

Maths in songs and rhymes

Sharing songs and rhymes with babies and young children provides lots of opportunities to have fun exploring maths ideas such as numbers, counting, shapes, patterns, size, sorting and matching.



Songs and rhymes are full of numbers and other maths ideas!

Sharing songs and rhymes

When you share songs and rhymes with your baby or child it helps them understand maths ideas in a fun and engaging way. They are learning about:

- the order of things (sequencing)
- patterns, rhythm and rhyme
- the names of numbers
- counting
- mathematical language – *under, over, forwards, up* etc.
- space, size and shapes



Moving their bodies as part of action rhymes, as well as having props to touch, hold and move – particularly when they are counting – will really help your child get to grips with maths ideas.

Songs and rhymes help babies and children learn about numbers... and so much more!

What comes next?

You might notice your baby or child smiling, kicking or waving with excitement when they hear a favourite song or rhyme and know

they are about to be lifted high in the air or tickled!
This shows that they are developing a sense of order,
as they become familiar with what comes next.



Understanding that some things have a particular order
or sequence, and being able to predict what will come next, will
help your child with counting, as well as with more complex maths
and science ideas later on.

Here are some examples of songs that help babies and children to
develop a sense of order:

- Round and round the garden – *tickle you under there!*
- Heads, shoulders, knees and toes

Patterns in rhythm and rhymes

All songs and rhymes have a pattern to them if you
listen carefully – perhaps in the rhythm of the music,
the rhyming of the words or the repetition of words and phrases.



When babies and young children listen, move and respond to
rhythms and rhymes in music and songs they are learning
about patterns. Clapping or making rhythmic
movements to songs and rhymes, as well as playing
instruments, help them to develop a sense of a beat
and rhythm – and an understanding of patterns in music.

Here are some examples of songs that include patterns:

- Baby Band – *repetitive words and an opportunity to move or shake to the beat*
- Row, row – *rocking gently to the rhythm*



Numbers, counting... and more!

Lots of songs and rhymes have numbers! To begin with, children

become familiar with the names of numbers and perhaps learn to recite them forwards – and backwards! – as part of the song.



In time, through hearing and using numbers in this way, they come to realise that numbers have an order to them and can be used for counting. Some songs even introduce children to simple addition, subtraction and division!

Here are some examples:

- 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Once I caught a fish alive – *getting to know number names and counting in order going forwards*
- Blast off – *getting to know number names and counting in order going backwards*
- Five in the bed – *early subtraction (taking one away each time)*



- One elephant – *simple addition*
- Baa, baa black sheep – *simple division (sharing)*

Songs and rhymes are a great way to practise counting, recognise patterns and develop a sense of order (what comes next)!

The language of maths

There are lots of maths words included in songs and rhymes which are used to describe the position, order, movement or direction of things, e.g. *under, next to, middle, top, up* and *down* etc.

Have you noticed your child using actions and movements when they join in with songs and rhymes? These movements help them to understand the meaning of the maths language they are using.

Here are some examples of songs that include maths language:



- We're going on bear hunt – *We can't go over it, we can't go under it, we'll have to go through it*
- Ready and... – *up and down, side to side, round and round, backwards and forwards*

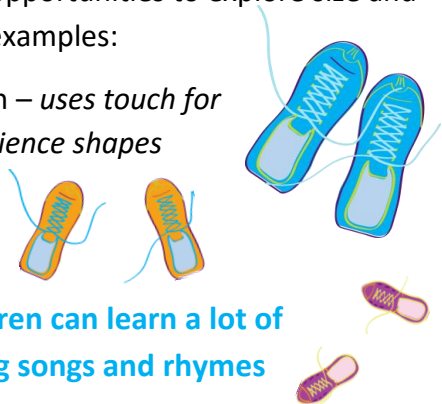
Joining in with songs and rhymes – especially those with movements and actions – help children learn important maths language like up, down, over or under.

Space, size and shape

Action rhymes with whole body, arm and leg movements offer children opportunities to explore and learn about the space round them. This helps them to develop an awareness of their bodies, and the distance between themselves and other objects around them.

Songs and rhymes also offer other opportunities to explore size and talk about shapes. Here are some examples:

- Round and round the garden – *uses touch for babies and children to experience shapes*
- Shoes – *use your hands to show different sizes*



Babies and young children can learn a lot of maths through sharing songs and rhymes