

10 Ways to Encourage Children to Write

by Joe Sottile



Writing is a priceless tool for children to master and use, just like reading is. The earlier they start writing words and sentences the more confident they will be on life's journey. Many parents teach their young children how to read before they even enter kindergarten. But why not encourage them to write before and during their first year of formal schooling?

Based on my thirty-three years of teaching elementary school, here is what I would recommend.

1. Children learn by example. To become a better reader or writer, children need to see their parents frequently reading and writing. If the atmosphere in the home is laden with books and active readers and writers, young children will want to explore books and writing. Children can become interested in books and writing through what they see and hear in their home and school environment.
2. When children enter school, they should be encouraged to use the school library, and the class library. If the classroom teacher doesn't have a lending library in the room, perhaps you could volunteer to create one. Friends of the Public Library usually have fantastic sales on used books. I have bought full bags of books for one dollar. Many teachers offer a monthly Book Club order with paperback books at reasonable prices.
3. Children love to colour. Encourage your child to colour and write. They can start off by writing their name on each page they colour as a gift for a person in the house or as a picture to be displayed on the fridge. Magnetic letters can also spell out names of family and friends.
4. Let your child be a list maker for what goes in the fridge and the kitchen cabinets. He or she can help with the weekly grocery list. At our local grocery children were offered a cookie, while shopping with mom or dad.
5. Reward your children for writing. Children love treats--chocolate chip cookies or lifesavers. You can reward them for writing their name or a couple



sentences. Don't underestimate the power of candy. I know a substitute teacher who shares treats with her students. When she walks into the classroom, they are happy to see her. Little things matter.

6. Reading and writing matters. When your children are young, you can read them a bedtime story to relax them, and you. They will never forget you doing that with them--just reading a short bedtime story. As they get older they can add on or change the story's plot. They can also write short reviews of the story.

7. Reviewing the last 24 hours can be fun. Yes, we can do it in a diary or journal. The act of writing spills over with positive energy for the young and the old, and somewhere in between. My brother, Tony, received a blank journal for his thirteenth birthday, and he filled it up each day of that year. It is now one of his priceless possessions. Many retired folks have gratitude journals that they add to each night.



8. Help your child to be grateful. The dinner table is a good time to say prayers and be grateful. What has this got to do with writing? Everything. One way to be emotionally close to your children is to facilitate the sharing of feelings. It will be a challenge not to be judgmental, and say things such as "You can't think like that son!" Feelings come and go. Let your children share what they think, and encourage them to write about those feelings. You will know your child better, and they will confide verbally or in writing more frequently.

9. Writing can be a good habit in good times and bad times at any age. In good times it makes life even better to visit your happy thoughts again. In sad times it gets the sad out. Encourage your children to write at an early age. They will always appreciate you for doing so.

10. Getting children to write more isn't complicated. If they have interesting topics to write about it's fairly easy. As a teacher, I stressed with my students that they can write about whatever is swirling around in their heads, just put it down in writing for a first draft. You can make it better later on. In the beginning of your child's journey in writing, you can be the secretary for writing little stories. You simply record what he or she says. Of course, you can make



recommendations such as advising to include a problem to be overcome in the story. This will be fun for you and your child. So, write on!

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Joe Sottile is a poet, writer, teacher, and speaker. He believes funny poetry can turn kids on to reading and writing. If you're a teacher, you might want to invite Poet Joe to your school or classroom to present poetry or do a writing workshop. If you're a parent, you might want to purchase [WAITING TO SEE THE PRINCIPAL](#). It's a riot. See what Joe has written at <https://www.amazon.com/Joe-Sottile/e/B002CHWBYC>

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