

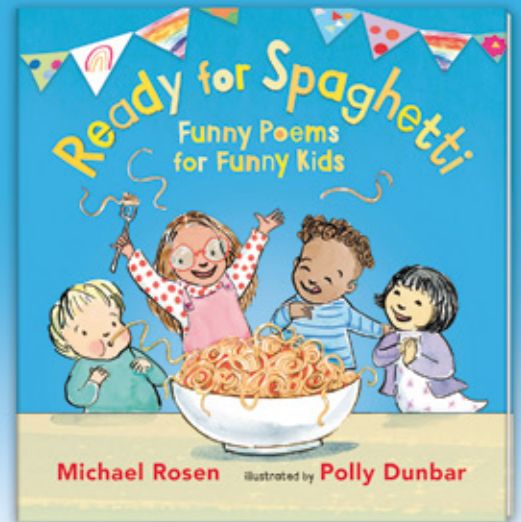
Storytelling fun with

Ready for Spaghetti!

Funny Poems for Funny Kids

Michael Rosen

illustrated by **Polly Dunbar**



9781406377644 • HB • £14.99

This book is a playful resource of little poems and expressive pictures exploring sounds, senses and feelings. You can read it one-to-one or in a group, you can use it as a springboard for creative writing or to encourage speaking and listening and you can choose just one poem or read several together!



PREPARING:

I recommend you read the book to yourself first to get a sense of the variety of subjects. Use the pictures to help understand the mood. Speak the words aloud and enjoy playing with the different sounds. Some of the words don't make sense! Rosen said he hopes children will copy the sounds and play with words, using them creatively and expressively. Adults should do this too! It's all about different sounds and feelings. Above all have fun with it, this is a book that it's impossible to get "wrong"!

If you are going to share the book in a storytime setting, I recommend choosing a few poems and exploring them rather than reading every single one from start to finish. You can choose by topic or just pick pages which appeal to you.

This book is suitable for adults with children and babies together. It's all about encouraging them to share language play with their little ones so encourage them to join in, get them saying the words, making up nonsense and doing all the actions.



You can advertise the storytime as an "active session with movement and sounds to make together" then everyone will know what to expect.

It's lovely to relax and let people come and go or join in however they like. It can be helpful to have a breakout or separate space for people to take their little ones if they feel grumpy or tired.



STORYTIME IDEAS:

Get everyone sat comfortably with their children in a safe and quiet space without distractions.

The book starts with a waking-up poem called "Up" and finishes with a bedtime poem "Goodnight". You will find these useful for getting everyone started and for finishing the session gently. "Up" works brilliantly as a warm up song. Ask everyone to chant or repeat "up, up uppity up", starting silently and getting gently louder. Encourage everyone to use actions, you could ask them to stretch their arms down low when you are whispering very quietly and get them to raise their arms higher and higher as the whispering gets louder. Use a bright and happy tone of voice - don't get too loud!

At the end of the poem, everyone can pretend to open a door together and look out at a sunny day.



If you finish with the poem "Goodnight" you can help everyone into a calm mood by asking them to gently repeat "hush and a hush". Spend some time doing this until everyone is feeling relaxed and calm. You could whisper the words or experiment with a simple repeating melody to sing it like a lullaby. Adults could join in with this poem while rocking their little ones and cuddling the children as if rocking them to sleep.

Spend time enjoying and exploring each poem, appreciating the gentle illustrations and repeating or singing lines together, maybe adding actions or props.

ACTIONS:

Movements will bring the words alive and are an easy way for everyone to join in. Allow the illustrations to guide you. Some of the poems like "Jumping" have very clear and obvious actions (either ask everyone to jump up and down or get the adults to bounce children on their lap). Other poems are less obvious, so be creative! For example, with the poem "Long Leggy Egg" you could ask the adults to wiggle the children's legs for them every time you say "long leggy egg"! At the end, if it feels appropriate, the grownup could pretend to nibble their baby's head, ("gobble you up!").

If you are inventing actions, keep them simple and broad so everyone can follow easily. Use the whole body, arms, legs and head – not just the hands.

Take your time and make sure everyone has had a few goes and knows what to do.



PROPS: A FEW IDEAS

Props can be fun and can add a bit of “wow” to your storytime. Use them sparingly, maybe just pick one or two.

Audience can take off their own shoes and tap them on the ground in marching time for “Here They Come”.

You could find a funny or wonky toy animal for “Grover Fell Over” and ‘try’ to make it stand up. If you pantomime exasperation and surprise every time your toy falls over, toddlers are likely to find this very funny!

You could dim the lights and turn on a string of fairy lights for “The Stars”.

If you are reading the poem “Bubble” you could use real bubbles at the end.

For “Teddy” you could bring a real teddy and get everyone to have a go pointing their fingers on its nose. Ask adults to do it first and their children will copy them.

REPETITION:

Repetition is your friend! These are poems which will continue to give with every repeat. I recommend chanting individual lines over and over, enjoying the sounds and “feel” of the words. You can repeat a whole poem several times so everyone gets the hang of joining in. If you have a favourite one you could also return to it in several different storytime sessions!

