Kay Chorao, author of *Rhymes Round the World*, brings together a unique collection of poems and rhymes for all children, young and old, to enjoy. From the United States to China and Australia to Poland, children will enjoy reading, singing, and learning about other traditions and cultures that are depicted throughout the book. From traditional poems and rhymes that many are familiar with, to the poems and rhymes not as popular, children of all ages will be able to identify with the stories told in the poems and rhymes.

Poems and rhymes are an excellent tool for teachers to use with young children, preschool to elementary aged, for many reasons. First, poems and rhymes simply tell a story. Young children love to hear stories, especially stories in which they are familiar. Stories about the sky, tickling, and rabbits can be found in Chorao’s collection and with
these topics and more, children can identify with the characters in each story. They can use these stories to help tell their story of their rabbit or the time that their daddy tickled them. Stories are what tell our lives and young children use stories such as these to begin understanding the world around them. Stories also help increase a child’s vocabulary and language development. Simply hearing the stories will teach children new words, phrases, and the idea of putting words and phrases together to make a story. Additionally, the repetition involved in many of these poems assists children in remembering the stories and also can lead to the children repeating the stories themselves. Increased vocabulary will lead to better communication skills, more creativity and imagination, as well as an improved ability to work with others.

Poems and rhymes are also excellent tools to use to develop children’s cognitive skills, particularly their imagination and creativity, but can lead to other areas of development. Using the vivid illustrations that accompany the poems and rhymes, children can role play these stories with themselves or with their friends. Role playing typically evolves into children creating their own stories to enhance the original story, thus building their creativity and imaginations. Additionally, role playing can lead to negotiating with peers, problem solving, and an overall sense of how to collaborate with others. Teachers can easily help children with this by adding materials to their classroom(s) such as dress up clothes and different props that are related to the poems and rhymes found in the collection, especially those that the children enjoy the most. Teachers can also help facilitate the role playing experience by helping children act out the stories that are the most loved.

Finally, this collection of poems and rhymes can be used to help promote the idea of diversity. Because the stories come from all around the world, young children can easily see that all cultures have short stories, songs, and poems that relate to children. Teachers can use this collection to show young children that another child living on the other side of the world enjoys the same things that they do. For example, one poem, “Tickle, Tickle,” describes a young child being tickled by their father. All children love being tickled and how easy it would be for a teacher to share that this poem in fact comes from Africa. Children will enjoy learning that they are not the only ones who love being tickled, among other things within this collection.

Overall Chorao’s Rhymes Round the World is an excellent collection of poems and rhymes that could easily be incorporated into classrooms with children in their preschool years up to elementary school. Prior to adding the book to their classroom, teachers should have some idea of how they would like to use the collection. Whether it is to help enhance vocabulary by encouraging story telling or by sharing with older children the various cultures shown through these poems, teachers should know the stories inside and anticipate their use with the children they are working with.
About the Author

Candace Shaffer earned her master’s degree in Child Development and Family Studies from Purdue University. She currently resides in Lafayette, Indiana, and has worked in the Early Childhood field for over twelve years.