Chugga-Chugga Choo-Choo is a great book to read to children. It features a train (which a lot of children love), bright illustrations and the text has a nice rhythm featuring lots of rhyming words. It is a great book to enhance a love of reading and to illustrate phonological/phonemic awareness. Rhythm in books, like this one, stimulates the areas of the brain used for pre-reading skills. Recent research is connecting the ability to detect rhythm with improved early decoding skills in reading.

The brain is uniquely wired to effortlessly learn through music and rhythms, both of which have a powerful effect on cognition (your ability to learn and remember). Reading books with rhythm with your child helps them develop their oral language skills. Your child’s ability to hear and understand concepts about print develop long before they are able to read individual words.

Ask your child if they have ever ridden on a train or seen train drive by. Discuss how the train travels on the tracks. Ask your child to make predictions (guesses) about where they think the train in the story is going. Talking about trains and the different parts of trains provides your child with background knowledge they will need for future learning. It is important to talk to your child about a lot of different topics.

When you find a topic that really interests your child, continue to develop this interest by reading more books about it. Many children love trains. Read both fiction and non-fiction books, visit a train station or train museum, and even ride in a train if you can!
Here are some song and rhymes about trains.

**Choo Choo Train** (finger play)
This is a choo-choo train,
   *Bend arms at elbows.*
Puffing down the track.
   *Rotate forearms in rhythm.*
Now it's going forward,
   *Push arms forward; continue rotating motion.*
Now it's going back.
   *Pull arms back; continue rotating motion.*

Now the bell is ringing,
   *Pull bell cord with closed fist.*
Now the whistle blows.
   *Hold fist near mouth and blow.*
What a lot of noise it makes,
   *Cover ears with hand.*
Everywhere it goes.

**I've Been Working On The Railroad**
I've been working on the railroad,
All the live-long day.
I've been working on the railroad,
Just to pass the time away.
Can't you hear the whistle blowing,
Rise up so early in the morn,
Can't you hear the captain shouting,
"Dinah, blow your horn."

Dinah, won't you blow,
Dinah, won't you blow,
Dinah, won't you blow, your horn?
Dinah, won't you blow,
Dinah, won't you blow,
Dinah, won't you blow, your horn.

Someone's in the kitchen with Dinah,
Someone's in the kitchen, I know,
Someone's in the kitchen with Dinah,
Strummin' on the old banjo.

Singing
Fee-fi-fiddle-ee-i-o,
Fee-fi-fiddle-ee-i-o-o-o-o
Fee-fi-fiddle-ee-i-o,
Strummin' on the old banjo.

**Engine Engine Number 9**
*Chug shoulders and arms in rhythm.*
Repeat singing faster, then repeat singing slower. After the first verse, hold thumb up and toot your whistle three times.

Engine, engine, number 9,
Coming down the Vancouver line.
If the train goes off the track,
Do you want your money back.
Yes, no, maybe so.

**Down By the Station**
Down by the station
Early in the morning,
See the little pufferbillies
All in a row.

See the station master
Pull a little handle,
Chug, chug, toot, toot
Off we go!