



Preschoolers need to practice using the small muscles in their fingers and hands.

- Encourage your child to do things such as brushing teeth, buttoning and zipping clothes and using forks and spoons without help.
- Ask your child to help you do real jobs, such as sorting and folding laundry, sweeping the porch and making the beds.
- Play with your child. Together you can thread beads or laces, do puzzles, and roll or pound homemade play dough.
- Ask your child's caregiver or teacher for ideas she/he may have.

How-to Help Your Child's Caregiver or Teacher

Exchange samples of your child's artwork and writing with the caregiver/teacher so that you will both know what the child is doing and learning.

Preschoolers learn about writing when they see how people use writing every day.

- Let your child see you write every day. When you make a note on the calendar, write a shopping list, sign in at the doctor's office or take down a phone message, talk to your child about what you're writing. "I'm writing a letter to Aunt Alice. Would you like to tell her about our walk to the library?"
- Show your child the words around us (cookbooks, shampoos, coupons, buses, street signs, restaurants, buildings, etc.) and illustrate their purposes. Hold up 2 cans of soup and say: "What kind of soup should we have – chicken noodle or vegetable?"

Preschoolers like to do their own writing.

- Make sure your child has writing materials and different places to write. Look around the house for items your child can use for writing – any kind of paper, crayons, markers and pencils. Put the writing materials in an open box on a low shelf or in a bottom drawer so that the child can reach them without needing help.
- Set up a place for writing in the room where your family spends the most time. For example, you can shorten the legs on an old chair and table to make them the right height for your child or you can often find secondhand child size furniture at thrift shops and yard sales. Keep catalogs and other writing materials in shoe boxes on the table.
- Talk with your child about how to write. If your child asks you how to make a letter, spell a name or write a word, show them how to do it. Also, let your child write in their own way. You may not be able to read the writing, but the child can read it to you. Over time, the child will learn how to write words that others can read.





ELM Early Literacy Matters

Games to play when you are out and about with your child

- Look for names of restaurants and stores-can you spot the familiar ones?
- Look for letters on bill boards-look for the letters that start with your name. Identify the letters you see and letter sounds.
- Play "I Spy"- you can spy colors, shapes, animals, cars. You can also play, "I Spy something beginning with the letter..."
- Sing songs
- Make up rhyming words-find some real rhyming words and some made-up words.
- Ask your child to recall what they did that day. What was their favorite thing they did? And draw a picture about it.
- Read books! Look at the pictures and try to guess what may be happening in the story. Then read the story then compare what you thought the story was going to be about. Draw a picture of your favorite part in the story.

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