



Learning to speak, read, write and communicate well begins at birth. Here's what you can do to build your children's language and literacy skills in fun everyday activities.

Let's Get Writing!

Tip Sheet #8

Why?

Learning to write involves much more than forming letters.

Children need to understand that what we say can be written down and how we use print in our everyday lives. They also need the strength and coordination to form letters. Take advantage of everyday opportunities to help your child learn about print and writing in a fun way.

Starting at Birth:

Share books with your baby every day. Touch the pages and point to some words so she will begin to understand that we read the words.

Build little muscles. Let your baby play with toys that build the muscles needed for writing (blocks, shape sorters, rattles, play dough ...).

Additional Tips for Toddlers and Preschoolers:

Provide writing materials. Include nontoxic markers, pencils, crayons, greeting cards, construction paper, lined paper, and chalk boards. All of these offer slightly different writing experiences and encourage your child to experiment.

Encourage her efforts. Talk about the marks she makes and show how excited you are about her

drawing and "writing". Ask your child to tell you about her picture. Write her words on the picture and read them together.

Let your child see you write. *"I'll write a note to tell Dad we are going to the park." or "Before we go to the store we need to make a grocery list. Let's write down what we need to buy."*

Additional Tips for Kindergarten Children:

Let your child help with writing jobs. Look through flyers and make a grocery list together or have your child sign her name on a birthday card.

Have a family message board or post messages. This gives your child a way to communicate with family members through drawing and writing.

Learning More than One Language

Communicate, read to and teach your child in the language you speak best (Mom speaks French and Dad speaks English). Strong first language skills make it easier for children to learn another language.

Find ways to expose your child to the language(s) you want them to learn (attend playgroups, community or library programs, provide CDs and books).