

RHYMING and FINGERPLAYS

Rhyming and beat support speech pattern development but also vital movement strategies such as motor timing and motor planning. Fingerplays have been a vehicle for early learning in all cultures. As our fingers take up a large number of brain connections, at all ages they help with focus, concentration and settledness.

BICKLE BOCKLE BLUEBOTTLE

*Bickle bockle blue bottle, fishes in the sea
If you want a partner please choose me
Blue bottle, blue bottle 123 (x2)*

I begin teaching this rhyme as a fingerplay, and then move to body percussion to keep the beat. When the children know the rhyme and have experimented with dynamics (soft/ loud, fast/ slow) we introduce a pass the parcel, then a parachute and lastly, a chasing game around the circle.

Activity 1

As a fingerplay to learn the rhyme.

Bickle bockle blue bottle, fishes in the sea fishes in the sea
If you want a partner please choose me

Touch fingertips together, pulsing fingers to the beat Press palms together and move like a fish swimming Place 2 fingers in the air, bounce to beat.

Blue bottle, blue bottle 123 (x2)

Fingertips together as above, then put 123 on 3 fingers (twice)

Activity 2

Pass a parcel around the circle as the children say the rhyme to keep the beat. I wrap a fish puppet in several layers of pretty paper. When the rhyme stops the child with the parcel unwraps a layer and guesses what it might be. Once the fish is discovered introduce a parachute as the ocean with children making big and little waves to keep the beat on the rhyme. Place the fish in the middle of the parachute and toss the fish or other suitable item on 1, 2...3!

Activity 3

One child skips around the outside of the circle as the others say the rhyme, keeping the beat with body percussion. On "If you want a partner" they tap someone on the shoulder who must chase them around the circle.

HEALTHY FOOD RHYME

*Food can help us grow
Food can help us think
Fit and strong from head to toe
It's what we eat and drink
Healthy food Yeah! (x 2)*

Keep the beat with a fingerplay, touch activity or body percussion.

Then create whole body actions to each line of the rhyme.

Use a large stretchy ribbon to keep the beat in a circle as we say the rhyme.

Then pass the fruit (percussion instruments in shape of fruit are good) around the circle to the beat.

GREETING SONG

Here's an easy song to greet the children in the morning.

Hello Hands How Are You

Tune ('Skip to My Lou' or 'Flies in the buttermilk shoo shoo shoo'.)

Hello hands how are you (3 times) How are you today!

Keep the beat with a clapping hands, then moving hands up and down, rolling them over and back etc.

1 After *today* add a clap up high or a hey with the voice.

Then change to moving different parts of the body e.g. *hello head, shoulders, feet body etc.*

2 Let the children suggest a body part to move and how to move it, slowly or quickly? etc.

3 Vary the type of movement as you move different parts of the body.

Add locomotor movement e.g. on *hello feet* the children could walk and later make a train stamping on *how are you today*.

4 Find words in other languages for body parts or for hello.

5 Add instruments e.g. play on the clap after today

ALITERATION AND RHYMING

Slithery snakes, slithery snakes, they'll eat you up in just 3 shakes,

1, 2, 3 (yum) Big snakes, little snakes, big shakes, little shakes,

Snakes up high, snakes down low,

Round and round and round we go.

For babies and toddlers try the rhyme as touch and tickle activity slithering on arms, legs or tummy, playing with the fun of gobbling up the child.

1 Bounce a baby or young child to the beat as you say the rhyme, moving up and down and around.

2 Preschoolers can try a massage on their own arms, legs or chest, tapping on the 1,2,3, running fingers up and down and rolling hands on round and round.

They could also try it on a friends back.

3 Move to the rhyme, creating whole body movements on *up high, down low*, twirling on *round and round*.

4 For older preschool children use ribbons or scarves as snakes.

RHYMES for MUSICAL LEARNING

Here are two rhymes to support maximum play, fun and varied movement for babies and young children. For more, see our resource: *Music for Little People*.

Bouncy Bouncy Up & Down bouncy bouncy up & down bouncing all the way to town *bouncing up... & bouncing down bouncy baby, bounce around*

Suggestions

Catch a moment to move, bounce and play as you use this rhyme to transition from one place to another or bounce a baby on your lap. Vary the tempo, and change the expression in your voice to make it fun and playful (faster, slower, softer, louder). Add pauses for maximum fun for the child.

Teach the the concept of up and down by changing the pitch of your voice as you move up and down with the child. This gives valuable stimulation to a child's balance (vestibular system) as well as a vital lesson in pitch.

Keep eye contact while singing or speaking to allow the child to see how your mouth moves to give essential cues for language formation and engage the baby with a smile and expressive voice.

Blinkety Blonk, Blinkety Blonk

blinkety blonk, blinkety blonk
horses gallop & horses romp
blinkety blonk, blinkety blonk
gallop & gallop & gallop....&.....PLONK!

Suggestions

Sit beside a baby lying on the floor, and bounce a bright soft toy to the rhyme to support eye tracking.

For a young baby, bounce them in your arms as if riding a horse as you say the rhyme. Or sit on a chair or the floor and bounce a baby on your lap to the beat of the rhyme. Surprise them on *plonk* by lowering them unexpectedly.

For older toddlers and young mobile children, have them gallop across the room with you to the words of the rhyme. Play with extending the number of gallops before the *plonk*. Then the children can have fun with falling down. This can be a way to engage the child's listening and responding. Change the tempo from fast to slow and make the voice softer or louder.

RIBBON CIRCLE

Use a stretchy lycra or elastic ribbon (or a parachute) sit in a circle then move around the circle, singing the following words to the tune London Bridge.

Pass the ribbon round and round x 3 ...and then we stop

Move the ribbon in and out x 3 ... then we stop

Shake the ribbon up and down x 3 ...then stand up

Walk the ribbon round and round x 3 ...lets go the other way etc

Extension activity

Using the music **Rabbit Polka** (from Dances Around the World)

On part A of this tune, use the stretchy ribbon to practice the rhythm (slow, slow, quick, quick, slow).

Try tapping the rhythm while holding the ribbon, on knees, shoulders, head etc

On part B of the tune, holding the ribbon, move around or in and out of the circle.

Once the children are familiar with the rhythm and the circling movements put the ribbon away. Try the following dance.

On Part A with hands, create rabbit ears, tail, whiskers etc to the rhythm.

On Part B dance with partners or in small circles

MAKING MUSIC A MULTISENSORY EXPERIENCE

***Pizza pizza pumpernickel,**
this little girl deserves a tickle,
one for her nose & one for her toes
& one for her tummy where the pizza goes.*

What to do

For babies and toddlers, give them a massage to this rhyme by gently squeezing on hand, legs or arms as if kneading the pizza dough. Change the touch to tapping, sprinkling, stroking on the skin, keeping the beat.

Make sure the baby is enjoying the touch experience. Every child may react differently. Change the touch experience, being guided by their reaction.

For Preschoolers show them how to knead the dough and put that touch on their legs, arms etc. Ask what else we need on a pizza and create different touch movements from their suggestions eg: spreading on the sauce, tickling on the cheese, patting on the pineapple as you repeat the rhyme.

Finger Painting Massage

*Put a spot over here
and a spot over there
and a lot of lovely spots on their back everywhere it's a spotty kind of day.*

From The Useful Book

What to do

For babies and toddlers, sing this song putting the spots on their body or gently on head or hands. Change to stripes, stripes, swirls, zigzags.

For Preschoolers model varied touch ideas that they can put on themselves. Try spots, stripes, swirls, zigzags, splotches. Once they have experienced it on themselves, try this as a touch activity with a partner putting the massage on a partners' back.

For many more ideas our **Music for Little People** CD and teachers book has lots to offer.

TAKING TURNS

Here's a simple music activity to support self regulation.

Tune: *Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush*

Begin with whole body movements

Jennifer's jumping (up and down) X 3

Jennifer's jumping up and down

and then she'll STOP!

Try twirling round and round, stomping loudly now, or creeping lightly now etc.

Once the children are comfortable with taking turns, moving and stopping on these whole body movements, ask them to suggest actions that everyone copies. Then change to taking turns on an instrument.

A small drum works well.

Hannah's playing (on the drum) X 3 Hannah's playing on the drum

and then she'll STOP! (...now pass it on)

Use each child's name as they take a turn on the drum.

The teacher changes the words to change the tempo or volume that each child performs e.g.

Benjamin's playing slowly (or quickly, loudly/softly) ...now. Then he'll STOP!

BUILDING POSITIVE NEUROPLASTICITY

We have long appreciated the importance of early childhood as a time of rapid and significant brain growth for babies and young children. If negative feelings, thoughts, and experiences are changing adult brains, how much more important is it, that we appreciate and direct children's attention to the positive, so that fun, joy, inclusion, cooperation and goodness are at the forefront of their daily experience and attention. Then, we give children the best chance to build strength, resilience, optimism, and trust, as part of their growing brain structure.

Some activities that I see supporting positive feelings and experiences for children are: music, movement, dance, singing, art, drama play and relaxation activities. In these experiences we can build positive touch experiences, inclusion, laughter, positive accomplishments and satisfying group achievements. As educators it is then, also important to be aware of what potential we have to direct children's thinking to positive experiences and to ask them to focus there, so these experiences becomes part of positive neural change, building wellbeing for their future.

RELAX AND REMEMBER

Bringing the positive to the forefront.

For Toddlers

As young children are settling for sleep or rest time, or in a quiet moment when you have a child's attention, perhaps while gently massaging or stroking a child's hand, leg or back, talk quietly about something fun, positive you have noticed them experiencing recently. For example "haven't you had a good morning. I saw you played with the trucks, aren't you a good driver. Which is your favourite truck?" Or "I saw you dancing to the music, you are a good dancer! Do you remember who danced with you?"

For Preschoolers

As the body rests and remembers, the brain integrates new learning.

This is a great learning tool as research shows we learn nearly as much by visualising as we do by doing an activity.

Ask the children to lie down to relax and revisit some of the positive, fun activities they experienced that day. Tell them the picture will be in their head as they lie very still and do nothing at all, just be very floppy and heavy like a do-nothing doll.

Do they remember what they enjoyed, how it felt? Mention some things that occurred that may illicit positive feelings for them. Give them some suggestions of things that may have been fun, but allow some time for them to freely remember their own positive experiences. How much better to combine "relax and remember" learning with positive feelings to build positive neuroplasticity!

For more relaxation ideas see our *Yogaplay and Relaxation* Resource: www.adventuresinmusic.com.au

PURPLE STEW

Try this tongue twister rhyme, with great language learning possibilities, movement and playing possibilities.

We're Making Purple Stew

We're making purple stew, we're making purple stew
With purple potatoes and purple tomatoes and YOU....
Fancy meeting YOU.... in a purple stew

For Toddlers

- Tap, bounce or dance a toddler to the beat of this rhyme. On *you* bounce the child up or dip them down. Pitch the *you* up and down with your voice, along with the corresponding movement for an early lesson in pitch.
- Try tapping the beat as you say the rhyme, with wooden spoons, cutlery etc on old pans or upturned bowls for drums at kitchen play time.

For Preschoolers

- Clap to the rhyme as you teach the words. Point to another person on *you* each time.
- Walk around the room or in a circle to the beat, clap own hands or a partners on *you*.
- Create a passing game. Pass a potato or a parcel or a large wooden spoon etc around a circle of children sitting. On *you* the child with the potato can move to the middle or outside, til all children are chosen.

- Extend this by placing a selection of instruments in the centre in container, so the children select and instrument each, to play on the rhyme.
- Try cooking a purple stew (there really are purple potatoes, tomatoes, carrots and of course, beetroot). Chop vegies, add red lentils, stock (or stock cube) in water to cook slowly in a saucepan. With a sprinkle of grated cheese as served, this makes an easy kids cooking session.

RINGA RINGA ROSY

Traditional movement rhymes and songs are easy to sing for teachers, parents and children, and offer a lot for musical learning opportunities.

**1 *Ringa ringa rosy a pocket full of posies,
A tissue, a tissue, we all fall down.***

**2 *Cows are in the meadow, eating buttercups,
A tissue, a tissue we all jump up!***

**3 *The robins in the steeple are singing to the people
A tissue, a tissue, we all fall down.***

**4 *Fishes in the water, fishes in the sea,
We all jump up with a 123!***

For babies - bounce them to the rhyme as you sing and dip them down or up at the end of each verse.

For toddlers (already walking) - take them by the hands and dance them around, modelling falling down or jumping up with them, to encourage balance and gross motor skills.

For preschoolers - use this rhyme to practice circle making, to encourage co-operative skills and enjoyable dancing fun.