

# The Power of Writing in Prep

## Growing Up Writing

### PARENT INFORMATION SESSION

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# Growing up Writing

Today's session will focus on:

- *The importance of writing in Prep*
- *Top tips for parents*
- *The intricacies of becoming a writer*
- *What should you do when they need help?*
- *Handwriting*

# Importance of Writing in Prep

*A primary focus for Prep teachers is to keep the excitement and confidence alive while at the same time introducing young children to the way written language works.*

*When your child engages in writing tasks, not only are they learning to be capable young writers, they are also practicing many of the important skills needed to become a successful reader – giving attention to letter detail, letter order, sound sequences, letter sequences and the links between messages in oral language and messages in print.*

*‘The writing knowledge serves as a resource of information that can help the reader.’ (Clay)*

*Let your child know that writing is a part of everyday life. And above all – let your child feel that ‘When I write, other people are interested in it!’*

# Writing Process – ideas vs mechanics

The first step for any writer is to come up with ideas based on experiences and knowledge- in other words, our thoughts.

The next step – that of finding the right words to express the idea is a more challenging task.

Then, for the beginning writer, expressing the idea in just the right way while simultaneously dealing with the mechanics of letter formation, spelling, word spacing, page layout – makes the writing task even more complex!

Invented spelling can lead to a control over writing that frees your child to write the messages they want to write. Otherwise they may only ever write the stilted messages that are made up of the words they already know. Be patient with your child's early efforts in spelling. Celebrate their growing awareness of letters and sounds and how words work!

# Ideas vs Mechanics – Striking a balance

When teaching writing to young children, teachers strive to create a balance between composing (the ideas) and transcribing skills (the mechanics).

Where a child is focused only on the message but lacking mechanical skill, the writing can be impossible to read. However, for a child who carefully writes the same story day after day using the same known words, the writing lacks depth and inspiration.

It's an intricate process and finding balance is the key!

*Children can write sooner than we ever dreamed was possible. They will learn to write by writing and by living with a sense of 'I am a writer'.*

*Lucy Calkins*

Every child's journey is different.  
Celebrate their writing – don't compare.

# Learning Targets

Learning Targets are used to individualise each child's writing journey.

Teacher's identify the next step in the child's writing, children engage in self assessment, teacher provides feedback and a new writing target is set.

# Individual Learning Targets

For students' writing and spelling to flourish it needs to be part of their daily lives.

# What is my role as a parent?

- **Talk with your child.** Conversation is one of the best ways to instill a sense of story-telling in your child. Engage your child in rich conversation about the little and big things that make up their lives.
- **Tell Stories.** Tell your child stories and ask your child to tell you stories. Help your child recall the stories, events and holidays your family has enjoyed. Encourage your child to use lots of details and to describe the sights, smells, tastes, sounds and feelings of the event.
- **Expand your child's ideas.** Help your child to flesh out their ideas and add details to their sentences using 'when-who-what' and 'how' as an organizational structure.
- **Encourage your child to write letters and some high-frequency words correctly.** The more control they have over writing letters and words the freer they are to be creative in their stories.
- **Be an author yourself.** Have your child work alongside you as you write. Write your child little messages.

# *So your role as a parent is to:*

- *Provide opportunities for exploration*
- *Provide materials*
- *Be in touch with your child's attempts*
- *Notice change when it occurs*
- *And to marvel!*

*Most of all, you need to be*

- *Available*
- *Attentive to your child's intention*
- *Able to follow the child's line of enquiry*
- *Able to supply help in his/her terms*

***You have to feel comfortable about letting the child lead, never do for your child what they can do for themselves.***

# WHEN YOUR CHILD ASKS HOW TO SPELL A WORD

## 1. In the beginning:

**SAY** *“You say the word slowly. What can you hear?”*

*This transfers the initiative for the activity to the child and helps build independence. Let the child record any sounds for which they know the letters.*

*At first accept what the child can hear in any order, do not insist on a beginning to end approach. This will come later, as the child gains control of the task.*

*Some children may be able to hear sounds but not record them. Celebrate this, its progress! Praise them for the sounds heard then tell them the letter.*

# How do you spell....?

**2. Later:** *As the child gains control of writing a bank of high frequency words the emphasis can shift.*

*When the word is already known...*

**SAY** *“You know how to write ‘went’.”*

*When the word is new, make a link to a known word...*

**SAY** *“You know how to write ‘day’. Think – How would you write ‘play’?”*

# How do you spell ....?

## **3. And for multi-syllabic words:**

*A good step is to ask your child to clap the parts first, then record each part in turn, listening to the sounds, and/or making links to what they already know.*

*Example: hol-i-day*

# How to help...

## **Finger Spacing**

Help your child to leave finger-spacing between words, saying *'It's easier for us to read.'*

## **Punctuation**

Encourage capital letters to start a sentence and full stops at the end.

# A word on handwriting ...

Like spelling and punctuation, handwriting is a tool for writing. It enables the learner to put ideas down on paper in a way that others can read.

Children's ability to write legibly should not be confused with their control over the writing process.

However, correct pencil grip and forming letters using the appropriate pathway is important learning in the Prep Year.

# Parent Information

This PowerPoint can be accessed at our school website [www.ascotss.eq.edu.au](http://www.ascotss.eq.edu.au)

*A Parent Writing brochure will be sent home this afternoon and will be available on the school website.*

