

Help Your Child to Read and Write



Action rhymes for babies

Round and round the garden

Round and round the garden,
Like a teddy bear;

Trace a circle on your baby's palm.

One step, two step,

Use your fingers to 'walk' up your baby's arm.

Tickle you under there!

Tickle your baby under the arm.

This little piggy went to market

This little piggy went to market,
This little piggy stayed at home;
This little piggy had roast beef,
This little piggy had none,
And this little piggy cried,
'Wee, wee, wee,' all the way home.

Wiggle your baby's toes with each line, starting with the big toe and ending with the little toe.

On the last line, gently tickle your baby's tummy.

Incy wincy spider

Incy Wincy Spider
Climbed up the water spout.

Use your outstretched thumbs and index fingers to 'climb' up the spout.

Down came the rain

Wiggle fingers and move hands down for the rain.

And washed the spider out.

Sweep arms wide apart to wash the spider out.

Out came the sunshine

And dried up all the rain,

Bring arms down in a big circle for the sun.

And Incy Wincy Spider

Climbed up the spout again.

Use outstretched thumbs and index fingers to 'climb' the spout again.

Tommy Thumb, Tommy Thumb, where are you?

Tommy Thumb, Tommy Thumb,
where are you?

With one hand, make a fist with your fingers so they cover your thumb.

Here I am, here I am, how do you do?

Hold up thumb and wiggle it.

Peter Pointer, Peter Pointer,
where are you?

Make a fist with your fingers covering your thumb.

Here I am, here I am, how do you do?

Hold up index finger and wiggle it.

Repeat with each finger in turn, holding up all your fingers and wiggling them for the last verse:

Toby Tall, Toby Tall, where are you?

Ruby Ring, Ruby Ring, where are you?

Baby Small, Baby Small, where are you?

Fingers all, fingers all, where are you?

Here we are, here we are, how do you do?

Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake

Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker's man,
Bake me a cake, as fast as you can.

Clap in time with the rhythm.

Pat it, and prick it, and mark it with 'b'.

On the word 'prick', touch your baby's palm with your index finger and trace a letter 'b' on their palm.

Or substitute the first letter of your baby's name.

Put it in the oven for baby and me.

Point to your baby, then to yourself. You could replace the word 'baby' with your baby's name.

Action rhymes for babies

This is the way the ladies ride

This is the way the ladies ride,
Trippety-tee, trippety-tee.

This is the way the ladies ride,
Trippety, trippety-tee.

Sit your baby on your knees facing you, hold both their hands and gently bounce them in time to the rhythm.

This is the way the gentlemen ride,
Gallop-gallop, gallop-gallop.

This is the way the gentlemen ride,
Gallop-gallop-gallop.

You can make the bouncing a little more vigorous as the song goes on, but don't make movements too vigorous with young babies.

This is the way the farmer rides,
Hobble-dee-hoy, hobble-dee-hoy.

This is the way the farmer rides,
Hobble-dee-hoy, hobble-dee-hoy...

... And DOWN in the ditch!

For the last verse, gently sway your knees from side to side. On the last line, hold your baby's hands and, supporting their head, let them lean right back as you say 'DOWN'.

Hickory, dickory, dock

Hickory, dickory, dock,
The mouse ran up the clock.

Quickly 'walk' your fingers gently up your baby's arm.

The clock struck ONE,

Clap your hands together.

The mouse ran down.

Gently 'walk' your fingers down your baby's arm.

Hickory, dickory, dock,

Tick-tock, tick-tock.

With your hand in front of you, move it rhythmically from side to side.

Two little dicky birds

Two little dicky birds,
Sitting on a wall,

Hold up both your hands and lock your fingers tightly around your thumbs. Wiggle your index fingers to show two birds on a wall.

One named Peter,

Hold up one index finger.

One named Paul.

Hold up the other index finger.

Fly away, Peter!

Make one hand 'fly away' behind your back.

Fly away, Paul!

Make the other hand 'fly away' behind your back.

Come back, Peter,

Fly one hand back and hold up 'Peter'.

Come back, Paul.

Fly the other hand back and hold up 'Paul'.

Action rhymes for toddlers

Row, row, row your boat

Row, row, row your boat,
Gently down the stream;
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
Life is but a dream.

Sit on the floor facing your child and holding each other's hands. 'Row' backwards and forwards.

Row, row, row your boat,
Gently down the stream;
If you see a crocodile
Don't forget to SCREAM!

When you reach 'crocodile', make snapping jaw movements with your arms. SCREAM the last word.

Row, row, row your boat,
Gently down the river.
If you see a polar bear
Don't forget to shiver!

Say 'shiver' in a shivery voice, wrap your arms round your body and make shivering movements.

Row, row, row your boat,
Gently to the shore.
If you see a lion
Don't forget to ROAR!

When you reach 'lion', leap up and make grabbing claw movements with your fingers. ROAR the last word.

One, two, three, four, five

One, two, three, four, five,
Hold up each finger in turn from one to five.

Once I caught a fish alive,
Put hands together and make them 'swim' like a fish.

Six, seven, eight, nine, ten,
Hold up each finger from six to ten.

Then I let it go again.

Put your hands together, with your palms facing upwards and lower your hands away from you.

Why did I let it go?
Because it bit my finger so.

Shake right hand as if it hurts.

Which finger did it bite?
This little finger on the right.

Wiggle little finger of right hand.

If you're happy and you know it

If you're happy and you know it,
clap your hands,

Clap your hands twice.

If you're happy and you know it,
clap your hands,

Clap your hands twice.

If you're happy and you know it,
and you really want to show it,
If you're happy and you know it,
clap your hands!

Clap your hands twice.

If you're happy and you know it,
stamp your feet...

Stamp your feet twice.

If you're happy and you know it,
pat your head...

Pat your head twice.

If you're happy and you know it,
jump up and down...

Jump twice.

If you're happy and you know it,
shout 'Hooray!'...

Shout 'Hoo-ray!'

Action rhymes for toddlers

The wheels on the bus

The wheels on the bus go round
and round,
Round and round, round and round;
The wheels on the bus go round
and round,
All day long.

Spin your forearms around each other.

The doors on the bus go open and shut,
Open and shut, open and shut;
The doors on the bus go open and shut,
All day long.

*Hold your hands up with palms facing you and
move your forearms apart and together.*

The wipers on the bus go swish,
swish, swish,
Swish, swish, swish; swish, swish, swish;
The wipers on the bus go swish,
swish, swish,
All day long.

*Point your index fingers up and swing your
forearms from side to side.*

The babies on the bus go wah,
wah, wah,
Wah, wah, wah; wah, wah, wah;
The babies on the bus go wah,
wah, wah,
All day long.

Pretend to rock a baby in your arms.

The mothers on the bus go shh,
shh, shh,
Shh, shh, shh; shh, shh, shh;
The mothers on the bus go shh,
shh, shh,
All day long.

Put your finger to your mouth when you say 'shh'.

Five little monkeys

Five little monkeys jumping on the bed,
*Hold up five fingers and bounce hand in time to
the rhythm.*

One fell off and bumped his head.

Hold up one finger, then rub your head.

Daddy called the doctor and the doctor
said,

Pretend to hold a phone to your ear.

**NO MORE MONKEYS JUMPING ON
THE BED!**

Wag index finger in time to the rhythm.

*Repeat with four, three, two, one and no
little monkeys.*

Head, shoulders, knees and toes

Head, shoulders, knees and toes,
knees and toes

Head, shoulders, knees and toes,
knees and toes

And eyes, and ears, and mouth, and nose,
Head, shoulders, knees and toes,
knees and toes.

*Use both hands to touch each body part as it's
mentioned. For the second verse, don't sing or say
'head' when you touch your head. For the third
verse, don't sing or say 'head' or 'shoulders', and
so on, until you are doing just the actions. Finally
sing the whole song very quickly with the actions.*