

Raising Readers: Tips for Parents

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Writing

Adapted from: Elish-Piper L. (2009/2010). Parent involvement in reading: writing with your child at home: information and idea for parents,. *Illinois Reading Council Journal*, 38(4), 53-56

Writing is a complex communication process that involves five main steps. These steps are outlined and described below along with ideas for how parents can help their children develop the skills needed for each step of the writing process.



Stage of Writing Process	What is it?	What can a Parent Do at Home to Help Support this Stage of the Writing Process?
Prewriting	Getting ready to write by thinking of ideas, brainstorming, drawing, and/or talking about what to write.	Before your child writes, have him or her draw or talk about what he or she plans to write.
Writing	Putting ideas into writing in the form of sentences and paragraphs. This is often called writing a rough draft meaning that it is not yet done.	Encourage your child to just get the ideas onto the paper. Remind your child that a first draft does not need to be perfect or even complete. Just getting the ideas on the paper is the most important part of this stage of the writing process.
Revising	Making the writing better by reading it and then changing words, phrases, or sentences to make them clearer.	Remind your child to always read what he or she has written. Encourage your child to look for ways to change words, phrases, sentences, or organization to make the writing clearer or more interesting.
Editing	Reading the writing carefully to check for correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, and word choice.	Have your child help you proofread and edit letters or other types of writing. For younger children, focus on one or two things such as starting each sentence with a capital letter and checking spelling of common words.
Publishing	Preparing the final draft and sharing it with others.	If your child writes a story, letter, or other piece, have him or her share it with others so that the writing becomes public. This can be done by reading the piece aloud, having someone read it, or displaying it for others to see.



In addition to using the writing process as a general framework for teaching writing, many schools also teach the Six Traits or Six + 1 Traits for writing (<http://educationnorthwest.org/traits>). The traits refer to aspects of good writing that develop as students move ahead as writers. These traits are briefly listed and described below.

Writing Trait	Description
Ideas	The main message and content of the writing
Organization	The structure of the writing that makes it clear and easy to understand
Voice	The tone and flavor of the author's writing
Word Choice	The vocabulary that the author uses in the writing
Sentence Fluency	The flow of the language in the writing, including the use of varied sentence patterns
Conventions	The use of correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation
Presentation	How the writing looks on the page, including handwriting and neatness

Parents do not need to understand all of the components of writing instruction to help their children at home. They just need to be willing to encourage their child, provide meaningful opportunities for practice, and communicate with their child's teacher about the expectations for writing in the classroom.



Questions or Comments?

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