



Early Communication – sounds, music, songs, and rhymes

Off to a Good Start: Information Sheet 1

Why this is important



The first 3 years are recognised as the most intensive for children to acquire speech and language skills.

A baby's earliest experiences include sound, from a mother's heartbeat in the womb to the sounds a parent uses to soothe. Sounds, music, songs and rhymes go on to underpin many learning experiences, particularly communication, language and speech development; but also social, and physical skills, attention span, creativity, ability to predict, anticipate, memorise, and even early maths development.

During lockdown babies' experiences might have been reduced, for instance, they may have heard fewer voices and had fewer songs sung to them by fewer people; they have probably also not been around large groups of people and their associated noises and sounds.

It's important for us to now 'fill in the gaps' and ensure young children have rich sound experiences but also to have fun as you participate and enjoy exploring music together.

What is your child learning?



Building Listening skills

Draw your baby's attention to the sounds and noises they hear in their environment indoors and outdoors. Recreate and repeat these sounds using your voice, body or objects.

Create your [own instruments](#) and experiment with the different sounds for your child to hear and explore.



Building a sense of Anticipation

Share songs and rhymes such as '[Round and round the garden](#)' that create expectation.

Playing games with your child, such as tickling with feathers or using scarves during peekaboo.

Activities and experiences to offer to try



Repeat, repeat, repeat!

Make singing songs part of your daily [routine](#).

Sing songs that [repeats words or actions](#). For example, Head, shoulders, Knees and Toes.



Have fun with sounds

Use a range of everyday household objects or outdoor materials (see below).

Explore the sounds your child can make with their own body, stamping feet, clapping hands, patting legs.

Watch how your child uses these items to create different noises. Introduce simple and repetitive words to describe the sounds they are making (bang, clang, crash)



Resources to use

- Household items used to create music - Wooden spoons, metal spoons, honey dippers, pastry brushes, pots, pans, biscuit tins, wooden egg cups, metal dust bin lids.
- Outdoor materials to explore sounds - tree bark, sticks, stones, leaves, shells.
- Transparent sensory scarves, ribbon sticks/rings- to move their bodies to the music
- Household objects/toys/puppets to represent your favourite nursery rhymes

What to look out for - Observing

- Listen carefully to the sounds your baby is vocalising.
- Respond sensitively by turn taking, making eye contact, and allowing time for your baby to vocalise and listen to your responses.
- Observe how your baby responds to different types of music.
- How your baby shows signs of enjoyment of rhymes, songs and exploring sounds. For example, by smiling, laughing, moving their whole body, clapping, swaying.
- Notice how your baby watches you and other adults in anticipation for the actions or familiar phrases.
- Observe how your baby grasps objects and uses them to create sounds and music.

More Ideas and further suggestions

[How to make instruments](#)

[Videos to teach songs and actions-](#) By NYCOS

[How to make ribbon rings-](#) By Denaby and Conisbrough family hub

[The importance of rhyme in early literacy development - The Imagination Tree](#)