

How to Support your Children with their Writing

Sentence Structure and Punctuation

The children need to:

- Use full stops and capital letters accurately;
- Punctuate speech accurately;
- Use a range of punctuation within sentences, eg. commas, brackets, ellipses;
- Use a variety of sentence types (simple, compound and complex)
- Use a variety of conjunctions (words to join sentences), eg. while, as long as, because, until, although etc.

You can help by:

- Getting them to read their writing aloud and check the sentences;
- Allowing them to use a different coloured pen for each sentence;
- Pointing out the punctuation in books that they are reading;
- Displaying some conjunctions around the house;
- Asking them to look at the length of each sentence. Have they used a mixture of short, punchy sentences and longer, more detailed ones?

Text Structure and Organisation

The children need to:

- Use paragraphs to organise their writing;
- Structure the writing according to its purpose;
- Always be aware of the reader and make sure that the reader is guided through the writing.

You can help by:

- Reading their writing for them and commenting on it from the reader's point of view. Is it clear and easy to follow?
- Get them to plan the writing thoroughly before they start;
- Encourage them to use a new paragraph for each of the sections of their plan.

Composition and Effect

The children need to:

- Use words and phrases that they have chosen specifically for their audience;
- Adopt a viewpoint and stick to it, eg. authoritative, humorous, persuasive;
- Use stylistic devices such as alliteration, figurative language, word play etc.

You can help by:

- Asking them to think of someone they know (eg. a younger sibling) who they could be writing for;
- Ask them to read their writing in an exaggerated tone;
- Suggesting alternative words and phrases to replace any boring ones that they have used;
- Point out stylistic devices in books and on the television (adverts are usually full of them).