

Writing at Meadow Lane Infant School



Ten 'top tips' designed to help your child develop their writing skills

1. **Build up finger strength to help pencil grip and control.** Lego, playdoh, tap-a-shape, K-nex, or any other similar activity which encourages children to grip and push with their fingers is great for this.



2. **Develop hand/eye co-ordination.** Using a computer mouse, doing dot to dot puzzles, tracing, threading beads, throwing and catching balls, and even cutting out using scissors, are great ways of training the brain to develop this skill.

3. Use a wide variety of implements which make marks, and do it as often as possible.

Paint, felt tips, chalk, finger paint, glitter pens, colouring pencils, crayons; you name it, if it leaves an image behind your



child will have probably used hand/eye co-ordination skills to create it. So inspire them with the variety of writing tools you offer! Try practising letter formation in a tray of sand, or flour, glitter, or shaving foam. Or try writing or drawing using a clean paintbrush and water on the patio or outside wall.



4. Write for a purpose. Encourage your child to engage in meaningful and purposeful activities such as writing shopping lists, letters, cards and postcards to friends and relatives, captions and labels in scrap books, notes and reminders to you.

5. Talk before writing. We always ask our children to do lots of discussion before writing at school, in order that they are very confident about what they want to say, and which vocabulary they want to use to say it. Developing children's spoken vocabulary is at the heart of developing many aspects of their written work.



6. Know your focus when praising a child for their writing. What has your child succeeded in? Have they remembered what they wanted to say? Did they set it out in the recognized way for that type of



writing, eg lists with items underneath each other? Did they remember finger spaces or capital letters? Were the letters neat and well formed? Could you recognize the spellings?

There are many skills a child has to use when writing, which as adults we can take for granted. It is important that we acknowledge the small steps towards success that a child takes each time they write. Our aim is to praise each one in order to build confidence and progress.



7. Encourage your child to develop a comfortable and efficient pencil grip. Your child's teacher will be happy to show you what this looks like if you are not sure. Please encourage your child to hold a pencil around about where the paint on the outside comes to an end. This will help them to see what they are writing as they go along.

8. Help your child to form their letters correctly.

Please refer to the attached sheets which outline how to form letters for right and left handed children respectively. Each sheet shows where to start the letter, and the direction that the writing implement should move in. It is important that the children are confident in this knowledge prior to them moving on to joining letters in cursive handwriting.



9. Read lots of different types of writing with your child.

Children learn by copying others. If they only ever read stories, they will become very skilled and confident at this type of writing, but will lack the knowledge that many adults rely on to help them communicate with and understand the wider world. For example, letters, reports, newspapers, dictionaries, encyclopedias, e-mail, fact books, text messages, web pages, poems, jokes, comics, lists, recipes, instructions, adverts, food packaging, tickets.....the list is endless. It is important that they can read and understand these types of writing before being asked to create their own versions of them.



10 Have fun with writing! Provide your child with a wide variety of experiences which they can talk and write about. This does not have to cost a fortune! For example, a rustle in the Autumn leaves and a chat about how it looks, sounds, smells and feels could arm your child with enough new vocabulary and inspiration to become a budding poet!

