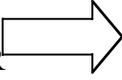




-  Good writing begins with good talking. Go places and see things with your child, and then talk about what has been seen, heard, touched, smelled, and tasted. Children learn to control language when adults share experiences and use rich, descriptive language to talk about those experiences.
-  Read with your child. The more exposure to language and the written word, the better. Point out how a well-written description helps you form a visual in your head as you read. Laugh when you read something funny or sigh when you read something sad to demonstrate that the written word affects you; it matters. React to a story as you read it — I would have been scared if I were that person because ; I wonder why she did ; I think ___ will happen next because
-  Let your child see you writing — you are a role model and a teacher! Show your child that writing is a part of life, not just something for school: shopping and to do lists; notes, cards and letters to family and friends; journals; letters to the editor of the local newspaper; step-by step directions to get somewhere or do something; letters requesting information, and perhaps even your own story. Occasionally, read aloud what you have written and ask your child his/her opinion of what you've written. If it's not perfect, that's even better, because then you can demonstrate that editing and revising are natural parts of writing.
-  Write a story together, perhaps mimicking a story you've read together (for example, begin with Once upon a time). Your young child can dictate it to you if he/she is unable to physically write. You can ask for supporting details (what color were her sneakers? ; where did they find the kitten? ; how did he feel when that happened?)
-  Help your child write. Help your child discover what he/she wants to say by talking about their ideas. If your child asks for help with spelling, punctuation, and word usage, give that help. Just be careful to be a help, not a critic. Praise the effort; compliment good detail; ask questions — just resist the temptation to criticize or red pen too much. Yes, you want to help by correcting spelling mistakes, but be sure also to note good detail or nice description or I wish you'd say more about this part . Writing is communicating; you'd be sorry to lose the message by overdrilling.



Play games with words for meaning — what's another way to say the same thing? Read only the beginning of something and make up your own ending, then read the real ending and compare it to yours. Play word detective by circling words in a story that give you a clue to the ending or support your feelings about a character.

OVER 

- ✎ Play games with words to build vocabulary and practice spelling. Games like Scrabble and Boggle are fun practice and can be played at any age/skill level.
- ✎ Give your child —and encourage others to give —gifts of writing-related supplies (pens & pencils, dictionary, blank notebooks for a journal, erasers or white out , note cards/stationary, desk lamp, etc.)
- ✎ Share cards and letters you receive from friends and relatives. Treat this mail as a special event. Encourage others to write to your child, no matter how brief. Writing is rewarding when your child gets a response. When thank you notes are in order, sit with your child and write your own notes at the same time. If there are a lot of notes to write, space them out over time. Writing 10 cards to thank 10 people for 10 gifts in 1 sitting is a lot to ask.
- ✎ Allow your child to help you with your writing, be it the shopping list, adding their own little note at the end of a letter you wrote, taking telephone messages, and/or preparing invitations to an upcoming event. Practice, practice, practice!



Writing for real purposes is rewarding and fun, and your daily activities can give you and your child lots of opportunities to write.