



*Learning to speak, read, write and communicate well begins at birth. Here's what you can do to build your children's language and literacy skills in fun everyday activities.*

# Sing Songs and Say Rhymes

Tip Sheet #3

## Why?

Singing is fun and children learn a lot from songs and rhymes. Many songs and rhymes repeat the same words over and over, and this helps your child learn new words. Your child will also hear the sounds that make up words, words that start with the same sounds, and words that rhyme. Research shows that knowing songs and rhymes at age three is related to how well a child reads at six!

Sing with your child in your first language. Strong first language skills make it easier for children to learn another language.

## Starting at Birth:

**Sing.** Your baby loves to hear your voice.

**Sing anything.** Sing songs you know, or make up songs about your baby. *"Happy bath time to you, happy bath time to you, happy bath time dear baby, happy bath time to you."*

**Share rhymes.** Say nursery rhymes to your baby throughout the day – during face washing, diaper changing, dressing and undressing, in the car or on the bus.

**Have fun.** Use lots of expression and make sure your baby can see your face. Try bouncing or moving as you sing so your baby can feel the rhythm.

**Learn more.** Visit a Best Start Hub, library or community program to learn new songs and rhymes.

## Additional Tips for Toddlers and Preschoolers:

**Add actions.** Include actions as you sing a song or say a rhyme.

**Take turns.** When your child knows a nursery rhyme or song, let her finish by filling in the words that you leave out. *"Humpty Dumpty sat on a \_\_\_\_\_. Humpty Dumpty had a great \_\_\_\_\_."*

**Make noise.** Clap or use noisemakers like a drum or shaker.

**Say silly sounds.** Make up silly names for the people your child knows using the same beginning sound. *"Dancing dinosaur daddy, messy marshmallow Mary."*

## Additional Tips for Kindergarten Children:

**Share rhymes.** Make up your own silly rhymes together. Play rhyming games. *"Willobee wallabee woo, an elephant sat on you. Willobee wallabee wee, an elephant sat on me. Willobee wallabee wam, an elephant sat on Sam!"*

**Talk about "rhyming"** Tell your child that rhyming words have a different beginning, but they sound the same at the end. Say that the words *"wam"* and *"Sam"* rhyme. "I say *wam*, you say \_\_\_\_ (your child may say *Sam*, *ham*, *lamb*, *Pam*)".

For more suggestions of rhymes and songs, please visit the Emergent Literacy link at [www.sudburybeststart.ca](http://www.sudburybeststart.ca)

*Building Language and Literacy at Home*

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