

Five Fun Ways to Help your Child with Writing in the Holidays

1. Word build!

Build a climate of words at home. Go places and see things with your child, then talk about what has been seen, heard, smelled, tasted and touched. The basis of good writing is good talk and younger children especially grow into stronger control of language when loving adults- particularly parents- share experiences and rich talk about those experiences. Teach your child new words each week and encourage him/her to use them. Make it into a game and give points for using the new words. Your child can keep a vocabulary notebook and get rewarded for the number of new words learned. The words will begin to appear like magic in his/her oral language and writing.

2. Tell stories!

Make up some stories together using some of the starting points below. You could try talking it through at first, then act as a scribe for your child, or let them have a go at writing it him/her self.

- Suggest three unrelated things—for example, a train, a princess, and a basketball—and encourage your child to write a story that includes all of them.
- Talk about a favourite family story or event, like a funny story that's been passed down from generation to generation, or a memorable holiday.

3. Keep a diary!

Encourage your child to keep a diary- perhaps about a day out or a holiday. This can be written or in the form of pictures or photographs and will help improve literacy, art, memory, and ICT skills. Do it yourself too! Let your child see you write often. You are both a model and a teacher. If children never see adults write, they gain the impression that writing occurs only at school. Read aloud what you have written and ask for your child's opinion of what you've said. If it's not perfect, so much the better. Making changes in what you write confirms for the child that revision is a natural part of writing- which it is.



4. Get real!

Writing for real purpose is rewarding and your holiday activities present many opportunities for purposeful writing. For example, encourage your child to make a list of what he or she would like to do or needs to pack. Write shopping lists together or thank you notes. Write a postcard to a relative when you are away. Finding a pen pal for your child would make writing "real." Helping children make the connection between writing and the "real" world will increase an interest in writing.



5. Use the web!

If your child loves computer games, why not try some which reinforce writing skills as well as being fun? They'll never notice that their screen time is actually writing time. Try these free websites:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/subjects/zgkw2hv>

<http://www.ictgames.com/>

<http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/>