



Writing

Writing is the act of using written words to communicate ideas. Children develop several skills as they become writers, including how to organize their ideas, how to use written symbols (letters and words) to record those ideas and how different types of writing are organized. This includes learning about:

- Tools for learning and communicating and expressing themselves with others
- The writing process which is a series of steps (getting an idea, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing)
- Many types of writing including real and imaginary information

Writing Activities

Scan the QR code for a video demonstration of the activity



Our youngest learners begin “playing” with ideas as they talk and listen to stories and begin “playing” with the written elements of writing as they make squiggles and begin to record “letter-like” forms.

Prior to age 3, when a child makes a squiggle, they are experimenting in cause and effect or imitation and increasing the muscle control in their hands. It’s not until around their third birthday that they start to understand drawn and written marks can stand for objects or words. This is symbolic knowledge. Reading books together and pointing out letters, numbers, animals, and people helps kids’ link meaning to drawings and words to help them learn to write.



Talk, talk, talk with your child. Talk about your everyday family activities, describe what’s happening outside, talk about where you’re going while in the car or on the bus. Ask your child to talk about their day. Encourage them to explain something they did or a game they played.



Story talk. Think aloud about a story. Talking about stories helps children develop their vocabularies, link stories to everyday life, and use what they know about the world to make sense of stories. Connect your story to a similar one your child may have experienced and help them tell it. Children are great mimics. When you tell stories, your child will begin to tell stories, too.



Making early marks. For any child to write meaningfully, they must first build up their fine motor skills. Art projects, working with play dough, measuring and pouring sand and water, and practicing writing are excellent ways to improve fine motor skills.



Scribbles to stick figures. Create writing stations. Keep markers, crayons, pencils, and paper in places around your home that offer lots of light and flat surfaces to work on. Be sure to offer lots of choices of materials for your child to create with.



Drawing shapes. Point out shapes in the house and try to draw them together (be encouraging). Have tracing stencils available for your child to trace.



Tracing. Trace and say letters. Have your child use a finger to trace a letter on paper, in sand, or on a plate of sugar while saying the letter’s sound.



Drawing pictures of real people, objects, and events. Encourage all efforts. Let your child tell you what they made. Hang your child’s art in their room or on the refrigerator.



Drawing pictures that tell a story. Ask your child to dictate a story to you. It could include any memory or activity. Have them draw their story. When finished with their drawing, ask them to retell the story to you or a family member while pointing out the parts of their picture that represent their story as they tell it.



Recognizing letters. Write your child’s name on a card so they can look at it often. Talk about the letters in your child’s name. Look around the house and find the letters in their name or in other words in magazines or books you read to them. Encourage your child to pick out letters they know.

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Imitate letters in writing. Have letter, word and picture cards or stencils available. Encourage children to practice tracing or writing the letters. Use white boards, their fingers, play dough, shoe strings, etc., to practice writing the letters.



Write a trip journal with your child to create a new family story. Recording the day's events and pasting the photographs into the journal ties the family story to a written record. You can include everyday trips like going to the market or the park.

Family Stories - Writing Ideas



Help your child draw a family portrait. Use a chalkboard or a family message board as an exciting way to involve children in writing with a purpose.



It helps for children to know that **stories come from real people** and are about real events. When children listen to stories, they hear the voice of the storyteller. This helps them hear the words when they learn to read aloud or read silently.



Encourage your child. When children begin to write, they run the risk of criticism, and it takes courage to continue. Our job as parents is to help children find the courage. We can do it by expressing our appreciation of their efforts.



Recognize names and some words. Help your child pick out words they recognize in magazines and books or online. Talk about what you notice and the similarities and differences in the known words. Create word cards to practice the words.



Family stories enrich the relationship between parent and child. Tell your child stories about your parents and grandparents. Reminisce about when you were little. Describe things that happened at school involving teachers and subjects you were studying. Talk about your brothers, sisters, or friends. You might even put these stories in a book and add old family photographs. This could model how you write about and keep these special memories or stories. Have your child tell stories and add their pages to the journal (or keep your own journals). This will be a special place to hold writing ideas. Buy matching journals for you and your child, and set aside time to write or draw in them together.



Write letters in their name. Help your child write their name by first modeling it for them, making the sounds of each letter before you write the letter. Encourage them to copy it. When your child says they can write their name alone let them. Don't critique but encourage all efforts. Let them know how proud of their attempts you are. Be sure to provide a choice of materials for them to practice writing their name.



Write other letters and words. Talk about letters and sounds. Help your child learn the names of the letters and the sounds the letters make. Turn it into a game! "I'm thinking of a letter and it makes the sound mmmmmm. Can you write that letter?"

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Show your thinking as you write. They should see you struggle and work through it.



Writing personal letters. Turn the playroom into a mail room. You and your child can “address” envelopes, stuff them with drawings, and make deliveries to family members. When children receive and write letters, they realize that printed word has a purpose. Be sure to read aloud the letters with expression, and encourage your child to do the same. Explain the writing process to your child: “We think of ideas and put them into words; we put the words on paper; people read the words; and, people respond.” You could also create handmade greeting cards together.



Encourage your child to help you create a menu when guests come for dinner.



Show enthusiasm. Keep your child writing and drawing by showing how much you like their work. Praise their efforts frequently, and show you care by hanging their creations on your fridge or another place in the home. Be sure to ask them to “read” you what they’ve written, or write a story together. Carry writing materials with you everywhere you go so when waiting in line or at the doctor’s office you can write together.

Making Lists



Encourage your child to help you make your grocery shopping list. Ask what letters or symbols go with the sounds of the words you are putting on your list. For example, “What sound do you hear at the beginning of milk? And what letter makes that sound? Would you like to make that M for me please?”



Encourage your child to make a personal dictionary by putting together several sheets of paper for a booklet. They can write new words that they are learning at the top of each page. Encourage them to draw a picture for each new word.



Model. Let your child watch you write notes, make out checks, create shopping lists, and doodle. They’ll be more likely to write if they know that you think it’s important.



How to write a story:



Think



Picture



Say



Sketch



Write

Biondo, Dr. Sandra. (2011). *MAISA ELA Kindergarten Unit 1*.