



## Tips to Encourage Children's Writing

- ⇒ **Provide writing materials for children's dramatic play** (e.g., paper and pencil to write a shopping list, a sign-in sheet for playing doctor or veterinarian, and a blackboard for posting the day's restaurant specials).
- ⇒ **Talk with children about their artwork.** Write down the child's descriptions either directly on the child's drawing or painting or alongside it.
- ⇒ **Have children sign themselves in and out** at the beginning and end of the day. Children can also sign up for a popular activity, a turn with a toy, or different jobs, such as snack helper.
- ⇒ **Encourage children to make signs** alerting others (e.g., a “do not disturb” sign to put outside a bedroom door at naptime).
- ⇒ **Provide materials for children to create their own books.** For book reviews, record children's comments on books they have read aloud together. Children can draw a picture of the reviewed book's cover. Completed reviews can be bound together to look at and share at a later time.
- ⇒ **Use a “K-W-L” or “K-W-L-H” chart** to help children chart what they *Know* about a topic, *Want* to learn, and have *Learned* from what they've read; if they wish, they can also add *How* they can learn more. Children can also determine what categories of information they've studied by reviewing the L column after they have finished their chart.



⇒ Use journaling:

- ⇒ **Group journals.** A whole group keeps track of interesting events and experiences, such as birthdays, holiday celebrations, and ordinary happenings, in one group journal. An entry can be suggested by anyone and written by you or the children.
- ⇒ **Project journals.** Individual children or pairs use journals when investigating projects. This is an especially good way to integrate literacy skills and other subjects, such as science and math, as children record the daily transformation of their pet caterpillars into butterflies or write down the measurements of different objects in the home.
- ⇒ **Traveling character journals.** A stuffed animal spends each weekend visiting a different child at home. The child (or, for younger children, the child and his or her parents) records what happened on the stuffed animal's visit. The character's adventures are shared with the whole group following the visit.
- ⇒ **Personal journals.** While personal, diary-type journals are perhaps best suited for school-age children, younger children can also keep personal journals no matter their current writing stage. The important point is that you ask children to “read” back their entries. This shows that you support the children's efforts.
- ⇒ **Home books.** These books are useful for young children dealing with separation issues. A book may have materials supplied by the children's families, such as pictures of the children's parents. When children miss their parents, they can look at the book with you. You can also record what the children want to tell their parents about what they did that day.





# Equipping a Writing Area

When you offer children writing tools, children can explore the world of print. An area for writing can include a small table and chairs and an easy-to-reach place for storing writing materials. This area gives children opportunities to use writing for a purpose.

Writing Tools	Printing Tools	Paper	Other Tools and Materials
<p>Pencils: black lead and colored, “chubby” and regular</p> <p>Magic markers: thick and thin, water-based, variety of colors</p> <p>Chalk and chalkboards</p> <p>Magic slates or magnetic drawing boards</p> <p>Crayons</p> <p>Lap pads</p> <p>Clipboards</p> <p>* Weighted pens, pencils</p> <p>* Pencil grasps</p> <p>* Slant board</p>	<p>Letter and design stencils</p> <p>Alphabet letter stamps</p> <p>Ink pad</p> <p>* Felt letters</p> <p>* Sandpaper letters</p>	<p>Computer printout paper</p> <p>Magazines</p> <p>Index cards</p> <p>Envelopes and stationery</p> <p>Unlined and lined paper</p> <p>Construction paper</p> <p>Carbon paper</p> <p>Small blank books</p> <p>* Textured paper</p> <p>* Paper with raised lines</p>	<p>Hole punch</p> <p>Shape punch</p> <p>Stapler</p> <p>Old wallpaper samples to use as book covers</p> <p>Scissors (e.g., left handed, “modeling”)</p> <p>Paper clips</p> <p>Pencil sharpener</p> <p>Paste or glue sticks</p> <p>Typewriter or computer with word processor</p> <p>Small alphabet strips</p> <p>* Sand boards</p> <p>* Plastic bendies</p> <p>* Writing “hats”</p> <p>* “Author” stickers</p>



\* These materials may be especially helpful for children who are not as responsive to other materials or may need more individualized support.