



School Readiness Kit

Preparing Children for Kindergarten



Interactive Activities for Adults and Preschool Children

Genesee Intermediate School District



Unit 5 Writing



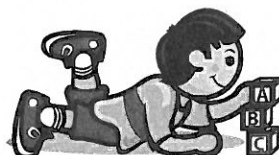
The Development of Writing

Children progress through developmental stages of writing. The child must first learn to control the arm, then the hand and pencil grip. Practicing these tasks can be lots of fun and may seem unrelated to writing to the casual observer. Large muscle movements required for catching a ball or rolling a ball toward plastic bowling pins or a bean bag with a target all help the child develop the eye-hand coordination needed for writing. Finger painting, drawing in sand or shaving cream, large drawings with crayons or markers help develop arm movements involved with writing. Pinching clay or play dough, and cutting with scissors help develop the hand muscles necessary for writing. Four year olds can enjoy and learn from all of these activities as they refine their skills and develop a pencil grip with their fingers. See tips for pencil grip on Page 2.



Development of written communication has to have meaning for the child. Let the child see you write notes, make lists, write out envelopes, etc. Give the child paper to “pretend write” along with you. Give the child plenty of writing materials to incorporate in play. Put pieces of paper and washable markers or pencils where children can incorporate them in play. Young children will need larger paper without lines as they are still refining their skills. Play restaurant with the child taking your order on a note pad, play engineer with the child drawing “blueprints” for building blocks or receipts for materials needed for building. These opportunities help the child understand how writing fits into everyday life.

When children progress from the scribbles to interest in making real words, help the child practice the basic shapes of letters. Circles, curves, and straight lines are combined in a variety of ways to make letters. Encouraging children to draw things they see in their world will be a fun way to practice coordination that will lead to forming letters.



Items Needed for the Activities:

- ◆ Dry Erase Board
- ◆ Dry Erase Marker
- ◆ Pencil
- ◆ Tips for Fine Motor Development

Help Your Child Become A Writer

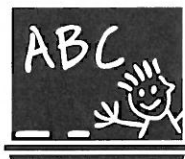
Children in kindergarten will write stories. Even though four year olds cannot write out a story using conventional spelling and grammar, they can develop a sense of how to tell stories using pictures.

Select a favorite book, an outing (trip to the museum), or an experience (making a snowman). Ask your child to draw 3-4 pictures, each indicating what he remembers or observed. Talk to him asking what happened first, second, third, etc. Arrange the pictures in order. Ask him to tell the story out loud. You write the story line on the pictures. Read the story back to him. Point out that the story has a beginning, middle and end. Your child will observe that the words you are writing have meaning and can be used to retell the story.



As your child matures and learns to write her own words, combine your efforts with the adult writing most of the words and the child filling in the words she knows. Eventually, the stories will have fewer pictures and more writing. These techniques will be developed through the elementary grade levels. The scaffolding approach of the adult doing all the writing, sharing the writing, then transitioning to the child doing the writing, will assist the child in organizing her thoughts.

Squiggles



Congratulate your child on attempts to write words. Just as your child said “ba-ba” for bottle and you recognized and encouraged the child, your early writer will use squiggles and eventually convert them into letters to write. Congratulate attempts to spell and read what the child is conveying. Ask the child what the writing says. With the child’s permission, write the conventional spelling somewhere on the page. Development of spelling will occur gradually into second or third grade.

The March issue of the School Readiness Newsletter will provide detail on the process of writing the alphabet, writing words, and developmental stages of writing.

10% of children are left handed!

By age 4-5, most children have demonstrated a preference for using their left or right hand. Either hand is acceptable for preferred use. Some researchers have found that dominance for use of one hand is determined by the baby’s position in the uterus. If the baby was predominantly laying on her left side, she will have a preference for her right hand. Other researchers report that hand preference is based on practice with one hand or the other. It is recommended that you let your child develop hand dominance naturally by allowing him to use what ever hand he consistently chooses.



Have Fun With Art

Any drawing experience will assist with fine motor development and the writing grasp of the fingers. Coloring books are fine, but also allow freedom of expression with blank paper. Gluing, cutting, picking up small objects in art play all will contribute to writing. Have fun and be creative!



Helping Your Child Hold a Pencil

Young children have to develop a pencil grip as they refine the muscles in their hands. Young children will often start to hold pencils by wrapping all fingers around the pencil high up on the stick and put their thumb up in the air. As the child progresses, the thumb is brought down and the grasp is closer to the tip of the pencil. The pencil grip that is encouraged for writing can be facilitated with the rubber grip support included in the materials for this kit. Children can learn to pick up pencils in a way that will ensure the correct hold. Place the pencil in front of the child with the lead pointing toward her. Have the child practice pinching her forefinger and thumb together. Move the child’s pinching fingers to the pencil and place the fingers one inch from the point. The adult can then pick up the eraser end of the pencil and rotate it up so that the stick of the pencil rests in the area of the child’s hand between the thumb and forefinger. Move the middle finger under the pencil to support the grip.

Rhymes and Finger Plays



Hold up five fingers. Bend them down as verse progresses. Actions may be added to fit words.

Kittens

Five little kittens
Sleeping on a chair.
One rolled off
Leaving four there.



Four little kittens;
One climbed a tree,
To look in a bird's nest.
Then there were three.



Three little kittens
Wondered what to do;
One saw a mouse,
Then there were two.



Two little kittens
Playing near a wall;
One little kitten
Chased a red ball.



One little kitten
With fur soft as silk;
Left all alone
To drink a dish of milk.

Seeing is Believing!

Let your child see you writing. Speak as you write so the child can hear what you are writing.

Dramatic Play Area Post Office

- Envelopes of various sizes
- Stationery, postcards
- Pens, pencils, markers
- Stickers, stamps, stamp pads
- Post office mailbox
- Tote bag to carry mail
- Computer address labels
- Tape
- Calendars
- Small drawer trays
- Posters and signs about mailing
- Mail carrier's cap
- Newspaper ads from drugstores, department stores, furniture stores
- Mailboxes for each child and adult
- Stapler



*Learning to Read and Write
Newman, Copple and Bredekamp*

Practice Writing

Encourage children to create writing with meaning. Have the child make lists or write notes and "read" them to an adult.



Play restaurant with your child. Let the child write your food order on scrap paper and serve your "meal." The child can use plastic food items or pictures of food cut from supermarket ads.

Genesee Intermediate School District
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Celebrating 50 Years
of Service



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Funded through grants by the Early Childhood Investment Corporation, the Michigan Department of Education (ASAP-PIE, Great Parents-Great Start), Community Foundation of Greater Flint, United Way of Genesee County, Merkley Trust, Target, and Macy's, in partnership with Genesee Intermediate School District, area health and human service agencies, and Genesee County school districts.



The mission of the Great Start Collaborative is to assure a coordinated system of community resources and support to help all Genesee County families provide a great start for their children from pre-birth to age five.



The School Readiness Kits are designed for children who will enter kindergarten the following school year. The activities in the kit will provide a foundation for curriculum and assessments that children will continue to work on in kindergarten. The kits provide parent/teacher information on literacy development and activities that parent/preschool teachers and child may do together.

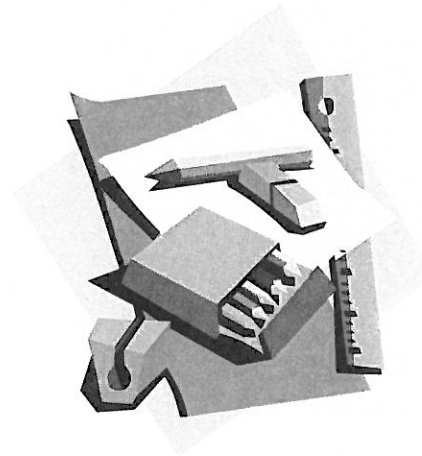
Writing Expectations During Kindergarten

The State of Michigan has established Grade Level Content Expectations for Kindergarten in English and Language Arts. The expectations are rigorous and align the curriculum with the national standards. Children are very receptive to learning between birth and five years old. It is the best time to expose children to a variety of learning experiences and play that will set the stage for the academic experience in school.

During the kindergarten year children will be expected to work on telling a story using pictures and words or word-like clusters. They will compose poems, create an informational piece for a class book and contribute to a research project

using words or word-like clusters.

Students will use semi-phonetic spelling and pictures to develop stories and informational text. They will learn to read and edit their own work and others to revise and improve their writing.



Students will learn to spell about 18 frequently encountered words correctly. They will work on looking for patterns in spelling and copying words to learn the correct spelling.

Students will begin to form upper and lower case letters. They will leave spaces between words and write from left to right and top to bottom.

Children are capable of all the tasks listed, but parents, caregivers and schools must work together to provide experiences that will provide a solid foundation for learning. For more information on the Grade Level Content Standards, visit www.michigan.gov/mde.