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MAY 2008

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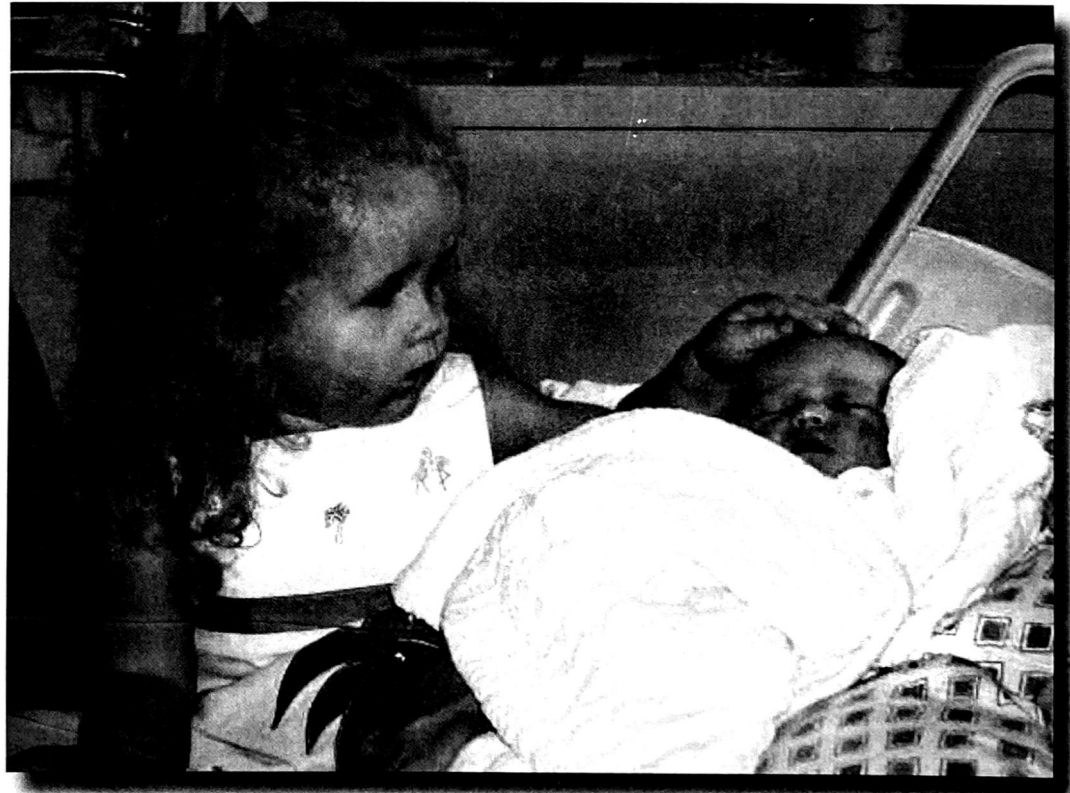
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An introduction

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A New Feature

She's Meeting her baby sister for the First Time



It was love at first sight
for these
Sweet Sisters



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8 Ways to Get Your Child Excited About Writing

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Making writing experiences personal is the key to motivating writers of all ages. The main goal of all writing experiences is to provide children with a purpose for writing. Writing activities need to be meaningful rather than writing for writing sake. Personalizing the writing project will capture a young writer or even an older writer's interest.

In school, students write responses to books they have read. They compare and contrast ideas in content area subjects. Sometimes, it can be beneficial for students to be encouraged to write just for fun.

Remember, writing activities can be simple at first. Young children can write in shaving cream and powdered Jell-o mix. They can experiment with a paint brush dipped in water on a smooth surface, at an easel with paint, and on the pavement outdoors with sidewalk chalk. Older students might enjoy charcoal or ink pens for sketching and writing in journals.

Here are other writing activities for you to try at home.

Design a postcard.

Invite your child to design their own post card to send to a friend or relative.

Blank postcards can be bought at most office supply stores. The post office also sells blank postcards that include postage.

Write a personal letter and attach a photo.

Have your child design their own stationary using stickers, their drawings and writing. Demonstrate for younger children how to address an envelope and include all parts of the address especially the zip code. For older children, teach the specifics of addressing an envelope. Work on the mechanics of letter writing and encourage them to include the date in the top right corner, a salutation, "Dear Aunt Bobbi," followed by a comma, an interesting message that includes several interesting sentences, a closing, "Your niece," and their signature. Suggest that they attach a recent photo of themselves.

Send a drawing or watercolor painting with a hand-written message.

Encourage your child to paint a watercolor

and send it to a relative, friend, or parent at his/her office. For example, attach a sticky note message to the artwork. "Hi mom, I miss you. Here's a painting to remind you of me. Love, ..."

Make a writer's brief case.

For older students, a mail bag type brief case is a fun place to hold writing paper, stamped envelopes, a personalized address book, a dictionary, and different kinds of colored paper, gel pens or colored pencils. Younger writers might enjoy having an assortment of stickers in their writer's brief case. These brief cases are portable and can be taken on vacation, to camp, or on a weekend with grandparents.

Buy a wooden box from a craft store.

Your child can personalize and decorate the box to store writing supplies. Include story-starters printed on colorful strips of paper. Example: One dark cloudy day I spied a...

Give the gift of a diary.

Specialty gift stores carry diaries that sometimes come with keys. This makes a private place for your child's writing that can only be shared if your child chooses. A notebook, works just as well, but the key makes the writing feel protected and private. For some children, privacy is important.

Purchase a leather bound or suede-covered journal from a book store.

The gift of a textured journal can be just the thing to motivate a middle school or high school student to write. Think about your writer's favorite color, and interests when choosing a journal.

Dialogue journaling is a fun way to communicate with your child. Your child should be given the choice of whether they wish to share what they have written or keep it private. If they wish to keep their entry private, they can fold the page in half. This indicates that this particular entry is not to be read without permission. The goal is to get kids writing. The more they write the more their writing will improve. Learning to be a good writer is similar to learning any new skill. The more the skill is practiced the better the result will be. Dialogue



journaling is meant to create a forum for two writers to share their ideas. An adult, for example, may write about an experience they have had and ask a question of the child. Example: When I was a child... Have you ever felt this way before? Explain how you felt.

The younger writer then replies. He/she can use the adult's modeled entry as a guideline for their response. Each time the adult responds to the child, he/she uses some of the language the student uses. This is an opportunity to model correct verb usage, interesting descriptive words, and good sentence structure for older writers. It provides an opportunity to practice spelling, punctuation, and writing complete sentences that are connected to one another.

During the summer, encourage children to write for recreational purposes like keeping a journal/sketchbook with drawings accompanied by writing. Making lists, writing thank you notes, and writing stories about places they have visited are all meaningful writing experiences for young writers.

Encouraging your children to write will benefit their reading and spelling as they look up new words in the dictionary and utilize their word knowledge to spell words on their own. With regards to spelling, try not to always give your child the correct spelling of a word. Let them do some of the work. Children K-2 should be sounding out

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words and writing the letters that represent the sounds they hear. They can be shown how to use the dictionary and assisted looking up unknown words. They can collect words and write them in a composition book as a personal word bank.

Whatever activities you try with your children, remember to be supportive, and positive. Compliment their writing efforts. Model how you use writing everyday. Young writers especially, need to see you writing. Most of all, keep it fun! For more ideas to encourage your child to write, see these helpful websites. ✎

Web Resources for Writing with children of all ages...

<http://www.seedsofknowledge.com/kidswriting.html>

<http://www.thewritingsite.org/resources/parent/primary.asp>

<http://www.thewritingsite.org/resources/parent/intermediate.asp>

<http://www.thewritingsite.org/resources/parent/secondary.asp>

<http://www.thewritingsite.org/resources/technology/default.asp>

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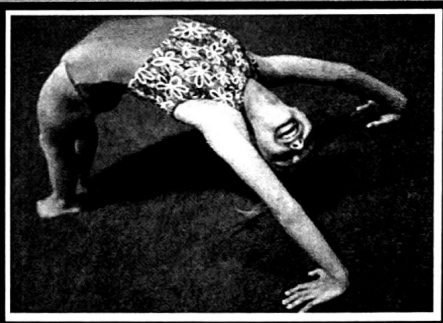
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