

## Simple advice on helping a junior child enjoy writing

Writing is just not easy - and many children find it a chore rather than fun. This is very irritating for those parents who watch a friend's child happily writing for pure pleasure, and whose own offspring has to be forced or bribed to do even three lines of writing! How can we parents make writing seem just a bit more attractive?

**Follow your child's interests:** Does your child like football, off-road cycling, designing clothes or playing with make-up? Whatever their interests, there are good writing opportunities. Perhaps a lockable football diary for writing match fixtures and a few private thoughts on each match as played. Use postcards or fancy writing paper for writing a short message to granny - and make sure she writes STRAIGHT back! Provide post-it stickers and encourage them to write messages to everyone ~ even the cat!

**Talk comes first!** The standard of children's writing at school is not only how they form letters and handwrite. They must be able to express their ideas clearly. Can they put thoughts in order and discuss what they want to say? All of these depend on speaking. So talk to your child, encourage them to express themselves, listen and respond to their ideas. It all helps!

**No just handwriting!** When your child is doing any writing, do not focus on the quality of their handwriting. It is discouraging for a child who doesn't like writing or who finds it difficult, to then be told off because the writing is not neat! Many handwriting faults will improve with practice and so your job is to help your child to want to write. More means better!

**Reading:** The more your child reads, the better they will write. Their choice of language and the ways they express themselves are all improved by reading. So follow their interests to encourage reading as much as possible. Read to them and read with them!