

HELPING YOUR CHILD WITH WRITING

If your child is learning how to:

- Make marks on paper
- Understand that these marks could mean something
- Understand that writing and drawing are different
- Write some letters
- Point to where the print starts

You can help by:

- Reading and writing together
- Talking about things that happen to you both
- Writing your child's name for display
- Looking at print all around, eg in shops
- Showing and talking about how you write for a reason, eg lists, birthday cards, notes, letters
- Making a child's writing table with paper, envelopes, crayons and pencils
- Providing magnetic letters and a fridge door!
- Labelling things around the home
- Writing notes for your child
- Encouraging your child to "have a go" at writing
- Naming the letters of the alphabet when children ask
- Allowing access to a computer if you have one
- Praising your child's attempts at writing, concentration on the meaning
- Making books of your child's writing to be read back

If your child is learning to:

- Know that spoken words can be written down
- Read back his/her own writing
- Write recognisable words
- Write from left to right and top to bottom of a page
- Understand that the written message stays the same
- Write the most obvious sounds in a word
- Leave some spaces between words

You can help by:

- Continuing to read and write together and talk about what you are doing
- Using a message board at home
- Providing a writing area
- Making scrap books together, eg about holidays
- Talking about different writing all around, eg telephone books, newspapers
- Helping children to make their own greeting cards
- Playing magnetic letter games
- Playing "I Spy"
- Making an alphabet book with him/her
- Continuing to label things at home
- Praising children's work, especially when they 'have a go' at words

If your child is learning to:

- Write about things of interest
- Write in sentences, varying the beginnings
- Write for different reasons and in different forms, eg lists, messages, cards
- Start to use punctuation
- Check their writing to see if it makes sense
- Talk about how the writing could be improved

You can help by:

- Displaying children's writing to show you value it
- Continuing to read and write together
- Encouraging writing for a purpose, eg letters for information
- Talking about the children's writing
- Encouraging use of the computer for word processing, if you have one
- Encouraging children to "have a go" at words
- Acting as a "response partner" if asked to. You might suggest your child:
 - Checks that the meaning is clear
 - Checks nothing is left out
 - Checks the ideas are in the right order
 - Checks nothing is left out
 - Checks the writing serves its purpose, eg says "Thank you", advertises something
 - Checks the spelling is correct
 - Checks the punctuation is correctly used
- Praising your child's writing, picking out improvements you can spot

If your child is learning how to:

- Talk about and use different forms of writing
- Vary their writing according to the person who will read it
- Use punctuation correctly
- Write longer sentences correctly
- Make notes from information books
- Begin to use paragraphs
- Check their own writing and someone else's for meaning and accuracy
- Think about how to improve their choice of words

You can help by:

- Providing a quiet study area at home
- Providing a thesaurus and dictionary
- Continuing to support word processing
- Continuing to talk about your child's reading and writing
- Encouraging children to talk about newspaper and magazine articles
- Continuing to encourage your child to write for different reasons, eg letters for information, to explain, to praise
- Helping your child to make notes that record key words rather than whole sentences or paragraphs
- Praising your child's progress in writing

If your child is learning how to:

- Use a personal writing style
- Write confidently in a range of forms of writing
- Spell and punctuate accurately
- Talk about their writing and how it was achieved
- Organise paragraphs into a satisfying piece of work
- Use a wide range of vocabulary
- Confidently read and revise his/her own writing
- Make notes and use these to help their own writing

You can help by:

- Providing a quiet study area at home
- Continuing to talk about your child's reading and writing
- Talking about issues in the news and on television
- Continuing to support your child's writing for a real purpose
- Respecting your child's private diary writing
- Continuing to support your child's computer writing
- Praising writing success and progress