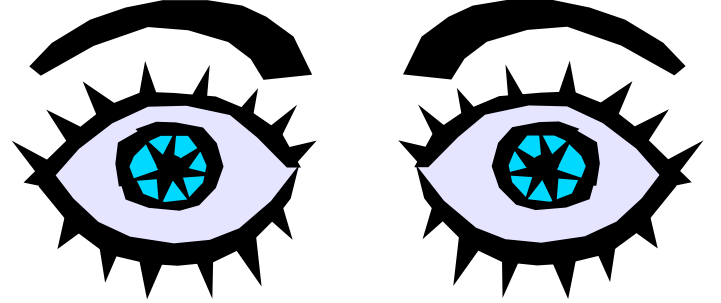


Here is how we do it:

First, we think about what we want to say. Then, we make letters for the sounds in the words. We call this “kidwriting.” Then the teacher or a parent writes our words the “adult way.” We see how some of our writing is like “adult writing.”

Pre-Kindergarten kids
can write!

LOOK!



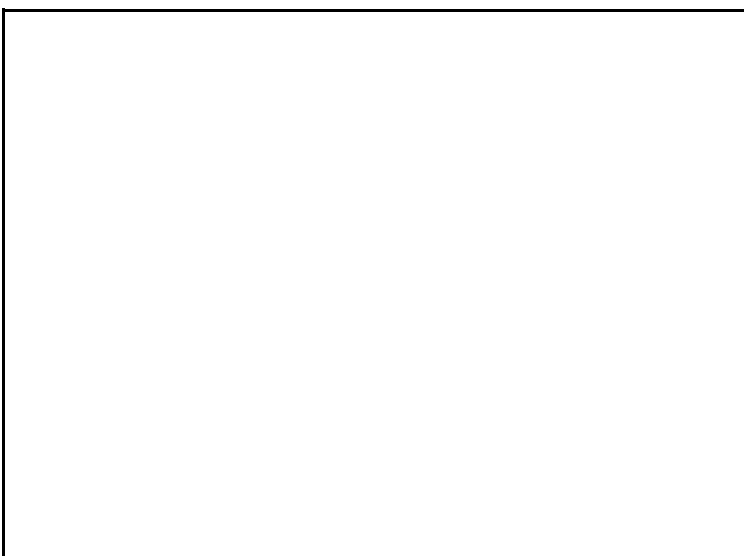
Sometimes, we remember how adults spell words. Then, we can use the “adult” spellings when we write next time.

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.

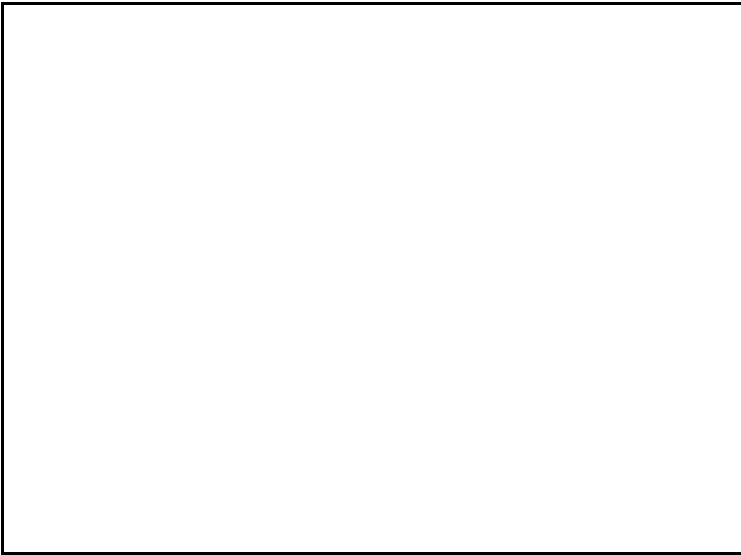
You can support your child's written language development in much the same way that you supported his or her oral language development, naturally, meaningfully and joyfully. You can model writing for authentic purposes. Tell your child what you are doing and why when writing shopping lists, letters, and reminder notes. Praise your child's early attempts at writing . Writing 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 stages your child will probably go through as she becomes a competent writer.

Stages of Writing Development



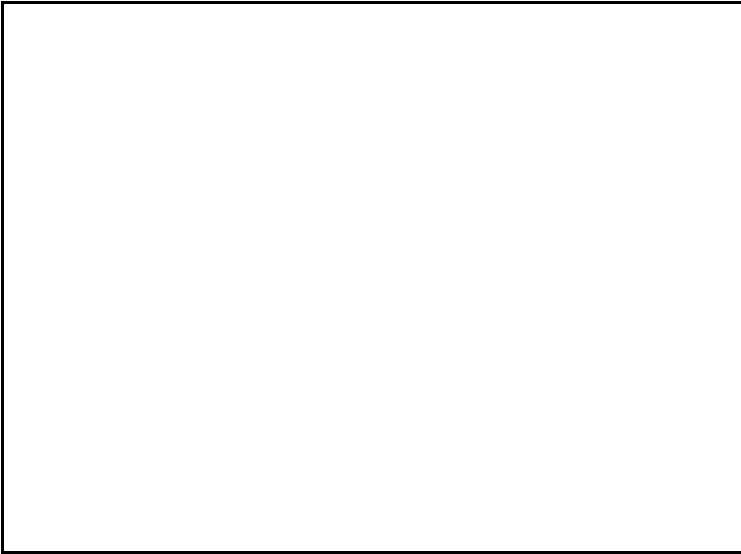
Level 1: Emerging/ Scribble

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.



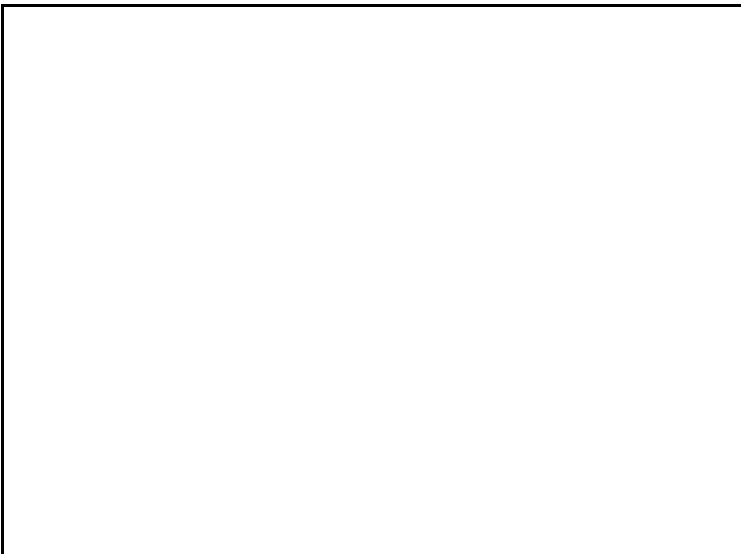
Level 2: Pictorial

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



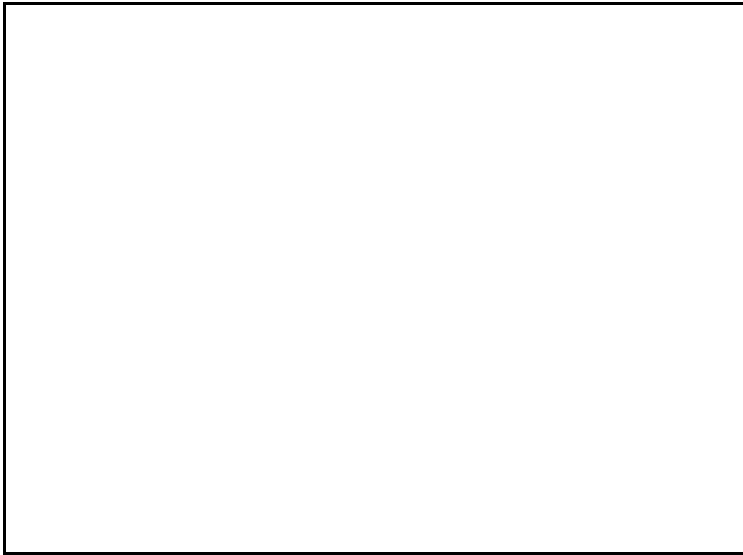
Level 3: Precommunicative

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.



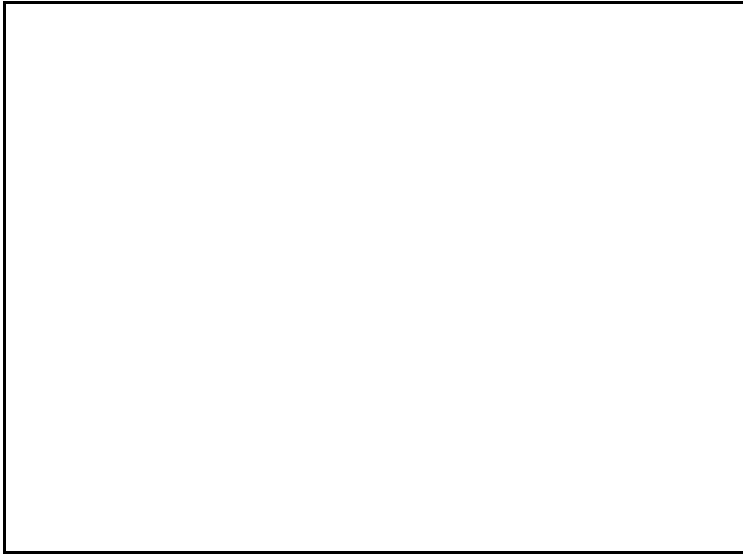
Level 4: Semiphonetic

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.



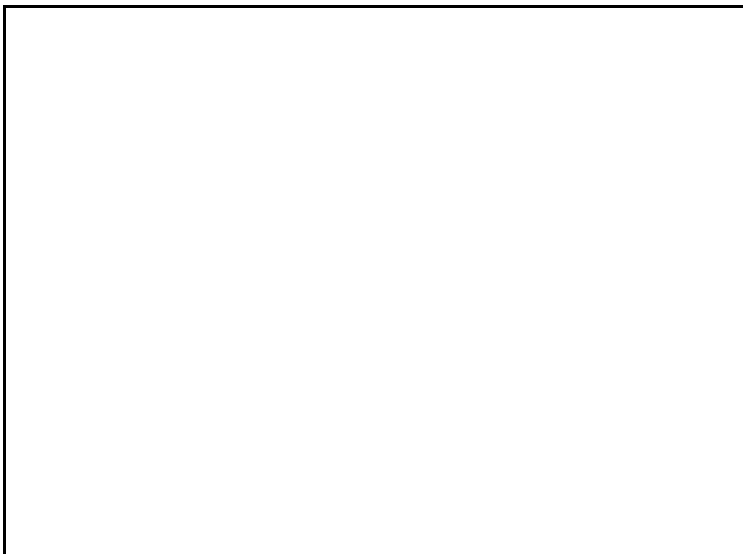
Level 5: Phonetic

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.



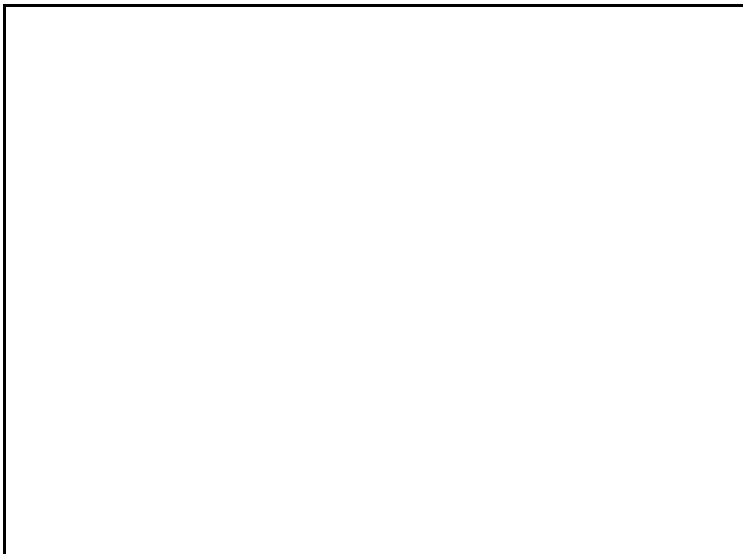
Level 6: Transitional

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 to visually 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

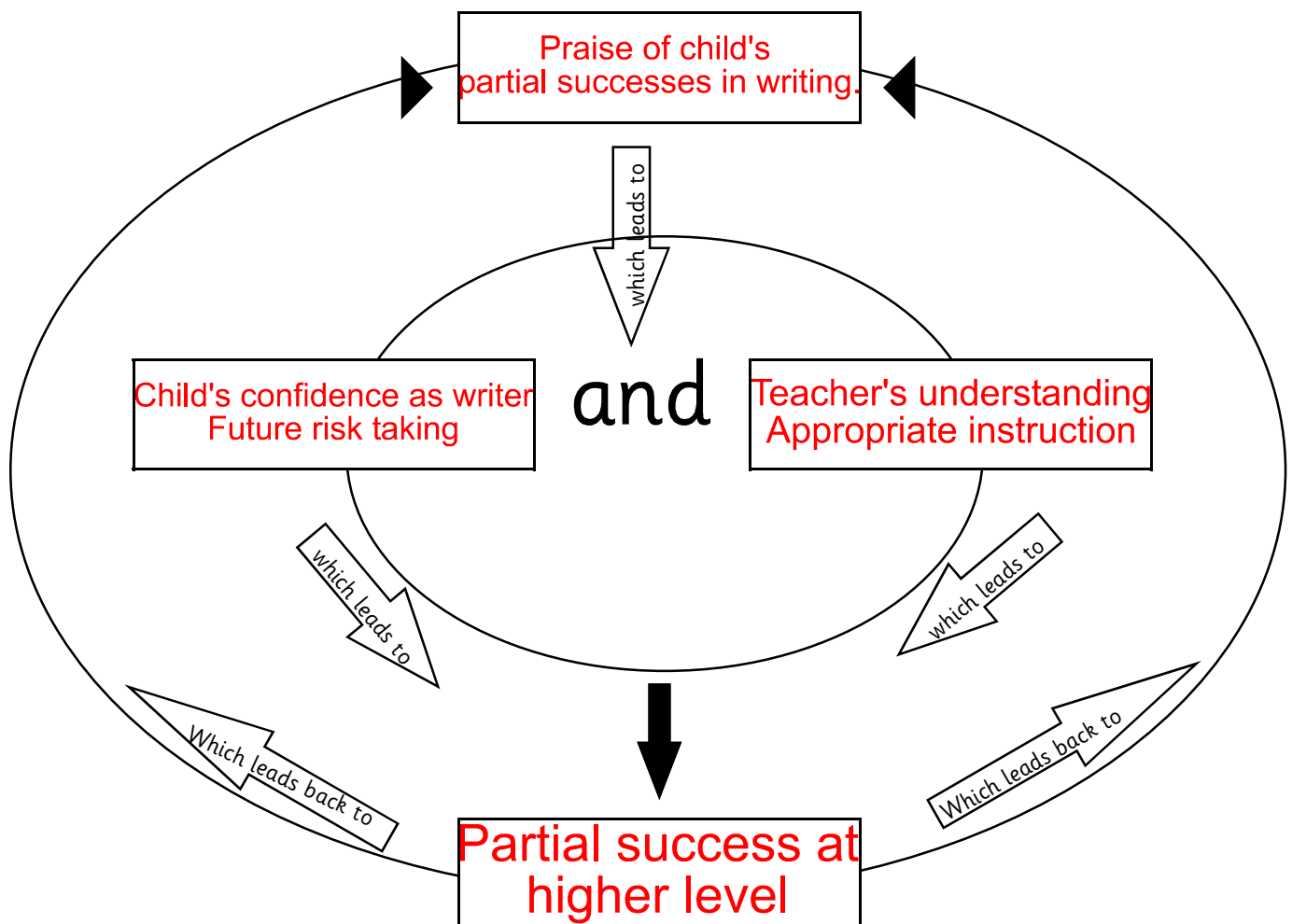
At this level, your child spells most words correctly, although he or she may use phonics based spelling for advanced words. Remember, we can only expect children to correctly spell words they have already learned! Now your child is usually using capital and lowercase letters and periods and question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



Level 8: Advanced

Advanced writers use a rich, varied body of written vocabulary. They may still use phonics based spelling for advanced words but have mastered the spelling of commonly used words. At this level, your child uses quotation marks, commas, and apostrophes correctly and usually organizes writing into appropriate paragraphs.

My goal is for each child to enjoy writing and to begin little by little to understand how to become a better writer. Remember, your child learned to speak gradually, and you celebrated each attempt. Together, let's celebrate your child's attempts and gradual growth as a beginning writer!



Magic Lines as Placeholders

A key element in getting children started as writers, the magic line is a blank horizontal line that functions as a placeholder when children know that they don't know an appropriate letter to represent a sound. Use of magic lines gives children a strategy to keep going when they get stuck in their messages.

Using a magic line is the beginning of a lifelong strategy of reminding one's self to later check a spelling or find a better word.

Tricky words:

When children are attempting to write a long word with more than one syllable, I have them clap each syllable or 'chunk' and write each one before moving on to the next. This strategy helps children to hear more sounds and not to become overwhelmed by a seemingly impossibly long word. It is also a good idea to write the singular version of a word before adding an 's'. The children have been taught that to make a word plural they usually need to add an 's'. The 'ing' ending is also common and the children have been shown how to add this part to the root word.

Vowels:

Children go through stages of recognizing the sounds they hear in words. First they usually hear the beginning sound, and may well write their words just using the initial sound for each word. Next they will begin to hear the final sound in words and then other consonants. Finally they will begin to hear the vowels (a,e,i,o,u and part time y) . The most able children might begin to check over their work to see if they have put a vowel in every chunk or word.

Spacing:

Children remember this analogy easily. Spaghetti spaces between letters and meatball spaces between words.

High Frequency Words

49% of all words written:

the	and	I
a	to	was
it	we	in
of	he	my
they	on	went
had	is	then
for	said	when
so	that	but
one	were	there
up	she	me
out	got	with
at	you	all
his	day	have
go	as	her
saw	came	him
back	after	are
about	very	are

Once children have recall of some of these words writing becomes much easier and hence more fluent.

Journal Writing Procedures for Classroom Volunteers

1. Ask the child to tell you about his or her drawing. If the child can't think of anything, point to a part of the picture and say. "Tell me about this part"
2. Repeat the child's story back as one complete sentence. Say one word at a time, emphasizing the sound or sounds that the child is ready to write.
3. Ask, " Do you hear any letters in the word _____?" Allow the child to write what he or she thinks the letters are.
4. If the child has no idea of what letter makes the sound, encourage the child to use a magic line (a horizontal blank line) in place of the unknown letter or letters.
5. If the child hears the letter but does not know how to write it, refer to the Letterland alphabet chart or card.
6. Keep re reading the words that have been written so far to help the child remember their place.
7. Praise the child for his or her great 'kidwriting'. Then write the story in adult writing. Point out any elements in the kid writing that match the adult writing.
8. Read the story back twice with the child pointing to the adult writing.
9. Please be careful about spelling, print clearly, and use capital letters only where they belong.
10. Remember to praise the child for his or her attempts and ignore mistakes.
11. Your help means everything. THANK YOU!