

# Rhythm and Rhyme: Poetry and Phonological Awareness for Young Children Spring 2026

## Ideas for incorporating Poetry and Playing with Phonemes

- Read LOTS of poetry! Expand beyond mother goose rhymes. Read nursery rhymes, comic poetry, poetry written for children, and poetry written for adults. Look for poems with rhymes and meter for younger kids, patterns help lodge things into our brains.
- Find poems related to topics you are studying or add a poem to your daily routine (i.e. weather).
- Memorize more poems (or excerpts). This will make them an easier tool to use. Recite at practical times, such as diaper-changing, hand-washing, or waiting in line.
- Fill in the blank. Read rhyming poems aloud and leave off the final word, having your child fill in the missing rhyming word.
- Play thumbs up/thumbs down.  
Say two words and have kids determine if the initial sound is the same (or if they rhyme) If it is, then it's a thumbs up. If the initial sounds are not the same, then thumbs down. Examples of thumbs down word pairs would be map/nap; light/sound; highlight/violet; brown/down
- Play with alliteration. Can you create sentences where every word starts with the same sound?
- Listen to poetry set to music. Add your own tune and sing a poem!
- Let the kids flip through a poetry book and choose a poem for you to read. Jumping around the book helps them grasp that a poem is a self-contained work and not necessarily connected in any way with the other poems.
- Get Active: Create actions to go along with the rhyme (i.e. Jump over “candles” for Jack be Nimble). Add hand gestures and movements for specific words. Clap the beat of the rhyme (or use sticks).
- Illustrate favorite poems.
- Is there a repeating line? Let the kids participate and call out refrains.
- Make Inferences - poetry often describes things without telling exactly what it is. The title may give it away, hide the title, read the poem together and then help the young reader infer what the poem could be referring to.
- Find rhymes - have kids point out all the words that rhyme in a verse.
- Create rhymes - Place household objects in a bag and have them pull out an item and name it. Then have them figure out what would rhyme with that word. This word can be a real word or a nonsense word.
- Write poems together. Start with a rhyme they know and have them change the words (“Down by the Bay”). Make an acrostic poem of their names or a topic you are discussing.

### Nursery Rhymes Collections:

- Marc Brown's Playtime Rhymes by Marc Brown
- The Baby's Playtime Book by Kay Chora
- The Neighborhood Mother Goose by Nina Crews
- A Child's Treasury of Nursery Rhymes illustrated by Kady MacDonald Denton
- Hippety-Hop Hippety-Hay: Growing with rhymes from birth to age three by Opal Dunn
- Over the Hills and Far Away: a treasury of nursery rhymes collected by Elizabeth Hamill
- Mother Goose Treasury with illustrations by Priscilla Lamont
- The People of the Town: Nursery-Rhyme Friends for You and Me selected by Alan Marks
- Pocketful of Posies: A treasury of nursery rhymes by Salley Mavor
- My First Mother Goose edited by Iona Opie; illustrated by Rosemary Wells
- Beatrix Potter's Nursery Rhyme Book by Beatrix Potter
- A Treasury of Nursery Rhymes and Poems by Frann Preston-Gannon
- Honey For You, Honey for Me: a first book of nursery rhymes collected by Michael Rosen
- Richard Scarry's Best Mother Goose Ever by Richard Scarry
- Five Little Friends: A collection of finger rhymes by Sean Taylor
- Wee Rhymes: Baby's First Poetry Book by Jane Yolen and Jane Dyer

### Multilingual Rhymes:

- Mamá Goose: Un tesoro de rimas infantiles by Alma Flor & F. Isabel Campoy; illus. Maribel Suárez
- La Madre Goose: Nursery Rhymes para los niños by Susan Middleton Elya
- The Hummingbird Sings and Dances: Latin American Lullabies and Nursery Rhymes by Marina Ruiz Johnson (with CD)
- Mother Goose Goes to India by Kabir & Surishtha Sehgal; illus. by Wazza Pink
- Songs in the Shade of the Cashew and Coconut Lullabies and Nursery Rhymes from West Africa and the Caribbean by Nathalie Soussana
- Japanese Nursery Rhymes: Carp Streamers, Falling Rain and other traditional favorites by Danielle Wright (with CD)
- Korean Nursery Rhymes: Wild Geese, Land of Goblins and Other Favorite Songs and Rhymes by Danielle Wright (with CD)
- My Village: Rhymes from Around the World Collected by Danielle Wright
- Chinese and English Nursery Rhymes by Faye-Lynn Wu

### Classic Poems Illustrated:

- Jabberwocky by Lewis Carroll; illus. by Chris Myers
- Hope is the Thing With Feathers by Emily Dickinson: illus. by Tatyana Feeney or Tim Hopgood
- The Road Not Taken by Robert Frost; illustrated by Vivian Mineker
- Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening by Robert Frost; editions illustrated by various artists
- My People by Langston Hughes, photos by Charles R. Smith Jr
- That Is My Dream! by Langston Hughes; illustrated by Daniel Miyares
- The Owl and the Pussycat by Edward Lear, illustrated by Charlotte Voake
- The Scroobious Pip by Edward Lear, illustrated by Charles & Nicholas Santore
- The Village Blacksmith by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
- My Shadow by Robert Louis Stevenson; illustrated by Sara Sanchez

## Reimagined Rhymes:

- Big Fat Hen; Hickory Dickory Dock by Keith Baker
- There Was an Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe by Jane Cabrera
- Maybe Mother Goose by Esme Raji Codell
- Mother Goose to the Rescue! by Nate Evans
- The Pie That Molly Grew by Sue Heavenrich
- Bonnie & Ben Rhyme Again by Mem Fox and Judy Horacek
- Blue Ridge Babies 1, 2, 3 by Laure Sperry Gardner
- Three Little Kittens (and one little mouse) by Barbara McClintock
- Baby Goose by Kate McMullen
- To Market, To Market by Anne Miranda
- Girls and Boys Come Out to Play by Tracey Campbell Pearson
- Hey Diddle Diddle: Classic Nursery Rhymes Retold by Joe Rhatigan
- Itsy Bitsy Spider: Classic Nursery Rhymes Retold by Joe Rhatigan
- Over in the Meadow by Olive Wadsworth; editions illustrated by various artists
- So Many Bunnies: a bedtime abc and counting book by Rick Walton and Paige Miglio

## Poetry Collections:

- From Dawn to Dreams: Poems for Busy Babies by Peggy Archer
- Goodnight Songs Treasury: A collection of Bedtime Poems by Margaret Wise Brown
- What's Your Favorite Color? By Eric Carle and Friends
- Goodnight, Starry Night Bedtime poems inspired by works of art by Joseph Coelho
- Poems Aloud; Smile Out Loud by Joseph Coelho
- When A Book Begins by Alegra Dashielle
- The Father Goose Treasury of Poetry by Charles Ghigna; Illus. by Sara Brezzi
- Thinker: My Puppy Poet and Me by Eloise Greenfield; illustrated by Ehsan Abdollahi
- You Are the Loveliest by Hans & Monique Hagen, illus. by Marit Tornqvist
- Forget-Me-Nots: Poems to Learn by Heart selected by Mary Ann Hoberman
- Firefly July: A year of very short poems by Paul Janeczko
- The Proper Way to Meet a Hedgehog and Other How-To Poems selected by Paul Janeczko
- A Family of Poems: My favorite poems for children by Caroline Kennedy
- Poems to Learn by Heart by Caroline Kennedy
- Keep a Pocket in Your Poem written and selected by J. Patrick Lewis
- The Bill Martin Jr. Big Book of Poetry edited by Bill Martin Jr. with Michael Sampson
- Starry Blankets: Poems for bedtime by Eve Merriam
- Poems From When We Were Very Young by A. A. Milne; illus. by Rosemary Wells
- One Minute till Bedtime: 60-second poems to send you to sleep selected by Kenn Nesbitt
- Zilot & Other Important Rhymes by Bob Odenkirk
- Little Poems for Tiny Ears by Lin Oliver, illustrated by Tomie dePaola
- If You Go Down to the Woods Today by Rachel Piercey
- The 20th Century Children's Poetry Treasury edited by Jack Prelutsky
- Behold the Bold Umbrellaphant; If Not for the Cat by Jack Prelutsky
- A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood: the Poetry of Mister Rogers by Fred Rogers
- A Great Big Cuddle: Poems for the Very Young by Michael Rosen; illus. by Chris Riddell
- Ready for Spaghetti: Funny poems for funny kids by Michael Rosen; illus. by Polly Dunbar
- Where the Sidewalk Ends; A Light in the Attic; Falling Up by Shel Silverstein
- A Child's Garden of Verses by Robert Louis Stevenson

## Animals:

- Song of the Wild: a first book of Animals by Nicola Davies
- At The Poles by David Elliott; illus. by Ellen Rooney/ Best in Show by David Elliott / In The Past by David Elliott; illus. by Matthew Trueman / In the Woods by David Elliott; illus. by Rob Dunlavy
- Alaska is for the Birds by Susan Ewing, illus. by Evon Zerbetz
- Zoobilations! By Douglas Florian
- Among a Thousand Fireflies; Hello, I'm Here!; Wait ...and See by Helen Frost and Rick Lieder
- Snow Birds by Kirsten Hall
- The Dirt Book: Poems About Animals that Live Beneath our Feet by David L. Harrison
- How Elegant the Elephant: Poems about animals and insects by Mary Ann Hoberman
- What Cats Think by Mies van Hout
- Woodland Dreams by Karen Jameson, illus. by Marc Boutavant
- Photo Ark ABC An Animal Alphabet in poetry and pictures poems by Debbie Levy, photos by Joel Sartore
- National Geographic Book of Animal Poetry edited by J. Patrick Lewis
- Pony Poems for Little Pony Lovers by Cari Meister; illus. by Sara Rhys
- Stomp and Chomp: My first book of Dinosaurs by Simon Mole; illus. by Matt Hunt
- Wriggle and Buzz: My first book of Bugs by Simon Mole; illus. By Adam Ming
- Otters, Snails and Tadpole Tails: Poems from the Wetlands by Eric Ode
- Dinosaurs in Love by Fenn Rosenthal
- The Smell of Wet Dog and other Dog Poems and Drawings by Barney Saltzberg
- Dear Treefrog by Joyce Sidman
- The Nest That Wren Built by Randi Sonenshine; illustrated by Anne Hunter
- Fourteen Monkeys: A Rainforest Rhyme by Melissa Stewart; illus. By Steve Jenkins
- If This Bird Had Pockets by Amy Ludwig VanDerwater; illus. By Emma Virján
- Fast Cheetah Slow Tortoise: Poems of Animal Opposites by Bette Western & Mies van Hout

## Science & Nature:

- Where in the Wild by Poppy Bishop; illus. by Jonny Lambert
- The Big Beyond: The Story of Space Travel by James Carter
- Once Upon A Star: A Poetic Journey Through Space by James Carter and Mar Hernández
- The Shortest Day by Susan Cooper
- A First Book of the Sea; Outside Your Window: a first book of Nature by Nicola Davies
- At the Pond by David Elliot
- Windsongs: Poems about weather by Douglas Florian
- When Green Becomes Tomatoes by Julie Fogliano
- Awesome Earth by John Branfield Graham; illus. by Tania García
- Trees by Verlie Hutchens; pictures by Jing Jing Tsong
- National Geographic Book of Nature Poetry edited by J. Patrick Lewis
- Sequoia by Tony Johnston
- Tree Whispers: A forest of poems by Mandy Ross
- Lion of the Sky: Haiku for all Seasons by Laura Purdie Salas (haiku meets riddle)
- Water Can Be... by Laura Purdie Salas
- Dear Acorn (Love, Oak) Letter Poems to friends by Joyce Sidman; illus. by Melissa Sweet
- Swirl by Swirl: Spirals in Nature by Joyce Sidman
- You Are Home: An ode to the National Parks by Evan Turk
- Out of This World: Star-Studded Haiku by Sally M. Walker
- Sing a Song of Seasons: A Nature Poem for Each Day of the Year selected by Fiona Waters

## About Us and our World:

- Family Poems for Every Day of the Week/ Poemas Familiares para cada dia de la semana by Francisco Alarcon
- Arroz con leche/Rice Pudding: A cooking poem by Jorge Argueta
- Just Like Me by Vanessa Brantley-Newton
- Clackety Track: Poems About Trains by Skila Brown
- Breathe and Be: A book of Mindfulness Poems by Kate Coombs
- Change Sings: a Children's Anthem by Amanda Gorman
- Catch the Sky Playful Poems on the Air We Share by Robert Heidbreder
- Noisy Poems for a Busy Day by Robert Heidbreder
- Construction People selected by Lee Bennett Hopkins
- I Am Someone Else: Poems about Pretending collected by Lee Bennett Hopkins
- Home Run, Touchdown, Basket, Goal! Sports Poems for Little Athletes by Leo Landry
- Delicious! Poems Celebrating Street Food Around the World by Julie Larios; illus. by Julie Paschkis
- Fresh Delicious: Poems from the Farmer's Market by Irene Latham
- If I Could Choose the Best Day: Poems of possibility selected by Irene Latham & Charles Waters
- Steppin' Out: Jaunty Rhymes for Playful Times by Lin Oliver, illustrated by Tomie dePaola
- Vivid: Poems & Notes about Color by Julie Paschkis
- All Welcome Here by James Preller; illus. by Mary GrandPre. – haikus about the first day of school
- Take Off Your Brave: The world through the eyes of a preschool poet by Nadim Shamma
- A Stick is an Excellent Thing by Marilyn Singer; illus. by LeUyen Pham
- I'm the Big One Now! Poems about Growing Up by Marilyn Singer; illus. by Jana Christy
- My Daddy Rules the World by Hope Anita Smith
- The Blacker the Berry by Joyce Carol Thomas; illustrated by Floyd Cooper
- With My Hands: Poems about making things by Amy Ludwig VanDerwater
- Digger Dozer Dumper by Hope Vestergaard
- Body Music: Poems about the noises your body makes by Jane Yolen & Ryan G. Van Cleave

## Online Poetry Resources:

Academy of American Poets. Poems for Kids. <https://poets.org/poems-kids>  
More than 25 themed and curated collections of children's verse.

The Children's Poetry Archive. <https://childrens.poetryarchive.org/>  
Large database of recorded reading of poems, either by the poem's author or by a narrator.

Family Friend Poems – Poetry for Kids. <https://www.familyfriendpoems.com/poems/children/>  
Poems organized by theme, age group, educational topic, and more.

The Poetry Foundation – Children's section. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/learn/children>  
Articles and a searchable database of 450+ poems for kid audiences. Animated poetry themed videos for children.

Jbrary. <https://jbrary.com/youtube-playlists/> - Videos of rhymes, finger plays, and songs.

## Other Resources:

Campana, Kathleen, Elizabeth J. Mills, & Saroj Nadkarni Ghoting. 2016. Supercharged Storytimes: An Early Literacy Planning and Assessment Guide. Chicago, IL: ALA editions.

Cobb, Jane. 2007. What'll I Do With the Baby-o? Nursery Rhymes, Songs, and Stories for Babies. Vancouver, BC: Black Sheep Press.

Cows in the Kitchen. Accessed 2/23/2026. <https://youtu.be/vg97Gff2Hwg?si=5bZ3if66tDo8ivJQ>

Diamant-Cohen, Betsy. 2019. Mother Goose on the Loose: Updated. Chicago, IL: ALA editions

Fälth, Linda, et al. "Phonological Awareness Training with Articulation Promotes Early Reading Development." Education, vol. 137, no. 3, Spring 2017, pp. 261–76. <https://access-proxy.sno-isle.org/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=asn&AN=121449191&scope=sit>

Institute For Learning & Brain Sciences. (2017). Module 16: Foundations of Literacy [online module]. University of Washington. <https://doi.org/10.6069/tpkz-4b04>. Accessed 2/23/2026.

Lyster, Solveig-Alma Halaas, et al. "Preschool Phonological, Morphological and Semantic Skills Explain It All: Following Reading Development through a 9-year Period." Journal of Research in Reading, vol. 44, no. 1, Feb. 2021, pp. 175–88

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NCTE Award for Excellence in Poetry for Children. Accessed 2/23/2026.

<https://ncte.org/awards/excellence-in-poetry-for-children-living-american-poet/>

Pullen, Paige C., and Laura M. Justice. "Enhancing Phonological Awareness, Print Awareness, and Oral Language Skills in Preschool Children." Intervention in School & Clinic, vol. 39, no. 2, Nov. 2003, pp. 87–98. <https://access-proxy.sno-isle.org/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=asn&AN=11022295&scope=site>

Reading Rockets. Phonological and Phonemic Awareness: Activities for Your Pre-K Child. Accessed 2/23/2026. <https://www.readingrockets.org/reading-101-guide-parents/prek/phonological-and-phonemic-awareness-activities-your-pre-k-child>.

Vardell, Sylvia. Poetry for Children. <http://poetryforchildren.blogspot.com/>. Accessed 2/23/2026. – keeps track of newly published poetry for children.

Walsh, Evelyn. "Shakespeare Goes to Kindergarten." Encounter, vol. 17, no. 1, Spring 2004, pp. 49–50.

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