

# BUILDING SKILLS @ HOME

## WRITING

### WHAT IS EMERGENT WRITING?

When children understand the purpose of writing; that they can convey meaning through their marks, they begin to progress through the many stages of emergent writing. This progression typically starts with scribbles. Along the way, children may use random letters or strings of letters, attempt to use inventive or phonetic spelling for words, and finally write with correct spelling patterns.

### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Early childhood reading and writing skills are related, and the development of one supports the development of the other. In many cases, a child's ability to write will develop before they are reading fluently. Emergent writing helps children break the reading code or the sound-symbol system of the English language. Frequent writing gives children lots of meaningful practice with the concept of print; such as the direction of print, sentence structure, and punctuation. Writing is also a very complex task. Having the ability to write gives children an early and much-needed boost of confidence with literacy skills.

### HOW DO I BUILD A WRITER?

- Let your child know that you value what they write and encourage your child to write whenever you can. "Read" their writing with them, hang it up, or take the list with you to the store.
- Model writing for your child in your daily life. Write them notes and read them to each other.
- Help them sound out words; saying the word slowly, recording the sounds that you hear.
- Make word cards with pictures or label items around your house for your child to copy.
- Provide many different writing tools for them to use; pencils, pens, markers, highlighters, colored pencils, crayons, etc.

### CREATING PURPOSEFUL REASONS TO WRITE:

- Make a shopping list
- Write a birthday or thank you card for someone
- Write a note or a letter to someone.
- Make a "to-do" list or a "wish" list
- Make a sign for the house or your room.
- Write a silly message or tell a joke.
- Make a menu for dinner.
- Make a poster for your room.
- Write about something fun you did over the weekend. Keep a journal of all your weekend activities.

### INVENTIVE SPELLING:

Invented spelling (sometimes called phonetic spelling) is when children spell words the best they can using their phonics knowledge. As children grow as readers and writers, their invented spelling begins to look more and more like conventional spelling, until inventive spelling disappears altogether.

- Don't view invented spelling as a crutch. It's actually very valuable for early writers! When children have to stretch out words and hear every sound, they're exercising their phonics knowledge.
- Don't avoid invented spelling by spelling every word your child asks for. It's tempting to avoid the battle by giving your child the spellings they want, but by doing so, we're crippling them.
- Don't allow careless spelling. Children should be held accountable for what they know.
- Do encourage your child to write words they can't spell.
- Do give hints to help. Help your child listen for the sound at the beginning of the word and write the correct letter. Later you'll be able to streeetch out the word with them and help them write the sounds they hear.
- Do provide resources, like an alphabet chart, to help your child spell.