

Supporting Common Core State Standards

Strengthen your child's writing skills

The Common Core State Standards have created a shift in writing objectives for students. Students will now be expected to write for a variety of purposes and to compose more extensive pieces of writing. Since writing is a skill that gets stronger with practice, the best way to support your child's writing efforts is to encourage writing at home. Here are 10 simple ways to do just that:

1 **Keep your child supplied.** The times may be high-tech, but her writing materials don't need to be. Keep her desk stocked with pens, markers and paper.

2 **Include your child** in writing-related tasks. If you're sending out a stack of holiday cards, have him help address the envelopes. If you are heading to the grocery store, ask him to help you make the list.

3 **Introduce your child** to your world. If you write at work, tell her about it. "This is a report I wrote. It took a long time to finish, but it turned out really well." Point out how the writing skills she's learning now—such as how to be clear and concise—may someday help her in her own career.

4 **Boost your child's vocabulary.** Share a new word with your child each week. It may seem like he doesn't notice, but that new word just may turn up in his writing someday!

5 **Give your child** a journal to record her private thoughts. Encourage her to write in it every night. Or have her keep a family diary during a vacation.

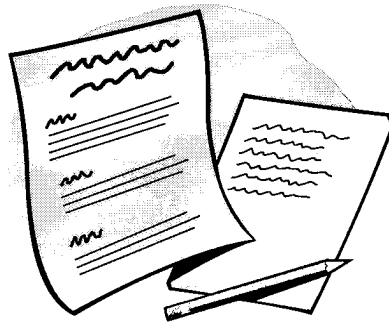
6 **Enlist a pen pal.** See if a family friend or relative will be your child's pen pal. Ask this person to send him a handwritten letter every month. After your child receives it, he should write a reply.

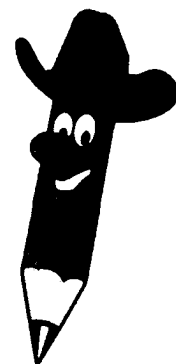
7 **Ask your child** to put requests in writing. The next time your child wants something, have her write down exactly what she wants and why. Tell her to address objections she thinks you might have. Can her writing persuade you?

8 **Exchange notes** with your child. Write short notes and put them in his backpack or under his pillow. Ask him to write you back.

9 **Empower your child** to express her opinions. Is she unhappy with a product? Have her write to the company. Is she upset about something in your town? Have her write a letter to the editor.

10 **Be supportive.** Every writer needs an audience—but not an overly critical one. If your child shows his writing to you, be encouraging. Focus on what you like. For progress in writing ability to occur, kids need to feel secure and confident about writing.

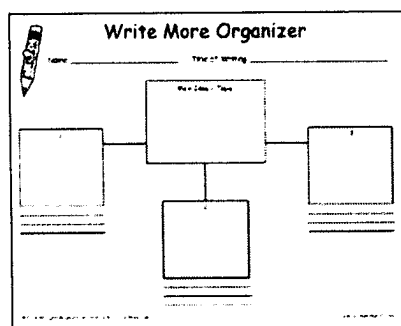




Parents As Writing Coaches

5 Helpful Tips for Working With Your Child at Home:

- Keep writing fun. Don't force your child to keep a diary or copy over notes and stories. Encourage your child to want to write but if writing is hard for your child, help him. Give him ideas, help him spell words, brainstorm story ideas together. Make writing enjoyable as much as possible.
- Keep a supply of unique writing materials on hand for use at home – for example: mechanical pencils, colorful erasers, kid-friendly journals, a thesaurus, a rhyming book
- Hang up helpful lists such as Vivid Verbs, Transition Words, Adjectives. Remind your child to refer to these lists often to make their writing more descriptive, interesting and flowing.
- Help your child feel comfortable using the Everyday Organizer. Guide your child to “think in 3’s”: one main story idea with three supporting details and three details about each supporting detail.



Offer help and suggestions to complete the organizer. Once your child understands the organizer, it should only take 5-10 minutes to complete. Never write complete sentences on the organizer – just notes.

- Before writing a rough draft, ask your child to complete the Everyday Organizer. Once it is complete, “read it aloud” as if it was a written story. Make sure all story ideas and details are listed on the organizer. Include setting and character descriptions on the organizer. If your

child can read aloud his organizer, then he is ready to write it out. Writing it out is quicker, easier and the story is so much better when an organizer has been used.

Two Easy Ways to Improve Student Writing:

1. Make sure each sentence starts with a different word. Starting a sentence with a verb or phrase always adds interest for the reader.
2. Include transition words either at the beginning of a sentence, at the start of a new paragraph or at the end of a sentence.

Most importantly, write along with your child – keep a diary together, write letters to grandma together, etc. Model for your child that writing can be fun!