

Cumbria County Council
Chat Play Share
Rhymes and songs

Row, row, row your boat

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

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

<https://wordsforlife.org.uk/activities/row-row-row-your-boat/>

Birth – 2 years



Put your baby on your lap facing you or sit them opposite you and hold their hands. 'Row' backwards and forwards in time to the music as you sing the song nice and slowly.

Play together with a boat in the bath (or a clean container which floats). Make the sound 'b,b,b,b,b,' as you move the boat around the bath. If your child makes a sound in reply, copy them.

2-3 years



Once the song is familiar, pause when singing it with your child and see if they can add in the next word.

Add in actions with sounds for the different versions of the song, encourage your child to join in to and have fun making the different voice sounds. E.g. 'brrrrrr' as you pretend to shiver.

3-4 years



Challenge your child to sing their favourite version of the song to another family member. This could be done virtually.

Pretend to be pirates. Give your child simple spoken instructions to follow to find hidden treasure. Try adding in some two-part instructions, for example, 'go up the stairs and look in your bedroom'.

Chat Play Share...Other ideas you could try....

Share some other versions of the song together or have a go at making up your own!

Rock, rock, rock your boat, gently to the shore, if you see a dinosaur, don't forget to roar.

Row, row, row your boat, gently up the creek, if you see a crocodile, don't forget to shriek.

Row, row, row your boat, across the reservoir, if you see a pirate, stop and say ooo-arrr.

Row, row, row your boat, gently down the creek, if you see a little mouse, don't forget to shriek.

Row, row, row your boat, quickly across the lake, if you see a rattle snake, don't forget to shake.

Share a story together about a boat/water and chat about the pictures and story. Examples of stories:

- Goat in a boat by Lesley Sims
- Ten little pirates by Mike Brownlow and Simon Rickerty
- Brilliant boats by Tony Mitton and Ant Parker
- Class three all at sea by Julia Jarmon
- Pirates next door by Jonny Duddle

Electronic versions of stories can also often be found online.

Talk about the words that rhyme in the different versions of the song (e.g. shore/roar, river/shiver). Make up silly sentences together by finding some more words that rhyme, for example 'a goat in a coat in the boat'.

Find a big box and use it as a boat. Act out the song whilst you sing it or pretend you are going on a journey.

With older children, follow your child's lead and chat about where they are going and what they can see. Talk about what else you might need and add some props for pretend play, for example, wooden spoons for oars or a cardboard tube telescope.

