

How can I encourage my child to write?

Some fun ideas and practical advice to encourage writing at home!



Before writing

- Before your child begins to write letter shapes, they need to develop their gross motor (big) muscles and their fine motor skills (in their fingers).
- Doing activities such as running, throwing, sweeping can help to develop and strengthen gross motor skills.
- Threading pasta on string, using pegs, weaving and playing with small Lego can help strengthen finger muscles which helps to improve pencil control.

Mark making shapes

- Making clear marks on a page
- Giving meaning to those marks
- Drawing faces and people
- Copying letters
- Forming letters independently
- Forming letters correctly (using the Read Write Inc rhymes).





Put some paint in a zip lock bag and seal. Use your finger and practise writing letters!

Glitter or sand trays.



Paint sentences!

Put paper underneath a table, lie on your back and write!



Water and paintbrushes on the pavement outside!



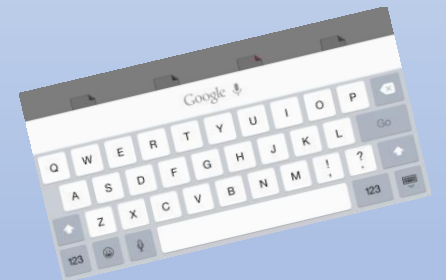
Write on a cardboard box.

some cereal boxes in paper!



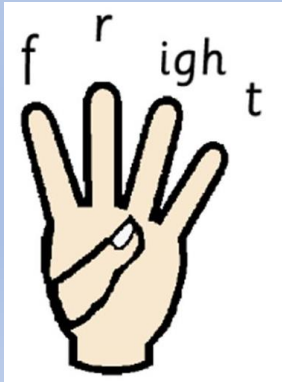
Different genres of writing

- Labelling a picture
- Shopping list
- Designing a model
- Writing a recipe
- Writing an invitation
- Writing a card
- Writing a diary
- Writing a letter and posting it
- Writing an email or text message on your mums laptop/tablet/phone...



Fred Fingers

- We learn to write words using Fred Fingers.
- When we do this, we think about how many sounds are in each word.
- We put that many fingers up on one hand (palm facing you) and a pointy finger on the other hand.
- Then we stamp the sounds onto our fingers.
- We then Fred talk as we write the word.



Holding a sentence

In order for children to become independent writers they need to be able to 'hold' their sentence in their head so they can remember what they are wanting to write. Before writing, say your sentence at least three times (using silly voices or actions to each word to help make it fun and easier to remember).

DON'T DO IT FOR THEM! Encourage your child to use their 'Fred fingers' to spell words and have their tricky word flash cards near them to help with the spelling of these. It may be a challenge at first, but children need to get used to spelling and writing independently to become a good writer.

When writing, have a sound mat with you, a speeds sounds chart and your tricky words. These are tools your child can use to help them become an independent writer. Encourage them to use these before asking for your help!

Story writing - imagination

- When your child can write sentences independently as is beginning to build up their stamina for writing, we want to enhance the content of their writing.
- Plan a story - you might have a picture to inspire you or a crazy idea that you just can't wait to write about, it's totally up to your child what they want to write about. Plan what is going to happen at the beginning, middle and end of the story.
- Write your story, remember to use key words such as 'once upon a time', 'a long time ago', 'finally', 'suddenly'...

Story writing plan example

Middle

Beginning

End



Edit your work - Check and fix

- Your child must be able to read their own writing. Its important they read what they have actually written down, not what they think they have written.
- Check words have been spelt 'correctly' using the phonetic sounds they know.
- Ensure tricky words have been spelt correctly.
- Make sure there are capital letters, full stops and finger spaces.
- Editing is a hard skill, but is a great way to learn so many lessons from - use a different colour pencil to help.

Note for parents

- Learning to write is very difficult! It will take time for all the different process to come together - be patient!
- This is everything a child has to think about when they are writing:
 - How to hold their pencil
 - What word they are writing
 - What sounds they can hear in the word
 - What the letters look like
 - How to form the letters correctly
 - Where to start writing on a page
 - The order the sounds need to be written in
 - Making sure the letters are the same size
 - Finger spaces
 - What the next word in their sentence is
 - And so much more!

All of this comes naturally to us, but not to your child! Practise, practise, practise is key! Children need to feel relaxed, have fun and when possible, like they are writing for a purpose.