Babies (0-11 months)

Supporting young babies on your lap to maintain eye contact, and sing the songs as you gently bounce them as each frog jumps into the pond. Rock them gently in time with the rest of the song.

Five little speckled frogs
Sat on a speckled log
Eating some most
Delicious grubs.
Yum, yum,
One jumped into the pool,
Where it was nice and cool,
Then there were four green speckled frogs,
Glub, glub.
Continue with four frogs and so on.

Babies (8-20 months)

Use fingers on one hand to represent the chapatis left each time. You can play with real chapattis, and plastic money, but 'pretend paying' is usually better for babies at this stage, and you might start with just 2 or 3 chapatis, buns or frogs in the song.

Five chapatis in the frying pan.
Round and brown for chapatti man.
Along came (Childs name) with a penny one day.
Bought a chapati and took it away.
(continue with four, three, two and one).

Young Children (16-26 months)

Once they are steady on their feet, children can stand and then jump into the pond at the appropriate moment. Use expressions in words and faces and rub your tummies for 'yum, yum'. Learn some more simple 'counting back finger songs about animals and birds.

Five little ducks went out to play,
Over the hill and far away.
Mama duck said 'Quack, quack, quack;
Four little duck came waddling back.
Repeat: for four little ducks etc.

Children (22-40 months)

Make some simple props for the songs – dough frogs and a pond, ducks and a river, eggs and a nest. Or make hats or masks for the children to wear, or use some caterpillar finger puppets. You could turn this poem into a little play to act out for other children or parents.

5 little caterpillars munching on a leaf
1 little caterpillar takes a little sleep
This little caterpillar wakes up with a cry
I'm not a caterpillar I'm a great big butterfly.
(Continue with four caterpillars until none are left.)

Older Children (40-60+ months)

Extend the song by making a story box with props to use as the song is sung. This song can be adapted for other fruit (pears, bananas, oranges etc) and used to sing at snack time.

Five rosy apples by the cottage door.
One tumbled off twig and then there were four.
Four rosy apples for use to see,
The farmer's wife took one and then there were three.
Three rosy apples for me and you,
I think I'll have one and then there'll be two.
Two rosy apples hanging in the sun,
You have the big one and then that will leave one.
One rosy apple, soon it's gone,
The wind blew it off the branch and now there are none.

1, 2, 3, 4, 5

1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Once I caught a fish alive is one of the classic finger play songs which encourage early counting skills. This is a song, which has a story as well as the numbers, and can be introduced from an early age. There are many other counting rhymes that can be added later, to support early counting activities.

Young Babies (0-11 months)

As you sing and play this r h y m e with very young babies, emphasise the individual fingers one at a time for each number, open you hands outward for 'letting go' use a questioning expression for 'why?' and identify your right little finger at the correct time. You could also touch their fingers gently as you count.

1, 2, 3, 4, 5 once I caught a fish alive,
6, 7, 8, 9, 10 then I let it go again.
Why did you let it go?
Because it bit my finger so.
Which finger did it bite?
This little finger on my right.

Babies (8-20 months)

Touch babies' fingers as you count each of the numbers, and help them to make the movements during the rest of the song. Try to help them do this in time with the beat of the rhyme – you may have to sing more slowly, but try to keep a steady beat.

Five fat peas in a pea pod pressed
One grew, two grew and so did the rest
They grew and they grew and they did not stop
Until the day when the pod went pop!

In this rhyme , children are counting to two – a good start and manageable for their fingers!

Young Children (16-26 months)

Develop the song into games where the children can catch fish bean bags, birds or soft toys as they sing, enacting the story of the song. Hang pictures on a washing line for children to touch as they count. Teach the children new rhymes about numbers as well as singing the familiar ones.

Five little sparrows high in a tree
The first one said, 'what do I see?'
The second one said, 'I see the street.'
The third one said, 'and seeds to eat.'
The fourth one said 'the seeds are wheat.'
The fifth one said, 'tweet, tweet, tweet.'

Children (22-40 months)

As young children learn new songs, they will be able to use words and actions together. At this stage it's important to speak and move clearly and consistently, using the rhyme. Gradually increase the range of rhymes for young children, adapting them to current themes and interests.

I have ten little fingers, ten little toes.
Two little arms and one little nose.
One little mouth and two little ears.
Two little eyes for smiles and tears.
One little head and two little feet.
One little chin that's me complete.

Older children (40-60+ months)

At this stage, you can sing along to activities and encourage the children to do so too. Sing about fishing with a fishing game, use a counting song as you spoon sand into containers, sing as you hop, skip and jump out of doors, count as you pack away or come to group time.

Give me five claps!
1, 2, 3, 4, 5!
Give me five claps!
1, 2, 3, 4, 5!
Give me five stamps!
1, 2, 3, 4, 5!
Give me five stamps!
1, 2, 3, 4, 5!
Give me five hops!
1, 2, 3, 4, 5!
Give me five hops!
1, 2, 3, 4, 5!
Give me five jumps!
1, 2, 3, 4, 5!
Give me five jumps!
1, 2, 3, 4, 5!

Round and round the garden

This well-loved finger play is often the first that babies learn. It is initially a touch and respond rhyme, but soon develops into excited, and often animated, anticipation between the adult and the child. Children seem never to tire of this game and song, however old they get

Young Babies (0-11 months)

Use very gentle movements, circling on the palm of the baby's hand in time with the beat while saying the words. Move your finger so the beat is felt on the words round, garden, like, bear, one, two, tickle and there. Start the game slowly and quietly, babies sometimes take time to get the message.

Round and round the garden, like a teddy bear,
one step, two step, and tickle under there.

Use a finger to trace a circle on the baby's palm, then 'step' up the arm to tickle then under the chin.

Babies (8-20 months)

As babies get older, and more used to the game, they will be anticipating the tickle. Now you can start making the movement on different parts of their bodies, such as hands and feet. You could also use variations to the words and your vocal expressions – use 'mouse' and 'house' instead of 'bear' and 'there' and a higher pitch for the mouse version.

Variation:

Round and round the garden like a little mouse,
One step, two step, run into your house.

Young Children (16-26 months)

At this stage you could use a soft toy bear or mouse, or a finger puppet in your hand when saying the poem and act it out with the toy. Try hiding the toy behind your back before you start, bringing it out slowly to raise the anticipation even more, and encourage the child to watch carefully. Pause sometimes during the rhyme to help with tracking eye contact.

Round and round the garden, round and round and round
Here he comes there he goes, which hole has he found.

Children (22-40 months)

As children get older they develop the physical ability to take the lead in finger play themselves this is when the two way vocal communication begins as the children do the movements on the adult's hands, and anticipate the response, while the adult says or sings the words. They also love making up their own new versions and hearing your new versions too.

Here I come, here I come, round and round I come.
Here I come, here I come, right onto your tum.

Older Children (40-60+ months)

As they build relationships with others, children will begin to say the finger play rhyme to another baby or child and carry out the actions. They may also use them spontaneously with dolls, soft toys and puppets. Making up new versions, with silly rhymes and words should be encouraged as it develops the listening and rhyme skills vital in early phonics.

Round and round the garden, the bear says beg your pardon,
Up and down the chairs, the mouse jumps on the stairs.

Lap Songs

Some rhymes and songs particularly lend themselves to one-to-one situations where the child is on your knee, opposite you on a cushion or carpet, or next to you in a comfy chair or settee. These songs are also useful when a child is unhappy or needing some comfort or quiet time.

Young Babies (0-11 months)

Rhyme is 'prime time' for babies and their key person. You are the substitute parent for the babies in your group, so a session with your key children, showing them they are special, and supporting language and social development through rhymes and songs.

Start with you little finger
This little lamb eats grass,
This little lamb eats hay,
This little lamb looks over the fence
This little lamb runs away,
And this big sheep does nothing but sit in the fields all day!

Babies (8-20 months)

At this stage, babies love all nursery rhymes, responding well to short individual sessions with a single adult. Use this time to expand their repertoire with new songs as well as their favourites 'more' or 'again, again' are soon learned if you respond with another round!

This is the way
The ladies ride,
Trit trot, trit trot.
This is the way
The ladies ride,
Trit trot, trit trot, trit trot.

....the gentlemen ride,
a gallop, a trot

....the farmer rides
jiggety-jog, jiggety-jog

....the old man rides,
hobblerty-hoy, hobblety-hoy.

Young Children (16-26 months)

Children never tire of individual attention as long as their growing need for independence is acknowledged make sessions short, perhaps following change time, or before naps and spend some time with individuals frequently, even if this can't be every day.

Horsey horsey don't you stop
Just let your feet go
Clippety-clop
Your tail goes swish
And the wheels go round
Giddy up we're homeward bound.
Horsey horsey off you trot
Just let your hooves go tritty trot
Hold your head up high
As the wheels go round
Giddy up we're off to town!

Children (22-40 months)

Older children may be felling their feet but still need the comfort of familiar adults and favourite activities. They also need periods of quiet and calm between their energetic periods of activity. Try some calming songs during book area or in small group time.

Hickory dickory dock
The mouse ran up the clock
The clock struck one
The mouse ran down
Hickory dickory dock
The mouse ran up the clock
The clock struck two and down he flew
Hickory dickory dock.

Older Children (40-60+ months)

As children mature even more, they may enjoy singing lap songs with puppets, soft toys or dolls on their knees, doing the actions and 'begin the adult' they may also enjoy singing the song in pairs, taking turns to take the lead or rocking/swaying together to the rhyme.

I think mice are rather nice.
Their tails are long, their faces are small
They haven't any chins at all.
Their ears are pink, their teeth are white.
They run about the house all night.
They nibble things they shouldn't touch
And no one seems to like them much.
But I think mice are nice.