

Bookstart Rhymetimes - fact sheet 1

COMMON FEARS AND WORRIES ABOUT LEADING A BOOKSTART RHYMETIME SESSION AND HOW TO OVERCOME THEM

I don't have a very good singing voice and can't sing in tune!

Babies just like to hear the sound of the human voice, they will not care whether you know the words or can sing in tune. If your voice isn't perfect don't worry, parents and carers will be reassured that they don't have to have a perfect singing voice themselves to give songs and rhymes a go. Remember to tell mothers, fathers and carers that to their baby/child, theirs is the best voice in the world.

Ask for singing help from everyone attending the session — there is rarely a Bookstart Rhymetime session where the people who come along don't want to join in. If you start the session with one or two well-known and popular rhymes this will encourage everyone to join in from the beginning and boost everyone's confidence.

I'm worried that I might forget the words or actions to the rhymes!

It's vital that you are given time to practise the rhymes before a session. Choose a few simple rhymes that you are familiar with to build confidence.

Repeat a rhyme two or three times in a session. The first time it is sung is the chance to hear it and become familiar with it, the second and third time is when the babies and parents can really join in and enjoy it. Babies love repetition so don't be afraid that you are not giving 'value for money' by only using a few rhymes and repeating them.

Stick to the same rhymes each session, only adding one or two new ones each week. This way you will give yourself more chance to learn the new rhymes. Try to avoid handing out sheets with the words written down as these can cause a distraction and discourage parents from interacting with their baby/child.

What if I go wrong in the middle of the song?

We all forget the words sometimes or mix up the words or verses — when this happens try to smile and laugh about it. The sessions are all about having fun and enjoying rhymes and stories. Try to keep the rhyme going if you can — parents and children will usually help you. If you really come unstuck, leave the rhyme and return to an old favourite, the parents and babies won't mind.

What if no one else joins in?

At the start of a session, remind everyone that Bookstart Rhymetimes are fun and that you need them to join in. Remind them about some of the benefits of singing rhymes with their children to reinforce the value of what they are doing. Tell them that you will be modelling the actions for the rhymes and that you would like them to copy these actions



with their babies and small children, and that the babies will have more fun and enjoy the sessions more if they can hear their parents joining in and having fun. If families are shy or reluctant to join in ask for favourite rhymes to get everyone involved. If your group is not too large you could ask each parent or child their name, age and which rhyme they want to do next.

Should I use a book during the session?

This very much depends on the age of the children in your session and on the mood of the group. What is most important is that the sessions are fun and relaxed so if you have a group which consists solely of babies, reading aloud a story may not be appropriate. However, if you have nursery rhyme books available, it is a good idea to hold one up for parents to see while you sing the rhyme so that they know that the books are available. Books such as the ones written by Annie Kubler are excellent for this. Books that are good to share and which will appeal to older babies and toddlers include any book with rhyming text. Choose books that are short as your audience will not want to sit still for long.

What if hardly anyone attends the session?

At the first few sessions there may be small numbers attending and adults can be a little self conscious about singing. So concentrate on singing songs that involve the adult and child close together, such as 'jiggling on the knee' or 'cuddling' and 'tickling' songs. Encourage families to bring friends with children along to the next session. Promote your sessions as widely as possible and through partners such as health professionals and children's centres. Make sure the sessions are fun, friendly and relaxed and that everyone is given a chance to stay and socialise at the end. Once you have a small core of people attending, word of mouth will bring in new families.

How do I stop parents talking during the session?

Don't be afraid to set out some rules at the start of a session. Start by reminding people to turn off their mobile phones and then use the opportunity to remind the adults that there will be plenty of time to talk together at the end of the session. Tell them that the sessions are all about joining in and having fun and that their babies will enjoy themselves so much more if they, the adults, are joining in too.

Involve the adults as much as possible, ask them questions about songs and rhymes they remember as a child or their child's favourite rhymes. Put them in the spotlight but in a friendly way. One gentle way to bring people back to listening is to sing the following rhyme (use any tune that fits): *Everybody do this, do this, do this* (for example, clapping) *Everybody do this, just like me* (for example, clap) *Everybody listen, listen, listen* (put your hand to your ear) *Everybody listen just like me* (singing with your hand to your ear and getting quieter and quieter) Be ready to start the next rhyme you have planned while you have everyone's attention. This really does work.

What if too many parents and children turn up?

Try to be as accommodating as you can but if Health and Safety regulations limit the number of people you are able to have at a session, try to encourage those for whom you don't have room to come back earlier the next week or redirect them to one of your other sessions. Make sure other staff are available to help at the start of a session to direct families to the rhyme time area and to help manage buggies and capacity.

If this is a regular problem you could organise a prebooking system for a block of sessions. Once families have completed the block of sessions you could end with a celebration session to mark a natural ending of the course. If there are other sessions within the area that families could progress onto you could then signpost them onto these.

You could have a standby list of people wanting to come along to the session and if regular families can't make a session you could ask them to call you to let you know so you can offer their place to families on a reserve list.

If you have the time and capacity you could run two sessions back to back, either one for babies followed by a second one for toddlers or you could run two identical sessions but with different families.

What if I don't get through all the rhymes I had planned to do?

Be flexible with your session plan. The mood of the group will often dictate what rhymes work and which don't, how many times you get asked to repeat a favourite rhyme, and whether a session needs to end early. The main thing is that the sessions are fun. Don't be afraid to abandon your session plan and throw in rhymes that are popular and familiar if that is what is working on the day.

What do I do if the children and/or parents/ carers look bored or distracted?

Have a few visual props to keep your sessions fun and exciting. Make sure that you have plenty of interactive action rhymes planned with plenty of movement and keep a few favourites in mind that you know work to add to your plan if something isn't working well.



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BOOKSTART RHYMETIME SESSION PLAN EXAMPLE

Session Date and Time:

Session Location:

Name of Bookstart Rhymetime Leader:

Number of Attendees:

Weather:

Type	Song or Rhyme	
Hello	Hello Song or regular first rhyme such as Twinkle, Twinkle.	
Calming can be spoken or sung	Round and Round the Garden x 2	
Movement	The Wheels on the Bus	
Finger Play/ Touch	This Little Piggy x 2	
Movement	The Grand Old Duke of York	
Movement	Row, Row, Row your Boat x 3 verses	
Chant	Humpty Dumpty x 2	
Touch	Cross Cross, Line Line x 2	
Movement	Heads Shoulders Knees and Toes x 3 getting faster each time	
Touch	Two Little Eyes x 2	
Calming	Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star x 2	
Goodbye	Goodbye Song	

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BOOKSTART RHYMETIME BLANK SESSION PLAN TEMPLATE

Session Date and Time:

Session Location:

Name of Bookstart Rhymetime Leader:

Number of Attendees:

Weather:

Type	Song or Rhyme	
Hello		
Calming can be spoken or sung		
Calming		
Goodbye		

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THE FORMAT OF YOUR BOOKSTART RHYMETIME SESSION

- 20 – 30 minutes in length is ideal.
- Talk, sing or chant in a ‘baby-directed’ way and slightly slower than normal speech. Tell everyone that you will be talking in a baby-friendly voice to help them follow the rhymes.
- How you say the rhymes is very important particularly if you are running a session for babies. Mothers, fathers and carers should be encouraged to place their faces close to their baby’s so that s/he can see the expression in their eyes and the way their mouth works to make the words. Speak softly — a higher-pitched voice is easier for baby to understand — and stress important words and phrases, even pausing before important words to add suspense and fun.
- It’s good to start with a ‘Hello’ song followed by a well known simple rhyme. This marks the start of the session and helps to signal that it’s time to join in.
- Choose a wide variety of nursery rhymes and action songs for each session with a mixture of chanted and sung rhymes. Keep to a simple format using some of the same rhymes and songs at each session, introducing a new rhyme from time to time to keep it fresh. You’ll soon get to know which rhymes and songs go down well and are the favourites.
- Tell everyone which rhyme you are about to do and check they know the words. If they don’t know the words, demonstrate the song first and then encourage them to follow you a second and third time.
- Try to count the group into the songs and rhymes, one, two, three, four . . . start the rhyme to ensure that you all begin together. This is the point at which you set the pace of the rhyme, so count in slowly. (You could also tap your knee to emphasise the beat.)
- Give yourself and the group a clap or a cheer after each rhyme to celebrate the joy of singing rhymes together.
- Saying a rhyme once is often not enough for young children. The second time you say it they are more prepared to join in! So don’t be afraid to repeat a rhyme or song two or three times.



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- Don't go too fast or rush through the material (there may be a tendency to rush if you are nervous, so try to consciously slow the speed at which you sing or chant the rhymes). Babies and young children take much longer than adults to formulate words and articulate them so if you go too quickly through a rhyme it may be difficult for some to follow you.
- Use plenty of actions, hand and finger movements. Babies love to be bounced, wiggled, jiggled, tickled and thrown up in the air. Actions like bouncing, clapping, patting, and tapping also help to emphasise the strong beat and rhythm of the rhymes and songs.
- Use approximately 12 rhymes and songs per session, with a mix of counting rhymes, nursery rhymes, tickling rhymes, bouncing rhymes, action songs and calming-down songs. These can be grouped together to form distinct parts of the session if you wish.
- Repeat most rhymes, but particularly shorter or new rhymes at least twice because babies, toddlers and some mothers, fathers and carers need time to get into the swing of things. You could try seeing 'which hand is the tickliest' or which foot likes the 'this little piggy' rhyme the best, for example.
- If a song or rhyme goes down really well it is fun to do it at least once more!
- Only choose rhymes that you feel comfortable with and know you enjoy singing. Practise them first. Be prepared for adults to do different tunes or slightly different words. Either go with the flow, or at the end of the rhyme suggest singing it again but identify which version to use so you are singing together.
- Encourage everyone to share rhymes that they know with you, especially those from different regions and different cultures. Rhymes from other countries (in English and/or other languages) can be found at www.mamalisa.com/world
- Don't feel you have to stick rigidly to your session plan. Use popular and familiar rhymes/songs if you are comfortable doing so even if you had not originally planned to. (The more sessions you do, the more confidence you'll have to 'play it by ear' depending on the mood of the group.)
- Never worry about cutting the Rhymetime short if the group has had enough before the allotted time. It is better to have a shorter, fun session than one that drags on and stops working for everyone.



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TOP TIPS FOR RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL BOOKSTART RHYMETIME

1. Preparation is the key to success.

You must

- have adequate time to prepare and plan the sessions and gather any resources needed.
 - prepare more than one session (so that if you feel the one you are using isn't going well or is inappropriate, for example, too many small babies for your planned type of rhymes, then you can switch between sessions).
- #### 2. Be flexible — you don't have to stick to the plan! If toddlers/parents request a special song or rhyme or want one repeated later in the session then that is OK .
- #### 3. Set the ground rules at the beginning of the session — in a nice, friendly way!

Ask that:

- mobiles are switched off.
 - adults join in and support the babies/toddlers.
 - grown-ups wait until the session has finished to catch up with friends as talking during the session can be very disruptive and can make it difficult for everyone to concentrate and hear.
- #### 4. Make signs to tell the public that a happy but noisy Bookstart Rhymetime will be taking place on XXX at XXX for half an hour so the library will be busy and noisy.

This should minimise complaints to other staff members if you get very noisy! If another library is close by you could give their details to anyone looking for quiet study time. Failing that, ask them to join in!

- #### 5. Ask your managers if you could give a short briefing at a staff meeting to the other members of staff on the importance of Rhymetimes and why they are important to the library service.

This should hopefully make sure that your colleagues are supportive of your sessions.

- #### 6. If you can have a buggy parking colleague on hand that is an enormous help — also to direct people to the toilets and to greet late arrivals etc.
- #### 7. Use an empathy doll or the Bookstart Bear — this is a great way to show parents/ carers how to interact with their babies.

8. **Have fun yourself! If that means picking your favourite rhymes for your first sessions then that is fine.**
9. **In the unlikely situation that it is not a happy event and the children are too restless etc. don't be afraid to cut the session a bit short!**
10. **Know your subject matter, don't try to sing songs/rhymes that you are not confident with and always read through your story before the session and familiarise yourself with the content.**

Bookstart Rhymetime session checklist

Make sure that you have:

- session plan.
- materials or props.
- watch or clock to time the session.
- a CD — this is nice for background 'arrival' music so that families are not arriving into a quiet sterile environment (public licencing laws permitting).
- a couple of alternative books and rhymes in case the book or rhyme you are sharing 'doesn't work' or your audience is younger/older than you anticipated.
- 'feedback book' so that families can give instant feedback as to how the session has gone.
- parental permission/consent forms if you are taking photographs or filming the session.
- Bookstart packs (if practical) so you can promote to families and perhaps gift directly if appropriate.
- a basket of board books for parents to share at the end of the session.
- a folder with library joining forms and Bookstart Bear Club membership packs, if it runs in your area.



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SONGS AND RHYMES (first lines and types)

Hello songs

- *Hello Everyone, How are you today?*
- *Here Today*
- *The Song Sack*
- *We're Singing in the Library*

Traditional songs (can be spoken/chanted or sung)

- *Baa Baa Black Sheep*
- *Cobbler Cobbler Mend My Shoe*
- *Hickory Dickory Dock*
- *Jack and Jill*
- *Little Bo Peep*
- *Little Jack Horner*
- *Mary Mary Quite Contrary*
- *Old MacDonald*
- *Polly Put The Kettle On*
- *Twinkle Twinkle*
- *This Little Piggy*

Calming songs (can be spoken/chanted or sung)

- *Bubbles*
- *Half a Pound of Tuppenny Rice*
- *Hands*
- *Little Bo Peep*
- *Little Boy Blue*
- *Mary had a Little Lamb*
- *Rain on the Green Grass*
- *Rock a Bye Baby*
- *Twinkle Twinkle*
- *Round and Round the Garden*

Fingerplay songs

- *10 Fat Sausages*
- *1-2-3-4-5 Once I Caught a Fish Alive*
- *5 Little Men in a Flying Saucer*
- *5 Little Mice*
- *A Hedgehog is Very Prickly*
- *Cheek Chin*
- *Cows in the Kitchen*
- *Cross Cross Line Line*
- *Cuddly Monkeys*
- *Here is a Bee Hive*
- *Incey Wincey Spider*

Movement songs (action/bouncing/dancing)

- *Big Red Tractor*
- *Down in the Bottom of the Deep Blue Sea*
- *Five Little Ducks*
- *Five Little Monkeys*
- *Dingle Dangle Scarecrow*
- *Down By the Station*
- *Down in the Jungle*
- *Galloping Major*
- *Head Shoulders Knees and Toes*
- *Here We Go Looby Loo*
- *Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush*
- *Hey Diddle Diddle*
- *Hickety Pickety My Black Hen*
- *Hickory Dickory Dock*
- *Hokey Cokey*
- *Horsey Horsey*
- *Humpty Dumpty*
- *If You're Happy and You Know It*
- *I'm a Little Teapot*
- *Jack Be Nimble*
- *Jelly On A Plate*
- *Old Brass Wagon*
- *Rickety Rickety Rocking Horse*

- *Ride a Cock Horse*
- *Ring a Ring A Roses*
- *Row Row Row Your Boat*
- *Skip To My Loo*
- *The Bear Went Over the Mountain*
- *The Big Ship Sails*
- *The Grand Old Duke of York*
- *The Wheels On The Bus*
- *This is the Way the Ladies Ride*
- *We All Clap Hands Together*
- *What Shall We Do With a Lazy Baby*
- *Wind the Bobbin Up*
- *Little Peter Rabbit*
- *Open Shut Them*
- *Pat a Cake*
- *Pickles in the Pickle Pot*
- *Roly Poly Roly Poly Up Up Up*
- *See Saw Majory Daw*
- *Sleeping Bunnies*
- *Gallumph Went the Little Green Frog*
- *Zoom Zoom Zoom*
- *Teddy Bear Teddy Bear*
- *The Clock Says Tick Tock*
- *There's a Spider In My Hair*

Numbers

- *1-2-3-4-5 Once I Caught a Fish Alive*
- *Two Little Dickie Birds*
- *10 Fat Sausages*
- *5 Little Men in a Flying Saucer*
- *5 Little Ducks*
- *5 Current Buns in a Baker's Shop*
- *5 Little Speckled Frogs*
- *Five Little Monkeys*
- *Five Little Speckled Frogs*
- *I have 10 Little Fingers*
- *I Have Two Hands*
- *Two Little Dickie Birds*
- *Two Little Eyes*

Percussion songs

- *Engine No 9*
- *The Grand Old Duke Of York*
- *Horsey Horsey*
- *If You're Happy and You Know It*
- *Library Band*
- *Polly Put The Kettle On*
- *Shake your Shakers*
- *She'll Be Coming Round the Mountain*

Goodbye Songs

- *Its Time To Say Goodbye*
- *Let's Clean Up*
- *We All Clap Hands Together*
- *Wave Goodbye Like Me*



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GOOD BOOKS TO SHARE IN GROUPS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

There are many wonderful books that are good to share with children under five in a group situation. Here are 25 of our tried and tested favourites books that work well with groups of young children and their families. These could all be used in Bookstart Rhymetimes or Storytime sessions.

- *All Join In* by Quentin Blake
- *Baby Goz* by Steve Weatherall
- *Dear Zoo* by Rod Cambell
- *Doing the Animal Bop* by Jan Ormerod
- *Duck in the Truck* by Jez Alborough
- *Quacky, Quack-Quack* by Ian Whybrow and Russell Ayto
- *Shark in the Park* by Nick Sharrat
- *The Animal Boogie* by Debbie Harter
- *The Happy Hedgehog Band* by Martin Waddell and Jill Barton
- *The Gruffalo* by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler
- *Hairy Maclary from Donaldson's Dairy* by Lynley Dodd
- *Handa's Surprise* by Eileen Brown
- *Elmer* by David Mckee
- *Hug* by Jez Alborough
- *It's the Bear* by Jez Alborough
- *Jasper's Beanstalk* by Nick Butterworth
- *Little Mouse, Red Ripe Strawberry and the Big Hungry Bear* by Don and Audrey Wood
- *Monkey Do* by Allan Ahlberg

- *Mr Gumpy's Outing* by John Burningham
- *Owl Babies* by Martin Waddell
- *You Choose* by Nick Sharrat
- *This is the Bear and the Picnic Lunch* by Sarah Hayes and Helen Craig
- *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury
- *Where's My Teddy?* by Jez Alborough
- *Whiff* by Ian Whybrow and Russel Ayto



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GOOD BOOKS FOR SHARING IN GROUPS THAT LINK WITH SPECIFIC NURSERY RHYMES

There are many wonderful books that are good to share with children under five in a group situation. Here are 15 of our tried and tested favourite books that work well with groups of young children and their families. These could all be used in Bookstart Rhymetimes or Storytime sessions.

- *There was an old woman who swallowed a fly* by Pam Adams
- *Wind the bobbin up* by Annie Kubler
- *If You're Happy and You Know It* by Jan Ormerod
- *Ten Fat Sausages* by Elke Zinsmeister
- *Row Row Row Your Boat* by Annie Kubler
- *Five Little Ducks* published by Amazing Baby
- *Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear* by Annie Kubler
- *Old MacDonald – touch and feel book* -published by Templar
- *Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes* by Annie Kubler
- *Down in the Jungle* by Mandy Ross
- *Down by the Station* by Jess Stockham
- *The Boy on the Bus* by Penny Dale –
(this links to the rhyme 'The Wheels on the Bus')
- *Walking through the Jungle* by Debbie Harter –
(this links to the rhyme 'Down in the Jungle')
- *Dear Zoo* by Rod Campbell.
(This book could be used to sing a variation of the rhyme 'Old MacDonald', this time changing the words of the rhyme to 'Old MacDonald had a zoo')
- *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury.
(This book could be told in a sing song voice and linked to teddy bear songs and rhymes, for example, 'Round and Round the Garden', 'The Bear went over the Mountain', 'Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear' and 'Tapping Teddies'.

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Copyright and Licence Guidance for Bookstart Rhymetimes

Anyone holding a Bookstart Rhymetime needs to be aware of Copyright law and Licencing requirements.

Licencing

Following a number of enquiries from libraries, children's centres and early years settings, regarding the licencing requirements for Bookstart Rhymetimes, we have consulted with PRS for Music (the new trading name of the Performing Rights Society) and Phonographic Performance Limited (PPL) and are pleased to be able to offer the following information.

PRS for Music **does not** charge a licence fee for a rhymetime session where adults sing rhymes and action songs with children and where no instruments or pre recorded music is played. PRS for Music **does not** charge a licence fee if children or adults accompany themselves on simple untuned percussion instruments such as maracas during such a rhymetime session.

If you chose to accompany a song or rhyme with a tuned instrument please note the following: Most nursery rhymes are not within copyright and can be accompanied. However it is up to the individual to ensure that words and music are not within copyright or that they have permission from the copyright owner before accompanying any song on an instrument. If the song (words or music) is within copyright and within the control of PRS for Music then a licence will be required.

Playing CDs at Rhymetime Sessions

A PRS for Music or PPL licence is not required to play the Bookstart Rhymetime CD during a Rhymetime session. You may, however, require these licences to play other CDs so you will need to check whether the songs (words and music) are within copyright and within the control of PRS for Music and PPL before using them. For further information or questions about licensing requirements please contact PPL: Tel: 020 7534 1000, website: www.ppluk.com and PRS for Music on 0845 309 3090 website www.prsformusic.com

Copyright

Copyright exists in an original work such as novels, lyrics or songs, poems and so on. These are known as literary works. Copyright exists from the moment the work is created (without the need for formal procedures) until 70 years after the death of the author. After this time the work falls into the public domain.

It is an infringement of the copyright to do the following acts in relation to a copyright work without the consent or licence of the copyright owner:

- To copy it ("in any material form") — this includes writing it down or typing it.
- To issue copies to the public.

Copyright law is very complex and is most commonly vested in the author, unless the work is a compilation of various authors' work; in which case it is additionally possible for separate parts of the work to be the copyright of the individual authors whilst the publisher retains the copyright in the compilation volume

Not all "Traditional Nursery Rhymes" are in the public domain – i.e. 'I'm a Little Teapot' and 'Dingle Dangle Scarecrow' are protected by copyright. 'The Wheels on the Bus' may be within copyright but we don't know for certain – and if the copyright owner cannot be found it doesn't mean that there isn't one.

If someone owns the copyright to a song or rhyme and someone else reproduces it for distribution to the public without permission, that copyright owner can come forward for compensation at any time. Publishers and authors of compilations of songs and rhymes (books or CDs) may seek payment from anyone reproducing a song or rhyme from their compilation without their permission.

Please Note - Before anyone produces a document (i.e. word sheet or booklet) reproducing literary works they must satisfy themselves that the works are in the public domain or obtain permission from the copyright or publication right owner. If the copyright owner cannot be found it doesn't mean that there isn't one. Someone could come forward and claim ownership at any time (up to 70 years after the death of the original author) and legitimately claim compensation.

Publication Right

Publication Right gives rights broadly equivalent to copyright, to a person who publishes for the first time a literary, musical or artistic work in which copyright has expired. Publicity rights last 25 years from the year of publication of the previously unpublished material.

Please Note - If anyone intends to produce a document containing rhymes and wishes to use the Bookstart logo, permission must be obtained from Booktrust before publication.

