

The Write Stuff

by

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Writing is an important form of expression. Here are some tips for parents to encourage and assist children with writing. Research tells us that we should approach writing as a process. Even professional writers produce several drafts before completing an edition for others to read and understand so don't get discouraged and, more important, don't let your young readers get discouraged if his/her first try isn't a masterpiece.

Develop a positive attitude. Eliminate the fear and anxiety about producing "perfect papers". Accept your child's first efforts without criticism and in so doing you will encourage him/her to keep on writing. Find something good in everything your child writes. Remember, the first goal is to make writing a pleasurable activity.

Encourage your child to jot down ideas he or she may have. It's OK to draw, doodle, or act out ideas before formal writing. You would be surprised how these informal activities can grow into more complete sentences, paragraphs and finished works.

Children benefit from lots of practice writing. Find reasons to help them use this skill. Cards, letters, notes, lists, diaries, etc., provide nice opportunities to do it every day. Allow your child to choose their own topics as much as possible. This promotes increased interest.

Keep a home journal with your children which details ongoing activities, plans, interesting events and special occasions. You can even add pictures to these journals as a way of complementing the activity.

Acknowledge that getting started can be difficult and don't expect all students to write at the same pace.

Talk about the writing so that your child will want to develop a particular piece all the more when opportunity permits.

Don't expect error-free papers all the time; rather, encourage correction and revision through self-discovery.

Lastly, share your child's best writing with others. This reinforces writing as an important activity which is both useful and enjoyable. Your child might also enjoy reading published collections of other children's writing or someday submit an original for publication in an appropriate magazine.

Encouraging your child to write and appreciating the process is a great way to promote expression and develop an important life skill.