

The Write Stuff



Why is it important to encourage children to write? Writing allows youngsters to explore their creativity and share events, ideas, and thoughts with others. Writing also develops reading skills—along with self-confidence.

You can bring out the writer in your child with these simple low- or no-cost activities that will make writing practice fun!

Time Travel Journal

Take off on a writing adventure with your young traveler.

Materials: paper, pencil

Ask your child to pretend she has been given a ticket to travel in time. Will she travel back to the pioneer days of the 1800s? Or forward to the year 3000? To use her ticket, she'll need to describe her adventures.

Have your youngster write a journal entry about her trip. She can describe the clothing she wore, what she ate, or an exciting event. *Example:* "March 15, 3000—Today I rode a spaceship to the moon. When I got there, hundreds of people were waiting to see me!"

Mouthwatering Menus

Your child can practice creative writing with this scrumptious family menu.

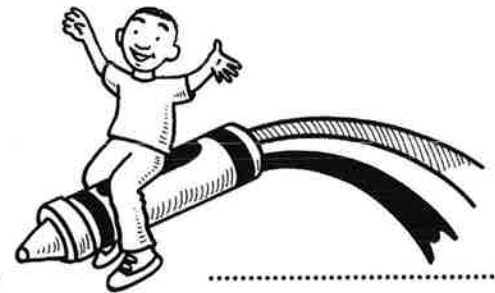
Materials: cookbooks, magazines, paper, pencil, crayons or markers

Help your youngster create a menu for your family's "restaurant." Start by looking through cookbooks and magazines for tasty



dishes. Have him choose foods your family might like for breakfast, lunch, or dinner.

Fold one or two pieces of paper in half. Let your child decorate the outside. On the inside, have him write tempting descriptions of the menu items. *Example:* "These golden pancakes are so fluffy, they might float up to the ceiling."



Rainbow Writing

Help your youngster make writing a colorful experience.

Materials: crayons, two sheets of paper, paper clips, ballpoint pen

Have your child use crayons to heavily color a blank sheet of paper. (*Hint:* Use several different colors.) Place the crayoned side of the paper on top of a blank sheet of paper. Use paper clips to hold the two sheets together.

Let your youngster write anything she'd like on the clean side of the crayon paper. *Ideas:* spelling words, the alphabet, a short story. Tell her to press firmly with a ballpoint pen. When she's finished, separate the sheets. The blank sheet will be covered with her writing—in rainbow colors!



It's Story Time

With this game, story writing is in the bag!

Materials: small plastic or paper bags, magazines, scissors, pencils, paper

Give each player a bag. Then, ask them to cut five pictures of people, places, and things from magazines.

Have each person write a short story using as many of the pictures as possible. *Example:* "The COW ran across the FIELD. The FARMER tried to stop the cow, but his TRACTOR got stuck in the mud!" Suggest they make up different styles of stories—funny, scary, or adventurous. *Hint:* Younger children can tell their stories instead of writing them.

Give one point for every picture used. The player who uses the most pictures to tell a story wins. Then, trade bags, and play another round.

Letters, Letters—Everywhere!

Here are three letter-writing activities for your child to try.

Materials: paper, pencil, envelopes, stamps

1. Does your youngster ever ask you questions, such as how the mail is delivered or how bagels are made? Suggest that she write a letter to the post office or bakery and ask for a tour.
2. Help your child write to a favorite author, sports figure, community leader, or teacher. In the letter, he can explain how the person has influenced him. And it gives him a chance to say thanks to someone special.

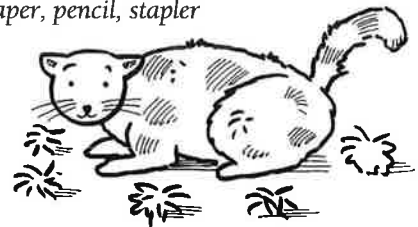


3. Have your youngster send a question to a friend or relative. *Example:* "How will you spend your summer vacation?" At the bottom of the note, add the names and addresses of several other friends. Then, add your child's address to the end of the list. Ask the recipient to write his answer on the note and send it to the next person on the list.

What Should I Do?

Almost everyone likes to give advice. With this activity, your youngster can create her own advice column.

Materials: paper, pencil, stapler



Think of several problems for your child to solve. Have each one end with the question, "What should I do?" *Example:* "My cat is shedding. What should I do?" Ask your youngster to write down the answers on sheets of paper. Encourage funny responses, such as "You could gather the fur and make a pillow!"

Collect the papers, and staple them together into a book. Then, when you need a laugh, read a few of the questions aloud together.

Variation: Younger children can answer the questions aloud, and you can write down their answers.

Super Survey

How well does your child know her family? She can take a survey to find out!

Materials: paper, pencil

Together, make a list of questions. *Examples:* "What is your favorite food?" "Which animal is the perfect pet?" Help a young child make a list of yes-or-no questions, such as "Do you like french fries?"

Help her set up a "survey booth" at the kitchen table. Invite each family member to the booth to answer the survey. Your youngster can write their answers under each question. After everyone has answered, let them guess each person's likes and dislikes—the results might surprise them!