



April is National Poetry Month

From <http://www2.scholastic.com> By Stephanie Izarek



Children are born poets; they just need your help to know it. Poetry requires us to look at the world from a unique perspective, to daydream, to imagine, laugh and pretend—all things that children do naturally. Poems help us make sense of ideas and feelings in ways that everyday language cannot. The playful rhythms, silly rhymes, nonsensical words, and short form of poetry also grab children's attention and give them a chance to succeed with language. In the words of poet Allen Ginsburg, "Poetry is ordinary magic."

Here are some ways to explore the world of poetry together and get your child's creativity flowing.

Read it Aloud— Many adults are intimidated by conventions of poetic form, but poetry—especially children's poetry is full of wonder, energy, and a sense of humor. Read poetry by different poets to find those you like; a love of poetry is contagious, so be enthusiastic!

Put poetry in print — Kids love to see their writing in print. Even if your child can't yet write, he can dictate his poems to you. Typing up your child's poetry preserves and honors his ideas and makes them available to others. Invite him to illustrate the poem he created.

Create a collage poem. Poets are word collectors. Encourage your child to search for words and phrases, in all sizes and colors, from various sources—magazines, cereal boxes, and so on—and cut them out. Explain that you will make "poem art" by gluing these found words into a collage that can

Find a poem in your child's name.

This type of poetry, known as acrostic, encourages word associations and playful nonsense. Your child's name becomes the "spine" words. Each letter of her name is a seed for a new word. Invite her to think of words that begin with each letter—the new words can relate to her name, things she loves to do, or nothing at all.

Make a silly poem together. Read some poems with silly, made-up words, such as "Jabberwocky" by Lewis Carroll or selections from Shel Silverstein's book, *Runny Babbit*.

Find some rhymes. This is an exercise in wordplay. Pick a word and invite your child to think of all the words that rhyme with it. Keep a list of the words he says. Then, together, see if you can create a poem from the list.

Poetry Websites:
www.gigglepoetry.com

www.poetry4kids.com

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