Simple ways to support writing at home

**Provide a place for your child to write** - The area should be an area that is quiet and well lit. Stock the area with supplies such as paper, pencils and crayons. You can also gather family photos and magazines that can be used as story starters. Speak to school should you need help with providing writing materials.

**Read, read, read** - The best activity to improve writing is reading. If your child reads good books, they will be a better writer. Reading exposes students to general vocabulary, word study and content-specific vocabulary. Through reading, students see a variety of authors’ techniques that they can use in their own writing. Encourage joining the local library and the use of the school library and online library.

**Encourage your child to keep a diary or a reflective journal** - This is excellent writing practice, as well as a good outlet for venting feelings. Encourage your child to write about things that happen at home and school. This reflective journal can be used to develop the “senses” of writing. Have your child write about what they saw, heard or felt on a trip or adventure. If possible, provide experiences in your community that will interest your child and spark her writing. Especially encourage your child to write about personal feelings — pleasures as well as disappointments. When reading your child’s journal (only if your child invites you to, of course), share your own feelings and ideas paired with positive feedback about your child’s writing.

**Provide authentic writing opportunities for your child** - Have your child write their own thank-you notes, party invitations and letters/emails to family. Let your child make the grocery list. 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.

**Be a writing role model** - Make sure your child sees you as a writer. Point out times that you use writing to communicate with others. Discuss authentic writing in the community such as articles and letters in the newspaper, on billboards or in written advertisements or online. Discuss the purpose of the writing and the target audience.

**Start a vocabulary notebook** - Teach your child new words each week and encourage them 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 spoken language and writing.

**Ask questions** - Always ask your child questions when he writes. Ask specific questions about your child’s writing such as: “How did that happen?” “How did that make you feel?” “Can you tell me more about that…?” “What are some other words you could use to describe…?”