

## Writing Suggestions for Incoming Kindergartners



## The Art of Conversation

- \* *Conversation is a form of interactive, spontaneous communication between two or more people who are following rules of etiquette.*
- \* *The art of conversation takes practice. At meals, turn off all electronic devices including television, phones and video games, and concentrate on listening and responding to what each family member has to say.*
- \* *Ask questions for clarification, avoiding those that have one word answers, like a simple yes or no. Encourage everyone to speak in full sentences.*
- \* *Tell family stories and engage in rich talk. This should be like telling stories around a campfire.*
- \* *Help your child recount details of shared events and retell those stories over and over again.*
- \* *Revisit favorite picture books using the illustrations as placeholders to retell the sequence of events in the story.*

*"It was impossible to get a conversation going; everyone was talking too much."*

Yogi Berra

## A Sense of Story



- \* *Read. Read. Read. The best writers are avid readers. They understand the sense of story, the structure of sentences, and the nature of language.*
- \* *Arthur Writes a Story - Marc Brown*
- \* *Bunny Mail - Rosemary Wells*
- \* *Click, Clack, Moo - Cows That Type - Cronin*
- \* *The Day the Crayons Quit - Drew Daywalt*
- \* *Diary of a Worm - Doreen Cronin*
- \* *Fancy Nancy - Jane O'Connor*
- \* *Harold and the Purple Crayon - Johnson*
- \* *Little Red Writing - Joan Holub*
- \* *My Dog Thinks I'm a Genius - Harriet Ziefert*
- \* *The Jolly Postman - Janet & Allen Ahlberg*
- \* *Three by the Sea and Four by the Shore - Edward Marshall*

## The Power of Words

- \* *Go places and see things with your child. Talk about what has been seen, heard, smelled, tasted, and touched.*
- \* *Point out functional writing: shopping lists, notes of things to do, thank you notes, calendar reminders, signs and labels.*
- \* *Build vocabulary using rare words they are unlikely to encounter in everyday conversations.*
- \* *Use synonyms to extend vocabulary. I'm hungry, I'm ravenous, I'm famished.*
- \* *Use similes and idioms - I'm hungry as a wolf or I could eat a horse...and be sure to explain what they mean.*
- \* *Read books that expose children to rich vocabulary through discussion of the pictures, text, story development, and sequence.*

*"Talking is a hydrant in the yard and writing is a faucet upstairs in the house. Opening the first takes the pressure off the second."*  
Robert Frost



Some thoughts about writing . . .

"Talk is one of the basic symbol systems, along with gestures and drawing, that children use to communicate before they ever put words on paper."

Vygotsky (1978)

Encourage children to use emergent forms of writing, such as scribble writing, random letter strings, and invented spelling. If asked to 'read' their marks, they can give a clear message or story. Maehr (1989)

Drawing is writing. Provide a variety of papers and writing tools (crayons, paint, pencils, markers, etc.) so that children can experiment and take risks. Be sure to ask them what their picture represents. Press for additional details and elaboration.

Let children see you write often. You're both a model and a teacher.



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