

Writing Development

Reading and writing are interactive and interconnected. Children learn to read by writing, and conversely, to write by reading. It is important to keep in mind that teaching and learning these skills must be done in interactive, hands-on, activities that are done for a real purpose and are meaningful. (Worksheets are not appropriate at this age).

The following are suggestions and examples of ways to support writing development:

- Provide a variety of writing materials (markers, pencils, colored pencils, crayons) and a variety of shapes, sizes and colors of paper for writing. Store them in attractive containers that are easy for the children to use.
- Provide these materials in various centers of your program (i.e. writing area, housekeeping area, block area, science area, etc).
- Clipboards with pencils attached to the boards with string or yarn are also great writing props for children to use in all areas of the room.
- Write with the children in meaningful ways. For example, in the pretend area, make grocery lists or menus together. In the block area, make signs that have directions on them, make road maps for the cars and add houses, community buildings, etc and write the names on them. Use large sheets of paper for this.
- Model writing with the children. When talking together or in a large group, periodically write down their thoughts, make lists of what you expect to see on a field trip and then revisit that list when you return to see if you saw the same things on the list.
- Encourage the children to draw pictures. Provide little blank books from scrap paper in the writing area, so that they can draw their pictures in the book. Then offer to write the words on the pages for them (or with them). If a child draws a picture, ask them to tell you about the picture. Then ask if he/she would like to you to write their words on the page and where.
- Encourage writing for real purposes by providing areas such as a post office or office. Have envelopes, stamps, etc. in this area.
- Children usually begin to write conventionally write their own name first. Provide name cards and lists of children's names in several areas of the room. Use a capital letter for the first letter and lower-case letters for the rest of the name.
- Provide examples of their name and other familiar words and family names for them to use as examples. Do not expect children to write between lines! They need the free form to develop their fine motor skills.
- **ACCEPT ALL ATTEMPTS AT WRITING as REAL WRITING.** This includes scribbling, making letter-like forms, mixed scribbling and letter-like forms, etc.
- Write stories together.
- Sometimes children will respond to having you write down their feelings if they are angry or sad or happy, or recording a conflict.