

Supporting your child at home with their writing

Early Years and KS1

- The basis of good writing is good talk. When you visit places encourage your child to talk about what has been seen, heard, smelt, tasted and touched. Encourage children to share their experiences in as much detail as possible.
- Let children see you being a model writer. Let them see you writing notes, cards or letters to friends or relatives, a shopping list, an article for a magazine or maybe a story or poem for them to enjoy. Let your children see that you are not perfect! Making changes and editing what you write is a natural part of writing.
- Let your child write their own Christmas cards, thank you letters, cards or e-mails to friends or relatives, invitations to a party, a list of things they need to take on holiday or a record of football results.
- Play word-building games like Boggle or Scrabble. Games like 'Guess Who' can also develop their descriptive vocabulary.
- Create silly sentences or tongue twisters using alliteration (a group of words that all begin with the same sound). For example: Silly Sarah slipped on Sam's salmon sandwiches or Monty Mouse marched merrily to the magic mountain.
- Use different types and colours of paper, a variety of 'special' pens and pencils, envelopes, stampers and various other stationery items can all help to motivate your child to write. Maybe you could even create a special writing corner or area.
- Cut out words from a newspaper or magazine. Can they use the words to write a sentence?
- Encourage your child to rehearse their sentence out loud before they write it down.
- Always encourage children to punctuate their sentences with a full-stop and capital letter.
- Handwriting does not have to be boring! Let children practise writing letters in sand, water or paint, or use white boards or blackboards. Pattern books can be fun to do and allow children to practise mark-making. Children can also make letters using playdough, pastry or shaving foam.
- Use magnetic letters on the fridge to spell out a message. Encourage your child to write their name, spell words and organise the letters into alphabetical order.

Engage with their writing through:

- saying what you liked about it
- asking where their ideas have come from
- asking them to show you where a sentence begins and ends

Help them to organise and sequence their writing by asking them to talk about their ideas or to draw a sequence of simple pictures to show how the main events in a story might be organised.

KS1 and KS2

- Help your child write a letter to their favourite author. Correspondence can often be sent to an author's publisher (whose details can be obtained on the internet) who will pass it on.
- When you go on holiday, encourage children to write postcards to friends or relatives. They could record things that you do in a holiday diary which they can share with friends or relatives when they get home.
- After making a cake or doing a craft activity, challenge children to write the recipe or instructions for someone else to use.
- Write an information page or booklet about something they find interesting e.g. spiders, Dr Who, dinosaurs, or cats.
- Encourage your child to learn weekly spellings and phonic group spellings. Write the spellings in sentences with accurate punctuation and practise common exception words and handwriting.
- Provide your child with a comfortable place to work and exciting writing materials. A dictionary and thesaurus would also be useful.
- Ask your child what their writing targets are from time to time and help them work specifically on these.
- Help them to reflect on their writing, particularly the effect they hoped to have on the reader. For example, is the reader sufficiently prepared for the ending? Have they introduced all the characters?
- Encourage them to read through their work, shaping their sentences for clarity and impact and checking their accuracy.

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