

Supporting your child with writing at home

Early writing activities and ideas:

1. 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. We are all by nature, story tellers, encourage your child to retell events.
2. Encourage children to look for print in their environment –road signs, food packets, shops, menus etc.
3. Encourage activities to develop fine motor skills e.g. cutting, using playdough, using tweezers, using clothes pegs.
4. Write a shopping list – real or imaginary! Or any other sort of list.
5. Letter formation – practise forming letters using paint, in sand, using playdough.
6. Let your child write their own Christmas cards or birthday cards to people.
7. Use a chalkboard or whiteboard to write family messages on.
8. Make labels for things around the house.
9. Use magnetic letters – your child can leave a message on the fridge.
10. Encourage and praise early mark marking.

Activities for Improving Writers:

1. Encourage your child to rehearse their sentence out loud before they write it down.
2. Let children see you being a model writer. Let them see you writing notes, cards or letters to friends or relatives. Allow your child(ren) see that you are not perfect and need to sometimes make changes and edit. This part of the writing process is important and is in fact a natural part of writing.
3. Cut out words from a newspaper or magazine. Can they use the words to write a sentence?
4. Encourage your child to learn weekly spellings and any phonics sounds or flashbacks that they bring home. Write the spellings in sentences with accurate punctuation and practise high frequency words and handwriting.
5. Read the beginning of a story and make up the ending together, verbally or in writing.
6. Write party invitations.
7. Play word-building games like Boggle or Scrabble. Games like 'Guess Who' can also develop their descriptive vocabulary.
8. Make up silly sentences and tongue twisters.
9. Encourage children to write thank you letters after birthdays and Christmas.
10. Write postcards when on holiday.
11. Design and write a menu for a family meal or party.
12. Type an email to send to a family member or friend.
13. Make a scrap book with labels and captions – maybe after a holiday or special event.

14. Write short stories involving the adventures of their favourite toys.
15. Write an information leaflet about something they find interesting e.g. dinosaurs, sports etc.
16. Write a letter to a favourite author.
17. Draw, label and explain their own inventions.

More confident writers:

1. Provide your child with a comfortable place to work and exciting writing materials. A dictionary and thesaurus would also be useful.
2. Talk through their ideas with them before they start to write, for example, prompt them to think about how they intend to tackle a subject.
3. 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?
4. Read books to, and with, them that are at a higher level than their own reading to expose them to ambitious vocabulary and complex sentence structure.
5. Make up song lyrics and/or raps.
6. Write a story for a younger family member, in the style of their favourite book – having a real audience will motivate your child to write.
7. Write a holiday journal.
8. Write instructions for an X-box game or Playstation game, e.g. Minecraft.
9. Write a recipe.
10. Produce their own comic (www.comicmaster.org.uk - have a great tool that children can access from home)
11. Write to the local newspaper about a local issue they feel strongly about or even to the local MP – this is an example of providing your children with an authentic writing experience.
12. Talk to different generations of family about their life and compile a family history.
13. Write jokes.
14. Look out for writing competitions e.g. Radio 2's annual 500 Word Competition.
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00rfvk1>

Give children plenty of praise for their efforts.