



Supporting Family
Engagement To
Promote Literacy

Grades K-3

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Kerry Hoffman,
Ph.D.

Writing for Grades K-3

A Resource for Educators



Introduction

This resource is intended to support educators in building family partnerships to enhance students' literacy development at school and at home. The goal is for schools, child care providers, and families to effectively partner to engage children in literacy-based activities. By providing practical ideas and resources for families, schools are better able to bridge literacy instruction from classrooms into homes, giving children more literacy opportunities in multiple contexts.

The Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) General Education Leadership Network (GELN) Michigan Early Literacy Task Force (ELTF) created *Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy: Grades K to 3* to improve children's literacy.¹ The Michigan Department of Education endorses the use of the Essentials as quality, research-informed instructional practices. The evidence supporting the family literacy practices is informed by research that meets rigorous standards established by the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) in classroom settings. These evidence-based classroom practices were adapted for home use; however, research has not investigated the efficacy of all of these practices in home contexts.

These Essential Instructional Practices include research- and standards-aligned writing instruction. This Essential Instructional Practice not only involves the actual practice of writing letters on paper and using a keyboard to write, but also includes the conventions of spelling and grammar. Children learn more about the letter-sound relationship through writing. More importantly, this Essential Instructional Practice calls for children to have daily opportunities to write for different purposes and audiences. Children should have opportunities to connect what they are reading to their writing by noticing how authors use different words, sentence structure, and other features to enhance their readers' experience. It is also important to support children as they engage in the process of writing throughout the creation, revision, and publication stages. To help families support literacy at home, you can share this strategy with them.

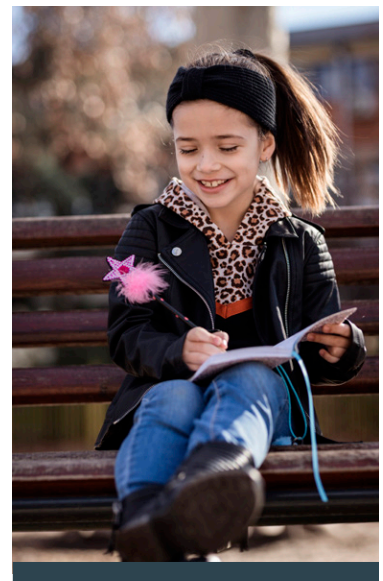
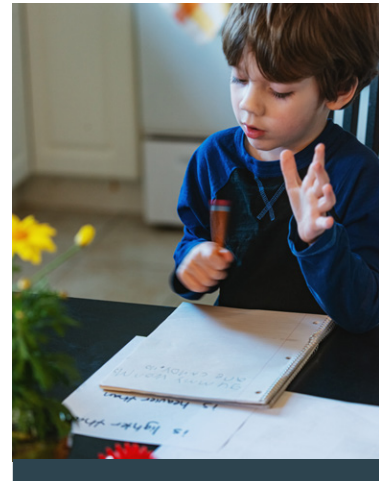


Sharing Why Writing Is an Essential Practice With Families

Writing is key to children’s literacy development. When children write, they articulate ideas and thoughts, whether by writing stories from their imaginations or by writing to explain something. They also learn more about the alphabetic system. There is a powerful connection between writing and reading. They complement each other. When children are given ample opportunities to write, they become better readers.² And good readers are often good writers, so giving children lots of opportunities to read is key.

When children write, they share their thoughts and feelings. It is an important way to communicate and interact with their readers. Children who have regular writing experiences outside of school develop their understanding of the power of writing to a greater degree than those who do not have these writing opportunities. Children benefit from adults, both at home and at school, who provide guidance about names, spellings, letters, words, and ideas.³ Through these interactions, children see that writing has an audience and a purpose.⁴ Supporting writing efforts at home also translates to greater growth in their school-based writing development.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children encourages families to support children’s writing at home in a number of ways. This includes making cards, writing stories together, showing children grocery lists or emails, and talking about these on a regular basis, as well as providing different kinds of paper and pencils or crayons to use. Other ideas include having children keep a journal where they can record new and interesting words, take notes like a news reporter, draw pictures, or write stories like the ones they have read or someone has read to them. Moreover, families who encourage their children to write and talk about what they are writing are helping them to love writing and cultivate motivation.

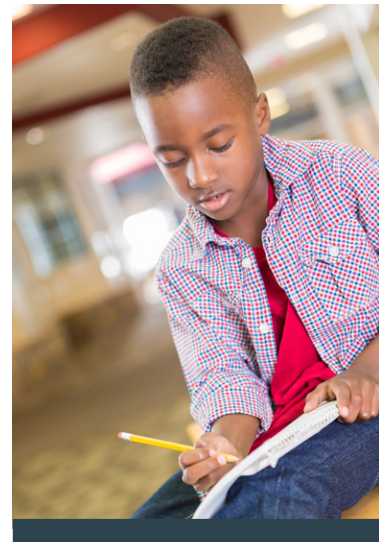


Supporting Families in the Essential Practice of Writing

Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy: Grades K to 3 also includes collaboration with families in promoting literacy. Schools can partner with families to learn more about supporting writing at home in a number of ways. For example, schools can share with families the “Writing” infographic that accompanies this brief. The MiFamily Engagement Framework⁵ outlines several high-impact strategies that help support student achievement and family engagement, including:

- Hosting student-led writing conferences with families and teachers;
- Sharing videos with families on how to incorporate writing into everyday activities at home;
- Hosting writing workshops for families to learn and practice a new strategy, get feedback, and ask questions;
- Sharing a description of emergent writing skills with families;
- Providing reading materials for students to take home and write about what they have read; and
- Providing passes to families to take their children to museums and other cultural sites and having children record what they saw and learned.

The key is for schools to partner as much as possible with families in their efforts to support students’ literacy learning, and support families in learning about writing and how they can encourage writing at home.



Resources

The following resources provide more information about and examples of how to support writing at home:

Educator Resources:

- [TeachWriting: Resources and prompts](#)

Tips for Families:

- [Reading Rockets: Writing](#)
- [Colorín Colorado: A bilingual site for educators and families of English language learners](#)
- [LD Online: Toolkit for parents to help with writing tasks at home](#)



Endnotes

- ¹ Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators, General Education Leadership Network, Early Literacy Task Force. (2016). *Essential instructional practices in early literacy: Grades K to 3*. https://literacyessentials.org/downloads/geln-docs/k-3_literacy_essentials.pdf
- ² Graham, S., & Hebert, M.A. (2010). *Writing to read: Evidence for how writing can improve reading*. A Carnegie Corporation Time to Act Report. Alliance for Excellent Education.
- ³ National Association for the Education of Young Children and the International Reading Association. (1998). Learning to read and write: Developmentally appropriate practices for young children. Joint Position Statement of NAEYC and IRA.
- ⁴ Dyson, A. (1990). *The word and the world: Reconceptualizing written language development*. Technical Report No. 42. National Writing Project.
- ⁵ Michigan Department of Education. (2020). *MiFamily: Michigan's family engagement framework*. https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/MIFamily_Family_Engagement_Framework_683447_7.pdf

Acknowledgments

Sheila Brookes, Ph.D., is a subject matter expert for the Region 8 Comprehensive Center and a research analyst for AEM Corporation. Dr. Brookes has an extensive background in early childhood education, with experience as a preschool teacher, university lab school director, and university professor.

Amy B. Colton, Ph.D., is the MI Co-Coordinator for the Region 8 Comprehensive Center. Dr. Colton's background in the field of education includes roles as a classroom teacher for students with special needs, a professional learning consultant at the district and international levels, a teacher-in-residence for the National Board for Professional Learning, and an author.

Kerry Hoffman, Ph.D. (lead author), is the Indiana Co-Coordinator for the Region 8 Comprehensive Center. Dr. Hoffman's diverse professional background in the field of education includes roles as a classroom teacher, assistant professor, school and district administrator, state assessment consultant, and university center director prior to joining ICF as a senior consultant.

Sarah Sayko, Ed.D., is a deputy director of the National Center on Improving Literacy and a senior research associate at RMC Research Corporation. She has previously served as a literacy content specialist with the Center on Instruction, a technical assistance provider with the National Reading Technical Assistance Center, an elementary reading coach, and a literacy specialist.

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