

The Importance of Nursery Rhymes

Nursery rhymes are a fantastic resource for teaching children skills and concepts that are essential for their everyday learning.

1) Improving language and communication skills

Nursery rhymes introduce new words and phrases, and their repetitive nature means the vocabulary can be picked up faster.

As nursery rhymes are read out loud, children are able to hear how the words sound and can practice how to pronounce them easily without the pressure of memorising words directly.

When reciting rhymes, children can practice speaking clearly, and can be shown how language variations such as pitch, volume, inflection and rhythm can be used to change the meaning of the words.

2) Developing reading skills

Nursery rhymes are a great tool for young children beginning learning to read, as they are essentially short stories.

Rhymes are a source of developing phonic skills, as they offer the ability to read and determine letter sounds. The rhyming words are especially useful for identifying the correct sounds.

Their rhythm and repetition makes them easy to commit to memory, and memory skills play a large part in learning to read.

3) Enhancing creative writing skills

Nursery rhymes are easy for children to follow and understand as they are structured like a short story with a beginning, middle and end.

They usually follow a sequence of events and consist of a main character in an interesting scene or circumstance – all important criteria for writing stories.

Nursery rhymes often also contain interesting literary devices such as alliteration and onomatopoeia, which help to engage children, and can be learned and applied to their own writing.

4) Teaching Maths concepts

Nursery rhymes use patterns in language and speech, and by recognising patterns in language, children are also able to recognise patterns in numbers, which helps with mathematical problem solving.

Many nursery rhymes also use numbers in the content of the rhymes, such as “One, two, three, four, five” and “Hot cross buns,” so children practice counting, addition and subtraction.

5) Encouraging imagination

Nursery rhymes often include elaborate storylines and characters, which help children to imagine them more easily.

The sense of imagination is heightened if nursery rhymes are coupled with some kind of creative visualisation such as illustrations or the use of actions.

6) Improving physical development

Nursery rhymes make great themes for drama and dance, as children can act out and use physical movement to demonstrate the characters and events in the nursery rhymes.

The ability to use the body to express words helps children make a connection between their senses and improves hand-eye coordination.

7) Social and emotional development

Nursery rhymes can help children to identify moods and feelings. Funny rhymes can make them laugh, while poems with sad themes can teach them about empathy, which is a good social skill.

8) Boosting confidence

As nursery rhymes are often fun or silly, children find them entertaining. Because they are memorable, children are also more likely to be able to recite them, which helps build their confidence in speaking.

9) Preparing for advanced learning

Nursery rhymes are an early form of poetry, and poetry is covered in later years, such as GCSE Language and English Literature, where children are examined on their ability to understand and analyse poems.