

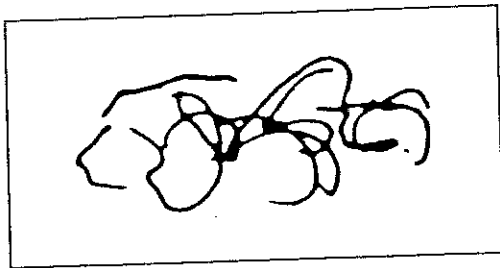
Letter to Parents and Caregivers

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Do you remember how excited you were when your child began to talk? You celebrated your child's cooing and baby talk; listened to, accepted, and praised your child's early attempts at speaking; and spoke to your child so that he or she could hear the correct pronunciation of words. In those ways, you joyfully taught your child to speak.

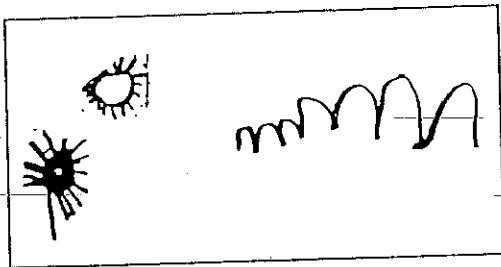
You can support your child's written language development in much the same way that you supported his or her oral language development, naturally, meaningfully, and joyfully. You can model writing for authentic purposes. Tell your child what you are doing and why when writing shopping lists, letters, and reminder notes. Praise your child's early attempts at writing. Learning to write should be as free of risk as learning to talk.

Your child went through several necessary stages in the development of oral language: cooing, babbling, and playing with sounds. Similarly, written language development follows predictable stages. These are the stages your child will probably go through as he or she becomes a competent writer.



LEVEL 1: EMERGING/SCRIBBLE

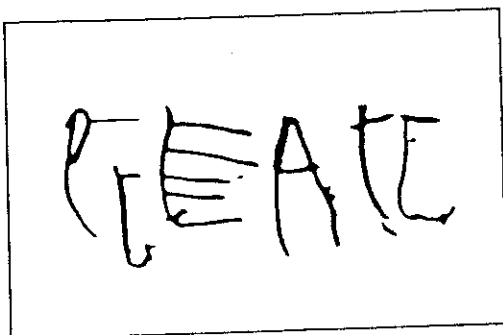
This is the beginning level at which your child scribbles. You may not be able to tell what the picture is about, but it's important to praise your child's beginning drawing.



LEVEL 2: PICTORIAL

At this level, your child begins to draw a somewhat recognizable picture and may tell about it. He or she may also imitate writing.

The flower is growing.



LEVEL 3: PRECOMMUNICATIVE

Your child may now be printing his or her own name or an occasional known word and may be writing strings of letterlike forms or a series of random letters. Sometimes he or she may attempt to read the message back, but you probably can't read it.

There are webs in Spidertown.

I F A G O F D A

I have a goldfish called Arielle.

I F N O
L P O A N D
G E N I E
C A M E O U T

I found a lamp and a genie came out.

W A N S A P O N N A
T I M E T H E R W A S
F O U R B U T E R F L I E S
T H E Y W E N T O N A N
A D V E N T U R E I N T H E
W O O D S .

Once upon a time, there was (were) four butterflies. They went on an adventure in the woods.

D e r a b l u e R a i n g e r s w h y d o y o u
f i g h t ? I s e e y o u o n T V . Y o u a r e
t h e b e s t . W h y d o y o u g o
t o t h e c o m m a n d c e n t e r ? W h y a r e
y o u o n F o x K i d s ? I l i k e y o u r s h o w
A r e y o u m y f r i e n d ? L o v e
A l e x

Dear Blue Ranger,
Why do you fight? I see you on TV. You are the best. Why do you go to the command center? Why are you on Fox Kids? I like your show. Are you my friend? Love, Alex

LEVEL 4: SEMIPHONETIC

At this level, your child begins to use some letters to match sounds, often using one beginning letter to write a word. He or she usually writes from left to right but may reverse some letters.

LEVEL 5: PHONETIC

Now your child writes most words using beginning and ending consonant sounds and spells some frequently used words correctly. He or she may begin to add vowel sounds, but they are often not the correct ones. At this level, your child may begin to leave spaces between words. It's getting easier to read your child's writing.

LEVEL 6: TRANSITIONAL

At this level, your child is writing words the way they sound, representing most syllables in words. He or she may sometimes be adding an extra silent *e* at the end of a word or doubling letters when they're not needed while trying visually to remember how spelling works. Now your child usually leaves spaces between words and is spelling many words correctly as he or she writes more than one sentence.

LEVEL 7: CONVENTIONAL

At this level, your child spells most words correctly, although he or she may use phonics-based spelling for advanced words. Remember, we can only expect children to correctly spell words they have already learned! Now your child is usually using capital and lowercase letters and periods and question marks correctly.