


## SUPPORTING EMERGENT WRITING

Children gradually understand writing and develop the skills to communicate and express their ideas through symbols (e.g., the alphabet). Please remember that you are supporting a process, not an outcome. Below are some ways you can support children's emergent writing in the classroom.

### Supporting the Earliest Stages of Writing

TEACHER ACTION	EXAMPLE
<p>Provide opportunities to draw, scribble, or write across learning centers.</p> 	<p><b>Classroom Entrance:</b> Have children make marks on paper that signify their names and belongings.</p> <p><b>Dramatic Play Area:</b> Add writing tools and encourage children to use them during play. For example, while playing restaurant, provide simple menus and notepads children can use to take orders.</p> <p><b>Literacy Area:</b> Have blank books available so children can write and illustrate their own stories.</p> <p><b>Math or Block Area:</b> Have children draw and label pictures of the structures they build.</p> <p><b>Science Area:</b> Provide children with paper and pencils during a walk. Ask them to draw and label pictures of what they observe.</p> <p><b>Outdoor Area:</b> Let children use the sidewalk as their writing surface—have chalk and water available as writing tools.</p>
<p>Make all kinds of writing tools available. Be ready to show children how to use them.</p>	<p>Writing materials are not limited to pen, pencil, and paper—other materials can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chalk and the sidewalk, concrete, etc.</li> <li>• Painting on the easel</li> <li>• Dry erase boards</li> <li>• iPads</li> <li>• Magnetic letters</li> <li>• Clay or playdoh</li> </ul>
INTERACTIONS	EXAMPLE
<p>Ask children questions about what they are drawing, scribbling, or writing. Transcribe what they say.</p>	<p>"Can you tell me about your drawing? I see you've used lots of colors." "I'll bet Annie would like to know what you are saying here. How could she know what you are writing? Show me what she could look at."</p>
<p>Revisit children's drawings, scribbling, and writing.</p>	<p>Revisit projects with children. Remind them of the words they used to describe their work, to help them realize that the meaning of their writing is the same each day. Remember that the writing's meaning may not be the same each day, depending on the child's age or interest.</p>

## Supporting Middle and Later Stages of Writing

TEACHER ACTION	EXAMPLE
<p>Have children write their names.</p>	<p>Have children label their work and belongings. Other ideas include writing their name on a sign-in sheet or in a class poll for favorite kind of pizza.</p>
<p>Provide authentic opportunities for writing throughout the day.</p>   	<p><b>Classroom Entrance:</b> Develop a sign-in and sign-out routine.</p> <p><b>Dramatic Play Area:</b> Provide writing tools and create play scenarios that give children a reason to write as they play. For example, when playing hospital or vet, provide blank patient forms that they can fill out while they wait to see the doctor. You can even create forms that the doctor and nurses fill out about the patients!</p> <p><b>Literacy Area:</b> Have children write and illustrate reviews of their favorite stories to share with other children and families who may want to read them. Or create mailboxes and a message exchange program (e.g., newsletters; letters to friends).</p> <p><b>Math or Block Area:</b> Have children make blueprints and label what they intend to build, including signs on or near the structure. Or draw and label a map of a town children built.</p> <p><b>Science Area:</b> Include science journals for children to record their observations. For example, if your class is interested in birds, have them record observations of bird behaviors, including a drawing.</p> <p><b>Outdoor Area:</b> Have children write down suggestions for a fun outdoor game.</p> <p><b>**It could be useful to have a word wall with common words, or labels of objects in the classroom. This way children have access to vocabulary when needed. Using pictures next to words also helps children make connections with written language and symbols. However, it is important that you still encourage children to sound out words and spell them using invented spelling. The purpose of the word wall is to help provide useful vocabulary, as opposed to being a place where children can do to copy the correct spelling of words.**</b></p>
INTERACTIONS	EXAMPLE
<p>Model writing throughout the day.</p>	<p>Demonstrate writing a message. This includes think-out-louds about what to write (“Hm, I think we should talk about [write topic on board]”) and the mechanics of writing (e.g., “This is the end of the sentence, so I will put a period here”). Don’t forget to consider children’s stages of writing so that you’re focusing on concepts that are relevant for children’s current skill levels.</p>
<p>Encourage peer scaffolding.</p>	<p>Allow children to work together to invent spelling and have conversations about the shared rules that underlie writing a message that others understand. This can take the form of writing a story or creating an invitation to a birthday party.</p>