

Kent City School
District

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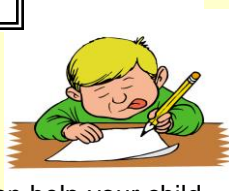
Parent Resource Newsletter

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

Helping Your Child Succeed in School

Launching Young Writers

WRITING is an important part of our daily lives. However, it can be a difficult skill to learn and master for some students. By getting a head start with some simple activities; you can help your child begin to develop writing skills at an early age. By doing so, you will be contributing to their future success as a student and as an adult, while teaching how to express their selves.



Why is writing important

- **Writing is an important element of a student's education.** - Whether students are writing by hand or on the computer, many assignments and exams require students to write short answers or longer essays as a way of assessing what they have learned. As students get older, they will be expected to show more sophisticated writing skills, and to complete more sophisticated tasks through their writing.
- **Writing is an important form of communication.** - Writing letters and emails is a common way of keeping in touch with friends, relatives, and professional colleagues. Writing is frequently the final stage in communication when we want to leave no room for doubt, which is why we write and sign contracts, leases, and treaties when we make important decisions.
- **Writing can be an important outlet.** - Many people find writing to be therapeutic, and a helpful way to express feelings that cannot be expressed so easily by speaking.

What can you do?

It's important to remember that writing can be as difficult a subject to teach and assess as it is to learn. Many students have trouble writing with clarity, coherence, and organization, and this can discourage them from writing if they feel frustrated.

That's where parent involvement can make a big difference. Encouraging your child to develop strong writing skills at a young age, and to become a better writer as they get older; can have a lifelong positive impact on writing, and may make writing an easier and more enjoyable process.

To get you started, read the number of ideas of things you can do to help your child become a stronger writer. While many of these ideas apply to younger children, they can be adapted for older children as well.

Resources: U.S. Department of Education, and compiled by Colorín Colorado. Reprinted with permission from Reading Rockets.org

Helping Your Child Become a Stronger Writer

Day-to-day Activities

- **Make sure your child sees you writing** - Talk with them about your writing so that they begin to understand why writing is important and the many ways it can be used.
- **As your child gets older, write together** - Have your child help you with the writing you do, including writing letters, shopping lists, and messages.
- **Suggest note-taking** - Encourage your child to take notes on trips or outings, and to describe what they saw.
- **Encourage copying** - If your child likes a particular song, suggest that they learn the words by writing them down.
- **Hang a family message board in the kitchen** - Offer to write notes there for your child. Be sure that they find notes left there for them.
- **Help your child write letters and emails to relatives and friends** - These may include thank you notes or just a special note to say hello. Consider finding a pen pal for your child.
- **Encourage keeping a journal** - This is excellent writing practice as well as a good outlet for venting feelings. Encourage your child to write about things that happen at home and school, about and about things they want to remember and do.

Things to Remember

- **Allow time** - Good writers often spend a lot of time thinking, preparing, and researching before starting to write.
- **Respond to your child's writing** - Respond to the ideas your child expresses verbally or in writing. Make it clear that you are interested in what the writing conveys, which means focusing on "what" the child has written rather than "how" it was written.
- **Praise your child's writing** - Take a positive approach and find good things to say about your child's writing. Is it accurate? Descriptive? Original? Creative? Thoughtful? Interesting?
- **Help your child with their writing as they get older** - Ask your child questions that will help clarify details of their stories and assignments as they get longer, and help them organize their thoughts.
- **Provide your child with spelling help when they are ready for it** - When your child is just learning how to read and write; they may try different ways to write and spell. Our job is to encourage our children's writing so they will enjoy putting their thoughts and ideas on paper. At first, your child may begin to write words the way that they hear them. This actually is a positive step in developing phonemic awareness. As your child gets older and begins to ask more questions about letters and spelling, provide them with the help they need.
- **Practice, practice, practice** - Writing well takes lots of practice, so make sure your child doesn't get discouraged too easily.
- **Read together** - Reading and writing support each other. The more your child does of each, the better they will be at both. Reading can also stimulate your child to write about their own family or school life.

As you read and write more with your child, you will be building an important foundation, and taking steps that will help your child to become a better reader, writer, and student. Your efforts now will make a difference — and it may be just the difference that your child needs to succeed!

TITLE I NEWS



Meet **Mrs. Mindy Strahan**. Mrs. Strahan has been a **Title I Reading and Math Tutor** here at Walls School for the last three years. She absolutely loves teaching here at Walls and she enjoys building strong relationships with each of her students. "If they know I care about them, they work ten times harder for me", says Mindy.

Mrs. Strahan is married, for 7 years (to her best friend). She has two beautiful daughters, Brynleigh (5 yrs.) and Emmaleigh (2-1/2 yrs.). "Being a mom has taught me so much. Especially when it comes to my job as a teacher", states Mindy. "I cherish being able to teach other parent's children".

She has loved being able to meet and teach with all grade levels; following students through their grades, watching them grow socially, emotionally, and academically. She tries very hard to give each of her students the confidence they need in order to believe in themselves.

Mrs. Strahan believes the best way for parents to be involved is by spending time each night with their child practicing the skills they are learning in their classroom and reading with them daily. She keeps parents involved through newsletters, weekly assignments and weekly communications. She wants parents to know she always makes sure she treats each child with the same love and respect that she gives her own children. She truly cares about their academic growth and success.

We are so happy Mrs. Strahan returned to Walls and continues her teaching in our Title I program. Hopefully you will get the opportunity to meet her personally.

SCHOOL NEWS



Time off in February

Friday - February 16th - No School - Inservice for Teachers. Elementary students will not be attending school this day.

Monday - February 19th - Don't forget Monday is **President's Day** and a day off from school. **Presidents' Day**, celebrated each year on the third Monday in February, is a day when Americans honor the legacies of the U.S. presidents. The holiday was established in 1800, when Congress declared February 22-George Washington's birthday—a federal holiday. Presidents' Day has become a day to honor not only Washington, but Abraham Lincoln, the 16th U.S. president who was born on February 12. To celebrate President's Day, head to the library and checkout a book on the lives and accomplishments of all U.S. presidents.

Site Review

Resources available for Parents and Families:

Website for learning and fun—for kids and parents together-

Checkout this Month's website:

When a mom mentions she's looking for some great educational websites for her kids, it's not long before **Starfall.com** is mentioned. The site has been online since 2002 and works with your children through letter recognition all the way through to reading plays, nonfiction and comics.

Their new Starfall Parent-Teacher Center™ is available free for everyone and includes supplemental custom worksheets, curriculum downloads, informative guides, all the latest Starfall news and much more for our grownup audience.

Kids' Corner

Use simple writing prompts for Valentine's Day or any Special Day

Young children can enhance emerging writing skills by participating in Valentine's Day writing activities. Here are a few ideas to inspire even the beginning writer:



- ♥ Create a Valentine's Day coupon book for a family member or friend, full of simple things you will do to show your love and friendship.
- ♥ Make a list of people who love you and give at least one reason why you know they love you.
- ♥ Write a letter to your Mom, Dad, grandparent, brother, or sister telling them why you love them.
- ♥ Describe a time when you felt especially loved.
- ♥ Write an **acrostic poem** (using the letters in a topic word to begin each line) for example a word like MOM, FRIEND, LOVE, or VALENTINE.



Here are the 2017-2018 Title I Contacts for our Title Program at your School:

Literacy Coach; Mrs. Rachel Yohn:

Davey School (330-676-7409)
Longcoy School (330-676-8379)

Literacy Coach, Mrs. Kristin Garner:

Schoolwide Holden School (330-676-8400)
Walls School (330-676-8300)

Family Engagement Coordinator,

Ms. Pam Bose: All Schools (330-676-7425)

Federal Grants Coordinator, Mrs. Karen

Rumley, Director of Instructional Program:
All Schools (330-676-7600)



Parents
plus
Schools
equals
Success