

10 Tips to help your child with WRITING

Tips for kindergarten to grade 3

1. **Read from a variety of sources.** Reading and writing are linked – success in one supports success in the other. Read stories, newspapers, advertisements, instructions, etc. to your child every day and then discuss what you have read.
2. **Encourage your child to write.** Children love to make their own birthday cards, write thank you notes, make place cards for the table, or send an email to a friend. Save old cards from birthdays and holidays to recycle for homemade cards. Whenever possible, let your child see you writing – grocery lists, instructions on the family whiteboard, emails, etc. – and get them to help.
3. **Writing can be done anywhere.** Have lots of magnetic letters or words on the fridge. Get a box of chalk and write your names on the driveway or sidewalk. Get a white board – it can be used again and again.
4. **Play writing games.** Make a game of letter finding. Show them how to form a letter and then go letter hunting in your house or in a book – count the number of "Ds" on a page. Find a picture they like and have them write words or a sentence about it.
5. **Help children build their vocabulary.** Try rhyming games starting with one word such as "mat". Say and write down all the words that rhyme, like "cat", "hat", "fat" and "splat". You'll be surprised how fast their word list grows.
6. **Explore the meaning of words.** Create a word book at home and have your child add words as they're learned. Have them note the words they use the most and talk about why.
7. **Write to each other.** Write notes to your child and leave them in interesting places, like the lunch box. Ask them to write a reply or come up with something new. If they have their own email, email each other. Have kids email jokes to family and friends.
8. **Don't limit what you write with or what you write on.** The sky's the limit – pudding, sticks or fingers in mud, earth, snow and sand, sparklers, steamed up windows and mirrors, and bubble soap markers for some sudsy learning.
9. **Writing comes in all shapes and sizes.** Point out different ways writing is used – letters, signs, advertisements, instructions – and explain why they are different. Also point out different ways letters are created – printed, cursive (written) and fancy variations. Let them be inspired to create their own letter art.
10. **Start writing at an early age.** Children often learn to write before they can read. Encourage this by showing them how to print their name or the names of friends and other family members. Buy them notebooks with lines so they can learn to make their letters correctly or a practice book with letters they can trace.