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The Pre-school Learning Alliance Book of Nursery Rhymes; Jack and Jill: A Book of Nursery Rhymes; Grace and Family; Two of Everything

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With recent research flagging up the importance of rhyme awareness to children's successful development as readers, it is good to see these two new collections of nursery rhymes. Are not these rhymes the basics we should be encouraging all Early Years educators, both at home and school, to be getting back to?

Would that all carers were able to pop a copy of **The Pre-school Learning Alliance Book of Nursery Rhymes** into their shopping trolley as I saw one doing at my local supermarket last week. This attractive (and cheap) hardback has some 50 traditional rhymes packed (somewhat squeezed in a few instances) into 14 loosely thematic double page spreads.

Thus we have five weather rhymes enclosed within a border of kite fliers, snowmen and windmills, and a spread featuring cherries, pancakes, pease pudding and pies surrounded by a border of those edible goodies, ingredients, utensils and cooks - both male and female. Every border has at each corner an image of a boy and girl reading for themselves - an added reminder that reading should be the cornerstone for enjoyment. The rhymes are set firmly in our present day multi-racial society and illustrated with jaunty playfulness.

Jack and Jill is a square paperback with an index of rhymes included. Each rhyme is given a whole page (or occasionally two). And there is more than one history lesson to be had from Ogden's illustrations which set them in an

Edwardian England when (well off) children wore sailor suits, breeches, frilly pinafores and straw hats and played with wicker-work prams, hobby horses and wooden toy soldiers, and grocers sported bow ties and stood behind counters with shelves stacked with cloth-topped preserve jars and marble-stoppered bottles.

There is a sprinkling of lesser-known rhymes in each book and one hopes that both volumes will find a place in classrooms and homes so that a new generation of children in their first years will have the chance to make all the rhymes a part of their heritage.

Running Order:

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