

# Nursery Rhymes Essential to Reading

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Did you know that reciting “Old Mother Hubbard” or “Jack Sprat” and other Mother Goose favorites can strengthen your child’s ability to read well when he begins formal reading instruction? Susan B. Neuman, Ed.D., an early literacy expert at the University of Michigan explains in a recent article in *Parent and Child*:

*”Nursery rhymes are especially powerful, because they are so memorable.*

*Children who are familiar with nursery rhymes when they enter kindergarten often have an easier time learning to read. This is probably because rhyming helps them discover many common word patterns (such as those in quick/stick or down/crown).*

*The ability to hear rhymes — knowing that cat rhymes with hat, but not with bag — is an essential skill for learning to read because it means that your child can discern the differences among individual sounds (or phonemes). Playing with rhymes trains her ear to hear the differences and similarities in how words sound.”*

Always use early versions of Mother Goose rhymes, rather than a “modern” telling which tends to flatten the language and imagery. LBC offers a 1916 edition of [The Real Mother Goose](#) as a free download or purchase a [beautiful, hardcover keepsake edition](#) from LBC.

## Five Ways to Enjoy Mother Goose Nursery Rhymes

1. Read them aloud at many and various times, till you can start reading one and your child can finish it.
2. Combine rhyming with clapping or singing.
3. Make a riddle of the rhyme, e.g. what rhyme has a little dog who laughed? (Hey, Diddle, Diddle).
4. Make a simple picture book out of one of the rhymes by stapling two-three, 8 ½ X 11 sheets on the short side. Print the words, then let your child illustrate.
5. Act out the rhyme together.

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