



Fast Start in Action

The *Fast Start* routine is simple: for ten minutes each weeknight, families and children read a short poem and then engage in developmentally appropriate, skill-building activities together.

The Poem Pages

The sixty poems in the program have been selected for early readers. You'll find many classic nursery rhymes, simple, engaging poems, and even poems that can be sung to familiar tunes. There are enough poems to copy and send home one or even two per week for the better part of the school year. A few weeks into the school year, have families and children begin the program by spending at least two days with one poem. (For a more advanced class, you might send home four poems each week and have families work with a different poem each night. With this arrangement, you will complete the program in half a school year.) You can select poems according to curriculum themes or phonic elements (see pages 18–19), or simply go in order.

The parent-child reading has several purposes. Families model fluent and effective reading and provide support for children's efforts. The repeated reading leads to children's own reading fluency and sight word acquisition, and provides authentic texts for the development of additional reading skills and strategies.

The Family Pages

After parent and child have read the poem several times, they begin playing with the words from the poems. All these activities are quick and fun, and are designed for children to complete them successfully.

There are three levels of family activities based on the needs of the child. **Simply check the box next to the appropriate level on the log sheet (page 17).** In this way, you can use the same poems with all children, but differentiate the support children receive according to their developmental needs.

1

Pat-a-Cake

**Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake,
Baker s man,
Bake me a cake
As fast as you can.
Pat it and prick it
And mark it with a T.
Put it in the oven
For Tommy and me.**

Looking at Words and Letters

These activities, most appropriate for children who are just learning about reading, focus on concepts about print and letter recognition.

Playing With Sounds

These activities, for emergent readers, focus on phonemic awareness and word families, and are most appropriate for children who are just developing phonemic awareness and phonics skills.

Beginning to Read

These activities are the most developmentally challenging and focus on decoding words and sight vocabulary. They are designed for children who have begun formal reading and phonics instruction in school.

1

Pat-a-Cake

Looking at Words and Letters

- 1. Ask your child how many lines are in the poem. Invite him or her to number the lines.
- 2. Ask, "Which is the longest line? How many words does it have?"
- 3. Ask your child to find separator B. Say, "Which word is Baker's? Circle it. Which word is 'Bake'?" Underline it.
- 4. Have your child point to the first and last word in the poem, and then count all the words.

Playing With Sounds

- 1. Say, "I'll say two words. You tell me if they rhyme."

man, can	can, cake	cake, bake
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- 2. Say, "Listen while I stretch out the sounds in these words. You tell me the words:

p . . . aas . . . t [pat]
m . . . aas . . . in [man]
b . . . ay . . . k [bake]
- 3. Say, "I'll say two words. You tell me if they start the same way:

man, mark	cake, bake	pat, put
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Beginning to Read

- 1. Write the following words on index cards or small slips of paper. Ask your child to sort them into two groups: long "a" words and short "a" words.

pat, man, fast, and (short "a")	cake, bake, baker's (long "a")
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- 2. Ask your child to circle the words in the poem that start with the sound "b." Repeat with "p."
- 3. Write the word man on a sheet of paper. Ask your child to name other words that rhyme with man (fan, ban, can, Dan, fan, pan, ran, tan). Together, write these new words.
- 4. Together, choose two or three words from the poem. Add them to your word wall and practice these words daily. Or, add them to your child's word bank (a collection of words on cards, one word per card).

Fast Start for Early Readers: Scholastic Teaching Resources, page 25

Itsy Bitsy Spider

**The itsy bitsy spider
Climbed up the water spout.
Down came the rain
And washed the spider out.
Out came the sun
And dried up all the rain.
And the itsy bitsy spider
Climbed up the spout again.**



Itsy Bitsy Spider

★ 2 ★

★ Looking at Words and Letters

- 1. Ask your child to find the shortest line in the poem and then count the words in that line.
- 2. Ask your child to find and underline each "s" in the poem.
- 3. Ask, *What is this poem about?*

★ Playing With Sounds

- 1. Say, *Let's change the word rain. What if we added "t" to the beginning? What word would that be?* (train) *What if the word started with "p"?* (pain) *What if it started with "spr"?* (sprain)
- 2. Say, *I will stretch out some words. You tell me what they are:*
rrr...aaay...nnn (rain)
c...aaay...mmm (came)
- 3. Say, *Now you try it. Stretch these words out:* sun, spider.

★ Beginning to Read

- 1. Ask your child to name some words that rhyme with *sun*. Write them as your child says them. To start off, offer some beginning sounds: "b," "f."
- 2. Say, *Do these words end with the same sound?*
itsy, bitsy down, came and, rain spout, out
- 3. Ask your child to draw a picture of the poem, then tell you what it is about.
- 4. Write *spout* on a sheet of paper. Point out the letters *-out*. Brainstorm, write, and read other words that rhyme and explain that all these words belong to the *-out* word family.
- 5. Together, choose two or three words from the poem. Add them to your word wall and practice these words daily. Or add them to your child's word bank (a collection of words on cards, one word per card).