



12 Activities for sparking the ‘writing bug’ in your child

Exposure to writing— as early as possible— creates the foundation for strong comprehension skills for readers, a better grasp of grammar concepts, and a lifelong appreciation of writing in all its forms. Here are some activities that may spark the “writing bug” in your child ...

- 1. Keep a notepad and pencils or pens handy around the house and in the car.** Ask your child to make lists for you, jot down interesting facts, or write down observations when you are out in the car. Your child could keep a running list of “what ifs” that might make a fantastical story... What if elephants were tiny and mice were huge? What if stuffed animals or the family pet could talk? What if you woke up and you’d become a dinosaur overnight?
- 2. Encourage your child to keep a writer’s journal.** Ask him to share his journal so you can read and discuss his writing. You also could make the journal a two-way writing project, writing your own responses, compliments, or questions in return.
- 3. Connect with family and friends through writing.** Help your child begin a pen-pal exchange by writing a letter about her favorite activities or a special event or memory. Ask the friend or relative to do the same. Ask your child to “interview” an older relative about his or her childhood during a phone call or FaceTime session, then write about what he learns. Find some terrific [conversation starters](#) from [StoryCorps](#), a national oral history project.
- 4. Ask your child to write what she likes best** about his favorite story, observations about the main character, or a specific event that happens in the book.
- 5. Start a family time capsule.** First, decide when you want to open your time capsule— in a year, five years, even 10 years. Then, have everyone write a letter telling the world about his or her life, documenting your family today and dreams for the future. (The family can enjoy the letters together when you open the capsule.) When and where were you born? What are your favorite things to do? Favorite foods? Movies? Pets’ names? Where do you want to be and what do you want to be doing when the capsule is opened? The kids can even write letters for their pets. Add other items like photos, drawings, postcards, and the front page of the newspaper. Tape up the box and label it with “Do NOT open until...,” then put it up in a closet until it’s time for the big reveal!
- 6. Help your child write his own book.** Create an “idea jar” of writing prompts, such as “my favorite place to go is...,” “if I had three wishes, they would be...,” or “the game I like best is...” Mix them up and have your child pick a prompt and write about the topic. Let your child illustrate the pages with drawings or photos. Your child can collect all the pages and print out his own book, or use an online program to “publish” the completed book.
- 7. Start a “what happens next” story** with your child. For example, you could write, “I went for a walk with my dog on a foggy morning. And then...” Allow your child to write what she thinks would happen next, and end with “and then,” so you can pick up the story and continue.
- 8. Make up and write down a silly rhyme** and challenge your child to create his own in response. For example, you could start with “I ran to the door and saw a giraffe on the floor.” Ask your child to create her own answer with rhyming words.
- 9. Explore found poetry.** Think of [“found poetry”](#) is a collage of words. Children can pull concepts, phrases, and words from various sources to create their poems. Old magazines, newspapers, junk mail, even packaging can be the inspiration for these word collages.
- 10. Maintain a family dialogue journal.** During the school year, a journal can be a great tool to connect home and school, with entries from parents, children, and teachers. During the summer, take this opportunity to open a dialogue with your child. Select topics where you and your child can share opinions, concerns, or perspectives.
- 11. Commit to a 30-day observation journal.** For 30 days, have your child sketch or draw something she observes or something that is on her mind. Use these drawings to inspire written pieces— from short stories to poems.
- 12. Tell childhood stories and encourage your child to do the same.** As you listen to your child, help him speak with detail. Encourage him to write down and illustrate some of his stories so he’ll remember them when he’s a grown up.

We’ll be sharing more tips so watch for the next installment of DLD Daily Dozen!

