

Let's fall in love with nursery rhymes ... again!

*Teddy bear, Teddy bear, turn around,
Teddy bear, Teddy bear, touch the ground...*

At first, we might think that every child and every adult who grew up speaking English as their first language will know this adorable nursery rhyme. The tune is simple and repetitive and the small range is perfect for little ones to pick up and sing easily. This song is also excellent for incorporating simple actions to get little bodies moving and stretching. You can even use this nursery rhyme as a tool for learning the musical intervals So - Mi - La and Do!

But would children today know the "Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear" nursery rhyme? What nursery rhymes would they know? Are nursery rhymes still playing an important role in early childhood education?

Looking back at my own childhood in Russia, I grew up with lots of music and singing around me but had no access to English traditional tunes or nursery rhymes. However, my love for nursery rhymes, including "Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear", started 23 years ago when I had my second child. And my love affair with nursery rhymes has only continued to grow stronger!

Importance of nursery rhymes for children's development

Nursery rhymes feature prominently in cultures all over the world and their role in language and literacy for children should not be underestimated.

In fact, research indicates that exposure to and familiarity with nursery rhymes has a notably positive impact on early literacy for children during early childhood and beyond. Nursery rhyme time can enhance children's alphabet knowledge, vocabulary, ability to recognise words, awareness of different letter sounds and story-telling skills. These are vital learning experiences that can be achieved through simply making time to recite nursery rhymes with children!



If you would like to receive 5 of our most popular rhymes and transitional songs, visit MusicEarlyChildhoodPresenter.com

Let's inspire more educators to use nursery rhymes with children and share your favourites on Bonkers Beat [Facebook page](#).

With reading to children a key undertaking to improve their overall education, nursery rhymes in the form of books present a great opportunity to promote reading with the additional engaging element of rhyme. Rhythm and beat competency have been found to be instrumental when it comes to children's listening skills, reading ability and even their performance in maths!

Incredible benefits of nursery rhymes in early childhood education

The beauty of nursery rhymes, I believe, is in their simplicity. We all know a nursery rhyme and can bring it into the room at any moment! Let's consider the benefits that incorporating nursery rhymes into your day can offer:

Discovery of language

Nursery rhymes are often the first exploration of language children have. They are short and engaging tales that have simple words and concepts for children to be introduced into the world of literacy and language. From here they begin almost immediately to improve their word recognition, pronunciation and through memorisation, children begin to recognise words visually when reading books of nursery rhymes too.

Building memory

It's interesting to note that almost all adults can recall a nursery rhyme or two from their earliest years no matter how old they get. The rhymes, repetition and rhythm are the reason for this and part of what makes nursery rhymes so powerful. Being able to recall that 'cat' and 'mat' or 'around' and 'ground' rhyme, is an incredible tool for children to call on as they continue to enhance their literacy and language skills.

Speech development

Pronunciation can be made easier for children through nursery rhymes thanks to the rhyming of lines. Once a child can recognise and say the parts of a word that sound the same, they have the ability to apply that same sound to other words. This repetition of sounds really helps them to grasp these sounds quickly too.

Physical development

Many nursery rhymes have actions that can go with them. This enhances the learning experience further by adding motor skills development. Take it a step further by even learning to identify body parts, as in 'Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes'.

Love of language and learning

If children can associate pleasure and joy from an activity, it is more likely they will continue to do more of it and enjoy it for years to come. By helping children to develop a love of nursery rhymes, reading, books and language you are ensuring they have a solid foundation from which to develop a love of learning for life.

Power of bonding and connecting

In the world of technology, we need to remember that human connection and relationship plays an even bigger role than ever before. Children develop social and emotional skills and an understanding of the world around them through personal relationships, communication and use of gross and fine motor skills.

Nursery rhymes provide an incredible opportunity for children to bond with adults and enhance all areas of their development in a holistic way.

Bring nursery rhymes into your early childhood setting

Learning to read and developing reading comprehension are essential skills for life. If you can encourage a love of words and language in children, you are giving them one of the most valuable tools possible.

With so much to be gained, it's impossible to ignore the magic of nursery rhymes and their potential in the early childhood education spaces. As I mentioned, when we think of our very own childhood, no doubt most of us remember a nursery rhyme fondly. Let's pass this on to the children in our services and, I'm sure, that one day, they'll be singing "Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear" to their own children too!



Galina Zenin

Galina Zenin (B.Mus. Ed., Dip. Teach.) is a presenter, early childhood educator and qualified music and voice training teacher, author, composer and storyteller. She writes her own music and brings to her programs a wealth of European and Australian experience, together with a high level of professionalism.

Her Bonkers Beat® programs are breakthrough, multi-award-winning music and wellbeing programs for early years that enrich the lives of young children and boost settings' occupancy at the same time. They have been introduced in many settings across Australia, empowering educators and enhancing the wellbeing of hundreds of children and families.

Galina is a recipient of the 2015 National Excellence in Teaching Award by Australian Scholarships Group (ASG) and the creator of Bonkers Beat Music & Bonkers Gym Wellbeing Programs. From keynote address to small group workshops, she has inspired audiences on 4 continents and has been widely featured in the national media.

You can follow Galina on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).