



Cocoon
empowering our children



Singing

together



Traditional English
Nursery Rhymes



It is my pleasure to share with all of you a compilation of 20 English traditional nursery rhymes as part of our 'Singing Time' project funded by Heritage Fund. After 4 years of running weekly toddler playgroup sessions at local venues and working closely with hundreds of families, we became aware of the importance of music as a universal language. Each country has traditional songs that have remained popular over time and interestingly, every nursery rhyme has an origin and a meaning that is part of a valuable heritage. Unfortunately, the information available is not always that clear and you might find different sources with different versions. But we did manage to find some facts to share with families and we have included some of these in the booklet.

Our 'Singing Time' project involved running 14 sessions with families and their children under 5, focusing on 2 songs per session and engaging in activities such as dancing, role-play and crafts. Our local families had the opportunity to discover and learn traditional songs, some of which were new to them. Not only that, but we brought the songs to life with a guitar, thanks to our facilitator Stella Bouchouna and our support member Vanessa Harrison. It was lovely to witness how our participants joined in the singing and dancing, transforming the children's area at Dagenham library into a magical space.

I would like to thank Heritage Fund for sponsoring this project; Dagenham Learning Centre for their ongoing support; our team for delivering and most importantly, our local families for their great participation and engagement. Building community is at the heart of what we do and projects like this are aimed at strengthening the opportunities to come together and support each other.

We hope you enjoy interacting with this booklet and using it with your children. There are positive benefits to a child's development and skills when they are exposed to music during the early years.

Natalia Lema

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London Bridge Is Falling Down

London Bridge is falling down,
Falling down, falling down.
London Bridge is falling down,
My fair lady.

Build it up with wood and clay,
Wood and clay, wood and clay.
Build it up with wood and clay,
My fair Lady.

Wood and clay will wash away,
Wash away, wash away.
Wood and clay will wash away,
My fair Lady.

When London Bridge was completed centuries ago, it had shops and houses on it, and for five hundred years it was the only bridge across the Thames in London.

This song is so popular that it can be found in many different versions all over the world.

Dingle Dangle Scarecrow

When all the cows were sleeping
And the sun had gone to bed,
Up jumped the scarecrow
And this is what he said...

Chorus:
I'm a dingle, dangle scarecrow
With a great big floppy hat,
I can shake my hands like this
And I can shake my feet like that.

When all the hens were roosting
And the moon behind a cloud,
Up jumped the scarecrow
And shouted very loud!

[Loud chorus]

When dogs were in the kennels
And doves were in the loft,
Up jumped the scarecrow
And whispered very soft...

[Soft chorus]



Most people believe this is a traditional nursery rhyme, but in fact it's a song written by Mollie Russell-Smith (lyrics) and her brother Geoffry Russell-Smith (music) from England.

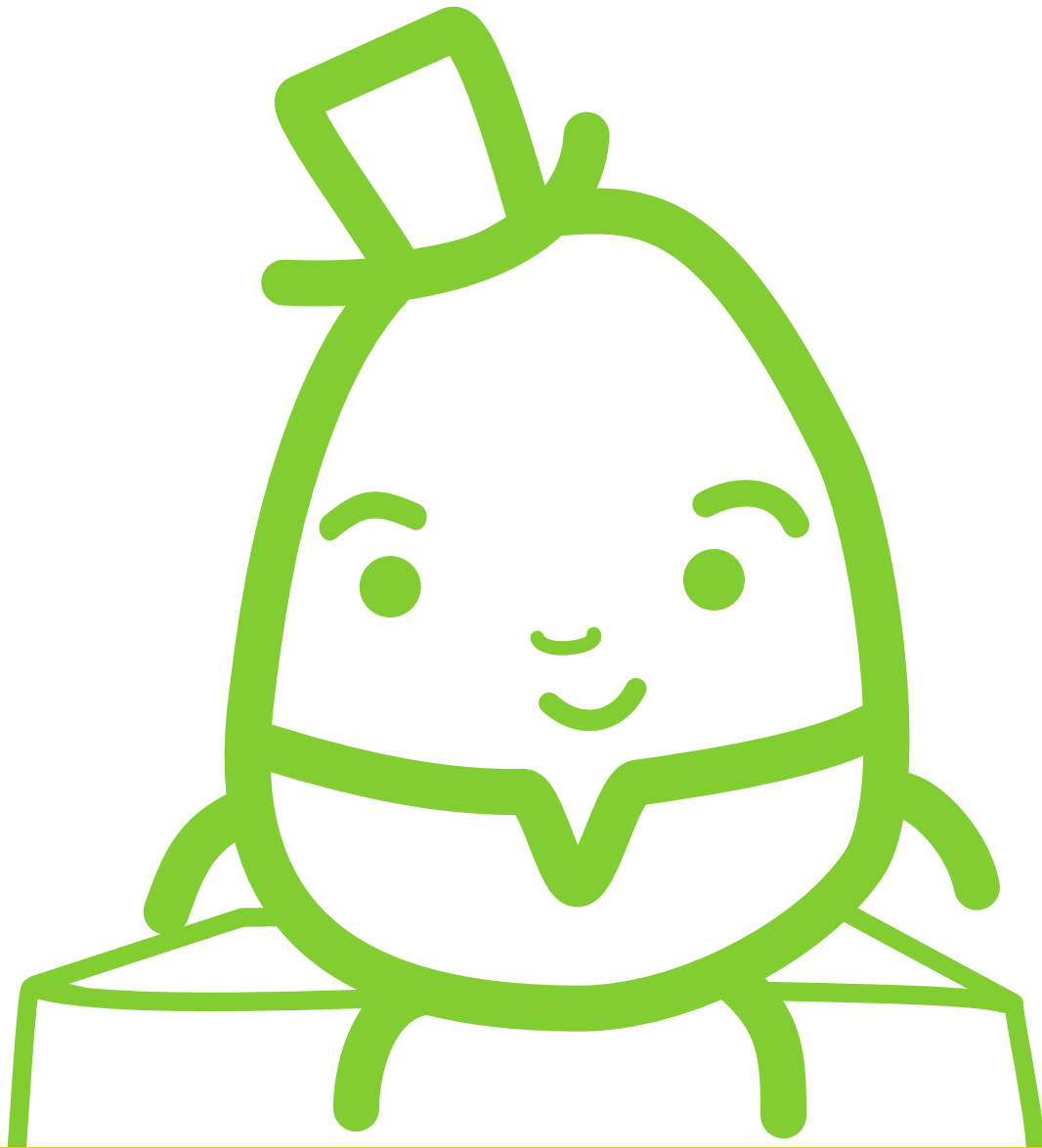
The original version was first published in London in 1964.



Pat-a-Cake

Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker's man,
Bake me a cake as fast as you can.
Roll it, pat it, and mark it with a B,
Throw it in the oven for Baby and me.

Families without an oven would take their items to their local baker, marking them to ensure they received the correct one back.



Humpty Dumpty

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the king's horses and all the king's men
Couldn't put Humpty together again.

Some historians believe Humpty Dumpty was simply a device for a riddle about breakable things. The first recorded version of the rhyme dates back to 1797. Due to the fragility of Humpty Dumpty that was revealed in his fall, the character has often been portrayed as an egg.

Oranges and Lemons

Oranges and lemons,
Say the bells of St. Clement's.

You owe me five farthings,
Say the bells of St. Martin's.

When will you pay me?
Say the bells at Old Bailey.

When I grow rich,
Say the bells at Shoreditch.

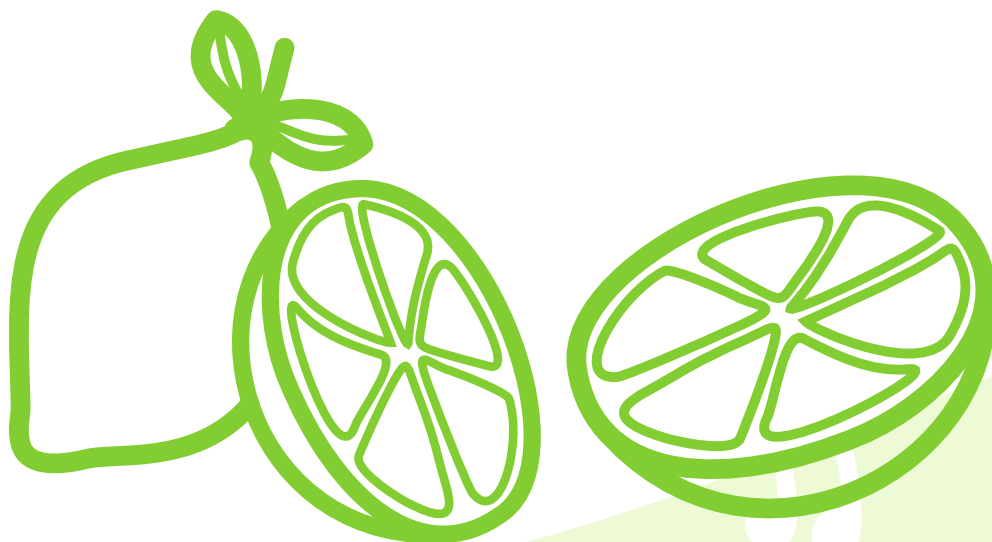
When will that be?
Say the bells of Stepney.

I do not know,
Says the great bell at Bow.

Here comes a candle to light you to bed,
here comes a candle to light you to bed.

This song is a traditional English nursery rhyme, folk song and singing game which refers to the bells of several churches, all within or close to London.

Some churches in London still play "Oranges and Lemons" to this day.





Jack and Jill

Jack and Jill went up the hill
To fetch a pail of water;
Jack fell down and broke his crown
And Jill came tumbling after.

Up Jack got and home did trot,
As fast as he could caper;
Went to bed to mend his head
With vinegar and brown paper.

Some people say that a hill in Somerset was the inspiration for this nursery rhyme and others believe that Jack and Jill were real people who lived at some point.

Hey Diddle Diddle

Hey diddle, diddle!
The cat and the fiddle,
The cow jumped over the moon;
The little dog laughed
To see such sport,
And the dish ran away with the spoon.



This rhyme is the source of the English expression "over the moon", meaning "delighted, thrilled, extremely happy".



Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush

Here we go round the mulberry bush,
The mulberry bush, the mulberry bush.
Here we go round the mulberry bush
On a cold and frosty morning.

This is the way we wash our face,
Wash our face, wash our face.
This is the way we wash our face
On a cold and frosty morning.

This is the way we comb our hair,
Comb our hair, comb our hair.
This is the way we comb our hair
On a cold and frosty morning.

This is the way we brush our teeth,
Brush our teeth, brush our teeth.
This is the way we brush our teeth
On a cold and frosty morning.

This is the way we put on our clothes,
Put on our clothes, put on our clothes.
This is the way we put on our clothes
On a cold and frosty morning.

Here we go round the mulberry bush,
The mulberry bush, the mulberry bush.
Here we go round the mulberry bush
On a cold and frosty morning.

This song has parallels in some European countries. Children hold hands and move in a circle in the first verse, and then they imitate the various actions.



Ten in a Bed

There were TEN in the bed and the little one said,
'Roll over, roll over!'

So they all rolled over and one fell out...

There were NINE in the bed and the little one said...

There were EIGHT in the bed and the little one said...

There were SEVEN in the bed and the little one said...

There were SIX in the bed and the little one said...

There were FIVE in the bed and the little one said...

There were FOUR in the bed and the little one said...

There were THREE in the bed and the little one said...

There were TWO in the bed and the little one said...

There was ONE in the bed and the little one said,
'Good night!'

The origin of this nursery rhyme is unknown, but it is extremely popular for teaching counting in preschools and early childhood school classes.



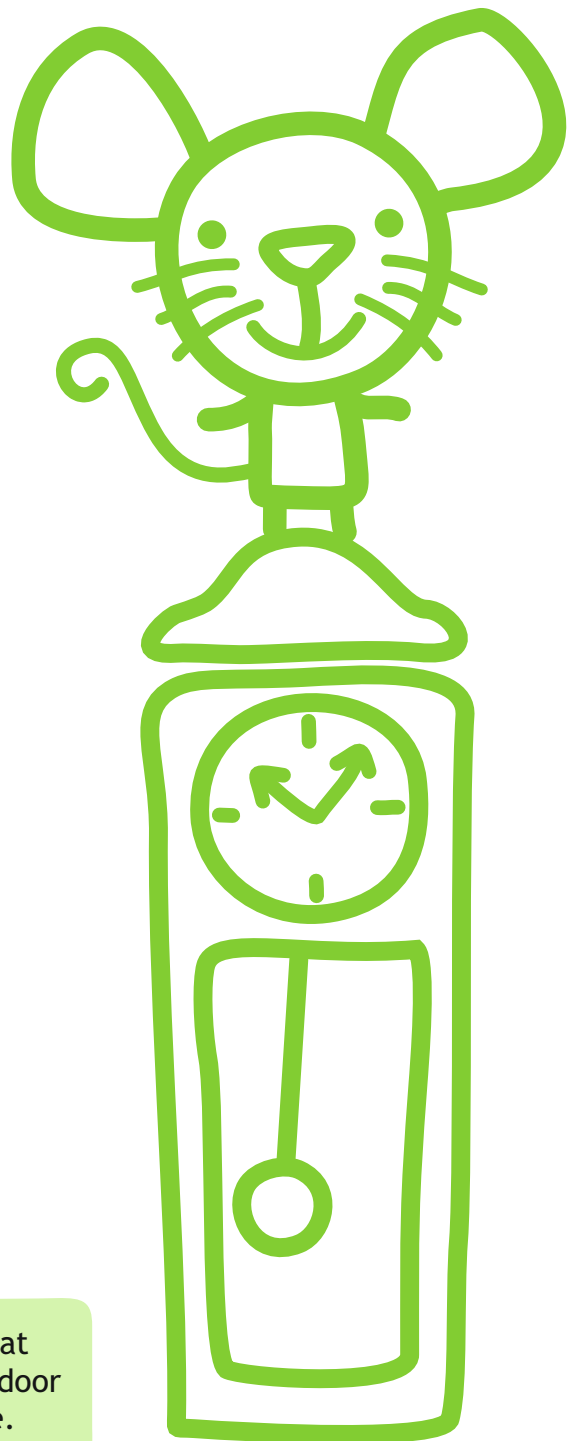
Hickory Dickory Dock

Hickory dickory dock,
The mouse ran up the clock.
The clock struck one,
The mouse ran down,
Hickory dickory dock.

Hickory dickory dock,
The mouse ran up the clock.
The clock struck two,
The mouse ran down,
Hickory dickory dock.

Hickory dickory dock,
The mouse ran up the clock.
The clock struck three,
The mouse ran down,
Hickory dickory dock.

Hickory dickory dock
The mouse ran up the clock.
The clock struck four,
The mouse ran down,
Hickory dickory dock.



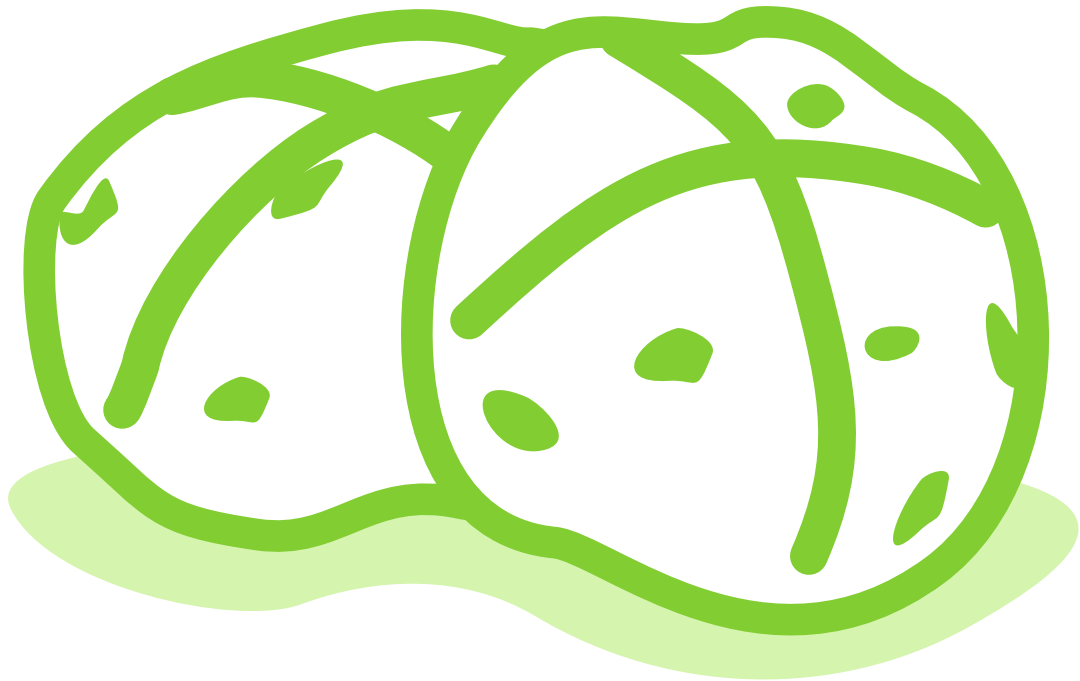
This rhyme is believed to be based on the clock at Exeter Cathedral, which has a small hole in the door below the face for the resident cat to hunt mice.

Mary, Mary

Mary, Mary, quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?
With silver bells, and cockle shells,
And pretty maids all in a row.

This rhyme has been seen as having religious and historical significance, but its origins and meaning are unclear.





Hot Cross Buns

Hot cross buns!
Hot cross buns!
One a penny, two a penny,
Hot cross buns!

If you have no daughters,
Give them to your sons.
One a penny, two a penny,
Hot cross buns!

Hot cross buns - sticky-sweet spiced buns marked with a cross - have traditionally been eaten for breakfast during Easter and it's believed that an Anglican monk first baked the buns to honour Good Friday as early as the 12th century. This rhyme was often used by street sellers.



Horsey, Horsey

Horsey, horsey, don't you stop,
Just let your feet go clipity clop.
Your tail goes swish and your wheels go round,
Giddy up, we're homeward bound.
Horsey, horsey, on your way,
We've got a journey of many a day.
Your tail goes swish and your wheels go round,
Giddy up, we're homeward bound.
We ain't in a hustle,
We ain't in a bustle,
Don't go tearing up the road.
We ain't in a hurry,
We ain't in a flurry,
And we ain't got a very heavy load.
So Horsey, horsey, on your way,
We've got a journey of many a day.
Your tail goes swish and your wheels go round,
Giddy up, we're homeward bound.

Horsey, Horsey is a comedy song written in 1937 and is suitable for teaching children different speeds, tempos, rhythms, and tones of voice.

The Grand Old Duke of York

Oh, the grand old Duke of York,
He had ten thousand men;
He marched them up to the top of the hill,
And he marched them down again.

When they were up, they were up,
And when they were down, they were down,
And when they were only halfway up,
They were neither up nor down.



This popular nursery rhyme is believed to refer to a not very successful military commander, probably from the early 19th century, although its origins may go further back than that.

Lavender's Blue

Lavender's blue, dilly dilly, lavender's green,
When I am king, dilly dilly, you shall be queen:
Who told you so, dilly dilly, who told you so?
'Twas mine own heart, dilly dilly, that told me so.

Call up your men, dilly dilly, set them to work,
Some with a rake, dilly dilly, some with a fork;
Some to make hay, dilly dilly, some to thresh corn,
Whilst you and I, dilly dilly, keep ourselves warm.

If you should die, dilly dilly, as it may hap,
You shall be buried, dilly dilly, under the tap;
Who told you so, dilly dilly, pray tell me why?
That you might drink, dilly dilly, when you are dry.



This song was originally known as a playful love song. The earliest surviving version of it was found printed in England between 1672 and 1679.



Girls and Boys, Come Out to Play

Girls and boys, come out to play,
The moon doth shine as bright as day;
Leave your supper, and leave your sleep,
And come with your playfellows into the street.

Come with a whoop, come with a call,
Come with a good will or not at all.
Up the ladder and down the wall,
A halfpenny roll will serve us all.

You find milk, and I'll find flour,
And we'll have a pudding in half an hour.

This nursery rhyme may date back to the time when children were expected to work during the daylight hours, so play was relegated to the evening.





This Old Man

This old man, he played one,
He played knick-knack on my thumb (or drum);
With a knick-knack paddywhack,
Give a dog a bone,
This old man came rolling home.

This old man, he played two,
He played knick-knack on my shoe;
With a knick-knack paddywhack,
Give a dog a bone,
This old man came rolling home.

This old man, he played three,
He played knick-knack on my knee;
With a knick-knack paddywhack,
Give a dog a bone,
This old man came rolling home.

This old man, he played four,
He played knick-knack on my door;
With a knick-knack paddywhack,
Give a dog a bone,
This old man came rolling home.

This old man, he played five,
He played knick-knack on my hive;
With a knick-knack paddywhack,
Give a dog a bone,
This old man came rolling home.

This old man, he played six,
He played knick-knack on my sticks;
With a knick-knack paddywhack,

Give a dog a bone,
This old man came rolling home.

This old man, he played seven,
He played knick-knack up in Heaven;
With a knick-knack paddywhack,
Give a dog a bone,
This old man came rolling home.

This old man, he played eight,
He played knick-knack on my gate;
With a knick-knack paddywhack,
Give a dog a bone,
This old man came rolling home.

This old man, he played nine,
He played knick-knack on my line (or spine);
With a knick-knack paddywhack,
Give a dog a bone,
This old man came rolling home.

This old man, he played ten,
He played knick-knack over again;
With a knick-knack paddywhack,
Give a dog a bone,
This old man came rolling home.

This nursery rhyme was first published in 1906 and is quite popular despite the fact that some words are difficult to pronounce. It is commonly used as a great way for children to learn counting in a fun way. The origin of This Old Man can be traced back to Wales around 1870.



Sing a Song of Sixpence

Sing a song of sixpence,
A pocket full of rye.
Four and twenty blackbirds
Baked in a pie.

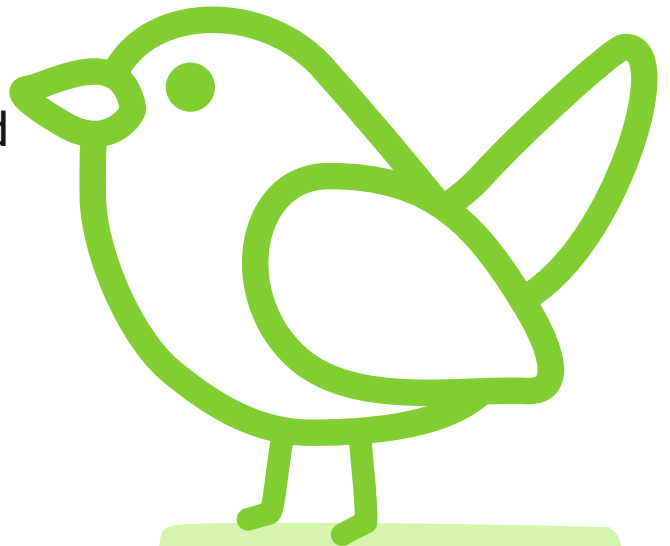
When the pie was opened,
The birds began to sing;
Wasn't that a dainty (or dandy) dish
To set before the king?

The king was in his counting house,
Counting out his money;
The queen was in the parlour,
Eating bread and honey.

The maid was in the garden,
Hanging out the clothes,
When down came a blackbird
And pecked off her nose.

And shortly after that,
There came a little wren,
As she sat upon a chair,
And put it on again.

They sent for the king's doctor,
Who sewed it on again;
He sewed it on so neatly,
The seam was never seen.



This rhyme has been linked to a variety of historical events or symbols from folklore, such as the queen symbolizing the moon, the king the sun, and the blackbirds the number of hours in a day.

Doctor Foster

Doctor Foster went to Gloucester,
In a shower of rain;
He stepped in a puddle,
Right up to his middle,
And never went there again.



This rhyme may be based on the story of a King of England travelling to Gloucester, falling off his horse into a puddle, and refusing to return to the city thereafter.

The rhyming of 'puddle' with 'middle' suggests that the word may have originally been the archaic 'piddle' which means a stream.

Ring-a-Ring o' Roses

Ring-a-ring o' roses,
A pocket full of posies,
A-tishoo! A-tishoo!
We all fall down.



At one point it was believed that this nursery rhyme was connected to the Great Plague, but no evidence has been found to support this.



“Thank you for the opportunity to have so much fun with my son. He loves singing the children’s rhymes. His favourite is 5 little monkeys. He likes the art and crafts afterwards and continues to play with it at home. I wish this project to continue. Thank you to the Early Years Cocoon team”.

“I attend Singing Time sessions with both my kids, 1 and 3 years old. Thanks to this project I could introduce them to music. What I love most is the sensory environment that has been created with also a part of it dedicated to some songs themed crafts”.

“Good organized group combining the singing with the craft related to the song. My little one always runs with

excitement to join the group. Looking forward to carry on with it. Thank you for such a wonderful work”.

“My daughter enjoys the rhymes with the musical instrument. I really appreciate the hand craft for each rhyme. We are looking forward to sing every Tuesday. Great service Natalia and Stella. Thank you very much”.

“What an amazing journey this has been! It was so rewarding to see the children joining in the singing, playing with the instruments and engaging with their parents as well as with each other for craft time! Music brought every one of us together and it has been an honour for me to be with all the families! Thank you for joining me!”. Stella, facilitator



**Barking &
Dagenham**

Early Years Cocoon C.I.C. is a company that was founded with the aim of benefiting the community and in particular families with young children.

Our objectives are: to develop supportive services for families with young children; to promote positive parenting by focusing on the learning and development of the child; to strengthen social, communication and artistic skills in young children and their parents; to share creative and educational practice to ensure the well-being of children through a supportive family; and to create multidisciplinary stimuli for children by engaging with other local community organisations and individuals.

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