

Supporting writing at home

Supporting writing

Reading and writing are interlinked – the better you are at reading the better you will be with writing. So the first thing you can do to help your child improve their writing skills is make sure they read a variety of books, comics and magazines.

Writing is a tricky process which involves several elements (thinking about content, handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar). No wonder many children find writing hard at first! In order to help your child, you may need to work out which part of the writing process they find difficult.

Many children get alarmed when faced with a blank page. Sometimes it helps to give them paper that has a picture border around it. This can spark children's interest and make the writing space more manageable.

Some children will need support with ideas for writing. You can help by playing language games and telling stories. By participating in oral activities, children develop their vocabulary. This in turn enriches their writing. It is also important to encourage your child to talk through their ideas before writing them down. This gives them an opportunity to organise their thinking and sequence their ideas.

Top tips for writing success

- Ensure the activity is fun – write shopping lists, write messages on the fridge with letter magnets, make cards.
- Make simple books together. You could use photos, pictures from magazines or your child could draw his/her own pictures. You could make a book about when they were a baby, about a family holiday or you could write a short story together.
- Make the writing task more manageable, e.g. you write one line and your child writes the next. Over time your child should increase in confidence and be able to take over more of the writing.
- Magic line – if your child is stuck trying to spell a word and will not have a go, encourage them to use their phonic knowledge to put down any letters they think might be in the word. This might just be the first letter. Get them to put a short 'magic' line for the rest of the word. For example, "I w..... to the p....." ("I went to the park."). This approach helps to keep the flow of writing going. Gradually your child's confidence will increase and they will be more willing to put down a few more letters for unknown words.
- Make sure your child knows that crossings out do not matter!

(Ideas and information are from Pearson Education)