

HOW TO WRITE (OR DO ANYTHING!) WITH YOUR CHILD

WITHOUT

Power Struggles



- **Make it fun:** NO busy work or worksheets/workbooks your child will resent over the summer (unless they love that stuff or want to “play school.”) **Get creative:** Play math games (we love Yahtzee), try some of the creative writing prompts below, do something different.
- **Show your own investment:** participate with your child when appropriate; show your willingness to jump in on the writing. Try a writing activity together.
- **When you become frustrated, STOP,** take a break, take a deep breath, and try to identify what triggered you.
- **Separate yourself from your child;** are any of these YOUR issues or hot buttons? Are you identifying too much with your child?
- Figure out if you are more **frustrated by your similarities** to your child or your **differences**.
- **Communicate with your child:** what is frustrating to THEM about working together? Do they have any feedback or suggestions for you? (Try writing it down instead of having a hard conversation!)
- **Let it be your CHILD’S work,** not yours, even if you are participating in the activity. This is not YOUR piano lesson, YOUR grade, or YOUR ideas.
- **Use a positive feedback method:** 1) Identify the words/phrases that jump out to you (with positive spin) 2) Share how you felt while reading (confused, excited, wanted more information, etc) 3) List questions you had about the writing as you went along.
- **Frame your critique positively;** don’t be a “fake cheerleader” but also don’t come across as overly critical; young writers have fragile egos, too, and ALL children seek their parents’ approval!

- **Familiarize yourself with your child's curricular expectations:** what is the writing protocol at school? Can you follow a similar process of brainstorming, drafting, revising, and editing? Are you well-versed in how to revise/improve writing? Do you know what particular writing crafts your child is familiar with?

Writing Prompts and Styles to Try:

- Describe someone in your family—sibling, parent, grandparent, even your pet
- Describe your favorite summer place—a vacation spot, your grandparents' house, a swimming pool, camp, whatever. LOTS of details!
- Write a memoir about one of your adventures this summer—use lots of details and all five senses.
- Describe a character from a book you're reading, or book you've read in the past. Paint a picture for us.
- Pretend you are a reporter for a kids' magazine. Write an article about summer safety for kids.
- Write a letter to anyone: a friend, a family member, even a Congressman!
- What are you most looking forward to about the next school year? What are you concerned about?
- Write a how-to article (cooking, drawing a certain picture, how to play a game)
- Write a report about an endangered species
- Write a commercial for a product you REALLY want to try.
- Write about a vacation where EVERYTHING went wrong.
- Keep a daily diary
- Write a poem about the seasons
- Write a haiku or two