

Handy Handouts®

Free informational handouts for educators, parents, and students

Put it to Paper: Tips for Parents to Improve a Child's Writing Skills

by Audrey W. Prince, M. Ed.



Writing is an essential skill. It is more than just putting words on paper. Writing is a process of communication that plays an important role in your child's life—both in and out of the classroom. Parents can make a big difference in helping a child develop writing skills by encouraging writing activities that are simple and fun. The following are activities parents can do with their child to promote writing at home.

Writing Activities



- **Send a Message** – Frequently leave notes on pillows, desks, mirrors, wherever. Have your child write you a note in return. A family chalkboard or message board is a great tool for encouraging your child to write messages.



- **Letters** – Make letter writing a habit for your child. Have your child write letters to family and friends.



- **"Year in Review" Notebook** – Keep an ongoing record of your family's life. Every family member can add to your family's story. Include important events that happen during the year. On New Year's Eve, sit down and read

through your "Year in Review" and start a notebook for the next year. To add to your story, include family photos whenever possible.



- **Give Writing as a Gift** – For birthday presents or for other gifts, have your child write a story for the recipient.



- **Postcards** – Have your child write and mail postcards on family vacations or special outings.



- **Say "Thank You"** – Let your child get in the habit of writing "Thank You" notes for gifts or whenever it is appropriate to do so.



- **Journals** – On your child's birthday, give him/her a special journal. Encourage your child to write in his/her journal as often as possible.



- **Make a Menu** – Let your child design and write the menu for a family dinner. This is a great activity that will keep a child busy while mom or dad is cooking. If some of the words are difficult, write them down on a separate sheet of paper for the child to copy.



- **Use Writing Prompts** – Writing prompts are a great way to help a child begin a story. An example of a writing prompt is— Pretend you are the first person to create a flying car. Tell what the car would look like and how it would work.



- **Be Creative** – Encourage your child to write and perform skits or puppet shows. Set aside time for other family members to see the performance.



Handy Handouts®

Free informational handouts for educators, parents, and students
(cont.)



- **Travel Log** – When you go on vacations, trips, or special outings, have your child record new sights and experiences from his/her journey.



- **Copy** – If your child likes a particular song, have him/her copy the lyrics. Children can also copy their favorite poem, quotation, or short book. Encourage neatness for legibility.



Writing Habits

Remember that the important thing for parents to focus on is the content more than grammar and other details of his/her child's writing. When a child begins to write, he/she runs the risk of receiving criticism—parents have the job of encouraging their child to continue. Also, parents should keep supplies of paper, pencils, markers, and other writing tools within easy reach.

Writing is a skill and habit. Helping your child put thoughts into words gives him/her a great sense of accomplishment. Fostering good writing habits will make a big difference in your child's attitude about writing. Help your child learn to write well—and enjoy doing it!

Resources:

- PageWise, Inc. (2008). Help your child in improving their writing skills. Retrieved January 8, 2008, from http://wywy.essortment.com/improvingwritin_njb.htm
- Keith, Kimberly L. (2008) Writing activities for kids at home. Retrieved January 8, 2008, from <http://childparenting.about.com/od/familylearningactivities/a/writingfun/htm>
- Lance, Wayne D. (1992, February). Teaching writing: preschool, kindergarten, and first grade. Retrieved January 8, 2008, from http://www.iched.org/cms/scripts/page.php?site_id=iched&item_id=teach_writing_prek-1

For more FREE Handy Handouts®, go to www.handyhandouts.com