



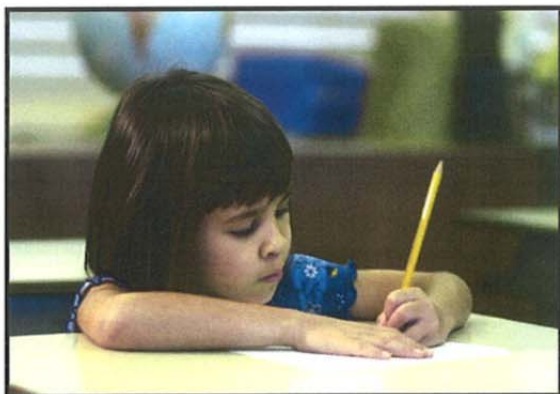
# Parents in the Know

## Focus on Writing

### The Six Traits of Writing

Writing is a complex process. There are many things that your child has to think about when writing. The Six Traits of Writing is a program that teaches children the different qualities that are necessary for good writing. The Six Traits of Writing and questions you can encourage your child to ask include:

- 1. Ideas:** This is the main idea of the piece. What am I writing about?
- 2. Organization:** Does the piece have a clear beginning, middle, and end? Are my ideas in a logical order?
- 3. Voice:** Does the piece sound like me? Does my personality show through?
- 4. Word Choice:** Did I paint a picture with my words? Are my words interesting?
- 5. Sentence Fluency:** How does my piece sound when read aloud? Did I begin my sentences in a variety of ways?
- 6. Conventions:** This is the mechanics of writing. Did I check my spelling, capitalization, punctuation?



## Poetry Corner

Poems are fun to write. They are short, rhyme, and can often include humor. The easiest poems to start out writing rhyme. You can find rhyming dictionaries on-line or at your local library that will help your child gather a collection of words to include in her poem. Some fun poetry books about writing include:

- \* Wonderful Words: Poems About Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening, by Lee Bennett Hopkins
- \* Miss Alaineus: A Vocabulary Disaster, by Debra Frasier

## Prompting Your Child to Write

Writing prompts help children begin writing. They provide something for the writer to respond to. So, the next time your child needs to write something, and can't think of an idea, you could brainstorm story ideas with him. Examples of prompts include:

What is your favorite holiday? Why?

Where in the world would you like to go? Why?

What is the best present you ever received?

What would you do if won the lottery?

What would you do if you were president?

## What Research Says



Parent involvement in their child's education is very important across the curriculum. However, a majority of research that has been conducted on parent involvement has focused on the effect parent involvement has on students' math and language arts abilities. And, the research is in. Parent involvement can have a significant effect on children's academic performance and achievement. Parents working with their children on school related activities can result in increases not only in reading, but writing also!

**Based on:** P. Manjula, G. Saraswathi, P. Prakash, and K.V. Ashalatha "Involvement of Parents in the Education of Children with Reading and Writing Difficulties -- Impact on an Intervention", Educational Research and Review, <http://www.academicjournals.org/err/PDF/Pdf%202009/Apr/Manjula%20et%20al.pdf>

# Focus on Writing

## How to Help

There are many things that you can do to help your child enjoy writing and become a better writer.

- 1. Materials:** Provide fun writing materials to help make writing special. A cloth covered journal makes a great gift.
- 2. Words:** Surround your child with words. Fill your house with books, magazines, notes, lists, and other things that model the written word.
- 3. Practice:** Help your child practice using a thesaurus or dictionary.
- 4. Share the Experience:** Write something together.
- 5. Write:** Show your child that you value writing by writing yourself. The more that a child sees her parent writing, the more important it will seem.
- 6. Opportunities:** Provide fun opportunities for your child to write. Have her write the grocery list, birthday invitations, and make cards.
- 7. Sent Notes:** One of the most special ways that you can model a love for writing is to write your child notes. Put one in her lunch bag, on her pillow, in her pocket, or on her dinner plate. This will help your child feel the power of the written word.

Based on: Ann Marie Foucault, "Six Traits Writing Tips for Parents", STMA Schools, [http://communityed.stma.k12.mn.us/curriculum/Six\\_Traits\\_Writing\\_Tips\\_for\\_Parents.php](http://communityed.stma.k12.mn.us/curriculum/Six_Traits_Writing_Tips_for_Parents.php)

## I Don't Have Anything To Do

The next time that your child tells you that he doesn't have anything to do, here are some suggestions:

- \* Write a cartoon
- \* Write a recipe
- \* Write a letter to a friend
- \* Make a card
- \* Write with stencils
- \* Make a book jacket
- \* Write words on a chalkboard
- \* Write riddles

## Books About Writing for Early Elementary

Written Anything Good Lately, by Susan Allen

Max's Words, by Kate Banks

The Boy Who Loved Words, by Roni Schotter



## Books About Writing for Upper Elementary

Show, Don't Tell!: Secrets of Writing, by Josephine Nobisso

How to Write Your Life Story, by Ralph Fletcher

*"You don't have to be great to get started, but you have to get started to be great." ~ Les Brown*

## My Child Hates Writing

Writing is hard work. Here are some suggestions of things you can do to make writing easier for your child:

- \* Encourage your child to write from personal experience.
- \* Buy a journal for your child so that she can take notes when doing something she may like to write about.
- \* Play vocabulary games like Scrabble and work on crossword puzzles together.
- \* Be patient. Realize that writing is hard work and good ideas take time.
- \* Make writing meaningful. Ask your child to write the grocery list, write a thank you note, etc.
- \* Brainstorm ideas with your child. Many times coming up with the idea is the hardest part!



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