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recommends...

## Fun Writing Ideas

### Babies

- Explore blocks and balls together. This shape exploration is the foundation for learning letters.
- Provide many interesting (but safe!) objects for exploration. When safety allows, use real life objects in addition to toys. Babies exploration of various shapes, sizes, corners, edges, and textures will help them with letter recognition and mathematical skill development later on.
- Using black or red markers, draw shapes on pieces of white paper while your baby watches you. Name the shapes and talk about them as you draw.
- Give your baby opportunities to play with paper.
- Model writing and typing while your baby is watching.
- Give your baby plenty of opportunities to use their pincer grasp (thumb and fingers working together to pick up something)—zipping a zipper, picking up cereal, lifting the flap in a board book etc.

### Toddlers

- Play with blocks and spend lots of time rolling balls back and forth. (Foundation for learning letters)
- Give your child plenty of opportunities to draw with markers, paint and fat crayons..
- Toddlers find holes irresistible. Cut a hole in the top of a small box or coffee can lid. Provide many safe objects for your child to place into the hole. When they are all inside, dump them out and let your child begin again. Perhaps cut different size holes and/or slits in different boxes for extra fun. This helps develop small motor skills which are very important in learning to write.
- Provide opportunities for your child to explore and manipulate play dough.
- On a nice day, fill a bucket with water outside, give your child a paint brush and let them "paint" items outside.
- Create opportunities for your child to practice using child safe scissors. Provide old magazines, scrap paper, paper bags or junk mail for cutting. Turn it into an art project if you like.
- Put two cups on the table—one filled with water and the other empty. Give your child an eye-dropper and encourage them to fill it from the full cup and squirt it into the empty cup.
- If you have access to a word processing program, open a document, increase the font to 72 pts. and together type your child's name or some interesting words or perhaps a sentence.
- Give your child some chalk and let them draw on an outdoor walkway.



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## Fun Writing Ideas

### Preschoolers

- Spend some time drawing pictures together. Use pens, pencils, markers, and crayons if possible.
- Cut the letters of your child's name out of sandpaper. Glue them onto a piece of paper and let your child explore the way the letters feel. Talk about it together. Post this on the door to your child's room.
- Make a chart of your and your child's "favorites": Food, color, animal, book, movie, person, day of the week, flower, bird, game, activity, place, relative, song, store, friend, celebrity, author, item of clothing, word, teacher, etc. Leave blanks to be filled in as you think of them. Talk together about each of the choices and why you chose it.
- Before bedtime one evening, tell your child that you are going to write "the story of their day". Engage them in a conversation about everything that they did that day from the moment they awoke until you finish talking and writing. Dictate their words as closely as you can.
- Give your child a large brown paper grocery bag to decorate. Provide markers, crayons, paint, glue, yarn, pom poms, glitter, or whatever art supplies you have. When they are finished, cut holes in the sides and on the bottom of the bag (which when turned upside-down will be the neck) to make a sort of vest or costume.
- If you make a shopping list, involve your child in the making of it. Name the item going on the list and then encourage your child to watch you write the item on the list. Spell each letter out loud if you like. Let your child hold the list at the store. Point to each item on the list as you shop and encourage your child to cross items off the list once they are in the cart.
- Fold a piece of paper into thirds and then unfold it. Encourage your child to draw a picture on the paper. Pointing out the divisions, ask your child to describe what is at the 'top' of the picture, what is in the 'middle' of the picture and what is at the 'bottom' of the picture. Then look at a book together and identify the top, middle and bottom of its picture.
- Engage your child in practice writing the first letter of you their name. Ask them to draw it very large. Ask them to draw it very tiny. Use different colors. Talk together about letters.
- Make a journal for your child by stapling together some folded pieces of paper. Periodically, encourage your child to draw, color, paste, or dictate something in their journal. This helps demonstrate the many aspects of print.
- Sprinkle a thin layer of sand into a baking tray. Use your fingers to write letters. Name them out loud or turn it into a guessing game where your child guesses the letter. For older children, spell out names or simple words and talk about them together.
- Using different pieces of colored paper, or putting a stripe of a color on the top of a piece of white paper, look around the room and make a list of all the things you see that are that color.