



Help Your Child Learn To Write!

Your child was born to write! With your help in learning writing skills, your child will be more likely to do well in kindergarten. When infants hold toys and grasp or shake objects, they are developing the muscles they need for writing. And when toddlers and preschoolers draw, scribble, paint and make things with their hands, they become more and more ready to write. Doing these things at home will prepare your child to write and will help him/her to be a good writer in school. Try these suggestions:

YOUR INFANT:

- Once your baby is able to grasp things, try shaking a rattle and then handing it to him or her to try. Keep doing this until baby learns how to shake the rattle. Let baby also play with other toys that can be gripped with fingers and hands.
- Let your baby play with safe household items that he or she can take apart and put together, such as plastic measuring cups.
- When your baby is old enough, allow your child to feed himself. Help your child to learn to use a spoon and fork, even if it's messy!
- Finger paint with your child. Pudding, *Jello*-powder mixed with water, and whipped cream are all "finger paints" that are safe for infants.

YOUR TODDLER:

- Tape a piece of paper underneath the table or to the wall. Let your toddler draw and write with pencils, nontoxic crayons or paints. Praise everything your child writes, no matter what it looks like! And put it up on the wall for everyone to see.
- Let your child see you writing grocery lists, things to do, letters, bills, and notes.
- Supervise while your toddler plays safely with *Play-doh*. Help your child to make shapes, letters or words, and talk about what they are.

YOUR PRESCHOOLER:

- Give your preschooler safe scissors, paper, tape and other arts and crafts materials that help develop writing skills. Encourage your child to create, and praise everything he or she makes.
- Set up a writing area for your child. Make paper in several sizes and colors and different-colored nontoxic markers, pencils and crayons available. Write notes to your child, and encourage him or her to "write back."
- Let your child make letters with *Play-doh*, strips of sponge, pipe cleaners, popsicle sticks or even shaving cream. Have fun with it!
- Play games that encourage your child to write. Let your child pretend to be a waiter taking your order, a teacher writing on the chalk board, or a policewoman writing a parking ticket.

ParentTips is a monthly resource for parents with young children.
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