

Tips for Parents about Writing Workshop

Mindy Hoffer, All Write!!! 2008

1. When your child shows you his or her writing, focus on what your child is doing well. Writing is very personal and a child can be easily crushed. Celebrate with your child what is good about the writing.
2. Help to encourage the enthusiasm your child has for writing. Your child's energy for writing should increase after talking with you, not decrease.
3. Don't panic over misspelled words. A child's speaking vocabulary is greater than written vocabulary. If a child only used words he/she knows how to spell, the writing would be very dull and lifeless. The teacher works on spelling skills during the year. Watch to see if your child's spelling improves as the year progresses. (Remember, even published work sometimes has spelling errors and that work has gone through much editing.)
4. Don't stress if your child doesn't use punctuation perfectly. Again, the teacher works on this during the year. Your child will progress in this area as well.
5. The goal of writing workshop is to teach the writer, not the writing. "If the piece of writing gets better but the writer has learned nothing that will help him or her another day on another piece, then the time was wasted." –Carl Anderson-
6. Show your child how you use writing in your life – making lists, writing letters, thank you notes, emails, notes to family members, etc.
7. Share stories from your life with your child. Your life stories are more interesting to your child than made up TV shows. . . REALLY!!!
8. When your child wants to tell you about an interesting thing that happened during the day, enjoy listening and encourage him or her to jot the event down. It might make a good piece of writing later.
9. Provide different kinds of paper, pencils, etc. for your child to write with at home. Have a home writing center.
10. Find reasons for your child to write – help with the grocery list, write thank you notes.
11. Read with your child.

Parent Tips for nurturing your growing readers:

(Reading is Fundamental)

1. **Read with your children at least once every day.**
2. **Make sure they have plenty to read.** Take them to the library regularly, and keep books and other reading materials in their reach.
3. **Notice what interests your child,** then help find books about those things.
4. **Respect your child's choices.** There's nothing wrong with series fiction if that's what keeps a young reader turning the pages.
5. **Praise your children's efforts** and newly acquired skills.

6. **Help your child build a personal library.** Children's books, new or used, make great gifts and appropriate rewards for reading. Designate a bookcase, shelf or box where your children can keep their books.
7. **Check up on your children's progress.** Listen to them read aloud, read what they write and ask teachers how they're doing in school.
8. **Go places and do things with your children** to build their background knowledge and vocabulary, and to give them a basis for understanding what they read.
9. **Tell stories.** It's a fun way to teach values, pass on family history and build your children's listening and thinking skills.
10. **Be a reading role model.** Let your children see you read, and share some interesting things with them that you have read about in books, newspapers or magazines.
11. **Continue reading aloud to older children** even after they have learned to read by themselves.