

How to help your child with writing ...



- Encourage children to continue to read and write for information and pleasure.
- Praise children's writing efforts and respond to the message. Show that you enjoy and value children's writing.
- Understand that the process of writing and refining writing for publication takes time.
- Understand that writing is for different purposes and audiences.
- Be prepared to discuss writing tasks with children.
- Encourage children to use writing to express their feelings. Respect their privacy if they choose to keep personal diaries or letters.
- If children have access to a computer, look out for programs which involve reading, writing or spelling for real purposes, rather than those which simply drill spelling out of context, e.g. solving puzzles, making or completing crosswords, choose your own adventure games.

Strategies to help your child with writing

- Play word games e.g. Scrabble or Boggle. Talk about word meanings.
- Encourage children to use dictionaries and thesauruses independently.
- When your child asks how to spell a word, encourage a 'have-a-go first' approach.
- Talk about ways to remember how to spell difficult words, e.g. 'practice' the noun, has the noun 'ice' in it.
- Talk about the relationships between words, e.g. unicycle, bicycle and tricycle are linked by the word cycle.
- Take children to see suitable 'live' theatre performances.
- Discuss current events.

Writing for different purposes

- Encourage your child to keep a diary or journal when on holiday. This is particularly valuable if you are travelling and the child is missing school.
- Understand that different types of writing require different language, setting out and special vocabulary, e.g. business letter is not the same as a letter to a pen pal.
- Encourage your child to read and write letters, postcards, lists and messages. Accept spelling inventions. Provide attractive paper and unusual pens.
- Encourage your child to make birthday, Christmas and Easter party invitations. The child can write his/her own greetings and verses. You may even be able to make recycled paper together.
- Encourage children to use writing to get things done, e.g. letters to politicians, newspapers etc. about topics of local interest or to a larger paper on more general topics about which they feel strongly.
- Talk about the mass media and their influence on society.