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20 Fun Ways for Parents to Support Their K-2 Child's Reading and Writing

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Parents are their child's first teachers and there are many fun, interactive ways that parents can support their children's reading and writing development. It begins when children observe their parents engaged in purposeful reading and writing activities. For example, when a child observes his mother making a grocery list, then accompanies her to the grocery store where he observes her reading the items from the list, locating them and purchasing them, he learns, by experience, that reading and writing have a purpose.

When children enter Kindergarten, they bring with them a variety of previous experiences with print which may come from their own family life, from early education programs, and from their interaction with world around them. Examples of prior experiences might include scribbling pretend notes on pieces of paper with crayons or writing his/her name for the first time in shaving cream. These are teachable moments for parents. They are opportunities for talking with your child about his/her efforts. Example: "Tell me about the note you have written."

Children are great storytellers. Encourage your child to dictate stories to you or help them publish their stories on the computer. These activities value your child as an author. Make simple scrapbooks about family trips and have your child write captions for the pictures and postcards. Suggest that they draw pictures of their favorite experiences. These activities support your child's reading and writing skills by communicating the message that their writing is interesting and people want to hear their ideas.

Reading aloud to your children conveys the enjoyment you receive from being able to read. Children will want to imitate your behavior and do as you do. The same is learned about writing when children observe their parents writing, they will want to write. Every child learns to read and write in his or her own time, but the experiences he or she has early in life can help nurture their desire to read and write.

20 Fun ways to Support Your K-2 Child's Reading and Writing

1. Read aloud to your children everyday.
2. Provide opportunities for purposeful reading like reading a recipe.
3. Attend special library events like "Meet the Author".
4. Make reading materials available.
5. Together, visit author websites. An example of a site with interactive activities for kids. Example: <http://www.randomhouse.com/kids/magictreehouse/activities.html>
6. Model your passion for books by letting your child see you reading often.
7. Demonstrate how to use the dictionary to locate a new word.
8. Play word games like "Boggle and Scrabble." Team up a younger child with an older, more fluent speller.
9. Keep a "New Word Notebook" by writing down new words your child encounters during their reading. Together, find it's meaning in the dictionary, read it aloud and have your child use it in a sentence. Younger children can draw a picture that represents the word.
10. Fill a box lid with letters that you cut from magazines or with alphabet stickers. Help your child learn a new sight word, or a difficult vocabulary word in a content area like science, by spelling it with the letters and writing the word in a sentence. Learning sight words or vocabulary words in the meaningful context of a sentence will help your child remember the word.

11. Model purposeful writing for your child. Examples: Write a daily message on a white board for the family to read at breakfast.

12. Make a "writing tool box" containing a variety of writing supplies like colored pencils, gel pens, markers, scissors, stickers, blank books, a stapler and construction paper. Include different kinds of paper, addresses of friends and family and stamped envelopes. Include a card of the alphabet for students to use as a reference for correct letter formation. This collection of writing tools makes spontaneous writing possible.

13. Easel painting is an excellent activity for beginning writers. Encourage older kids to paint, and draw. Art activities strengthen muscles in the hands needed for writing.

14. Encourage your child to tell stories and publish them on the computer.

15. Help your child keep a "personal word diary." Record basic sight words or content vocabulary in a notebook or sketchbook that your child frequently misspells. This diary can be used as a reference when your child is writing.

16. Younger students can use a sketchbook with no lines. Help your child write the new word at the top of the page beginning to the left side of the page. Help them think of ways to illustrate the word and use the word in a sentence.

17. Students can send an email "book review" to tell an author what they thought of one of their books. Example: Carole Marsh, [The Mystery in the Rocky Mountains #13](http://www.carolemarshmysteries.com), www.carolemarshmysteries.com

18. Have your child practice writing the weekly spelling words in a pan of Jell-o powder. Involving multiple senses makes the experience more memorable.

19. Have your child make and decorate a bookmark from construction paper. After they finish reading a book, help them write the title of the story, the author, the main characters and what the story was about on the bookmark.

20. Crossword puzzles help develop comprehension and reinforce new vocabulary in a meaningful context. Puzzles can be made or puzzle books can be purchased. [The Teacher's Apple](#) in Ashburn, 703-723-2753, or [Loudoun Learning](#) in Leesburg, 703-443-9966, are good resources.)


Resources

[The International Reading Association](#), 800 Barksdale Road, P.O. Box 8139, Newark, Delaware 19714-8139, Tel. 302-731-1600, www.reading.org
[The Read-Aloud Handbook](#), 4th Edition, Jim Trelease, Viking Penguin, 1995.

[Raising a Reader](#), Jennie Nash, St. Martin's Press, N.Y., 2003.

[Raising Lifelong Learners: A Parent's Guide](#), Lucy Calkins with Lydia Bellino, Perseus Books, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1997.

[Read to Me: Raising Kids Who Love to Read](#), Bernice E. Cullinan, Scholastic, 1992.



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