

The Importance of Rhyming in Early Reading (Age 5)

A guide for parents

Rhyming is more than a fun language game—it's an essential early literacy skill. At around age 5, children are developing *phonological awareness*, which is the ability to hear and work with the sounds in spoken language. Rhyming is a key part of this.

Why Is Rhyming Important?

1. Helps children hear patterns in language

When children notice that *cat*, *hat* and *mat* sound alike, they are learning to pay attention to the *ending sounds* in words.

This ability supports later skills like sounding out and blending words during reading.

2. Builds strong listening and memory skills

Rhyming encourages children to listen closely. Recognising and remembering patterns makes it easier for children to store and recall new words.

3. Prepares children for spelling and writing

Rhyming teaches children that words can share chunks of letters and sounds.

For example, once a child knows *cat*, they can more easily read or write *bat*, *sat*, *mat*.

4. Strengthens vocabulary

Rhyming games and songs expose children to new and varied words, helping their vocabulary grow naturally.

Two Key Rhyming Skills

1. Rhyme Detection (Hearing Rhymes)

This is when your child can hear that two words rhyme.

Examples:

- “Do *dog* and *frog* rhyme?”
- “Which word rhymes with *sun*: *fun* or *cat*?”

2. Rhyme Production (Making Their Own Rhymes)

This is when your child can generate a rhyming word independently.

Examples:

- “Tell me a word that rhymes with *hat*.”
- “What rhymes with *tree*?”

Both skills are important and develop with practice.

Easy Ways to Practise Rhyming at Home

1. Play quick rhyming games

- “I’m thinking of a word that rhymes with *log*. What is it?”
- “Can you find something in the room that rhymes with *bear*?”

2. Share rhyming books

Books like *The Gruffalo*, *Room on the Broom*, and Dr. Seuss stories are full of predictable rhymes children love.

3. Sing nursery rhymes and songs

Songs like *Row, Row, Row Your Boat* or *Twinkle, Twinkle* naturally build rhyming awareness.

4. Use silly or nonsense rhymes

Children find nonsense words fun and learn that rhyming is about *sounds*, not real words.

Example: “What rhymes with *cat*? *Zat!* *Plat!*”

Signs Your Child Is Developing Rhyming Skills

- They notice or laugh at rhymes in songs/books
- They can tell if two words rhyme
- They try to make their own rhyming words
- They enjoy playing with sounds and silly phrases