

10 Tips TO HELP BUILD YOUR CHILD'S WRITING SKILLS



Writing helps communicate thoughts, complete tasks and demonstrate the mastery of a skill, an integral part of every elementary school student's education. In fact, with the adoption of new school standards, students are using their writing skills even more than before across the curriculum. Writing is no longer being taught as a stand-alone topic; rather, it's now integrated into all core academic areas.

Here are some examples of where your child may encounter writing tasks:

- Students may be given a math problem and they are expected to explain in writing how they solved it.

- Science tests may involve a few multiple choice questions followed by a two-page essay question.
- During reading instruction, students may be asked to look back into the text and use specific details from the passage to support their reading comprehension writing assignment.

Writing is not an easy task for all students. For many struggling writers, these assignments and assessments may leave students frustrated and discouraged. It's challenging to put thoughts into words on a page in an organized manner.

The good news is that parents can support and enrich their children's writing skills in the home environment. This support may help make the task of writing easier and more enjoyable for students!

10 Tips for Building Writing Skills at Home:

1. Provide a variety of materials for writing. Fun pens and pretty papers can be great motivational tools.



2. Create a space in your home for writing that is free from distractions

3. Choose strong vocabulary words to learn at home for the week. Use these words in your daily oral vocabulary and written work. Words such as “obstacles” and “curious” are a great start. See if your child can use them both in a written story.

4. Integrate writing at home. Do a science project together, and then write about the process or results.

5. Encourage writing for a variety of purposes. Your child could make a shopping list, write a fictional story or send a letter.

6. Use technology to improve writing. Encourage your child to send an e-mail to a friend or publish a story online with a program such as Little Bird Tales.

7. Allow your child to observe you writing on your own. Be a good role model and smile while you are doing it, too! Take time to share your writing with him or her, and talk about how you use writing in your personal and professional life. Show your child a variety of different written work such as a written letter, business communication or a journal page.

8. Connect writing with your child’s passion. If your son is interested in the *Magic Tree House* series of books, encourage him to write a letter to Mary PopeOsborne. If your daughter is interested in mysteries, have her create a scavenger hunt with written clues to find a hidden treasure.

9. Celebrate writing in a variety of ways. You could:

- Host a family “open mic” night once a month, and take turns reading poems or stories written by family members out loud.
- Tape completed stories to the refrigerator.
- Do a happy dance together with your child when a completed writing project comes home from school with a positive note.

10. Last, but not least, it is important to provide time to write daily. In order for writing skills to improve, students must spend time writing. Add it to your family’s daily routine and build it into the schedule. This will help your writer to practice and gain confidence in his or her writing.

For additional writing tips, check out Sylvan’s writing programs! Our expert tutors can create an individualized writing plan, share tips and guide your child through writing prompts he or she sees on a regular basis. As millions of successful students and their families will tell you, a little writing help at Sylvan goes a long way.