

Helping Your Child Become A Writer

Good writers read a lot. They get ideas for writing from reading the work of other people. When you look at the writing of a seven or eight year old, you can see the influence of both books and firsthand experience. You will also notice that they spell words the way the words sound to them, such as “gril” for girl or “caricders” for characters. As parents, we tend to pressure them to get it “right”, however, writers at this age are generally not ready for revisions. They are more interested in telling you their story and we need to be careful that we do not hinder their creativity by taking the joy out of writing. They will eventually learn to spell words correctly as they continue to read, write and study spelling at school. The more they write, the better writers they will become. The following tips will help your child to make writing authentic and to keep it fun.

1. **Keep a journal.** Encourage your child to write down thoughts at the end of a chapter or book. Ask if you can respond to his writing.
2. **Write a thank you letter.** Have your child write a note to an uncle or grandparent whenever she receives a special gift or treat.
3. **Create an invitation.** Provide paper, stickers, stamps, and markers so your child can decorate the note and envelope. Make it a fun art activity as well.
4. **Make up jokes and write them down.** Young children love to tell corny jokes. Have your child write down the jokes so he doesn't forget them. Remind him that the words need to appear in a certain order so that people will laugh and not be confused.
5. **Do crossword puzzles.** By doing crossword puzzles with your child, she will learn that many words have more than one definition, and it will help her to pay more attention to words.
6. **Create a family album.** Take photos of a “typical week in our family.” Help lay out the pictures in order. Discuss each picture and why it is special. Have your child write something about each picture and place it in the album. Have your child share the album with family members.
7. **Interview parents or grandparents.** Help your child make up a list of questions to ask. Tape record or video the conversation. Next, have your child write a story about the family member. Add the story to the family album and include a picture.
8. **Write it down.** If you're on the telephone or busy and your child can't wait to tell you what happened, suggest that he write it down and read it to you later. This will get your child in the habit of writing you notes as a form of communication.

Adapted from: Read To Me, Raising Kids Who Love to Read by Bernice E. Cullinan.