

# Rainbow Rhyming

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# What is Rainbow Rhyming?

The Rainbow Rhyming Program at Community Connections (Vic) Ltd has been developed within the SIEDS programs to support:

- Bonding and attachment between parents and children 0-3 years
- Social inclusion
- Emotional development
- Oral language
- Attention skills
- A love of rhymes and simple stories, with an emphasis on Australian content
- **Rainbow Rhyming programs complement the Mother**



# Why Rhyming and Repetitive Language?

Rhyming language has been used since the beginning of time to:

- Assist memory and recall
- Tune listeners into the sounds and rhythms of spoken language

▪ **In ancient times, civilizations wove their cultural knowledge into myths, legends and folk tales that often rhymed, or had repetitive choruses and refrains, which assisted bards and storytellers in memorizing longer sagas. The Illiad and The Odyssey by Homer are famous examples.**

▪ **Using rhyming language to assist storytelling is intuitive and instinctive and begins early in life**



# The Origins of Traditional Nursery Rhymes

- In England, the oral chants and verses are known as Nursery Rhymes while in America they are known as Mother Goose songs
- The term 'nursery rhyme' appears from the 1830's onwards but is known to have been part of the nursery routines long before that period
- When childhood became a recognized stage of life, in the Romantic Era (early 1800's), adults used these short rhyming songs to sing to young children
- Children and adults were more easily able to recall little ditties which rhymed and were often social and political comments on the times (Ring-a-ring a rosy = The Black Death; Baa Baa Black Sheep = the poor people having to pay tithes or part of their earnings to the land owners)
- They have endured across centuries and most English speaking people have been raised on English nursery rhymes



# The Program

- ❑ Will draw on these English nursery rhymes because of their universal appeal
- ❑ As well as traditional European and Australian folk stories with repetitive phrases
- ❑ Australian rhymes and lullabies
- ❑ Demonstrate how to model and create simple story-play with toddlers using known rhymes as the basis
- ❑ This will lead into Beyond The Rainbow themes for story-play for 3-6 year olds



# Language Development

- ❑ Babies who have rhyming language whispered or chanted to them in the first weeks and months of life become curious about language
- ❑ They become curious about the sounds and rhythms of language which fine-tunes their hearing and impacts on their babbling and first attempts at sounds and words
- ❑ As toddlers, children are more easily able to concentrate and recall rhyming couplets, whether they are rhymes or short stories
- ❑ Older children are able to predict likely rhyming words when they are immersed in rhymes from birth
- ❑ Such fun experiences with language leads towards oral competency and reading readiness
- ❑ Oral competency is the foundation of literacy
- ❑ Mem Fox says “rhymers will be readers ...”



# Working Memory

Rhyming language helps children develop good working memory.

Working memory and recall of information is the ability to temporarily store and manipulate information over a short time frame and is essential to language comprehension, reading and problem-solving, and is a critical prerequisite for the long-term storage of information.

Working memory is the ability to do something with (manipulate) the knowledge or information, eg. Answer questions, or make up an alternative ending. When this happens, we move to a higher order of thinking such as prediction, speculation, problem solving or IMAGINATION.

# First Rhymes

- Focus on showing love for a baby
- Soothing baby when distressed
- Lulling babies to sleep
- Pointing out body parts
- Reinforcing daily rituals such as sleeping, eating and bath time
- Rhymes introducing cultural phenomena can also be sung and chanted with babies as well as toddlers



# Bonding and Relationships



# Meeting Others (socialization)



# Eye Contact



# Listening Skills



# Discuss with parents

- The importance of making eye contact (helps baby develop a sense of self)
- Changing facial expressions
- Varying voice tone
- Monitor baby's reactions
- Experiment with rhymes to create new ones / nonsense ones

# Creating Simple Stories From Nursery Rhymes

- By the age of two, children who have been read to frequently and sung rhymes are able to understand simple story lines. We call such stories linear stories. There is no plot or problem to be resolved, but a series of related events that make sense. This is a good time to play around with known rhymes, extending them into simple stories. A simple way to begin this is to blend characters and ideas from similar rhymes.



**The following is one example of how to do this:**

Known rhymes around the theme of sheep:

- Baa baa black sheep
- Mary had a little lamb
- Little Bow Peep
- Little Boy Blue

**With props:**

*If you have toy characters representing the characters in the rhymes this is a good way to help young children visualize the story-play .We have been able to use knitted versions of the characters for many of our play scenarios, as well as toy characters and stuffed or soft animals and characters.*

*\*Research shows that when very young children manipulate objects in their play they are more likely to remember the content of the play.*

# Simple linear story (no problem)

Here is Little Boy Blue and here is Little Bow Peep and here are some of their sheep. “Baa”, said the first sheep, “baa baa”, said the second sheep, “baa, baa, baa”, said the third sheep. Now, they are all fast asleep.

# Story – play



# Story-play



- Autism: after 12 months of limited play ability, Charlotte created a play scenario following the sequence of the 3 bears - the porridge was too hot, then the bears went out and went in a boat down the river to go fishing - no language but Charlotte recreated the story modeled by Amanda using the props and play sequences.
- At the beginnings of problem solving in story-play
- Through repetitious play, retelling the story, limited language

# Story-play



- Making rain for the story using props
- Speech delay. Instigated using rain, big storm created by witch,

# Story-play



- Speech delay
- Follow plot sequence
- Repetitious rhyme
- Recall parts of plot
- Now imaginative play alone in room with dolls stories
- Minimal language, but improved receptive language, low expressive language

# More complex story - problem

- *“One day Little Boy Blue was fast asleep under the haystack when he heard Little Bow Peep crying. He woke up and ran over to her and asked her why she was crying. When Little Bow Peep explained she had lost her sheep Little Boy Blue looked around for his sheep and realized he had lost his sheep too. So they both jumped up and ran around looking for their sheep. And there they were, behind the haystack, playing hide-and-seek.”*

- \*It is easy to create a simple story by joining ideas from known rhymes, and even by extending them with your imagination. And so ....
- *“When Little Bow Peep and Little Boy Blue found their sheep they say down to eat their lunch while the sheep ate some grass. But, oh no! A big spider came down and sat beside them and they were so frightened they ran away. And then the sheep didn’t know where to find **them!**”*

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- **Or perhaps you are having boiled eggs for breakfast with your toddler, and the following story popped into your mind...**

*“Humpty Dumpty was a funny little egg. He just loved sitting on fences. But one day he fell off and cracked his egg shell. All the king’s men called for an ambulance to take poor Humpty to hospital where the doctor bandaged his aching head. Then the doctor had to go and visit Miss Polly who had a sick dolly:*

**\*Try to find a copy of the picture book “Little Lumpty” by Miko Imai (1994) and see how the original rhyme has been extended into another story.**


- *“Miss Polly had a dolly who was sick, sick, sick. She called for the doctor to come quick, quick, quick. The doctor came with his hat and his bag and he knocked on the door with a-rat-a-tat-tat. Etc. etc”*
- *And Miss Polly felt like a cup of tea so she went and put the kettle on:*
- *“Polly put the kettle on. Polly put the kettle on. Polly put the kettle on. We’ll all have tea.”*

# Story Knowledge

- Nursery rhymes are clever because they are the shortest stories, like limericks, which have characters, a setting and a simple plot (something happens) which develops in a four or six line stanza
- Parents who sing rhymes are introducing the idea of story
- Story is at the heart of all early learning and play

# Story is Central to the Developing Mind

- They are engaging (falling down a well, scared by a spider)
- They reflect actions, events and routines of childhood such as getting dressed (Deedle Deedle Dumpling), falling over (Humpty Dumpty, Jack and Jill), eating (Little Jack Horner, Simple Simon), animals (Baa Baa Black Sheep, Three Blind Mice, Hey Diddle Diddle), bath time (Rub-a-dub-dub), bedtime (Ten in the Bed, Wee Willie Winkie), places (Ride a cock horse to Banbury Cross, Pussy cat, pussy cat where have you been?), days of the week (Solomon Grundy)
- Cumulative stories assist memory (The house that Jack built, I know an old lady)
- Alliteration (Peter Peter Pumpkin Eater)
- Tongue Twisters (Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers, Betty Botter bought some butter) are fun and clever use of language
- Riddles are fun, clever and stimulate problem-solving

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- **You will only be limited by your own imagination how you innovate on the traditional rhymes and make them more interesting and contemporary for toddlers and older pre school children.**

**\*Listed below is a reference list for books which use and extend the traditional rhymes in interesting ways:**

- **There was an old woman who swallowed a mozzie**
- **The Lamington Man**
- **Goldilocks and the Three Koalas**
- **The three Little Bush Pigs**
- **Cindy Ella**

**(All part of Aussie Gems series, Scholastic Australia)**

- **There was an old woman who swallowed the sea**
- **Little Red Riding Roo by Dave Jones (Hardie Grant Egmont / Prahran)**
- **My Big Book of Fairy Tales and Rhymes (Tucker slingsby, 2006)**

**Also seek out traditional stories with repetitive refrains:**

**The Ginger Bread Man**

## Imaginative Thinking Versus Knowledge

*Albert Einstein argued that knowledge is limited to all that we know and understand in the present, while imagination can embrace all there will ever be to know and understand. (going BEYOND the known or “here and now”)*

# *Imagination is the birth right of ALL CHILDREN*

*and the highest order of thinking*

*There are two realities - what we can see (the everyday), and the “hidden”; the physical and the spiritual.*

*SIEDS programs encourage both children and adults to travel between the two worlds via the magical rainbow road. This bridge or connection between matter and the spirit is the “imagination”.*

*(Owen Barfield, 1977 in Susan Perrow, 2008)*

*SIEDS begins with Rainbow Rhyming and moves onto Beyond The Rainbow and into The Dreamtime*

# Beyond the Rainbow



Children's imagination soars and is obvious when they begin to blend aspects of familiar stories to create new stories.

Parents learn how to play creatively with their children. As the weeks and months go by, parents and practitioners begin to see children playing autonomously in the most elaborate ways.



# Research

There is very little literature on literacy programs and social connectedness. This initial pilot study is a step towards understanding changes in families' social connections leading to greater social inclusion within their communities.

**The Study:** a six month evaluation of the Reading Discovery home-based program was carried out with Deakin University in 2006-7 to:

1. Measure any changes that occurred in children's language, social and pretend play development
2. Gauge any changes in the parent's understanding of literacy and the home literacy environment
3. Track any changes in social inclusion of the families



# Research cont.

## Results of the pilot study (2007)

- ❑ An increase in social autonomy across informal and formal networks as well as increased embeddedness in formal networks for all families
- ❑ SIEDS staff were reported by families to have become important in their lives with families listing Reading Discovery at level one in both the health professionals and health system in general
- ❑ After 6 months involvement in the Reading Discovery program, the children were re-assessed on their developmental levels of language, social ability and pretend play skills. It was found that over the 6 months of being involved in Reading Discovery, the children had gained 20 months in development in their play skills and 9 months in their language and social ability over the 6 month period. The parents of the children had significantly increased their own reading per week and the number of books in the house had increased. Parents reported greater understanding of their role in the development of their children and importance of their involvement in preparing their child for school through reading stories, appropriate choice of books, and the value of playing with their children.

# Research 2008

**Results from the follow up longitudinal study a year later include:**

- **Children became much better at logically sequencing their play actions into a story when using conventional toys. (earlier research has indicated that playing with toys is closely related to structuring stories with characters)**
- **In the post test there was a significant increase in children's overall ability to logically sequence and ELABORATE in their play when using both conventional toys and unstructured objects**
- **Results showed both boys and girls improved in their elaborate play actions BUT THAT BOYS INCREASED IN THEIR ABILITY TO SEQUENCE THEIR PLAY ACTIONS WITH BOTH CONVENTIONAL AND UNSTRUCTURED OBJECTS comparatively more than the gains made by girls**
- **The real gains were in Expressive Language with parents noticing children talking more (which became apparent from the early stages of the study)**

# How will YOU know if a family will benefit from Rainbow Rhyming?

## CHILD:

- **Delayed language**
- **Poor attention**
- **Poor memory and comprehension**
- **Poor social, emotional and cooperative skills**
- **Minimal experience with books, stories, rhymes and songs**
- **Lack of rich play experiences and inability to play in a focused and creative manner**
- **Poor problem-solving skills**
- **Family history of early school drop out and poor literacy and numeracy attainment**
- **Generational welfare dependency**
- **Haven't met developmental milestones and exhibit obvious delays**
- **Poor attachment and bonding with parent or carer**
- **Needing extrinsic rewards and attention rather than intrinsic rewards stemming from healthy autonomy and general well being**
- **Behaviour problems including anger, bullying or unhealthy attachment**
- **In Child Protection / Out of Home Care**



# How will YOU know if a family will benefit from Rainbow Rhyming?

## **PARENT:**

- **Poor or no attachment with child/ren**
- **Post natal depression**
- **Addiction or other problems**
- **Relinquishing parent / or family about to be reunited**
- **Poor language and literacy skills**
- **Low functioning family**
- **Doesn't know how to read to or play with children**
- **Single parent with minimal or no support**
- **CALD family**



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