

Writing at home

- Help your child write an alphabet letter, then go letter hunting in your house or in a book to find that letter
- Let your child see you writing – you can use your first language
- Encourage them to write shopping lists or make birthday cards
- Water and a paintbrush on a dry path and a stick on sand are fun ways to write letters and words.

Here's a tip - Don't worry if your child's letters or words are sometimes backwards or misspelt at this age. The important thing is that they have fun writing at home and are making an effort.

- Write to each other. Write notes to your child and leave them in interesting places, like their lunch box. Ask them to write a reply
- Help them email, text or write to family or friends
- Work with them to put labels on special things – like the door to their room or their toy box.

Here a tip - display their work. Put it on the fridge. Be proud of it. Share it with others.

- Talk about the letters in your child's name and where the name comes from.
- Help them create a scrapbook with pictures. Encourage them to write stories under the pictures and talk to you about them.
- Ask them to write about pictures they draw - on paper or on the computer. Or get them to tell you the story and you write it under the picture.

Here's a tip - talk about what your child writes. Be interested. If you don't understand what your child's picture or story is about, ask them to tell you about it.

- Have felt pens, pencils, crayons and paper available
- Put magnetic letters on the fridge – ask what words they can make with the letters.
- encourage your child to write – on paper or on the computer. It is OK for you to help and share the writing. Give lots of praise
- enjoy the message and don't make your child anxious about spelling or neatness
- make a photo book and get your child to write captions
- scrapbooks are fun, too. Old magazine or newspaper pictures about a favourite subject, dogs, your family, motorbikes or the latest toy craze, pasted on to blank pages – with room for captions or stories, too

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- play with words. Finding and discussing interesting new words can help increase the words your child uses when they write. Look up words in the dictionary or on the Internet or talk to family to find out more about the meaning (origins) of the words.

Here's a tip - talk a lot to your child while you are doing things together. Use the language that works best for you and your child.

- write lists – ‘Things I need from the shop’, ‘Games to play when I am bored’, ‘Things I want to do in the holidays’. The last one can be cut up and go into a box or bag for a lucky dip when the holidays finally arrive
- write out recipes or instructions for other people to follow (especially fun if the instructions are for an adult)
- keep a diary, especially if you are doing something different and exciting. Your child can draw the pictures or stick in photos. Their diary could be a webpage on the computer
- write letters, cards, notes and emails to friends and family and the Tooth Fairy – you might write replies sometimes, too
- cut out letters from old magazines and newspapers to make messages write secret messages for others to find in their lunch box or under their pillow.
- Make up a different ending for a favourite story together and get them to write it down
- Keep writing fun and use any excuse you can think of to encourage your child to write about anything, any time.
- Talk about interesting words with your child, especially ones that are fun to say, like "hippopotamus". Short and simple games could involve finding how many little words can be found using the letters in the word ‘elephant’
- Work together on the small word games found in the children’s section (or word section) of the newspaper
- Make up a story or think of a legend or traditional tale and act it out with costumes and music, write down the names of the characters
- Make up a play with your child. You could help your child to write the play down. Use puppets they design and make themselves to give a performance to the family

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- Writing for a real purpose can help your child want to write. For example, writing invitations, typing emails or writing and posting small notes
- Personalising notes by cutting, decorating, sticking or stamping are great skills for coordinating fingers and being creative. Postcards are a good size for a sentence or two and they are cheap to post, too
- Encourage your child to write what they need to pack for a holiday, dictate your shopping list to them, or get them to write a list of jobs that need doing.
- Talk to your child about what you are writing – let them see you making lists, writing emails, filling in forms
- Keep envelopes, banking slips, forms you don't need so that your child can do their own 'grown up' writing
- Display your child's writing where others can admire and read it

Here's a tip - be a great role model. Show your child that you write for all sorts of reasons. Let them see you enjoying writing. You can use your first language – this helps your child's learning, too.

- Writing about their heroes, sports events, hobbies and interests helps your child to stay interested in what they are writing about
- Help your child to leave messages in sand on the beach, send a message in a bottle, do code crackers, word puzzles, crosswords, word finds – these are all fun to do together
- If you or someone in your family has a computer, encourage your child to use it to write, email and publish or print for pleasure (emails, birthday cards, poems, jokes, letters, pictures with captions). Or you could use a computer at the library.
- Get your child to talk about their writing and share it
- Cut out words and letters to make stories, codes, poems, puzzles and more...
- Play word games together
- Get your child to help write the shopping list, invitation lists for family events, menus for special dinners, thank-you cards when someone does something nice
- Postcards are a good size for a sentence or two and they are cheap to post, too. Have a special place to keep your child's writing at home (notice board, fridge, folder). You might frame a piece of writing and hang it up, too.

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- Play word games and do puzzles together. Games and puzzles such as crosswords, tongue twisters and word puzzles help build your child's knowledge of words, spelling, thinking and planning skills
- Start a blog about a family interest. Find a topic you're both interested in and set up your own blog.
- Suggest your child is responsible for the weekly shopping list, equipment list for weekends away and holidays, task lists for the week
- Short stories or a journal – on paper or on a computer – can help them to write about their experiences and their own feelings about things that have happened at school, in their family, in the world, at sports events and on TV
- Report on a new baby or pet addition to the family. This might be a slide show, scrapbook, page on the computer
- Make an argument in writing for a special request – trip, event, present etc.
- Draw up written contracts for agreed jobs; e.g. Every day I will... (make my bed, do one lot of dishes, and when I complete the contract I can choose...).
- Play word games and do puzzles together to help your child learn more about words and spelling
- Have interesting paper and pens available or help them make a special book to write in
- Write to your child, or give them jokes, cartoons or short articles you think they'll like to read from the newspaper
- Talk about ideas and information they are going to write about. Talk about experiences, diagrams, graphs, pictures, photos, song lyrics and material that your child is planning to use for school work. Discussing the information and main ideas can help their planning for writing and their understanding, too
- Share enjoyment of their writing. Read and talk about the writing that your child does. Give praise for things they have done well to support their learning.
- Ask your child who they would like to write to. It is helpful if what they write is given or sent to others
- Ask them to write a story to read to a younger sibling
- A diary or journal

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