

Supporting Language & Literacy at 15 Months

The Importance of Rhythm, Rhyme, and Song

At 15 months, your child is exploring their world more than ever, including the world of language. They're trying out lots of new words and need your help to get them right.

Nursery rhymes are so much more than fun little poems. They help your child notice and play with the sounds and rhythm of words, learn to speak with animated voices, and how to predict what word comes next.

- Help your child learn words while they move by combining rhyming with rhythmic clapping and other movements. Rhyming songs and poems teach your child about the patterns of sounds and help your child follow directions as you sing the words. This kind of play involves your child's whole body, which may make it easier for them to connect the motion with the words you say.
- When you're reading a book with rhymes, pause and give your child a chance to chime in. The rhyming structure itself provides a great cue for guessing what word is next, which allows your child to play with sound and also to participate in the reading process.
- Encourage wordplay using poems, rhymes, or songs. Make up silly rhymes that include your child's name, such as, "Did Matt sit on the cat?" Or try working together to tell a little story about a cat chasing a rat. You could even make your own rhyming book by writing down the sentence and draw pictures to go along with it.

When you help your child explore the sounds and rhythm of their language with nursery rhymes, rhyming games, songs, and poems, you're helping them learn skills important for learning to read, write, and create mental pictures from words.

Language skills to look for:

- looks at familiar object when you name it
- follows directions given with both a gesture and words
- points to ask for something or to get help
- using many different consonant sounds at beginning of words
- tries to say one or two words besides 'mama' or 'dada'
- copies other children while playing

Explore rhymes and rhyming with books and stories. Even if they don't include rhyming words, you can have fun finding rhyming words to the pictures and words in the book. Here's a short list of some of our favorite titles to explore with your 15-month-old:

- *Every Little Thing* by Cedella Marley
- *The Sneaky, Snacky Squirrel* by Educational Insights & Lucia Gaggiotti
- *Goodnight, Goodnight Construction Site* by Sherri Duskey
- *Where's Spot? (Lift-a-Flap)* by Eric Hill
- *Little Green Frog: Pond (Lift-a-Flap)* by Ginger Swift
- *Baby Goes to Market* by Atinuke