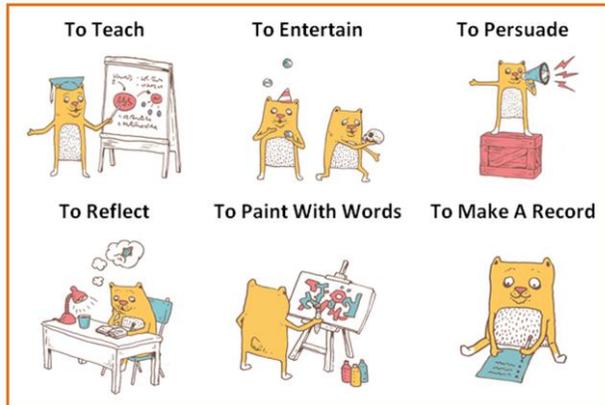


Writing With Children At Home

Be Together

Writing together starts by *being* together. Create a shared environment in which you explore what you want to write about. Here are just some of the reasons that children want to write:



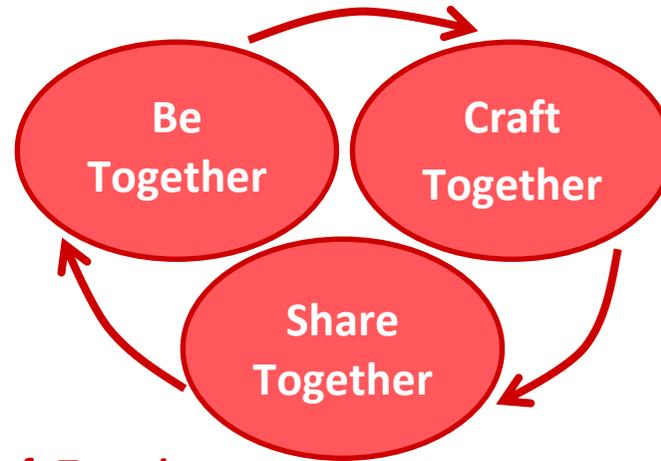
One way to motivate our children to write is to show our own motivation & pleasure. We can talk about what we plan to write alongside them, discussing our purpose and intended audience. Two prompts that work particularly well:

I want to write about... (Ghostbusters!)

I have an idea! (Let's write our own story!)

Ideas for writing come when we spend time together exploring, talking, drawing, watching, reading and playing together. Let children guide what you're going to write about.

Find out more: writing4pleasure.com



Craft Together

When children put pen to paper or fingers to keyboard, they are—sometimes for the first time—figuring out what it is they want to say. At this point, they are not worrying about how best to say it. That can come later. Crafting should be a playful and fun experience. Together, focus on your ideas and not conventions. Bond together. Read aloud to each other what you've got so far. Talk together. Advise each other. Two prompts that work particularly well:

I love... (your ending) **because...** (it made me shiver.)

I didn't quite understand (this bit. What do you mean?)

Here is some drafting advice that can help you to write happily and quickly, and prevent getting stuck:

Drafting Advice	
Got a sticky or a yawny bit? - Put a line under the bit you are unsure about. - Carry on.	Don't know how to spell a word? - Invent the spelling. - Put a circle around it. - Carry on.
Don't know what to write next? - Read it to someone - Get them to ask you questions.	Not sure of punctuation? - Put a box where the punctuation might need to go. - Carry on.
Think you have finished? Start writing something new!	

Share Together

Before our writing can meet its audience, we spend time getting it 'reader ready'. We make sure that our readers will be able to read it easily and understand it. If *drafting* is about finding out what it is we want to write, *revising* is about finding out how best to say it. Writers spend time sharing their writing, talking about how they can make it the best it can be. You can do this together at home, too. Read, talk, and make changes.

Where should we publish our writing? Who should hear our writing?

Once you have done a bit of proof-reading, sorted out your spellings, and gotten your handwriting just right, you're ready to publish. Where's it going to go and who is going to see it?

- Put it in a frame or give it as a gift.
- Put it on your bedroom wall.
- Put it in the bathroom for people to read on the loo or while they're in the bath.
- Write it in chalk on the pavement.
- Record it on your phone and send it to someone.
- Turn it into a piece of artwork.
- Mail it to a person who needs to read it.
- Place it anonymously in local establishments such as: libraries, places of worship, local history centres, museums, art galleries, train stations, bus stops, bookshops, cornershops windows, lamp posts, gates, fences, takeaways, retirement homes, cafes, coffee-houses, pubs, sports-clubs, dentists' or doctors' surgeries, buses, or trains.

Top Tips

The best things you can do when helping a child write:

- Devote time to it. Make it a quality experience. Show your own interest and pleasure.
- See yourself a fellow writer—take part in writing alongside and offer sensitive support when asked. You're not there to police and correct but to engage in writing yourself, too. Share your own ideas, ask your own writing questions, and, importantly, talk as you craft texts together. You don't need to be a 'good' writer but you do need to write.
- Allow children to choose what they would like to write.
- Remember that children can continue with some old writing or start something new.
- See talking and drawing as *planning* and encourage taking things from the reading, video games, play, film, or the television programmes that they like.
- Encourage using 'temporary' spellings whilst drafting, as this is a strategy used by real-life writers. Writing happily and socially is the key to success here.

What *not* to do when helping a child to write:

- Don't look over your child's shoulder all the time and criticise.
- Don't rush the experience or try and get it all done in one day.
- Don't ask children to write something they haven't chosen for themselves.
- Don't control their writing.
- Don't stop to correct errors immediately; insisting on 100% accuracy while they are trying to get their ideas down for the first time.
- Don't ask a child to write without talking and writing together.
- Don't leave out time for reading what you've written to each other and giving your responses.

Here are just some of things you can write together:

Riddles, rhymes, songs, jokes, poems, signs, labels, lists, charts, booklets, games, recipes, instructions, how to guides, everything I know about... letters, anecdotes, vignettes, true stories, invented stories, comics, fairy-tales, myths, experiments, letters, scripts and plays.

