

Ways to Encourage Your Child as a Writer



1. Encourage your child to sound out words and write a letter for each sound they hear. In our writing curriculum, we encourage phonetical spelling, so if your child asks, “How do I spell apple?”, an appropriate response would be, “What sounds do you hear in that word?”
If he or she spells it “APL”, that is exactly what we are working towards!
2. Ask your child to tell you stories, and help him/her structure the stories in a beginning, middle, and end format. Your interest will inspire him/her to want to add the details that make it a story, and telling stories is an important precursor to writing stories.
3. Tell your child stories—ones from your childhood, ones from your days—He/she will love hearing about your life, and listening to stories will help develop the understanding of how to tell stories.
4. Share any form of writing you do with your child—lists, notes, letters—they all help children realize the importance of writing.
5. Give your child opportunities to tell you about what they know. If your child is an expert at Legos, encourage him/her to tell you about it. The more organized the explanation, the better, as this practice will help him/her develop informational writing pieces.
6. Encourage your child to persuade or argue with reasons and evidence. Need a new pair of shoes? Convince me! Why do you need a new pair of shoes, and how can you tell? What will happen if you don’t get a pair of new shoes? How will your life improve? This sounds silly, but this type of thinking and speaking will dramatically help your child when he/she is learning to write opinion pieces.
7. Point out the revision process in anything you do together. If you are building blocks, sometimes, you make a different decision about the foundation. If you are cooking, you might add more salt. If you are painting a picture, you might need to start over. These are revision decisions that build flexibility of thought and are critical for writers of all ages and stages.

Thinking out loud through revisions also helps with building resiliency and teaching children that it's ok to make mistakes -- Mistakes help our brains grow!

8. Read and read and read some more! Stop and gasp when you read something beautiful. Stop and laugh when you read something funny. Stop and groan when you read something goofy. Your child will pick up on craft moves and amaze you because they will show up in his/her writing. Make the question "How did the writer *do* that?" part of your repertoire as you read with children.