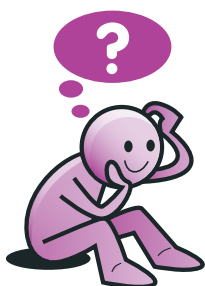


Section 3.9

Using/copying actions in rhymes and songs

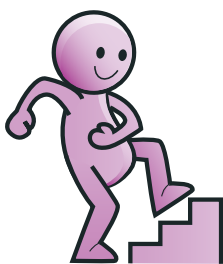


Why is this important?

Nursery rhymes and songs are repetitive and easily become familiar, thereby helping children to remember a series of actions associated with specific words, and to become increasingly confident in being able to predict what is going to happen next.

What to do

- In a small group or individually, sing favourite nursery rhymes together, particularly those with actions, e.g.
 - ★ ‘I’m a Little Teapot’
 - ★ ‘Twinkle Twinkle Little Star’
- Slow down your singing: give the child a chance to join in with the actions. Don’t worry about singing the same song several times in a row – children love the repetition and it helps them become familiar with the actions.
- Guide the child’s hands/arms to encourage him/her to join in.
- Older children/siblings love nursery rhymes and can encourage younger children to join in.



Step up

- Pause during action songs or at the end of a line to encourage the child to fill in the missing word (e.g. ‘Twinkle Twinkle Little ...’). If this doesn’t happen, just carry on and fill the space yourself and try again with a different song.
- Introduce longer and more complicated songs where vocalisations are needed rather than actions (e.g. ‘Old MacDonald Had a Farm’).
- During routines of significance to the child, make up your own words and actions to familiar tunes.
- Children love made-up songs about themselves and children they know!

Step down

- Start with very simple rhymes (e.g. ‘Twinkle Twinkle Little Star’ which has fewer/easier actions).
- Listen to nursery rhyme CDs together.
- Humming along to the tune is the start of managing the words, so encourage this!
- Remember that children need lots of repetition before they start to produce the actions (or words) on their own, so sing whenever you can throughout the day.

