

**DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**FOSTERING EARLY WRITING SKILLS**

**PARENT INFORMATION SESSION**

**PRESENTER GUIDE**

**DeLaSIG**

DE State Improvement Grant



# MATERIALS

## Materials Needed for Fostering Early Writing Skills

- Flip Chart-self standing with Post It paper
- 3 x 5 cards
- Ink Pens for completing evaluation
- Scrap paper (brown paper bags, old gift wrapping paper and junk mail)
- Picture books (Click, Clack, Moo, Cows That Type, Arthur Writes a Story, and Dear Mr. Burberry)
- Crayons (thin and chubby)
- Copy paper to make name books
- Examples of infant toys suitable for grasping
- Finger paints
- Colored chalk
- Foam materials to make letters and Styof foam trays
- Sand or rice
- Magnetic letters
- Scissors
- Old table cloth or shower curtain
- Cardboard

## Early Writing Skills Guide For Presenter

### I. Welcome

#### Warm-up Activities: Getting Acquainted (3-5 minutes)

Begin by welcoming parents and handing out the agenda for your meeting. Ask parents to sign in on attendance sheet and indicate the teacher's name. After these actions are completed, get all of the parents involved on one of the following activities.

#### Activity A

1. Have participants pair up and share their early writing experiences. Have participants ask each other if they remember when they began to write.
2. Pass out pieces of scrap paper and ask participants to write using their non preferred hand. Ask them if it feels peculiar. Explain that this is how children feel when they begin to write.

#### Activity B

1. Have participants discuss when they think their child should begin to write.
2. Also have them discuss what role the parent should play in their child's early writing skills.

**Note to presenter:** These activities are designed to make parents feel at ease. If there is not enough time, you can omit them from your presentation.

### II. Explanation of the Information Session (3 minutes)

Welcome to Early Writing Skills. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. Thank you for coming out this evening. We will focus specifically on how to help your child get on the road to writing. This presentation will last approximately 25 minutes. Then I will conclude by asking you to complete a brief evaluation of this session. This helps us plan future sessions.

### III. Why Writing is Important ( 5 minutes)

Many parents ask, "Should I help my child with writing?" The answer is yes if you want your child to:

- Do well in school
- Enjoy self-expression
- Become more self-reliant

Writing will be important from the early years through college and throughout adulthood. Writing is:

#### 1. Practical

Most of us make lists, jot down reminders, and write notes and instructions at least occasionally.

## **2. Job Related**

Professional and white-collar workers write frequently—preparing memos, sales reports, articles, research reports, and proposals. Your children will see their teacher write on the board.

## **3. Social**

Most of us write thank-you notes and letters to friends. It is more personal than e-mail.

## **4. Therapeutic.**

It can be helpful to express feelings in writing that cannot be expressed so easily by speaking. (Ask if and how many participants keep journals)

**Note to Presenter:** Ask each person to think about their day (or week) and name three writing activities that they did. Ask for a volunteer to write the responses on a flipchart and categorize the remarks using the titles described above (practical, job related, social or therapeutic). After everyone has had a turn, name the information described in each area.

## **IV. Things to Know About Writing (5 minutes)**

- A.** Writing is more than putting words on paper. It is a final stage in the complex process of communicating that begins with thinking.
- B.** Writing begins long before children can print their names.
- C.** One way that a child communicates is by drawing. Children should be encouraged to draw and parents should ask questions about the drawings.
- D.** Most children's basic speech patterns are formed by the time they enter school. By that time, most children speak clearly, recognize letters of the alphabet, and may try to write.
- E.** Children see people writing more than reading. Parents fill out forms, write Shopping lists, and write notes to school.

**Note to Presenter:** Some children's books promote mastery of the purpose of written speech. Read aloud excerpts from *Click, Clack Moo, Cows that Type*, *Arthur Writes a Story* and *Dear Mr. Blueberry*.

## **V. Pointers for Parents (5 minutes)**

- A.** Provide a place for your child to write. It is important for a child to have a place to write--- a desk or table with a smooth surface and good lighting.
- B.** Have plenty of paper---lined and unlined---and things to write with, including pencils, pens and crayons.

- C. Respond to what your child is writing. Show genuine interest in what your child is doing and ask questions. Do not overly correct what your child is writing. Try to find something positive to say about his/her writing attempts.
- D. Young children will often want to learn how to spell his/her name first. Practice spelling and then writing your child's name.

**Note to Presenter:** Use flipchart to brainstorm for other ideas for parents to help their children with writing. One suggestion is to create a name book for your child. Fold a piece of paper into a book and try to write words that rhyme with the child's name.

## **VI. What to Expect: Developmental Stages for Writing (10 Minutes)**

### **Birth To 6 Months Old**

- A. Babies are just learning to use their hands. Your four 4-to 6-month old baby can reach for and grasp things that he wants.
- B. Your baby will not be able to grasp objects by himself. Offer age appropriate toys to challenge your baby's small motor skills. (Show examples of grasping toys).

### **6 To 12 Months Old**

- C. Babies gain more control over their hands. A baby can pass objects from one hand to the other and may enjoy ripping and pulling materials.
- D. A baby this age may be able to pick up very small objects using his/her thumb and forefinger. Babies' hand movements become more precise, allowing them to feed themselves finger food. (This is also a good time to allow your baby to play with board books).

### **12 To 18 Months Old**

- D. Most 12-18 month olds have developed the hand skills necessary for grasping writing tools and making marks on paper.
- F. Children this age become interested in writing.
- G. The only type of writing that you should expect from your baby is scribbling. By scribbling, your baby explores what he/she can do with crayons and paper and tries to imitate what he/she sees older children and parents do.

### **Toddler**

- H. You can support your toddler's writing development by having materials available. Children this age are able to manipulate thick crayons versus the thinner versions.
- I. Drawing helps toddlers become writers. It involves grasping a crayon or marker, holding the paper so it doesn't move, and applying just the right amount of pressure with the writing instrument all at the same time.

- J. Some toddlers are able to make a few letters such as “X” or “O” by the time they are 3 years old.
- K. Older toddlers like to use “writing” in their play. Toddlers this age like to imitate what they see adults doing. They may pretend to write a shopping list or a letter to a family member.
- L. Older toddlers become aware that written symbols, such as letters or pictures represent real objects.

### **Preschooler**

- M. A preschooler may begin to make real letters accidentally. A few four year olds may even write their names. This is the perfect time for parents to begin to display written work on the refrigerator.
- N. A preschooler may request help in learning to write letters. These young children often want to make sure that their first name is spelled correctly.
- O. A preschooler may want to write the same things that his/her parents write. Young children develop confidence in writing when they are included in real writing activities such as making the shopping list, writing thank you notes and invitations.
- P. Finger painting is a fun way to write the letters of the alphabet.
- Q. Children this age are usually able to use smaller crayons to write with and color.

**Note to Presenter:** Use flip chart to show examples of what writing looks like at the various stages of a child’s development. If time allows ask participants to share what they do to encourage writing at home.

### **VII. Activities to Enhance and Encourage Early Writing (15 Minutes)**

- A. **Magnetic Letters** - These letters can be purchased from any dollar store. Allow your child to trace the letters of the alphabet on a piece of paper.
- B. **Colored Chalk** - Give your child a few pieces of colored chalk to practice writing on small chalkboard or the sidewalk.
- C. **Scrap Paper** - Save all scrap paper that comes into the house. Scrap paper can be junk mail, old gift wrapping paper, used brown paper bags, etc... Set up an area in the home and explain to your child that writing can only take place on the paper that you have provided.
- D. **Sand Box** - Allow your child to trace the letters of his/her name in the sand. This activity is fun because if your child makes a mistake it can easily be rubbed out. This activity also works well with rice.
- E. **Painting With Water** - give your child a small bucket of water to use outside and any kind of paintbrush. Encourage your child to “paint” their name or letters on the sidewalk or a large piece of cardboard.

- F. Play Dough** - Encourage your child to shape letters with play dough. Your child can even write letters using play dough as the surface.
- G. Foam Letters** - Purchase foam material from arts and crafts store and trace the letters of the alphabet onto the foam material. Help your child cut the letters out. Trace upper and lowercase letters. This will familiarize your child with the patterns of each letter. Or cut letters from Styrofoam trays that usually have fruits and vegetables on them.
- H. Typing** – Provide opportunities for your child to type using a computer or typewriter. Children like to practice typing and hitting the keys. If a computer is available, turn the font size up so the letters type large onto the screen.

**Note to Presenter:** Set up stations around the room and let parents try each activity area. Surfaces can be protected with old shower curtains or cheap plastic table cloths.

## **HANDOUTS**

## Activities to Enhance Early Writing Skills

- ❖ Give your child a few pieces of colored chalk to practice writing on a small chalkboard, sidewalk or driveway
- ❖ Magnetic letters can be purchased from the dollar store so that your child can trace these letters on a piece of paper.
- ❖ Save all scrap paper that comes into the house. Junk mail, old gift wrapping paper and used brown paper bags are all suitable for your child to practice writing on.
- ❖ Allow your child to trace the letters of his/her name in the sand.
- ❖ Give your child a small bucket of water to use outside and any kind of paintbrush. Encourage your child to “paint” their name or letters on the sidewalk or a large piece of cardboard.
- ❖ Encourage your child to shape letters with play dough. Your child can even write letters using play as the surface.
- ❖ Purchase foam material from an arts and craft store and trace the letters of the alphabet onto the foam material. Help your child cut the letters out. Trace upper and lower case letters. Parents can also use the Styrofoam trays, found in the market, that are used to display fruits and vegetables.
- ❖ **Typing** – Provide opportunities for your child to type using a computer or typewriter. Children like to practice typing and hitting the keys. If a computer is available, turn the font size up so the letters type large onto the screen.



Information obtained from U. S. Department of Education [Helping Your Child Become a Reader](#)

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## **EVALUATION**

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## EVALUATION

Session Title \_\_\_\_\_ Presenter(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle the ONE area that you best represent today.

1. Teacher: General Education
2. Teacher: Special Education
3. Teacher Coach/Consultant
4. Early Care & Education Provider
5. Paraeducator
6. Parent
7. Building Administrator
8. District Administrator
9. Other (please specify)

Please indicate your responses to the following statements based on **5** being “Strongly Agree”

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>				<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Cannot Rate</b>
1. Objectives and outcomes of the session were clear.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Information was understandable and clearly explained.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. This session allowed me to extend my knowledge/ understanding of the topic.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Presenter(s) were responsive to participant needs.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. The session climate was positive.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. The topics and information were relevant.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Participant views were heard and respected.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Appropriate audio-visual materials were used to enhance the understanding of the topic.	1	2	3	4	5	6

**Please complete the reverse side.**

10. The most helpful thing about this session was:

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12. How could we improve future sessions on this topic?

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13. Comments

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Name: (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for taking your valuable time to complete this form.**  
**The information you gave will be used to improve our programs and prepare reports.**