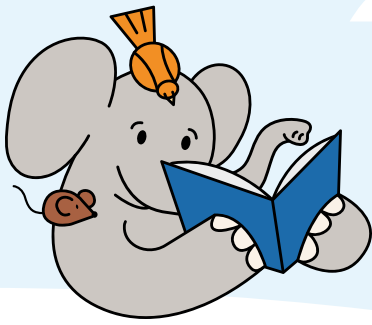




Growing Readers!

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Reading Rockets and Colorín Colorado*

Write in Front of Them: Modeling Writing in the Digital Age

Just like the texts, emails, posts, and reminders you write, much of the writing your child will do will likely happen on screens. But to best understand how writing is a tool for thinking, communicating, and making sense of the world, your child first needs to learn to write by hand.

Forming letters by hand does more than develop fine motor skills. It builds connections between how letters look, what they're called, and the sounds they make, giving your child the foundation for reading and spelling that typing or dictating cannot replicate. And from a very young age, watching you write helps your child understand that written words have meaning.

Writing is one of the most powerful tools we have for thinking: for making plans, working through ideas, and remembering what matters. Your child's experience with this starts with you! Here are five important things they'll learn when they see you write:

- 1. Writing is fun!** When writing is something your family does as part of daily life, your child will want to get in on it. Pencils, paper, crayons, and a place to write will support your child in replying to the note you left them or labeling the toy bins in their room. Even if your child is just at the scribbling stage, that scribble is the beginning of writing!
- 2. Writing captures the world.** Writing starts with noticing. Show your child that you are paying attention to what's happening around you—writing milestones in a scrapbook, noting an idea that came to you in the shower, or jotting down the name of a bird you've never seen before. Encourage idea collecting by providing shared spaces for lists, notes, and things to remember, like a small whiteboard where anyone in the family can add their thoughts and observations.
- 3. Writing helps us think.** When you're working something out, reach for a pen. Write out a pros and cons list before a decision, jot down questions before a doctor's appointment, or keep a running list of ideas for a project. Let your child see you pause, think out loud, and put your thoughts on paper. Writing slows us down in the best possible way and your child gets to see that the blank page is the place to go to figure out what they think.

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- 4. Writing helps us communicate.** Draw your child's attention to writing materials and digital tools you use to write messages to family and friends. Talk about why you choose certain words or why you change them. Make opportunities for your child to write their own messages by composing thank you notes together or creating a birthday card for someone special. Honor all their efforts—particularly early ones—to help your child see themselves as a writer.
- 5. Writing is connection.** Help your child understand that writing is one of the ways we hold onto what matters. A journal you write with your child can keep family stories, capture daily life, record things you are grateful for, or reflect on books you've read together. When you notice ideas from books and daily experiences, you're modeling how writers gather inspiration and showing your child that their own life and stories are worth writing about.

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