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FOR FAMILIES

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Helping Your Children Learn to Write

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- ❖ **INSIGHTS FOR FAMILIES** is provided by your child's school in recognition of your role as a partner in education. Written by Judy McDaniel, communications consultant.

Reading and writing skills are closely related. Families have important roles in guiding children's writing skills. Be involved and active.

- ❖ Create an environment that nurtures the sharing of language and experiences. Talk about the things you do together. Read to and with your children frequently.
- ❖ Label items that belong to your children, for example, "Jill's Toy Box," "Ben's Cars."
- ❖ Let your children see you writing notes and letters so that they associate writing with real-life functioning. Let children see you revising your writing so they learn that revision is good.
- ❖ Read and accept with enthusiasm what your children write. Avoid being critical. Provide help with spelling, punctuation, and usage.
- ❖ Find a quiet, suitable, well-lighted place for children to write. Keep dictionary, pencils, pens, paper and envelopes handy.
- ❖ Encourage developing writers to write frequently. Supply real audiences by asking children to contribute to family communications such as letters, captions for pictures and albums, grocery lists, notes to baby-sitters and siblings.
- ❖ Encourage children to write for information, samples and free brochures. Read aloud some of their writing.
- ❖ Praise children's efforts at writing. Encourage initiative and respect uniqueness. Don't compare children's writings to those of siblings or friends.
- ❖ Display children's writings in a special place. Let children know that publication is a part of writing and that families enjoy what has been shared.
- ❖ Look over the writings children bring home from school. Keep the writings in a folder so that they can see progress.
- ❖ Find out about the writing and spelling programs in school. Daily writing, small classes and frequent feedback from teachers are ideal. Ask what you can do at home to complement work in school.
- ❖ Volunteer to work in classrooms. High quality writing programs include individualized assistance that can often be provided by adult helpers under teacher direction.
- ❖ Encourage contact with the writing of skilled authors. Writing is learned, in part, by reading. Good literature programs foster effective writing.
- ❖ Look for and respond to good student writing that is published in school and local newspapers, magazines and journals. Encourage participation in recognition for writing contests and awards.
- ❖ Encourage students to solve problems in any area by "writing through" the steps. Writing the directions for solving a math word problem is one example.
- ❖ Stress getting ideas down on paper before thinking about usage or editing.