



Dear Parents.

Perhaps you are wondering about how writing develops and why, perhaps, your child is bringing home papers with temporary spellings that haven't been corrected.

Remember when your child first learned to talk? S/he may have many "mistakes" or approximations in their speech, but it didn't really concern you that much. At times you may have corrected their speech, but mostly you included your child in your conversations, encouraged them to talk, and delighted in your interactions with them. As parents, you know that children learn to talk the same way they learn to crawl or walk...They learn to talk by talking.

Learning to write works the same way. Here is an example of writing in the early years.

IFAGDFDA

Now this may not look like standard writing, but it is an approximation and it is AMAZING! It tells us a lot. This shows that this child knows that written language is supposed to mean something, and the child can explain exactly what it means. When asked, we are told:

I have a goldfish called Adam.

Just about every letter stands for one word in the story.

| | | | | | |
|---|------|---|----------|--------|------|
| I | F | A | GDF | D | A |
| I | have | a | goldfish | called | Adam |

Some additional developmental stages come before this one, and others come after. From this sample we see that child knows the following:

- Print goes in a straight line from left to right.
- Print is made up of letters
- Letters stand for sounds in the words s/he wants to write.

Later we might see:

I FNDA LPANDA GENE CAMOT

I found a lamp and a genie came out.

Here is what this WONDERFUL piece of writing tells us about the child's writing development.

- Written language is made up of words and separated by spaces.
- Written words are made up of a number of different letters.
- Written words have beginning and ending sounds.
- Written words have vowels.
- When you know a word "AND" you spell it the same way every time.

By the end of the year, we hope to see:

My frorit prt of the clasrom is the libare bekus it has Books. And we lrn how to red. I like it.

My favorite part of the classroom is the library because it has books. And we learn how to read. I like it.

Teachers help children learn to write the way parents and families help them to learn to talk. If we put our energy and focus into correcting each and every approximation, the child will get discouraged and lose a natural desire to write. What research tells us about heavy correction is that meaning is less important than spelling the words correctly.

If we invite them to use their oral language in their writing, even if they can't spell all the words correctly, we give them the freedom to say what they mean. Children learn to write by writing. When we support and applaud their "best attempts" we see their writing take off.

Do we have a time to teach spelling, grammar, punctuation, and handwriting? Absolutely! We do this during our whole group instruction, small group instruction, and individual conferences. We select one or two teaching points that are within their writing development and support them as they take on this new skill.

My goal in sharing my thoughts with you is to encourage you to share in your child's joy of writing. Kindergarten is an amazing year of growth for writers. The skills will come with time. Just remember... We learn to write by writing!

Sincerely,

