“Programs for Toddlers”

A chapter from

Read Me a Rhyme in Spanish and English

by Rose Zertuche Treviño
Sitting still is not what toddlers are made of, as their attention span is short, so be prepared for wiggling, wandering children who may decide to sit on your lap as you proceed to read a book. Toddlers are exploring their world, and everything belongs to them. They haven’t yet learned to share, so a little trauma during storytime might occur if you bring out the musical instruments or the toys. The key to storytime for this age group includes variety with songs, fingerplays, and nursery rhymes mixed in between stories. Select books with large, colorful pictures and minimal text. Be ready for interruptions. You should plan for the program to last between fifteen and twenty minutes for this group.

A bilingual program for children gives you an opportunity to have fun with these inquisitive minds. At this stage, toddlers can clap their hands, stomp their feet, jump, and even run from you. They learn fast and will soon be counting with you in two languages. Start your toddler program with a song or a rhyme that becomes something familiar to them that they will always connect with the library.

Here’s one you might want to try:

**PULGARCITO**
- Pulgarcito.
- Pulgarcito.
- ¿Dónde estás?
- Aquí estoy.
- Quiero saludarte.
- Quiero saludarte.
- Yo también.
- Yo también.

**WHERE IS THUMBKIN?**
- Where is thumbkin?
- Where is thumbkin?
- Where are you?
- Here I am.
- Here I come to greet you.
- Here I come to greet you.
- Run and hide.
- Run and hide.
It is always a good idea to have books within grasp just ready to be checked out. Place a few musical CDs on your table with the books and make time to engage the parents by offering any one of the following:

- A bilingual handout listing the titles of the books you shared
- Words to the bilingual rhymes, songs, and fingerplays
- Suggested resources with additional ideas to use at home
- A schedule with your storytime listings

Get your toddler group and their parents used to your program, and give it an engaging name like one of the following:

- Jardín de cuentos (Story Garden)
- Cuentitos, rimas y más (Stories, Rhymes, and More)
- Jardín Infantil (Children’s Garden)

**PROGRAM 1: ABC / 123**

**Opening Rhyme**

Begin your program with your welcome rhyme in Spanish and English. Invite parents to participate with their children.

**Book**

Here’s a book to start with about some animal friends on their way to surprise Zelda the zebra on her birthday:


**Clapping Rhyme**

Now try this traditional clapping rhyme about chocolate. *Chocolate* is spelled the same in Spanish but instead of two syllables, there are four. Clap your hands to a steady rhythm and do a call-and-response with this song. You can purchase a *molinillo*, which is a Mexican kitchen tool for whipping chocolate. It is a long stick, and you dip the larger circular end into the pot and rub your hands together with the top part between your two hands.

**EL CHOCOLATE**

Uno, dos, tres, CHO

Uno, dos, tres, CO

**CHOCOLATE**

One, two, three, CHO

One, two, three, CO
Uno, dos, tres, LA  
Uno, dos, tres, TE  

Chocolate, chocolate,  
Bate, bate chocolate.

**Book**

Here is a bilingual ABC book featuring animals that introduce the different letters of the alphabet:


**Rhyme**

Next, try this number rhyme:

**CUÉNTAME DIEZ**  
Los perros aquí,  
Los gatos allá.  
Cuéntame diez  
Y yo me saldré.  
Uno, dos, tres, cuatro, cinco,  
Seis, siete, ocho, nueve y diez.

**COUNT TO TEN**  
The dogs over here,  
The cats over there.  
Count to ten  
And then I’ll leave.  
One, two, three, four, five,  
Six, seven, eight, nine, and ten.
**Book**

The following book is available in a bilingual edition:


**Call-and-Response Rhyme**

Ask parents to hold their toddler’s hands and make the motions as you recite this call-and-response rhyme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOS DEDITOS</th>
<th>MY FINGERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tengo diez deditos.</td>
<td>I have ten fingers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diez deditos tengo yo.</td>
<td>Ten fingers have I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuéntalos conmigo.</td>
<td>Count them out with me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uno, dos, tres,</td>
<td>One, two, three,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuatro, cinco, seis,</td>
<td>Four, five, six,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siete, ocho, nueve,</td>
<td>Seven, eight, nine,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y uno más son diez.</td>
<td>And one more makes ten.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ya cuéntalos al revés</td>
<td>Now count them backward.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Tengo diez deditos.                              | I have ten fingers.               |
| Diez, nueve, ocho,                               | Ten, nine, eight,                 |
| Siete, seis, cinco,                              | seven, six, five,                 |
| Cuatro, tres, dos, uno.                          | Four, three, two, one.            |
| Diez deditos tengo yo.                           | Ten fingers have I.               |
| Tengo diez deditos.                              | I have ten fingers.               |

**Additional Books**

Here is a list of titles that you can have available for parents to check out:


Mora, Pat. *Uno, dos, tres: 1, 2, 3*. Clarion, 1996.


**Closing Rhyme**

End the program with the following rhyme:

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Colorín, colorado,
Este cuento se ha acabado
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This story is now over.

Or you can change some of the words, like this:

```
Colorín, colorado,
Este programa se ha acabado
```

This program is now over.

Be sure to send home a flier with the titles of the books you read, the words to the songs and rhymes, and a list of reading tips.

**PROGRAM 2: WATER / EL AGUA**

You may want to purchase a small portable fountain that lets you add water to flow over rocks. This might intrigue your toddlers. They can each take a turn and investigate. Use your imagination and try something new. Perhaps you have the budget to purchase a case of bottled water in small toddler-size bottles that you can hand out with rules about drinking water in the library as they are leaving.

**Opening Rhyme**

Begin your program with your welcome rhyme in Spanish and English. Invite parents to participate with their children.

**Book**

Start with this book, which is available in Spanish and English and is based on a true story about ten rubber ducks that are scattered in different directions during a storm.

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**Motion Rhyme**

Next, recite this traditional rhyme and be sure to encourage your toddlers to make swimming motions.
NADABAN
Nadaban y nadaban,
Nadaban los patitos.
Nadaban y nadaban,
Y no se mojaban.

SWIMMING
Swimming and swimming,
The ducklings go by.
Swimming and swimming,
They always stay dry.

Book
Follow with this story:


Motion Rhyme
Now, engage your group in this motion rhyme about fish that swim and fish that fly. Ask your toddlers to pretend that they are the little fish as they act out the swimming and flying motions.

LOS PECECITOS
Los pececitos nadan en el agua. The little fish swim in the water.
Nadan, nidan, nidan.
Vuelan, vuelan, vuelan.
Son chiquititos, chiquititos.
Vuelan, vuelan, vuelan.
Nadan, nidan, nidan.

THE LITTLE FISH
The little fish swim in the water.
They swim, swim, swim.
They fly, fly, fly.
They are tiny, tiny, tiny.
Fly, fly.
Swim, swim, swim.

Book
This bilingual story is about the ocean:


Song
You can follow this up with a song about a little boat:

EL BARQUITO
Había una vez un barquito chiquitito,
Había una vez un barquito chiquitito,
Había una vez un barquito chiquitito,
Y no podía, no podía, no podía navegar.

THE LITTLE BOAT
There was once a small boat,
There was once a small boat,
There was once a small boat,
That just couldn’t navigate.
Pasaron una, dos, tres, cuatro, cinco,
Seis, siete semanas.
Pasaron una, dos, tres, cuatro, cinco,
Seis, siete semanas.
Pasaron una, dos, tres, cuatro, cinco,
Seis, siete semanas.
Y el barquito, el barquito,
No podía navegar,
Y si la historia no les parece larga,
Y si la historia no les parece larga,
Y si la historia no les parece larga,
Volveremos, volveremos, Volveremos a empezar.

One, two, three, four, five,
Six, seven weeks went by.
One, two, three, four, five,
Six, seven weeks went by.
One, two, three, four, five,
Six, seven weeks went by.
And the little boat, the little boat Couldn’t navigate
And if this story doesn’t seem long And if this story doesn’t seem long And if this story doesn’t seem long
We can start, we can start We can start at the beginning again.

Additional Books

Here are some titles of books you can have for parents to check out after your program:


Closing Rhyme

End your program with a closing rhyme or song. Be sure to send home a flier with the titles of the books you read, the words to the songs and rhymes, and a list of reading tips.
PROGRAM 3: COLORS / LOS COLORES

Opening Rhyme

Begin your program with your welcome rhyme in Spanish and English. Invite parents to participate with their children.

Book

Here’s a book illustrated by the Caldecott Award–winning illustrator David Diaz with the words to the traditional song “De colores”:


Rhyme

Recite this traditional rhyme:

Pito, pito, Whistle, whistle
Colorito: Many colors:
¿Dónde vas Where are you going,
Tan bonito? Pretty one?

Book

Next, share this book, available in Spanish and in English:


Fingerplay

Try this fingerplay and start with the pinkie. Point to one finger at a time. After you recite the last line, hide toddler’s thumb behind his or her back.

El amarillo es mío. Yellow is mine.
El rojo, tan flojo. Red is lazy.
El blanco va al banco. White goes to the bank.
El anaranjado está mojado. Orange is all wet.
El verde se pierde. Green gets lost.

Repeat, a little faster.

Book

Now read this bilingual book, which received a 2008 Pura Belpré honor award for illustration:

**Rhyme**

Here is a very simple traditional rhyme:

- A la escuela y al jardín, At school and in the garden
- Con Martín With Martin
- Colorín. In the garden.

**Additional Books**

Add these titles to your display of books for parents to check out:


**Closing Rhyme**

End your program with a closing rhyme or song. Be sure to send home a flier with the titles of the books you read, the words to the songs and rhymes, and a list of reading tips.

**PROGRAM 4: THE FARM / LA GRANJA**

**Opening Rhyme**

Begin your program with your welcome rhyme in Spanish and English. Invite parents to participate with their children.
Vocabulary Activity

Talk about the farm and ask the toddlers what kind of animals they might see at the farm. You can have pictures of animals that the toddlers can identify. Here are a few of the animals you might find on the farm.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>la gallina</td>
<td>the hen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>el gallo</td>
<td>the rooster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>el cerdo</td>
<td>the pig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>el caballo</td>
<td>the horse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>la vaca</td>
<td>the cow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Book

Share this first book, always introducing the title, the author, and the illustrator:


Song

You can sing “Old MacDonald Had a Farm” in English and then follow up with the song “La granja” in Spanish by the Mexican children’s musician José-Luis Orozco:

**La Granja**

Vengan a ver mi granja que es hermosa.
Vengan a ver mi granja que es hermosa.
El patito hace así, cuá, cuá
El patito hace así, cuá, cuá

**The Farm**

Come and see my farm, for it is beautiful.
Come and see my farm, for it is beautiful.
The duckling goes like this, quack, quack.
The duckling goes like this, quack, quack.

**Coro**

Oh, vengan, amigos,
Vengan, amigos,
Vengan, amigos, vengan.
(Cantar dos veces.)

**Chorus**

Oh, come, my friends,
Oh, come, my friends,
Oh, come to see my farm.
(Sing twice.)

Repeat the song, inserting the following animals:

El pollito hace así, pío, pío.
La vaquita hace así, mú, mú.
The chick goes like this, peep, peep.
The calf goes like this, moo, moo.
El puerquito hace así, oinc, oinc.
The piglet goes like this, oink, oink.

El burrito hace así, íja, íja.
The donkey goes like this, hee-haw, hee-haw.

El gallito hace así, kikiri, kí.
The rooster goes like this, cock-a-doodle-doo.

Book

Here is another book to use with your group of toddlers:


Song

Here is a traditional song to sing. You can ask parents to sit their toddler on their lap and recite it as a bouncing rhyme.

**CABALLITO BLANCO**
Caballito blanco,
Sácame de aquí,
Llévame a mi pueblo
Donde yo nací.

Tengo, tengo, tengo,
Tú no tienes nada.
Tengo tres ovejas
En una manada.

Una me da leche,
Otra me da lana,
Otra mantequilla
Para la semana.

**WHITE PONY**
White pony,
Give me a ride,
Take me to the town
Where I was born.

I have, I have, I have,
you have nothing.
I have three sheep
In my herd.

One gives me milk,
One gives me wool,
One gives me butter
That lasts me all week.

Book

Next, you can read Pat Hutchins’s classic tale about Rosie the hen:

Song

Here is an action song. Before each stanza, practice walking first like a duck, then like a chicken, and then like a lamb.

**Los Animalitos**

Detrás de Doña Pata
Corren los patitos;
Por allí, por allá,
Cuá, cuá, cuá.

Detrás de Doña Gallina
Siguen los pollitos;
Por allí, por allá,
Pío, pío, pío.

Detrás de Doña Borrega
Van los borreguitos;
Por allí, por allá,
Beh, beh, beh.

**The Little Animals**

After Mrs. Duck
Run the little ducklings;
This way and that way,
Quack, quack, quack.

After Mrs. Chicken
The little chicks follow;
This way and that way,
Cheep, cheep, cheep.

After Mrs. Sheep
Go the little lambs;
This way and that way,
Baa, baa, baa.

Additional Books

Here are books for your display table. Be sure you tell parents that the books are ready to be checked out to share with their toddlers.


Closing Rhyme

End your program with a closing rhyme or song. Be sure to send home a flier with the titles of the books you read, the words to the songs and rhymes, and a list of reading tips.
PROGRAM 5: BUGS / LOS INSECTOS

Opening Rhyme

Begin your program with your welcome rhyme in Spanish and English. Invite parents to participate with their children.

Book

If you have older toddlers, you might want to try reading each page of this book. If you have younger toddlers, read select lines of text. It is a good story to learn and then tell, and it has big, beautiful illustrations. You can have your kids repeat Martina’s full name with you: Martina Josefina Catalina Cucaracha.


Song

Next, sing this popular song about a thirsty cockroach:

La cucaracha, la cucaracha,
Ya no puede caminar.
Porque le falta, porque le falta,
Limonada que tomar

The cockroach, the cockroach
Can no longer walk around.
Because he needs some, because he needs some,
Lemonade to drink

Book

Butterflies are beautiful, and you might want to show pictures of butterflies before you read one of the following stories. The first title, about a young boy named Olmo, is available only in Spanish. Read it in Spanish and then have the toddlers and their parents tell you the story in English.


Movement Rhyme

Here’s a rhyme about a spider that went for a walk. Make a spiderweb on the floor using masking tape. Play follow the leader with the toddlers, and
you can be Doña or Don Araña as you walk around the spiderweb. Be sure to dance during the third line and then you can start walking backward until you ask your toddlers to take a seat.

**Doña Araña**

Doña Araña se fue a pasear
Hizo un hilo y se puso a trepar.
Vino el viento y la hizo bailar.
Vino la tormenta y la hizo bajar.

**Doña Araña**

Doña Araña went for a walk
and swung happily from her web.
Along came the wind, which made her dance.
Along came a storm, so she had to go back.

**Book**

If you can, bring in an ant farm and let your toddlers see ants at work, then read this story:


**Motion Rhyme**

Here is a motion rhyme. Sing this several times using hand motions.

**La Huitzi Huitzi Araña**

La huitzi huitzi araña
Subió, subió, subió.
Vino la lluvia y
Se la llevó.
Salió el sol y
Todo lo secó.
Y la huitzi huitzi araña
Subió, subió, subió.

**The Itsy Bitsy Spider**

The itsy bitsy spider
Went up the waterspout.
Down came the rain
And washed the spider out.
Out came the sun and
Dried up all the rain.
And the itsy bitsy spider
Went up the spout again.

You can substitute *hormiguita,* or “little ant,” for *araña* and use two fingers to make the motion of the ant walking up the waterspout.

**La Hormiguita**

La hormiguita
Subió, subió, subió.
Vino la lluvia y
Se la llevó.
Salió el sol y
Todo lo secó.

**The Itsy Bitsy Ant**

The itsy bitsy ant
Went up the waterspout.
Down came the rain
And washed the little ant out.
Out came the sun and
Dried up all the rain.
Y la hormiguita
Subió, subió, subió.

And the itsy bitsy ant
Went up the spout again.

**Additional Books**

Here are a few books to add to your stack. You can make substitutions for any of these or have them available for your storytime customers:

- Prims, Marta. *I Am a Little Spider / Soy una pequeña araña*. Barron’s, 2002.

**Closing Rhyme**

End your program with a closing rhyme or song. Be sure to send home a flier with the titles of the books you read, the words to the songs and rhymes, and a list of reading tips.

**PROGRAM 6: OPPOSITES / LOS OPUESTOS**

**Opening Rhyme**

Begin your program with your welcome rhyme in Spanish and English. Invite parents to participate with their children.

**Vocabulary Activity**

Talk about opposites and give some examples.

- *arriba* / up
- *abajo* / down
- *despierto* / awake
- *dormido* / asleep
- *feliz* / happy
- *triste* / sad
Read this bilingual story with the toddlers:


Here is a simple rhyme to share with the group:

```
SALTAR          JUMP
Salto por aquí,  I’ll jump over here,
Salto por allá,  I’ll jump over there,
Pues esa culebra  ’Cause that snake’s a fright
No me ha de picar.  And I won’t let him bite.
```

Next, share this book:


Talk to the toddlers again about opposites. Here are more examples to show.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>grande/big</td>
<td>chico/small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blanco/white</td>
<td>negro/black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flaco/skinny</td>
<td>gordo/fat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mojado/wet</td>
<td>seco/dry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alto/tall</td>
<td>pequeño/small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arriba/above</td>
<td>abajo/below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sí/yes</td>
<td>no/no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One more book about opposites to try is this one:


Try this rhyme as a call-and-response:
LOS OPUENTOS
Yo digo nuevo, tú dices viejo.
Yo digo arriba, tú dices abajo.
Yo digo frío, tú dices calor.
Yo digo dormido, tú dices despierto.

OPPONITES
I say new, you say old.
I say up, you say down.
I say cold, you say hot.
I say sleep, you say awake.

Additional Books
Here are a few more books about opposites that you can display for parents to check out:


Closing Rhyme
End your program with a closing rhyme or song. Be sure to send home a flier with the titles of the books you read, the words to the songs and rhymes, and a list of reading tips.

PROGRAM 7: THE SENSES / LOS SENTIDOS

Opening Rhyme
Begin your program with your welcome rhyme in Spanish and English. Invite parents to participate with their children.

Vocabulary Activity
Talk about the five senses—sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste. In Spanish they are la vista, el oído, el tacto, el olfato, and el gusto.

Book
Start with the following book available in Spanish and in English:

Call-and-Response Rhyme

Here’s a rhyme to recite that you can do as a call-and-response, first in Spanish and then in English:

**MIS CINCO SENTIDOS**
- Una boquita para comer,
- Mi naricita para oler,
- Mis dos ojitos para ver,
- Mis dos orejitas para oír,
- ¿Y mi cabecita?
- Para dormir.

**MY FIVE SENSES**
- A small mouth for eating,
- My little nose for smelling,
- My two little eyes for seeing,
- My two little ears for hearing,
- And my head?
- For sleeping.

**Book**

This next book is about taste. Although it is available only in Spanish, you can read through it once and then have your toddlers and parents help you by telling you what they see on each page in English.


**Rhyme**

Now ask your group of toddlers to point to their mouth, nose, eyes, ears, and head when you say each one and then to repeat after you with this simple rhyme.

- Una boca para comer,
- Una nariz para oler.
- Dos ojos para ver,
- Dos orejas para oír,
- Y una cabeza para dormir.

- One mouth to eat,
- One nose to smell,
- Two eyes to see,
- Two ears to hear,
- And one head to sleep.

**Book**

If your group is doing well with attention and participation, share a third book. You will be the best to decide on when to stop.

**Motion Rhyme**

Next, you can share this motion rhyme and do all the motions with your group:

**MIS MANITAS**

Tengo dos manitas.
Dos manitas especiales.
Pueden aplaudir.
Pueden girar.
Y pueden abrazarse
Como dos amigas.

**MY LITTLE HANDS**

I have two little hands.
Two very special little hands.
They can clap.
They can roll.
And they can give each other a hug
Just like two friends.

**Additional Books**

The following books can be shared with parents as you encourage them to check them out:


**Closing Rhyme**

End your program with a closing rhyme or song. Be sure to send home a flier with the titles of the books you read, the words to the songs and rhymes, and a list of reading tips.

**PROGRAM 8: TRANSPORTATION / EL TRANSPORTE**

**Opening Rhyme**

Begin your program with your welcome rhyme in Spanish and English. Invite parents to participate with their children.

**Vocabulary Activity**

You can talk about different types of transportation. You can borrow a few toys like a car, a boat, a bicycle, and an airplane, or you can show pictures of these items. Identify each item in Spanish and in English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>el barco</td>
<td>boat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>el coche</td>
<td>car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>el avión</td>
<td>airplane</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
la bicicleta  |  bicycle
el metro    |  subway
el taxi     |  taxi

**Book**

Read this book about Maisy that is available in Spanish and in English:


**Song**

This next song was first translated into Spanish by the musician José-Luis Orozco. I have combined his version with one I learned. Sing this song and do all the motions with your toddlers:

**LAS RUEDAS DEL CAMIÓN**

Las ruedas del camión van  
Dando vueltas,  
Dando vueltas,  
Dando vueltas,
Las ruedas del camión van
Dando vueltas,
Por la ciudad.

La gente en el camión  
Salta y salta . . .

Los limpiadores del camión hacen  
Swish, swish, swish . . .

Las monedas del camión hacen  
Clink, clink, clink . . .

El bebé en el camión hace,  
“Ña, ña, ña . . .”

La mamá en el camión hace,  
“Shish, shish, shish . . .”

**THE WHEELS ON THE BUS**

The wheels on the bus go  
Round and round,
Round and round.

The wheels on the bus go  
Round and round,
All through the town.

The people on the bus go  
Up and down . . .

The wipers on the bus go  
Swish, swish, swish . . .

The money on the bus goes  
Plink, plink, plink . . .

The baby on the bus goes,  
“Waa, waa, waa . . .”

The mother on the bus goes,  
“Shh, shh, shh . . .”
El chofer en el camión dice,  The driver on the bus says,
“Pasen para atrás . . .”     “Move on back . . .”

Las puertas del camión  The doors on the bus go
Se abren y se cierran . . . Open and shut . . .

Las ruedas del camión van . . . The wheels on the bus go . . .

**Book**

Next, you can share this bilingual book:


**Song**

Sing this song or recite it as a call-and-response rhyme:

**VAMOS A REMAR**
Ven, ven, ven acá
Vamos a remar
Rema, que rema, que rema,
que rema,
La vida es como un sueño.

**ROW YOUR BOAT**
Row, row, row your boat
Gently down the stream
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily
Life is but a dream.

**Book**

Another book that you might share is this one about Teresa and her shiny new car, a gift from her grandpa:


**Rhyme**

This is a traditional nonsense rhyme that rhymes in Spanish but certainly loses the rhyme in the English translation:

**EL QUE SE FUE A SEVILLA**
El que se fue a Sevilla
Perdió su silla.
El que se fue a Aragón
Perdió su sillón.

**HE WHO WENT TO SEVILLE**
He who went to Seville
Lost his chair.
He who went to Aragon
Lost the whole sofa.
Additional Books

Here are some books to have on hand for parents to check out:


Closing Rhyme

End your program with a closing rhyme or song. Be sure to send home a flier with the titles of the books you read, the words to the songs and rhymes, and a list of reading tips.