
INSIGHTS

FOR PARENTS

□

It's never
too early
to learn
to write well!

□

- ❖ INSIGHTS FOR PARENTS is provided by your child's school in recognition of your role as a partner in education. Written by Ann Hagen, communications consultant.

Learning to write is an important part of each child's education. Children need to understand how to organize their thoughts and put them down on paper in a precise and logical way if they want to excel as students and in later years.

As a parent, you can help your children to write well and to enjoy writing. The following games and strategies will get you started:

- ❖ Make sure that your children have an uncluttered desk or table that is well lit and that they have ample paper, pencils or pens and an eraser.
 - ❖ When visiting a place of interest such as a zoo, historic site, museum or the beach, ask your children to jot down notes about their experiences and then to write an essay, story or poem about the adventure when you return home. You may be surprised at the observations that appear on paper.
 - ❖ Suggest that your children keep lists to help them organize thoughts and actions.
 - ❖ Visit the library. Reading the writing of many authors as well as enjoying various types of writing is often inspirational.
 - ❖ Encourage your children to write letters and thank-you notes to relatives and friends. Purchase blank greeting cards so that your children can write their own messages inside.
 - ❖ Check with the school or library about possible pen-pals for your children. Participating in a pen-pal program can give students a glimpse of people's lives in other parts of the world as well as a chance to expand their writing skills.
 - ❖ Encourage your children to keep a journal in which they can:
 - ♦ Express and vent feelings, good and bad;
 - ♦ Write about what happens during each day;
 - ♦ Jot down notes about friends and other acquaintances; and
 - ♦ Note things to do now or in the future.
- The information in the journal should be private unless your children volunteer to share what they write or to discuss their feelings, ideas and/or descriptions.
- ❖ Numerous age-appropriate word games are available to help children learn to write and spell, such as Scrabble, crossword puzzles, computer games, anagrams and flash cards. Use and enjoy them at every opportunity.
 - ❖ If you're corresponding with a friend or business associate, talk about your writing with your children in order to demonstrate the relevancy of writing in your everyday life.

(Continued)

- ❖ Talk about the need for good writing skills throughout life in terms of:
 - ♦ Obtaining good grades in school and college through quality themes and essays;
 - ♦ Searching for employment with letters and resumes;
 - ♦ Writing references for yourself and others;
 - ♦ Communicating with friends, relatives and business associates; and
 - ♦ Writing proposals, reports and memos that communicate your intended message.
- ❖ Encourage creative writing by having your children write about a topic designed to spark thinking, such as:
 - ♦ A favorite vacation;
 - ♦ An unusual scenario;
 - ♦ A group of related or unrelated items that should be included in a story;
or
 - ♦ A perfect birthday present.
- ❖ Have your children pick a topic and write a paragraph a week for several weeks about that topic. Help them maintain a storyline and continuity from week to week but encourage them to include things observed or experienced during the current week.