



Writing at Home

Know how long an activity is going to take

Short and frequent learning activities can keep your child stimulated for longer and maximise the retention of information. For example at Explore Learning a written activity will take no more than 15 minutes, therefore the children know how long they are expected to write for and feel more motivated to complete the task.

Rewards

If children are going to be rewarded for doing writing at home they should know exactly what the reward is and what they need to do to achieve it. At Explore Learning children rewarded for concentrating and for doing their best.

Let them fidget

Sometimes children just need something to fiddle with such as a tangle toy. A tangle toy helps to take away the urge to fidget and stimulates parts of the brain that assist children in their learning. We love these: http://www.greatlittlerewards.co.uk/Tangle_Jr_Neon_Sparkle_p/104m.htm

Create a timetable

Sit down together and draw out a plan of a typical day or week and show your child what time they have each day to do their favourite things and what time they will do written activities and homework.

Praise, praise, praise

It is very important to give praise and encouragement for every little achieve. This might be sitting down and concentrating, completing a written activity independently or simply not complaining about sitting down and writing. Every child is different and therefore praise should be given for individual achievements.

Be Vocal

Discuss any writing concerns with your child's teacher and consider visiting an education centre such as Explore Learning where we have writing tools specifically designed to support struggling writers. Sometimes children respond differently to writing with other adults especially young role models like Explore Learning tutors can be especially powerful. To find out more about Explore Learning and to book a free trial session visit <http://www.explorelearning.co.uk/>

Start young

It is very important for your child to start writing from a young age, and I don't mean just writing stories but writing anything at all! It doesn't matter if they don't finish writing the stories, as long as they're practicing their own stories as much as they possibly can and creating something unique.

Make up stories about people they know

Some children may struggle to come up with characters' names and personalities so to resolve this encourage them to write about their favourite characters from TV or film – or perhaps one of their friends or family.

Encourage their love of reading

Reading books to a child is a great way of sparking their imagination, even to an older child. Once children learn to read, you're sometimes tempted to let them get on with it, but if you read a book with a child or put on a tape, you're enjoying the book with them. You're sending a message that books are important, reading is important, and therefore writing is important. Encouraging them to enjoy stories is the starting point to sparking their imagination.

Don't get too bogged down in grammar

Of course grammar is essential later in life, but I can't emphasise enough that grammar can't and shouldn't prevent creativity. It shouldn't stop a child's imagination running free and putting down in writing something special. Time and time again I have come across a child who is self-conscious about their poor grammar and spelling. Sadly it can create an insecurity that acts as a barrier to potentially great work. Quite simply, if a child starts their creative writing by thinking they have to be perfect, they won't express themselves in the way they want to.

At Explore Learning, grammar isn't the first thing we focus on: in our Creative Writing classes it's all about ideas. Dare I say it, it doesn't matter if you can't spell some things; what's important is that you've got some brilliant ideas that aren't 'dumbed down' by an inability to express yourself perfectly grammatically.

Write about Real Life

What they write doesn't need to be fictional; if it helps them to put pen to paper, ask them to write about something exciting that happened lately. Encourage them to use vivid, emotive language. Once they've done this they can move onto making up their own stories where they can let their imagination take control!

Avoid the TV

Getting children to love reading and writing can prove to be a challenge, especially with television, films and games being its most harsh competitors. Having some family reading time can be very powerful. If your child sees you replacing TV with books then they are more likely to be inspired to get excited about it too.

Enter Competitions

Competitions are a fantastic way to give children confidence in their writing. They get impartial feedback on their work and if they do well it will drive them further! Read about our National Young Writers' Awards <http://www.explorelearning.co.uk/youngwriters>