

Supporting your child's writing at home

The skill of writing does not come naturally. To help your child develop these skills we need to show them how writing is part of everyday life and what purpose it has.

Younger writers

How can you help your child when they are beginning to learn to write?

- Praise all of their efforts
- Involve them in tasks which require you to write; shopping lists, letters, e-mails. Explain what you are doing and why.
- Give your child a reason to write - they write their own shopping lists, invites to a party, thank you letters, tickets within their role play (train tickets, show tickets), cards or lists (Christmas presents, things to take on holiday)
- Encourage your child to say the word that they want to write slowly and count the sounds that they hear. They then should write the sounds that they heard and check it.
- Always write using upper and lower case letters correctly.
- Ensure your child is holding the pen or pencil correctly.

As children become independent writers and are able to write simple words and sentences they are then presented with further challenges. These challenges are designed to improve their sentences to make them more interesting, exciting and have the impact which they desire.

Older writers

How can you help your child once they can write?

- Continue to praise all of their efforts
- Introduce new vocabulary into your conversations with them or through stories. Explain the new vocabulary and use it within the correct context.
- Provide them with opportunities to write for a purpose - write letters to a friend/family member, writing their own diaries, write a story for a younger brother/sister to read.
- Encourage them to use more interesting vocabulary.



In school we use VCOP to focus the children on the different elements of a sentence which will improve the quality of their writing. VCOP stands for Vocabulary, Connectives, Openers and Punctuation.

Vocabulary - adds adjectives to describe and changes dull words for more interesting ones (whispered/shouted instead of said).

Connectives - adds more action and detail to a sentences

Openers - changes the start of a sentence to grab the readers attention and keeps them reading.

Punctuation - makes an impact within a sentence (full stops, capital letters, exclamation marks, question marks etc.)

By using VCOP we can change a simple, but boring, sentence like 'the cat went along the wall' into an interesting sentence in four simple steps:

(1) Vocabulary - The *fluffy ginger* cat *prowled* along the *red brick* wall.

(2) Connective - The fluffy ginger cat prowled along the red brick wall *because he was spying on a juicy bird.*

(3) Opener - *Whilst licking his lips,* the fluffy ginger cat prowled along the red brick wall because he was spying on a juicy bird.

(4) Punctuation - *Whilst licking his lips,* the fluffy ginger cat (*who had sharp teeth*) prowled along the red brick wall because he was spying on a juicy bird.

Helping your child with VCOP at home

- Discuss interesting and new vocabulary which you discover whilst reading together. Encourage your child to explain what the word means and think of alternative words which mean the same thing.
- Play games - 'how many words can you think of instead of?' (said, went, nice, big, good)
- Search for openers or connectives within the stories you share together.
- Give your child a word/opener/connective and ask them to verbally put it into a sentence.
- Discuss the punctuation which you come across in text