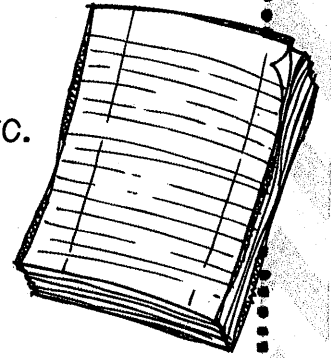


# Building Writing Skills

## Beginning



- Write from left to right with letters touching writing lines
- Place spaces between words – Use a finger, popsicle stick, etc.
- Use uppercase and lowercase letters
- Use a capital letter at the beginning of a sentence
- Use punctuation at the end of a sentence
- Use drawing, guided writing, and dictating to write
- Use letter/sound knowledge, sight words, and word walls to write simple words
- Write correct beginning and ending consonant sounds
- Understand there are different types of writing (lists, letters, etc.)

## Intermediate

- Consistently use correct, basic capitalization and punctuation
- Write in complete sentences
- Write correct beginning, middle, and ending sounds
- Use and spell sight words correctly
- Be able to read own writing to share with others
- Organize sentences based upon one topic
- Plan Stories (brainstorm, list, graphic organizer)
- Create and publish a variety of writings (stories, lists, letters, etc.)
- Begin to use voice, audience, and purpose in writing

## Advanced

- Continues to use sight words and additional grade level words correctly
- Consistently use correct capitalization, punctuation, sentence structure, tense, and subject/verb agreement
- Organize writing with beginning, middle, and ending
- Choose main topic to write about
- Add details to support main idea
- Use paragraphs
- Begin to use transitions (First, Second, Third, Last, Next, etc.)
- Use editing tools (dictionary, partner) to revise first draft
- Produce a variety of writings (poems, stories, letters, personal narratives)
- Follows the writing process

# HOW TO MAKE

# Spelling

# FUN!

- Look at the word, say the word, try to memorize the letters in the word, write the word from memory, and check to see if you are right.
  - **Use magnetic letters on a refrigerator or cake pan to spell words.**
  - Spell words with glue and sprinkle glitter on them or use glitter pens.
  - **Cut out letters from a newspaper or magazine to spell words.**
  - Make spelling flash cards – write words on index cards and cut the letters apart to spell.
  - **Call out spelling words in the car.**
  - Take a pre-test on Monday to see what words to work on. Don't forget to review the known words too!
  - **Mnemonic Devices – Come up with a saying to remember words – For example: tail – The apple is light.**
  - Use scrapbook foam letters as a fun tool to study with.
  - **Write spelling words in bubble letters or another fun way.**
  - Use ABC Cookie Cutters and play-dough to cut out letters to spell words
  - **Paint spelling words.**
  - Use shaving cream to write spelling words.
  - **Write words in sand.**
  - Use letter beads from a craft store to write your spelling words (You could even put them on a string, or a screw, which is a great motor skill!)
  - **Put letters on Legos, rocks, popsicle sticks, or bottle caps, and put them together to spell your words.**
  - Got a Magna Doodle? Write your spelling words on it!
  - **Use Scrabble tiles (add up the points for each word to practice math skills)**
- SpellingCity.com – This site has tons of fun games to play using spelling words.

# BUILDING A Reader At HOME

## Explore Books!

Give your child an opportunity to explore books. **Visiting a library or bookstore** gives your child a chance to find topics and books that interest them.

## Read, Read, Read!

Make sure to read for at least 30 minutes per day! Children can read independently, aloud to an adult, or back and forth with a partner.

## Ask Questions!

- Predictions
- Characters
- Main Idea
- Problem
- Solution
- Retell Story
- Genre
- Moral

## Make it Fun!

**Reading shouldn't be a chore.** Intentionally read with your child/discuss books but also research topics and do book activities together.

## Be an Example!

Children learn by example, so **let your child see you read** whether it be a book, newspaper, cookbook, etc.

## Pick Good Fit Books!

A book that is a good match for your child should meet the following requirements:

- Purpose for reading
- Interest
- Can they understand what they are reading?  
Can they retell the story?
- Do they know most of the words?

## For Beginning Readers:

- Point out and read words in natural settings – stores, streets, etc.
- Memorize sight words
- Visualize the story in your head
- Ask questions before, during, and after
- **Don't immediately tell an unknown word to your child.** Instead, ask them to:
  - Sound out the word
  - Break the word into parts
  - Try a different vowel sound (long/short)
  - Use illustrations for clues
- Skip the word, re-read sentence, and go back – what word would make sense?

## For Advanced Readers:

- Notice interesting, new vocabulary words, and make it a challenge to use them in conversation
- Read with expression
- Explore non-fiction books and their text features (diagrams, table of contents, etc.) along with other genres as well
- Compare and contrast books
- Discuss connections to literature
- Think of new titles for books
- Explore multiple books from the same author

# BUILDING Math Skills At HOME

**Here are some simple things that you can do at home to help your child with math.**

- Play board games as a family! Many of them encourage math development. Yahtzee (basic addition), Connect Four (problem solving), Card Games (basic addition and subtraction and ordering numbers), Candy Land (make your own game cards and use math facts instead of colors), Monopoly (money), and Battleship (coordinate graphs) are just a few to mention.
- Talk about the calendar with your child. Look forward to and countdown to special events such as vacations, birthdays, and holidays. Count the weeks and days to an event, and determine which day it will fall on.
- Help your child learn to count money by playing store with them. Use real coins and dollar bills.
- Use an empty egg carton as a counting tool to practice addition and subtraction skills up to 10. Simply place objects in the slots, and use the empty slots to count up to/from 10.
- Be on the lookout for shapes. Discuss the shapes you see. For a challenge, ask your child how many sides the shape has. (Example: A triangle has three sides. Two triangles would have six sides.)
- Help your child develop time skills by incorporating the clock into their schedule. At home, create a bedtime schedule (Example: Brush Teeth at 8:00; Bedtime story at 8:10; Bed at 8:30). Create a poster with the schedule, and hang it in your child's bedroom. Begin with easy times (7:00), and gradually progress to more difficult times (7:30 and 7:45).
- Involve your child in activities at home that use measurement such as picture framing and home improvement projects.
- Bake with your child. Have them read recipes and measure ingredients.
- Develop an understanding of fractions when eating or making a pizza by discussing how many slices there are, and what fraction of the pizza they are eating.

# Why can't I skip my 20 minutes of reading tonight?

LET'S FIGURE IT OUT --- MATHEMATICALLY!

Student A reads 20 minutes five nights of every week:  
Student B reads only 4 minutes a night...or not at all!

Step 1: Multiply minutes a night x 5 times each week.

Student A reads 20 min. x 5 times a week = 100 mins./week

Student B reads 4 minutes x 5 times a week = 20 minutes

Step 2: Multiply minutes a week x 4 weeks each month.

Student A reads 400 minutes a month.

Student B reads 80 minutes a month.

Step 3: Multiply minutes a month x 9 months/school year

Student A reads 3600 min. in a school year.

Student B reads 720 min. in a school year.

Student A practices reading the equivalent of ten whole school days a year.

Student B gets the equivalent of only two school days of reading practice.

By the end of 6th grade if Student A and Student B maintain these same reading habits - not counting reading on the weekends or during summer vacation:

Student A will have read the equivalent of 60 whole school days

Student B will have read the equivalent of only 12 school days.

One would expect the gap of information retained will have widened considerably and so, undoubtedly, will school performance. How do you think Student B will feel about him/herself as a student?

Some questions to ponder:

*Which student would you expect to read better?*

*Which student would you expect to know more?*

*Which student would you expect to write better?*

*Which student would you expect to have a better vocabulary?*

*Which student would you expect to be more successful in school...and in life?*

