

Talk - for - writing

One of the most important ways to help your child to write is to talk!

Tell your children lots of stories. Stories about you, your family and relations. Re-tell the traditional stories that you were told as a child. This can help children to shape their own stories and have something to write about.

No one can write down anything that they cannot say. Children need to practise saying and hearing whole sentences so that they become used to hearing the flow and sound of whole units of meaning.

People don't talk in sentences. They skip about from one topic to another and use their faces and gestures to create emphasis.

If children don't hear sentences, they will write as they speak - without punctuation and without structure.

Practise changing some of the things you say into sentences that you could write down.

Connectives

Connectives are the words and phrases that join ideas together and make writing flow along nicely. Play story consequences with your child. Start a story and stop at the word *because*. Your child takes over and stops at the word *while*. This continues, swapping the role of story-teller at words and phrases such as:

- After a while;
- Then;
- Next;
- Suddenly;
- Later on;
- Finally;
- In the end.



e.g. Once upon a time there was a little boy called Billy who was feeling really fed up *because*...

Sentences

A sentence is a unit of meaning. It can stand alone and makes sense on its own. In writing, a sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop so that the reader knows when to pause.

In school, your child will be encouraged to practise sentences by saying them aloud before writing them down. By doing this, the sound of the sentence can be heard:

- Does it make sense?
- Is it clear?
- Can I make it more interesting?
- Would it sound better if I re-arranged it?

Play silly sentences with your child. Think of two or three unconnected words and try to make a sentence from them. e.g.

- policeman and skateboard;
- zebra and humbug;
- vicar and ballet shoes;
- fish and potato;
- alien and dustbin;



Start the silly sentences in different ways:

- Exhausted,
- In the wink of an eye,
- Singing merrily,
- Like David Beckham,
- Suddenly, without warning.