

Supporting Young Writers

Conversation and Language Around Writing

1. Ask your child to tell you stories, and help them structure the stories into a beginning, middle, and end format. Your interest will inspire him/her to want to add the details that make it a story, and telling stories is an important precursor to writing stories.
2. Tell your child stories--ones from your childhood, ones from your days-- He/she will love hearing about your life, and listening to stories will help develop the understanding of how to tell stories.
3. Share any form of writing you do with your child--lists, notes, letters--they all help children realize the importance of writing.
4. Give your child opportunities to tell you about what they know. If your child is an expert at Legos, encourage him/her to tell you about it. The more organized the explanation, the better, as this practice will help him/her develop informational writing pieces.
5. Encourage your child to persuade or argue with reasons and evidence. Need a new pair of shoes? Convince me! Why do you need a new pair of shoes, and how can you tell? What will happen if you don't get a pair of new shoes? How will your life improve? This sounds silly, but this type of thinking and speaking will dramatically help your child when s/he's learning to write opinion pieces.
6. Teach your children that sometimes when we are not sure how we are feeling, when the world seems confusing and overwhelming, sometimes writing can provide an outlet for sorting through some of the rubble and discovering not only sources, but also solutions. You may be surprised at how powerful writing to discover truths about ourselves can be. Try to find time to give it a go.
7. Read. Read more. Stop and gasp when you read something beautiful. Stop and laugh when you read something funny. Stop and groan when you read something goofy. Your child will pick up on craft moves and amaze you because they will show up in his/her writing.

Questions to Ask Writers

1. What are you working on as a writer?
2. What are you the proudest of about this piece?
3. Who is/ Who could be the audience for this piece?