

Many parents know the importance of reading to young children, but did you know that introducing your toddlers and preschoolers to writing, can also help them develop important literacy skills? This doesn't mean that you should expect young children to write letters and words correctly, but it does mean you should show them how and why we write, (just like when you read to them you are showing them how and why we read). You can do this by writing down the words that children say about a picture they have drawn, or by encouraging children to watch you while you make a shopping list (you can even let them "help" you write the list if they are interested). Remember, young children develop as writers through real life practice and by having opportunities to write with parents and other caring adults.

## How writing develops in young children .....

### ❖ The Experimenting Writer (Toddlers age 1-2)

- Scribbles
- Notices print in the environment
- Shows an interest in writing tools (pencils, pens, crayons, etc..)
- Likes to make marks on paper
- Might attempt to make objects/shapes/letters, but they are mostly unrecognizable



### ❖ The Emerging Writer (Preschoolers age 3-5)

- Draws pictures with some recognizable pictures, shapes & objects
- Begins to have a purpose for drawing or writing
- Often pretends to "write" by making random marks or letters on paper
- Begins labeling pictures with some recognizable letters or very simple words (such writing a "T" for train, or writing the word "mom")
- Learns to write his or her name in a recognizable form
- Starts to use pictures or words to express their personal feelings
- Eager to tell others about their picture or writing
- If asked "What would you like me to write for you?", child can dictate a story or message to an adult.

### ❖ The Developing Writer (PreK-Kindergarten ages 4-6)

- Creates recognizable pictures, shapes and letters
- Draws pictures with specific details
- Writes phrases & simple sentences, more than single words
- Shows an awareness of conventions of print (puts some spaces between words, writes left to right and top to bottom)
- Begins to experiment with punctuation, though not necessarily appropriately placed
- Begins to make "stories" that are 2 or more pages in length (including drawings)
- Wants to "read" their writing (or stories) to others



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Learn more about your child's development, and receive age-appropriate early learning activities geared to help your child develop school readiness skills!

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