

Encouraging Young Writers

- 1) Fluency and a risk-taking environment are the foundational beams of a healthy writing classroom.
- 2) Encourage drawing. Spend time talking about the illustrations in books.
- 3) Let children see you writing for a variety of purposes. Talk aloud about what you're writing, and why.
- 4) Parents: look for low-stress writing opportunities – on vacation, for instance, while driving in the car.
- 5) Supply children with a variety of paper choices: large sheet, small sheet, stapled books, etc.
- 6) Make sure you have a variety of writing implements and markers on hand.
- 7) Think of early writing the way you think about early talk. Approximations are an important part of the process.
- 8) Look at misspellings as “language-in-process” rather than errors.
- 9) Think of formal publishing and informal publishing. Primary classrooms should provide lots of opportunities for kids to informally publish their work by reading to another class, etc.
- 10) Suggest natural audiences for student writing: “I bet your grandfather would love to read that!”
- 11) Look for authentic reasons for writing: “Since our wonderful student teacher is leaving, why don't we all write goodbye letters to her?”
- 12) Keep the vibe positive in the writing classroom. Don't go around correcting their errors. Build on their strengths.
- 13) Don't belabor the stages of writing. Most kids only have a certain amount of “juice” for a piece of writing.