



Expressing Ideas through Writing

Your child was born to be a reader and a writer! She is more likely to be a good writer if she is read to every day. She needs practice with scribbling, drawing, writing, and talking about what her marks mean. You are your child's first and best teacher. You can help your child learn to be a writer. Every day moments are learning moments! Try these easy and fun activities with your child:

YOUR INFANT:

- Read to your baby every day. Touch the pages and point to pictures in the book. Later on, she will begin to understand the connection between spoken words and print.
- Let your older infant hold crayons and make scribble marks on paper. You may need to hold her hand and show her how.
- 'Paint' outside on the sidewalk or brick with paint brushes and water. Show your child how the wet paint brush can make marks.

YOUR TODDLER:

- Let your child watch you write (grocery lists, checks, thank-you notes, letters, etc.). Talk to him about what you are writing.
- Let your child use crayons, markers, pencils, and paper often. Let her make marks on paper by scribbling or drawing. Talk to her about the marks and lines that she makes. "You made wiggly lines on your paper. They are red and blue!"
- Finger paint with your child. Make marks together on finger paint paper.
- Give your child toys that have letters on them (ex., wooden blocks with letters on them). Foam letters are great for children to manipulate. Talk about the letters. Spell your child's name with them (ex., "R-Y-A-N spells Ryan. That's your name!").
- Read to your toddler every day. Name pictures in the books and ask him to point to them. When he is older, he will connect written words with spoken words.

YOUR PRESCHOOLER:

- Make a place in your home where your child can draw and write. Keep drawing and writing supplies there. Include crayons, markers, pencils, different kinds of paper, and perhaps tape and stickers.
- Keep a chalk board, chalk, and an eraser nearby for her to write and draw with.
- Ask your child to tell you about what he is drawing, or to "read" what he has written. Then write down the words for him.
- Keep magnetic letters in a low place on your refrigerator. Let your child play with them. Show her how you can make familiar words like 'exit,' 'stop,' or her name with the letters.
- Make greeting cards and thank you notes together. Have your child draw pictures of what she wants to say. You may notice that she is making letter-like shapes or stringing familiar letters together. You can write down the words she says on the card.
- Organize photographs in a book and have your child dictate the captions that tell about the pictures. You can write them down for her.
- Let your child 'sign' his name. He may scribble it, make a wiggly mark, or try to write some letters at first. Put a sign with his name on his door.

