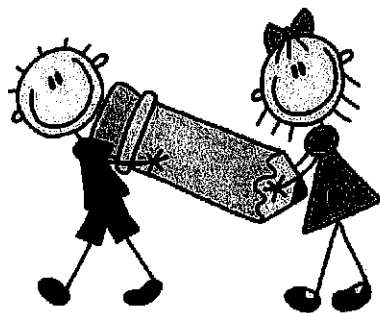


How Can I Help My Child With Their Writing?





OVERVIEW OF FIRST STEPS WRITING MAP OF DEVELOPMENT PARENT VERSION

TRANSITIONAL

Transitional writers are able to write a variety of texts, such as explanations, narratives and brochures. They consider the purpose and the audience when making decisions about what to include. Transitional writers are developing control over spelling, punctuation and the way texts are organised. They are beginning to use a range of strategies for spelling unknown words.

CONVENTIONAL

Conventional writers create a wide variety of texts, such as biographies, web pages and documentary scripts. They can adjust their writing to suit specific purposes and audiences. Conventional writers write cohesive paragraphs and demonstrate control over the use of grammar, punctuation and vocabulary. They have developed a large range of strategies to spell unknown words.

PROFICIENT

Proficient writers control all aspects of writing and write a wide range of sophisticated texts, such as research papers, newspaper articles and hypertexts. They understand how purpose and audience influence writing. Proficient writers are able to convey detailed information and explore different perspectives. They have developed an extensive vocabulary and use many strategies to spell.

The Writer

- ◆ Writes a range of different types of texts, e.g. *reports, recounts*.
- ◆ Finds, records and organises information from a variety of sources to help compose own texts.
- ◆ Explains why they are writing, and to whom.
- ◆ Chooses ideas and words to suit the audience they are writing for.
- ◆ Talks about alternative ways to represent the characters and events in their own stories.
- ◆ Talks about alternative ways to represent people and ideas when writing informational texts.
- ◆ Experiments with different devices, e.g. *repetition of words, different fonts*.
- ◆ Varies words to add interest.
- ◆ Spells and uses an increasing number of words correctly.
- ◆ Attempts to use less common letter patterns, e.g. *tion, sion, ph*.
- ◆ Writes sentences using correct punctuation.
- ◆ Groups related information in writing, not necessarily using correct paragraphing format.
- ◆ Includes all correct letters in words, but may sequence them incorrectly, e.g. *thier (their), rhythm (rhythm)*.
- ◆ May use a plan to organise ideas before writing.
- ◆ When asked to, refines own writing.
- ◆ Chooses ways to publish writing.

Supporting Transitional Writers

See Parent Cards Transitional Writing Phase

The Writer

- ◆ Writes a range of different types of texts, e.g. *explanations*.
- ◆ Retrieves, records and organises information from a variety of sources when writing texts.
- ◆ Adjusts the language and ideas in own texts to suit purpose and audience.
- ◆ Selects ways to represent characters and events to create specific effects in stories.
- ◆ Selects ways to represent people and ideas to create specific effects in informational texts.
- ◆ Uses devices to influence the reader, e.g. *flattery, ambiguity*.
- ◆ Willing to 'have a go' at spelling specialised words, such as words used in science and maths.
- ◆ Makes spelling generalisations, e.g. *applies rules for suffixes, rules for past tense*.
- ◆ Writes sentences that vary in length and complexity using correct punctuation.
- ◆ Includes topic sentence and supporting detail when writing a paragraph.
- ◆ Plans for writing in a variety of ways.
- ◆ Independently refines own work.
- ◆ Selects appropriate publishing formats.

Supporting Conventional Writers

See Parent Cards Conventional Writing Phase

The Writer

- ◆ Writes a large range of texts.
- ◆ Retrieves, records and organises information from a variety of sources when writing texts.
- ◆ Makes choices about the way a text is composed to suit the purpose and audience.
- ◆ Represents characters and events in stories in order to provoke a response from the reader.
- ◆ Represents people and ideas in informational texts in order to provoke a response from the reader.
- ◆ Selects devices to enhance impact and influence the reader.
- ◆ Selects vocabulary for its shades of meaning and effect.
- ◆ Has accumulated an extensive bank of known words that are spelt and used correctly.
- ◆ Aware of the many letter patterns that are characteristic of the English spelling system.
- ◆ Able to recognise when a word is spelt incorrectly.
- ◆ Selects from a variety of ways to plan writing.
- ◆ Refines writing to enhance impact.

Supporting Proficient Writers

See Parent Cards Proficient Writing Phase

Parent Card

General Description of Role Play Writers

In this phase, students role play the act of writing, experimenting with ways to represent written language either on paper or electronically. Role Play writers experiment by forming scribbles, letter-like symbols or random strings of letters, often using letters from their own name. While Role Play writers may 'read' their writing, others cannot.

How to Support Role Play Writers

Role Play writers will benefit from a range of experiences. Consider any of the following suggestions.

- Provide opportunities for your child to write by providing blank paper, crayons, pencils and other writing materials.
- When you write, give your child a blank copy to write on too, such as cheques, cards, forms.
- Write for your child. This allows them to see the starting point for the writing and to understand that print has a message.
- Write about shared experiences with your child.
- Ensure your child sees other members of the family writing for different purposes, and talking about their writing.
- Encourage and praise your child's attempts at writing. Encourage them to talk about their writing and what the writing may say.
- Read to your child every day. Reading aloud helps children hear the language patterns in books, expand their vocabulary, and appreciate the value of books and other texts.
- Share simple picture books with your child and talk about the pictures and the story and relate events or characters to your child's experiences. Encourage your child to make predictions about the stories.
- Expose children to a wide variety of texts such as magazines, brochures, comics, newspapers, electronic texts.

Parent Card Encouraging Writing

To ensure that your child is encouraged to become a writer, consider the following questions.

- Do I praise all attempts at writing?
- Does my child see me or other family members writing?
- When I am writing, do I talk about whom I am writing for and why I am writing?
- Is a place provided where my child can sit and write?
- Does my child have large blank paper to write on and a variety of writing materials?
- Do I talk about all the 'print' I use in the home environment such as calendars, TV guides, catalogues, newspapers, instructions, cookbooks?
- Do I talk about letters and words I see in the environment, e.g. *signs outside shops, traffic signs, billboards*?
- Is my child encouraged to take notice of 'print', e.g. *find letters in his or her name, a stop sign starts with the letter 's'*?
- Do I focus on the message in the writing, acknowledging all efforts, rather than on whether any letters are written correctly?
- Do I encourage my child to hold a pencil correctly?

Parent Card

Writing with Your Child

- It is important for you to write with your child so that they can see you writing and hear what you are thinking when you are writing.
- Use photos from an outing to make a book about what you did, e.g. *a trip to the zoo*. Plan what to write with your child and talk about the letters being used.
- Keep a diary with your child. They can draw a picture or glue in photos to remind them of the day. Sometimes, point to the words as you are reading.
- Talk about what you are writing and why you are writing it, e.g. *a shopping list so that you know what to buy, an email to Grandma to thank her for the birthday present*.
- When writing with your child talk about the way you are writing, e.g. *It is a letter so I write 'dear Grandma' and I finish it by writing 'love from'...*
- Talk about the letters you are using to begin a word, e.g. *'I need to write sausages on my list. It sounds like Stephen's name at the beginning because they both start with 's'.*
- Involve your child in many different types of writing such as:
 - reminders about jobs to do
 - emails to friends and relatives
 - making cards for special events, e.g. *birthdays, weddings, new baby, thank you*
 - phone messages
 - letters to Santa
 - invitations
 - shopping lists.
- Make a book of the songs or rhymes your child knows and include an illustration with each song so that your child can 'read' the book.
- Encourage your child to 'have-a-go' with writing, by writing letters to family members or notes to yourself. Try and provide feedback.
- Accept and praise your child's attempts to 'write' even though it may not look like regular writing.

Parent Card

Writing and Reading Links

Reading and writing are connected in many ways. Developing children's understandings in reading will help in the development of their writing. Reading and discussing a range of texts with your child allows them to:

- hear different language patterns and structures
- be exposed to new vocabulary
- share and discuss opinions about what is presented
- see how different types of writing are organised
- transfer what they know about reading to their own writing.

- Read to your child every day.
- Encourage your child to join in when being read to, e.g. *turning the pages, holding the book, allowing them to read the bits they remember.*
- Share book tapes together, particularly those that indicate when to change the page. Make up a tape together of your favourite book.
- Make sure your child sees you and other members of the family reading and writing. Try to read as many different things as possible. Talk about what you are reading and writing and why you are doing it, e.g. *'I am reading this to find out which batteries your toy needs.'* *'I am filling out this form for your tennis lessons.'*
- Outside the home, talk about signs, labels and logos, e.g. *'I am stopping because there is a stop sign; look, it starts with the letter "s", the same letter as your name, Sophia.'*
- Demonstrate how reading is used in the home every day, e.g. *'I am going to make pancakes, so let's read the recipe and work out what ingredients we need.'* Talk through the recipe as you gather the ingredients and follow the procedure.
- Provide opportunities for storytelling by:
 - encouraging your child to make up stories
 - using picture books to make up stories
 - retelling favourite stories
 - telling stories about your own child and the things they like doing.

Parent Card

Developing Writing Through Play

It is important that children are encouraged to explore the world they live in. Play is one of the best ways that children learn about and experiment with what they know about the world. Try some of the following activities with your child:

- Say, read and act out nursery rhymes. You may want to write out the nursery rhyme and allow your child to 'read' them. Keep the rhymes and create into a book.
- Make up songs, ditties or poems using alliteration or rhyming, e.g. *Angus ate apples, Jake the snake*. Write down the rhymes created together and let your child illustrate them. These games can become books.
- Provide opportunities for your child to use different language or experiment further with the language they already use, e.g. *Your child may love to play with trucks, and diggers. This gives you the opportunity to set up a 'Construction' area*. Create a 'construction site' together that your child can play in, using the language associated with the experience. This procedure could be used for a variety of different situations including those your child may already be familiar with, e.g. *doctors surgery, pet store, zoo, restaurant, farm yard, weather station, etc.*
- Use written language to describe activities your child is working on. For example, label their latest Lego design, write the title of a puppet play you have created together, write about what you have done into a diary and ask your child to illustrate.
- Make props for your child's favourite games and label them, e.g. *a firehouse for the fire station, tunnel with an 'in' and 'out' sign*.

Parent Card

Developing Understandings About Print

Talking with your child about the different parts of a book and how print works is important for your child to know before they start writing. As adults we know this information so well that we often forget that we ever learnt it.

- Select one or two points from the following list to discuss with your child each time you read together.
 - A book has a front, a back and a cover.
 - A book has a right way up.
 - Books are read from front to back.
 - Pages are turned to reveal the next part of the book.
 - The left-hand page is read before the right-hand page.
 - A page is read from left to right and top to bottom.
 - Print is different from pictures.
 - Talk about first and last. These can be applied to pages in a book, words on a page or letters in a word.
 - Words such as 'letter', 'sound', 'word' and 'sentence' describe different things.
 - Words consist of letters.
 - Numbers and letters are different.
 - Letters have two forms: capital letters and lower-case letters, e.g. 'M' and 'm'.
- Draw your child's attention to letters and words that are part of daily life. Point out and read aloud any printed material, e.g. *cake packet directions, traffic signs, advertising signs, opening times*.
- Teach your child to recognise words or letters that are significant to them, e.g. *letters in their name, names of siblings, road signs*.
- Magnetic letters are one way your child can play with and build words. Your child can pick out and play with letters, placing them on the refrigerator or magnetic board.
- Make letters out of play dough or write them in paint. Encourage your child to make their own letters or to copy your letters.
- Place labels around the home. These labels should be written in sentences as this helps your child to:
 - make a connection between what we say and what we read and write.
 - understand that once something has been written it stays the same each time it is read.
 These could include labels on:
 - doors, e.g. *This is where Khan sleeps.*
 - toys, e.g. *Puzzles are in here.*
 - drawers and wardrobes, e.g. *Ajay's t-shirts are in here.*

Parent Card

Developing Vocabulary

For your child to develop vocabulary, it is important that they are exposed to a wide variety of experiences. Assist your child to develop a large vocabulary by:

- reading aloud a variety of good literature.
- reciting poems together.
- saying rhymes together.
- singing songs together.
- encouraging your child to dress up and use the language of characters from stories read.
- going on outings to ensure your child has a wide range of experiences to talk about.
- encouraging your child to retell the day's events at the dinner table or on the way home in the car.
- discussing what you have seen with your child.
- introducing words to describe the shape, colour, and movement of toys as you both play with them.
- valuing what your child says and providing a model of how to communicate, e.g. *through initiating and maintaining conversations*.
- encouraging your child to talk with other children. This will provide opportunities to interact with different models of language.
- using correct terminology when introducing new language to your child.

Parent Card

Building Language Knowledge Through Games

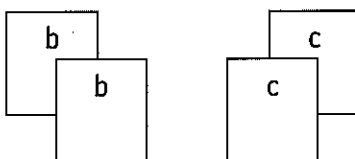
Where's Spot?

Using one of your child's toys, e.g. *a teddy bear*, choose a hiding place, and say, "*Teddy is hiding somewhere that starts with the /b/ sound. 'Where could that be?'*" Have your child go and look to see if Teddy is in the place guessed.

Snap

The format of a traditional Snap game is used.

- Make up a set of cards where pairs of cards have the same letter on them.



- Deal out all the cards to the players.
- In turns, each player overturns one card from their hand and places it face up on the table, forming a central pile.
- When an upturned card matches the one on top of the central pile, that player places their hand on the central pile, and says SNAP, and gives the category for the Snap. The player then takes all of the cards to add to their hand.
- Play continues in this way until one player has all the cards.

Concentration

Concentration is a game that invites players to exercise concentration and memory to locate matches from a selection of cards placed face down. The cards used for Snap can also be used for Concentration.

- Make a set of cards. The cards could include:
 - Pictures of objects that begin with same letter, e.g. *box/balloon, cat/computer*.
 - Pictures of objects that rhyme, e.g. *cat/bat, moon/spoon, goat/boat*.
 - Words of different lengths (Note: your child shouldn't be expected to read the words—just notice whether they are long or short.)
- Place all cards in the pack face down on the table.
- In turn, each player overturns two cards (one at a time), attempting to match them in some way, e.g. *they rhyme, start with the same letter*.
- If there is a match, the player states what that is, keeps the cards and has another turn. If there is no match, the cards are replaced exactly where they were, face down.
- The game continues in this way until all the cards are matched. The winner is the player with the most matched pairs.

A Trip to the Moon

- Begin the game by saying "We're going on a trip to the moon. You can come if you bring '*something*'." The '*something*' will depend on the category you choose, e.g.
 - matching*: "You need to bring something that starts with 'S'."
 - rhymes*: "You need to bring something that rhymes with the word 'van'."
- Have your child take turns to say "I will bring a ..."

Continue the game for a specified length of time or until more choices cannot be added.

Parent Card

General Description of Experimental Writers

Experimental writers know that speech can be written down; however, they may not always read their writing the same way every time. They 'have a go' at writing texts they are familiar with, such as letters, recipes and lists. These writers may represent words using one, two or three letters, e.g. *PRT (party)*. Experimental writers know that there is a purpose for writing and can identify their audience, e.g. *I am writing a letter to Granny to say thank you for...*

How to Support Experimental Writers

Experimental writers will benefit from a range of experiences. Consider any of the following suggestions.

- Encourage your child to 'have a go' at writing and praise their attempts.
- Provide opportunities for your child to write, e.g. *family message board, shopping list, letters to friends*.
- Ensure your child sees other members of the family writing and talking about their writing. Talk about the purpose of your writing.
- Write for your child. This allows them to see the message they want in print. Encourage them to 'read' it back to you and to others.
- Expose your child to a wide variety of texts such as books, magazines, electronic texts, brochures, newspapers and comics. These can be read many times, so that children will become familiar with them. This helps to build self-confidence.
- Talk about the way different texts are organised, e.g. *'Recipes have a list.'*
- Talk about letters, sounds, words, sentence patterns and interesting features in the texts, e.g. *This is the letter 'm'. This is the word 'happy'.*
- Read to your child every day. Reading aloud helps children hear the language patterns in books, expand their vocabulary and appreciate the value of books and other texts.

Parent Card Encouraging Writing

To ensure that your child is encouraged to become a writer, consider the following questions.

- Does my child see others writing at various times?
- Does my child see me writing?
- When I am writing, do I talk about whom I am writing for and why I am writing?
- Is a place provided where my child can sit and write?
- Does my child have large blank paper to write on and a variety of writing materials?
- Do I encourage my child to hold a pencil correctly?
- Do I talk about print I see in the environment, e.g. *signs outside shops, traffic signs*?
- Do I talk about all the print I use in the home environment, such as calendars, diaries, TV guides, catalogues, newspapers, instructions, and cookbooks?
- Is my child encouraged to take notice of print, e.g. *find words they know such as a Stop sign starts with the letter 's'*?
- Do I display my child's attempts at writing, perhaps by displaying them on the refrigerator or wall?
- Do I praise and value all attempts at writing, and see it as 'real' writing?
- Is my child read to every day?
- Is my child encouraged to join in when being read to, e.g. *turning the pages, holding the book, reading the parts they remember*?
- Is my child encouraged to act out or retell stories he or she has heard?

Parent Card

Writing with Your Child

- It is important for you to write with your child so that they can see you writing and hear what you are thinking when you are writing. Encourage your child to help write:
 - reminders about jobs to do
 - emails to friends and relatives
 - making cards for special events, e.g. *birthdays, weddings, new baby, thank you*
 - phone messages
 - tonight's dinner menu
 - take dinner orders from family members
 - shopping lists.
- Praise and encourage all attempts at writing.
- Before you begin writing with your child, talk about:
 - Why are we writing this text?
 - Who are we writing for?
 - What do they already know?
 - What do we want to tell them?
 - What is the best way to get our message across, e.g. *a letter, a list?*
- Use photos from an outing, e.g. *a holiday*, to make a book about what you did. Plan what to write with your child and talk about the letters and words as you are writing. Keep the 'book' and read it often.
- Make a songbook together of the songs your child knows, writing out the words for them to 'read'. You may include an illustration to assist your child to identify the song. Ask your child to write a couple of the words, the title or write a comment about the song, e.g. *Ts is M Fvt so ('This is my favourite song')*.
- Keep a diary with your child. It is a good idea to ask them to draw a picture first or glue in pictures or brochures as a reminder of the day. Have your child tell you what they want you to write in their diary. Read aloud what you are writing as you write it. Talk about the choices you are making e.g. *I want to write monkeys. I think that starts with the same sound as Matthew. What letter does Matthew start with? Yes 'M', so monkey must start with 'M'. Sometimes point to the words as you are re-reading what you have written.*

Experimental Card 3 (cont.)

- Start up a written conversation with your child either in a book or a whiteboard, e.g. *How was your day today?*
- When writing with your child, talk about the way the writing is organised, e.g. *It is a letter so I will start with 'Dear Grandma' and I finish it by writing 'love from'.*
- Talk about the letters you are using to begin a word, e.g. *I want to write Julie. It sounds like John's name because they both start with 'J'.*
- Ask for input from your child when you are writing, e.g. *I am going to write 'Toya'. What letter do you think 'Toya' might start with?*
- When writing cards or letters for friends, ask your child to write their own name.
- Print your child's name while the child watches. Talk to your child as you write, explaining why you are doing it, e.g. *I am writing your name on your lunchbox so that everyone knows who it belongs to.* As you write the letters say the sound each letter represents, e.g. *M-a-t-t.*
- Set up a home message board and write a message each day, e.g. *Tomorrow we are going to the zoo with Dad.* Allow your child to compose the message sometimes. Read the message several times throughout the day to emphasise that printed messages remain the same.
- Encourage your child to write your shopping list, to-do list or a phone message.

Parent Card

Writing and Reading Links

Reading and writing are connected in many ways. Developing children's understandings in reading will help in the development of their writing. Reading and discussing a range of texts with your child allows them to:

- hear different language patterns and structures
 - be exposed to new vocabulary
 - share and discuss opinions about what is presented
 - see how different types of writing are organised
 - transfer what they know about reading to their own writing.
- Make sure your child sees you and other members of the family reading and writing. Try to read as many different types of texts as possible. Talk about what you are reading and writing and why you are doing it, e.g. *I am looking on the Internet for the weather forecast to see if we can go to the park today.*
 - Outside the home, talk about signs, labels and logos, e.g. *I can see from this sign that the library is open until 6 o'clock so we have plenty of time to choose our books.*
 - Demonstrate how reading is used in the home every day, e.g. *I am going to make shortbread so let's read the recipe and work out which ingredients we need.* Talk through the recipe as you gather the ingredients and follow the procedure.
 - Share book tapes together, particularly tapes that indicate when to change the page. Make up a tape together of your favourite book.
 - Look through cookbooks together and select a recipe to cook with your child. Make a point of checking that you have the right ingredients to cook what you want. Write out a shopping list together of the things that you might need.
 - Show your child how to predict when reading. For example, when you are reading a menu, you could say, "I'd like an orange juice. Let's see if they have that. Here is the drinks section and there is something that starts with the letter 'o', that could be orange juice. There is also something that starts with 'a'. What do you think that could be?"

Experimental Card 4 (cont.)

Things to do after reading

- Talk about the way writing is structured, e.g. *This story is written like a letter and starts with Dear... This is a book about space so there are pictures and diagrams.*
- Talk about associating letters with sounds when both reading and writing.
- Point out key words in the text and explain words your child may not know.
- Talk about the book and encourage your child to re-read parts of the story with you.
- Talk about the characters, plots and settings of stories, e.g. *Which was your favourite character? Where did the story take place?*
- Discuss what was learnt from informational books, e.g. *What did you find out about spiders?*
- Challenge your child (in a fun way) to find words in the story that begin with the same letter as his or her name.
- Talk with your child about the way authors use words to:
 - describe appearances, e.g. *short, thin, tall*
 - describe actions, e.g. *ran, jumped, screamed*
 - describe feelings, e.g. *scared, sad*
 - emphasise by using repetition, e.g. *It was a big, big spider.*

Parent Card

Developing Writing Through Play

It is important that children are encouraged to explore the world they live in. Play is one of the best ways that children learn about and experiment with what they know about the world. Try some of the following activities with your child.

- Say, read and act out nursery rhymes. You could write out the nursery rhymes or encourage your child to write them out. Allow your child to 'read' them.
- Make up songs, ditties or poems using alliteration or rhyming, e.g. *Sarah sings songs. Ross the boss.* These games can become books. Write down the sentences created together and let your child illustrate them.
- Use car registration plates to make up silly sentences, e.g. *6VFE: Six Very Friendly Elephants.*
- Provide a variety of 'dress-ups' for your child to play in. This will encourage them to take on other roles and experiment with language.
- Provide opportunities for your child to use different language or experiment further with the language they are already using. For example, your child may love to cook, that gives you the opportunity to go to a restaurant. Talk about the restaurant and all the things you see, such as menus, table numbers, cash register. Discuss how the menu is set up and point out words. You could create an area at home to play 'restaurants'.
- Provide opportunities for storytelling by:
 - encouraging your child to make up stories
 - using picture books, favourite toys, retell favourite stories
 - telling stories about your own child and the things they like doing.
- Use written language to describe activities your child is working on. For example, label their latest Lego design, write the title of a puppet play you have created together.
- Explore and play with letter formations in a variety of situations. Write and draw letters and words using some of the following ways.
 - Cover a surface in paint
 - Make the letter shapes with cookie dough or playdough
 - Draw the shapes of letters when using glue
 - Trace the letters in sand
 - Write the letters on a drawing board
 - Write the letters in coloured icing.

Parent Card

Developing Understandings About Letters, Words and Sentences

- Talking with your child about the way writing is created is important for your child, as it allows them to build up their literary knowledge. Select one or two points from the following list to discuss with your child when you are reading or writing together.
 - Talk about first and last. These can be applied to pages in a book, words on a page or letters in a word.
 - Use correct terminology such as 'letter', 'sound', 'word' and 'sentence' to describe different things.
 - Discuss how words consist of letters.
 - Point out that words have a space on either side.
 - Discuss how numbers and letters are different.
 - Talk about how letters have two forms: capital letters and lower-case letters, e.g. 'M' and 'm'.
 - Discuss how a sentence includes one thought.
 - Discuss the use of punctuation such as capital letters, full stops and question marks.
- Draw your child's attention to letters and words that are part of daily life. Point out and read aloud any printed material, e.g. *traffic signs, advertising signs, bills, marketing mail*.
- Teach your child to recognise words or letters that are significant to them, e.g. *their name, names of siblings, road signs, favourite toys*. Search out these words in different places.
- Magnetic letters can be used to learn about letters and spell words. Your child can pick out letters and try to spell words, placing them on the refrigerator or a magnetic board. Encourage your child to use what they know about letters and sounds to spell as best they can. Praise attempts at spelling unknown words.
- Where appropriate, place labels around the home. These could include labels on:
 - personal items, e.g. *This is where Stephen keeps his dress-ups*.
 - household items, e.g. *The television can be turned on when you are dressed*.
- Write labels in full sentences as this helps your child to:
 - make a connection between spoken and written words
 - understand that we speak in connected phrases and sentences
 - understand that the printed word remains the same.

Parent Card

Developing Understandings About Different Types of Writing

- Talk with your child about different types of writing and the purposes of each piece of writing. Knowing the reason why we are writing helps us to make decisions about the way we organise the writing, e.g. *We are writing a shopping list so that we know what to buy from the shop.*
- Read books that use writing in different ways, such as stories that are written like letters, poetry books, informational books, cookbooks, phone books.
- When writing with your child, talk about the way you are organising your writing, e.g. *It is a letter so I write 'Dear Aunty', tell her about our trip to the zoo, and finish with a closing like 'love from'.*
- When reading informational texts, e.g. *book about trains*, with your child, highlight the features of that text such as headings, captions and photographs. Discuss how they differ from fiction texts.
- When using the computer, talk with your child about how to find information, view pages and email possible questions.

Parent Card

Developing Vocabulary

Children will use the vocabulary they know when they are writing. It is important to continually provide your child with opportunities to learn new words and encourage them to use them in their writing. Assist your child to develop a large vocabulary by:

- talking about and helping your child to recognise words that are meaningful to them, e.g. *name of their street, town, school, pet, friends*.
- pointing out key words in the text and explaining words your child may not know.
- reading aloud a variety of good literature.
- reciting poems together.
- saying rhymes together.
- singing songs together.
- encouraging your child to dress up and use the language of characters from stories read.
- talking about familiar things and ensuring your child has a wide range of things to talk about.
- talking about topics of mutual interest with the expectation that your child will listen and respond.
- encouraging your child to retell the day's events at the dinner table or on the way home in the car.
- valuing what your child says and providing a model of how to communicate, e.g. *initiating and maintaining conversations*.
- encouraging your child to talk with other children. This will provide opportunities to interact with different models of language.
- writing as your child dictates. This shows the relationship between the written and spoken word.
- model standard speech by repeating a phrase used in an acceptable form, e.g.
Child: I wonned the race
Parent: Yes you did win the race.
Child: I'm the bestest runner.
Parent: Yes, you are the best runner.
- ensuring your child has lots of interesting things to talk about that will encourage new vocabulary, by visiting museums, art galleries, farms and local events.
- playing the game that certain words are omitted from the conversation and they have to think of replacement words.

Parent Card Supporting Spelling

Risk-taking or 'having-a-go' to spell words is critical and should be encouraged, rather than using words they know just to have correct spelling. Correct spelling will develop over time. Encourage your child to use what they know about letters and sounds to spell as best they can. Praise attempts at spelling unknown words.

- Magnetic letters can be used to learn about letters and spell words. While you work in the kitchen, your child can pick out letters and try to spell words, placing them on the refrigerator.
- Talk to your child as you write, explaining why you are doing it, e.g. *I am writing your name on your lunchbox so that everyone knows who it belongs to.* As you write the letters say the sound each letter represents, e.g. *P-A-M.*
- Once your child knows the names of the letters, help them to understand that letters make different sounds, e.g. *"This is the letter 'g' and it makes the sound /g/ as in 'girl' but in the word 'giraffe' it makes the sound /j/."*
- Accept your child's attempts at spelling by focusing on what is correct.
- Encourage your child to 'have a go' at spelling new words by focusing on the first letter and representing all the sounds in a word, e.g. *LRFNT (elephant).*
- Help your child to learn the spelling of some high-frequency words, e.g. *and, but, when.* Only teach these when your child is already writing frequently and with a lot of success. You could write these words on a blank place mat to use as a learning mat and a reference when writing. Ask your child's teacher for high-frequency words suitable for your child to learn.
- Assist your child to learn to spell new words by having your child:
 - 'Look-Say-Cover-Visualise-Write-Check', e.g. *Look at the word and then say the word. Have them close their eyes and see if they can see the word and then write the word. Check against the original spelling of the word.*
 - manipulate letters. Have the word cut up in individual letters and have your child put the letters in order. You may make your own letter tiles or use those from a game of Scrabble.
 - write the word in sand, on a doodle board, or into icing or flour.
 - clap out the syllables to help break the word into parts.
- Talk about and help your child to recognise and spell words that are meaningful to them, e.g. *name of their street, town, school, pet, friends.*
- Writing out words for your child rather than spelling them out orally will help them to build their visual memory of the word. This assists the child with the strategy, Does this look right?

Parent Card

Building Spelling Knowledge Through Games

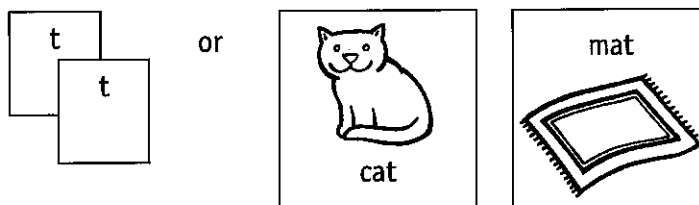
'I Spy...'

- Begin by saying "I spy with my little eye something that ...", and continue by adding "begins with t", or "rhymes with bear", or "ends with at".
- Invite your child to guess the word.

Snap

The format of a traditional Snap game is used.

- Make up a set of cards that match in some way, e.g.



- Deal out all the cards to the players.
- In turns, each player overturns one card from his or her hand and places it face up on the table, forming a central pile.
- When an upturned card matches the one on top of the central pile, that player places their hand on the central pile, and says SNAP, and gives the category for the Snap. That player then takes all of the cards to add to their hand.
- Play continues in this way until one player has all the cards.

Concentration

Concentration is a game that invites players to exercise concentration and memory to locate matches from a given selection of cards placed face down. The cards used for Snap can also be used for Concentration.

- Make a set of cards with letters, words or pictures. The cards could include:
 - Words that begin with the same sound, e.g. *ship, shop, shoe*.
 - Words that rhyme e.g. *bear, tear, wear*.
 - Words that have the /e/ sound spelt the same way, e.g. *leaf, beach*.
- Place all cards in the pack face down on the table.
- In turn, each player overturns two cards (one at a time), attempting to match them in some way, e.g. *they rhyme, start with the same sound*.
- If there is a match, the player states what that is, keeps the cards and has another turn. If there is no match, the cards are replaced exactly where they were, face down.
- The game continues in this way until all the cards are matched. The winner is the player with the most matched pairs.

Snap and Clap

Snap and Clap makes use of rhythm and repetition to encourage your child to focus on rhyming words. The focus of the game is on providing a rhyming word, not on maintaining a complicated clapping and snapping pattern.

- Begin with a simple snap, clap rhythm and then say a word. Challenge your child to repeat the snap, clap rhythm and provide a rhyming word at the end

Experimental Card 10 (cont.)

For example, snap, snap, clap (you say) *light*
 snap, snap, clap (your child says) *right*
 snap, snap, clap (you say) *might*.

Continue until you run out of rhyming words.

A Trip to the Moon

- Begin the game by saying "We're going on a trip to the moon. You can come if you bring *something*". The 'something' will depend on the category you choose. For example:
syllables – "You need to bring something that has two parts to its name, e.g. *rocket, ticket, burger*."
rhymes – "You need to bring something that rhymes with honey", e.g. *funny, sunny, money*.
matching – "You need to bring something that starts with 'sh', e.g. *ship, shoe*".
- Have your child take turns to say, "I will bring a ..."
- Continue the game for a specified length of time or until more choice cannot be added.

What Could It Be?

What Could It Be? involves the creation of clues, presented orally, for your child to solve. Create riddles for your child to solve. For example, you might start by saying, "*I'm thinking of something in the room whose name has two parts. It is made of glass and you can see through it. What is it?*"

What Could It Be? clues can be:

- rhyming words, e.g. "*I'm thinking of an animal. The animal's name rhymes with 'pear' What could it be?*"
- beginning sounds, e.g. "*I'm thinking of an animal that's name begins with 'b'. What could it be?*"

Hunting for Words

Challenge your child to go 'hunting' for words, objects or pictures at home that have something in common, e.g. *words beginning with 'tr', ending with 'ing' or rhyming with 'lake'*. Children often enjoy this sort of challenge and may like to take their discoveries to school to share with the teacher.

Tic Tac Toe

Tic Tac Toe is played in the same way as Noughts and Crosses. However, specified letters, letter patterns or words are used to create a sequence of three diagonally, up or down, instead of noughts and crosses. For example, you might write words that begin with 'st' and your child might have to write words beginning with the letter 't'.

tap		stick
stop	star	tip
top		

If your child is having difficulty thinking of words to add, you both might like to make a list of words prior to beginning Tic Tac Toe.

Alternatively, have cards with pictures and/or words on them and have your child place their word onto a space while saying what it is.

Parent Card

General Description of Early Writers

Early writers write a small range of texts, such as stories, greeting cards and reports. These students begin to select information to include in their writing according to the purpose and the audience. They write simple sentences using correct punctuation and know how to automatically spell some frequently used words. When writing unknown words, Early writers often select letters on the basis of sound, e.g. *becos* (*because*).

How to Support Early Writers

Early writers will benefit from a range of experiences. Consider any of the following suggestions.

- Write with your child and ensure your child sees other members of the family writing a range of different texts. This is also an opportunity to share and discuss what the purpose of your writing is and to whom you are writing it, e.g. *I am writing this email to thank Aunty Joy for my birthday present.*
- Provide opportunities for your child to write, e.g. *family message board, Christmas cards, shopping list, menus for the week, jobs for family members.*
- Expose your child to a wide variety of texts, such as books, magazines, electronic texts, brochures, newspapers, comics. Talk to your child about the way different types of writing are organised.
- Encourage your child to discuss how different characters are represented in texts, and make comparisons to real life.
- Give praise and encouragement for your child's writing attempts by focusing on the things they have done well.
- Support your child's spelling attempts and praise their willingness to 'have a go' at using words they don't know how to spell. This will encourage them to use interesting vocabulary in their writing, rather than just using the words they know how to spell.
- Encourage your child to try different ways to work out the spelling of an unknown word by:
 - breaking words into parts
 - using common letter patterns
 - using letters that work together
 - thinking about the base word, e.g. *happy is the base word + un = unhappy.*
- Encourage your child to talk about the strategies they use to attempt the spelling of unknown words and attempt other strategies.
- Read to your child regularly. Early writers benefit from hearing language patterns and structures, and from exposure to new vocabulary. This is also an opportunity to share and discuss opinions about what is presented in text.

Parent Card Encouraging Writing

To ensure that your child is encouraged to become a writer, consider the following questions.

- Does my child see me writing?
- Does my child see others writing at various times?
- Do I talk about the purpose and audience for my own writing, e.g. *I am writing a letter to your teacher to let her know why you were sick yesterday.*
- Do I encourage my child to take risks with their writing? This can be achieved by focusing on the overall message and what they have done well, trying not to focus on their errors.
- Does my child share their writing with the family?
- Does my child have a suitable place to write that includes materials such as paper, writing materials, dictionary, thesaurus, and computer? Does my child like this space?
- Do I display my child's writing, perhaps by displaying it on the refrigerator or wall?
- Do I praise all attempts at writing?
- Is my child read to every day?
- Is my child encouraged to retell stories he or she has heard?
- Do I talk about print I see in the environment? e.g. *signs outside shops, traffic signs, billboards.*
- Do I talk about all the print I use in the home environment, such as calendars, diaries, TV guides, catalogues, newspapers, instructions and cookbooks?

Parent Card

Writing with Your Child

- Praise and encourage all attempts at writing.
- It is important for you to write with your child so that they can see you writing and hear what you are thinking when you are writing. Involve your child in many different types of writing, such as:
 - writing letters, messages and postcards to other family members
 - making cards and invitations for special occasions, e.g. *birthday parties*
 - assisting you to write the weekly shopping list
 - helping compile lists for a particular purpose, e.g. *guests to attend a party, outing ideas for the holidays.*
 - making a “how-to” book on an area of special interest, e.g. *“How to Catch a Fish”.*
- Before your child begins writing, ask some questions. Select from the following:
 - Why are you writing this text?
 - Who are you writing for, who is the audience?
 - What do you know about the audience?
 - What does the audience want or need to know about this topic?
 - What will the audience (reader) expect to see in the text?
 - What is the best way to get your message across, e.g. *letter, list?*
 - How will you set it out?
 - Will it need headings or illustration?
 - Whose viewpoint will you be writing from?
- Have your child keep a diary. If your child is reluctant to write, you could use a conversation diary by taking turns asking questions and answering them.

For example,

“What did we do today?”

“We went to the zoo.”

“Which animals did you see at the zoo?”

“I saw monkeys, crocodiles and elephant.”

Your child can draw a picture or glue in photos to remind them of the day. Talk about the decisions you are making when you write, such as, I am asking a question here so I will need a question mark at the end of the sentence.

Parent Card

Writing and Reading Links

Writing and reading are connected in many ways. Developing children's understandings in reading will help in the development of their writing. Reading and discussing a range of texts with your child allows them to:

- hear different language patterns and structures
 - be exposed to new vocabulary
 - share and discuss opinions about what is presented
 - see how different types of writing are organised
 - transfer what they know about reading to their own writing.
- Make sure your child sees you and other members of the family reading and writing.
 - Demonstrate how reading is used in the home every day, e.g. *I am not sure what to do for a bee sting so I am going to look it up on a first-aid site on the computer.*
 - Provide opportunities for storytelling by encouraging your child to make up stories. Have them use picture books, favourite toys or retell favourite stories.
 - Talk to your child about what you do as a reader.
 - Look at the cover and predict what the book will be about.
 - When you come to an unknown word, you read on and try to work out what the word could be.
 - When you don't understand something, you re-read it.
 - Always think about what will happen next.
 - Work out the meaning of unknown words by the way they are used in a sentence.

Things to do after reading:

- Talk about the text and encourage your child to re-read parts, either with you or alone.
- Encourage your child to retell the text to you or another family member.
- Compare characters from the book with real people the child knows.
- Talk about the characters, plot, setting and events of stories, e.g. *Which was your favourite character? Where did the story take place?*
- Discuss what was learnt from informational books, e.g. *What did you find out about insects from this diagram?*
- Talk about the way authors use words to:
 - describe appearances, e.g. *skinny, blue-eyed, beautiful*
 - describe actions, e.g. *skipped, trotted, fell*
 - describe feelings, e.g. *happy, frightened.*

Parent Card

Supporting the Writing Process

The Writing Process can be broken into five stages:

Planning — time to gather ideas, brainstorm, read and discuss.

Drafting — time to get their thoughts down on paper, produce their first draft.

Conferring — time to receive feedback from others.

Refining — time to revise, edit and proofread their work.

Publishing — time to share their work with others.

Below are some questions to ask your child as they are working on writing assignments.

At the planning stage:

- What is the purpose of your writing, e.g. *informing, inviting, explaining*?
- How are you going to organise your writing, e.g. *as a letter, a story, a research report*?
- Who is the audience for your piece of writing, e.g. *classmates, penpal, buddy*?
- How are you going to organise your thoughts about what you are going to write, e.g. *brainstorming, listing questions that you need to research, planning headings*.
- How are you going to find the information you need, e.g. *visit to the library, Internet search*?

At the conferring and refining stages:

- Have you read through your writing?
- Do you think your message is clear?
- Have you organised your information logically?
- Is there more information that you can include?
- Have you used the best words, e.g. *included descriptive words or subject-specific words*?
- Are your sentences well written?
- Have you left any words out?
- Have you punctuated correctly?
- Have you checked all your spelling?

At the publishing stage:

- How are you going to produce a final copy of this work so you can share it with others?
 - Do you need to write it out neatly?
 - Can you type it on the computer?
 - Can you publish it in a different way, e.g. *design a PowerPoint presentation, a chart, a portfolio*?
 - Can you add anything to enhance your published piece, e.g. *pictures, models, diagrams, artefacts*?
- Have you published it in the most suitable way for your purpose and audience?
- How do you feel about what you have produced?
- Is there anything you would do differently next time?

It is important for your child to gain the most from the writing experience, therefore ensure your child has ownership of the work.

Parent Card

Supporting Punctuation and Grammar

As students learn to write, they often can't control all elements at the same time. For example, they may be focusing on the meaning of the story, or writing the information down rather than concentrating on their spelling and punctuation. It is important to focus on one thing at a time when working with your child on punctuation and grammar; this helps them to gain control over one element of their writing before beginning to use and refine another.

Use the following suggestions to assist your child to develop their understanding and use of punctuation and grammar.

- If your child asks you to help them edit their writing, remember to focus only on one new thing at a time.
- When your child is editing their work, ask them to read their work out aloud. Often as work is read aloud, many more changes are detected.
- If your child has produced their text on the computer, encourage them to use the grammar checker. Be mindful that not all computer-generated suggestions will be appropriate and that your child will have to make decisions about whether or not to accept the computer-generated suggestions.
- When reading texts with your child, talk about the punctuation and grammar that the author uses, e.g. *See here where the author has used a comma before the character speaks and then used speech marks before and after the character has spoken.*
- Read a story and deliberately use incorrect grammar and ask your child to say it correctly.

Parent Card

Developing Understandings About Different Types of Writing

Every piece of writing has a purpose and an audience. Your child needs to be clear about the purpose and audience of writing, as this will have an impact upon the decisions your child will make about the way the text is organised, the structure, and the type of language used.

Here are some suggestions to help you support your child develop their understanding about different types of writing:

- When your child is reading, discuss the **purpose** of the text, e.g. *Why do you think the author wrote this text?* As there are many different purposes for writing, your child will discover there are texts where the prime purpose is to:
 - entertain, e.g. *poems, jokes, cartoons*
 - recount, e.g. *journals, retells*
 - describe, e.g. *contents pages, simple reports, labels*
 - socialise, e.g. *SMS messages, emails, invitations.*
 - explain, e.g. *classroom rules, tables*
 - instruct, e.g. *directions, road signs, rules*
 - inquire, e.g. *interview questions*
 - persuade, e.g. *brochures, catalogues.*
- Discuss the **audience** of different texts. Have your child collect the junk mail and then discuss who is the target audience. Discuss the differences between the audiences.
- Have your child collect different forms of text, e.g. *a letter, a recipe, a book about Ancient Greeks*. Talk about how the layout is different. Remind your child to think about how they need to organise their text depending upon which form they are writing.
- Different forms of text will have different **organisational features**. When reading, draw your child's attention to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — headings and subheadings — captions — diagrams and other visual aids (photographs, graphs, tables, cross-sections) — tables of contents — bolded or italicised words — computer menu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — bullet points — blurbs — hyperlinks — footnotes — appendix — bibliography — index.
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Discuss the inclusion of these organisational features, where appropriate, in your child's writing.

Parent Card

Developing Vocabulary

Children will use the vocabulary they know when they are writing. It is important to continually provide your child with opportunities to learn new words and encourage them to use them in their writing.

Use the following suggestions to assist your child to develop their vocabulary.

- Read quality texts to your child and discuss new vocabulary as it is read.
- Provide stimulating experiences for your child that encourage them to experiment with new vocabulary, e.g. *trips to the zoo, museums, art galleries, movies, sporting events*.
- Use photos or souvenirs from an outing to make a small book about the experience. Encourage your child to write about the experience. Keep the new 'book' and read it often.
- Keep a diary with your child and read it regularly with them. Read aloud what has been written. Talk about the choices you or your child are making as you write, e.g. *I want to use a really good word to describe the dinosaur bones: extraordinary*.
- Play games such as Scrabble™, Boggle™, Upwords™.
- Work on crosswords together.

Parent Card Supporting Spelling

It is important to remember that when your child is beginning to write, they are trying to come to terms with many different skills. They may be thinking about letters, words, spelling, handwriting, keyboarding, grammar, punctuation, ideas and layout. It is not reasonable to expect all of these things to be correct when your child is learning to write.

Assist your child with spelling through any of the following:

- Magnetic letters can be used to spell words. Your child can spell words, placing them on the refrigerator. Encourage your child to use their knowledge about letters and sounds to spell the word.
- Help your child to learn the spelling of some high-frequency words such as 'their', 'there', 'they're'. Use a plastic place mat and a temporary marker to record high-frequency words your child has difficulty spelling. Ask your child's teacher for suggested words. Your child can use this as a learning mat and a reference when they are writing. You can remove and then replace words your child has become familiar with. Words already learnt can be written on the back of the place mat as a reminder of all the words that they already know how to spell.
- Talk about and help your child to recognise and spell words that are meaningful to them, e.g. *name of their street, town, school, pet, friends*.
- Encourage your child to try different ways to work out the spelling of an unknown word:
 - breaking words into parts, e.g. *be+cause = because*.
 - using common letter patterns, e.g. *ee, ea, ie*.
 - using letters that work together, e.g. *photograph*.
 - thinking about the base word, e.g. *happy – unhappy, happily*.
- When writing, ask your child to carefully consider the base word and the prefix and suffixes to be added. By being clear on what is a prefix and suffix can assist your child to spell the word correctly, e.g. *pre-script-ion, the base word is 'script' and 'pre' is the prefix and 'ion' is the suffix*.
- Encourage your child to talk about the different ways they attempt to spell unknown words.
- Assist your child to learn new words by using the following:
 - 'Look Say Cover Visualise Write Check': Ask your child to look at the word and then say the word. Have them close their eyes and see if they can see the word and then 'have a go' at writing the word. Your child then checks the spelling of the word.
 - Many children learn by manipulating letters. Have the word cut up in individual letters and have your child put the letters in order. You could make your own letter tiles or use those from a game of Scrabble.
 - Write the word in sand, on a doodle board or into icing or flour.
 - Look for words within words, e.g. *frIEND*.

Parent Card

Building Spelling Knowledge Through Games

Puzzles

Puzzles provide opportunities for your child to investigate the spelling of words. There are many commercially produced publications (including software packages) incorporating puzzles such as crosswords, word sleuths, and others such as creating words, finding small words inside larger words and rhyming activities.

Tic Tac Toe

Tic Tac Toe is played in the same way as Noughts and Crosses. However, specified letters, patterns or words are used to create a sequence of three diagonally, up or down, instead of noughts and crosses. For example, you might write words that have an /e/ sound and your child may have to write words beginning with 'thr'.

see	throb	beach
	throw	
threw		key

If your child is having difficulty thinking of words to add, you both might like to make a list of words prior to beginning Tic Tac Toe. It is good to discuss the variety of different ways the same sound can be spelt, e.g. 'e' sound can be spelt 'ee', 'ea', 'e'.


What Comes Next?

What Comes Next? is an adaptation of what was known as the game Hangman. However, in What Comes Next? your child is required to guess the letters in the correct order.

- Choose a word from something your child is trying to write. Make a dash for each letter in the word.
- Give your child a clue to help them guess the first letter, e.g. *The first letter is between A and C in the alphabet.*
- Allow your child to guess the letter.
- As your child guesses the next letter, a guess that could be a correct English letter sequence is written on the left, e.g. *ba, bi.*
- Those that could not be a correct English letter sequence are written on the right as single letters, e.g. *t, b*, not modelling incorrect letter patterns.
- A penalty is only given for guesses that could not be correct. When your child guesses a letter that couldn't be right, draw a segment of the mouse.
- Have your child continue to guess the letters in order until all letters are written.
- The game ends if the drawing is completed before the word is completed.

WHAT COMES NEXT?

	B	E	C	—	—	—	—
COULD BE						COULDN'T BE	
t						t	
ba						b	
bet							
beck							



(The word is because.)

Parent Card

General Description of Transitional Writers

Transitional writers are able to write a variety of texts such as explanations, narratives and brochures. They consider the purpose and the audience when making decisions about what to include. Transitional writers are developing control over spelling, punctuation and the way texts are organised. They are beginning to use a range of strategies to spell unknown words.

How to Support Transitional Writers

Transitional writers will benefit from a range of experiences. Consider any of the following suggestions.

- Provide opportunities for your child to write. For example:
 - Write messages, emails, letters and postcards to other family members
 - Make greeting cards and party invitations either on the computer or by hand
 - Compile lists for a particular reason, e.g. *gifts wanted, a shopping list, jobs to be completed*
 - Enter competitions from magazines and newspapers
 - Make scrapbooks about their favourite stars, sports or interests
 - Encourage the use of a Family Message Board
 - Encourage your child to keep a diary or journal when you go on a trip or holiday. Have them collect printed material such as brochures, leaflets and tourist guides to include in the journal. This is especially valuable if you are travelling and your child is missing school.
- Write with your child and ensure your child sees other members of the family writing a range of different texts. This is also an opportunity to share and discuss what is the purpose of your writing and whom you are writing it for, e.g. *I am writing a letter to the community paper to oppose the high-rise development.*
- Talk to your child about the most appropriate way to organise their writing for a given task.
- Praise and encourage your child's writing by focusing on the things they have done well and the new skills they have attempted.
- Support your child's spelling attempts and praise their willingness to 'have a go' using words they don't know how to spell.
- Encourage your child to talk about the strategies they use to attempt the spelling of unknown words and to try different strategies. These may include:
 - breaking words into parts
 - using common letter patterns
 - using letters that work together
 - thinking about the base word
 - visualising the word
 - thinking of similar words.
- Read and share articles and stories with your child.

Parent Card

Writing and Reading Links

Writing and reading are connected in many ways. Developing children's understandings in reading will help in the development of their writing. Reading and discussing a range of texts with your child allows them to:

- hear different language patterns and structures
- be exposed to new vocabulary
- share and discuss opinions about what is presented
- see how different types of writing are organised
- transfer what they know about reading to their own writing.

Here are some suggestions to help your child make the links between writing and reading.

- Discuss how the author has used words to:
 - describe appearances, e.g. *skinny, blue-eyed, beautiful.*
 - describe actions, e.g. *skipped, trotted, fell.*
 - describe emotions, e.g. *happy, frightened.*
- Discuss what was learnt from informational books, e.g. *What did you find out about insects from this diagram?*
- Discuss the purpose of the text, e.g. *Why do you think the author wrote this book?*
- Point out and discuss different organisational features of the texts that are being read, e.g. *headings, subheadings, diagrams, tables.*
- Demonstrate how reading is used in the home every day, e.g. *I want to find out about accommodation for our next holiday so I am going to search the sites on the Internet and read about the places available and what they have to offer.*
- Give a diary, book or notebook as a present.
- Encourage your child to read and discuss a variety of texts. This may include novels, poems, magazines, comics, newspapers, web pages, brochures and non-fiction books. Exploring topics of interest motivates children to read and may provide the stimulus for their writing.
- Talk about the text and encourage your child to reread parts either with you or alone.
- Encourage your child to retell the text to you or another family member.
- Talk about the characters, plot, setting and events of texts, e.g. *Which was your favourite character? Where did this story take place?*
- Compare characters from the text with real people your child knows.

Parent Card

Supporting the Writing Process

The Writing Process can be broken into five stages:

Planning — time to gather ideas, brainstorm, read and discuss.

Drafting — time to get their thoughts down on paper and produce their first draft.

Conferring — time to receive feedback from others.

Refining — time to revise, edit and proofread their work.

Publishing — time to share their work with others.

Below are some questions to ask your child as they are working on writing assignments.

At the planning stage:

- What is the purpose of your writing, e.g. *informing, inviting, explaining*?
- How are you going to organise your writing, e.g. *as a letter, a story, a research report*?
- Who is the audience for your piece of writing, e.g. *classmates, penpal, buddy*?
- How are you going to organise your thoughts about what you are going to write, e.g. *brainstorming, listing questions that you need to research, planning headings*.
- How are you going to find the information you need, e.g. *visit to the library, Internet search*?

At the conferring and refining stages:

- Have you read through your writing?
- Do you think your message is clear?
- Have you organised your information logically?
- Is there more information that you can include?
- Have you used the best words, e.g. *descriptive words or subject-specific words*?
- Are your sentences well written?
- Have you left any words out?
- Have you punctuated correctly?
- Have you checked all your spelling?

At the publishing stage:

- How are you going to produce a final copy of this work so that you can share it with others?
 - Do you need to write it out neatly?
 - Can you type it on the computer?
 - Can you publish it in a different way, e.g. *design a PowerPoint presentation, a chart, a portfolio*?
 - Can you add anything to enhance your published piece, e.g. *pictures, models, diagrams, artefacts*.
- Have you published it in the most suitable way for your purpose and audience?
- How do you feel about what you have produced?
- Is there anything you would do differently next time?

It is important for your child to gain the most from the writing experience, therefore ensure your child has ownership of the work.

Parent Card

Supporting Punctuation and Grammar

As students learn to write, they often can't control all elements at the same time. For example, they may be focusing on the meaning of the story, or writing the information down rather than concentrating on their spelling and punctuation. It is important to remember when working with your child in the area of punctuation and grammar, to focus on one thing at a time so they can gain control over one element of their writing.

Use the following suggestions to assist your child to develop their understandings and use of punctuation and grammar.

- Praise your child's writing efforts and respond to the message rather than focusing on the grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- When reading with your child, point out and discuss different punctuation, e.g. *question marks, commas, semi-colons*.
- Talk about how authors have used punctuation.
- If your child asks you to help them edit their writing, remember to only focus on one thing at a time, e.g. *sentence structure or punctuation, not both*.
- When your child is editing their work, have them read it aloud. This may help them identify if they have left words out or whether their writing makes sense.
- If your child has produced their text on the computer, encourage them to use the grammar checker. Be mindful that not all computer-generated suggestions will be appropriate and that your child will have to make decisions about whether to accept the computer-generated suggestions or not.
- Discuss how your child can make their sentences more interesting. Have them use a highlighter pen to mark all of the verbs they have used. Talk with your child to see if they can think of a more interesting word to replace it with. For example, *Kerry walked along the footpath* could change to *Kerry trudged along the footpath*.

Parent Card

Building Understandings About Different Types of Writing

Every piece of writing has a purpose and an audience. Your child needs to be clear about the purpose and audience of a piece of writing as this will have an impact upon the decisions your child will make about the way the text is organised, the structure, and the type of language used.

The following are some suggestions to help you support your child to develop their understanding about different types of writing.

- When your child is reading, discuss the **purpose** of the text, i.e. why do you think the author wrote this text? As there are many different purposes for writing, your child will discover there are texts where the prime purpose is to:
 - entertain, e.g. *poems, jokes, cartoons*
 - recount, e.g. *journals, retells*
 - describe, e.g. *contents pages, simple reports, labels*
 - socialise, e.g. *SMS messages, emails, invitations.*
 - explain, e.g. *classroom rules, tables*
 - instruct, e.g. *directions, road signs, rules*
 - inquire, e.g. *interview questions*
 - persuade, e.g. *brochures, catalogues.*
- Discuss the audiences of different texts. For example, have your child collect the junk mail and then discuss which audience they think the advertisers are targeting. You might like to discuss how the choice of words will be different depending on the age of the audience.
- Have your child collect different forms of text, e.g. *a letter, a recipe, a list, a book about Ancient Greeks, a short story*. Talk about how the layout is different. Remind your child to think about how they need to organise their text when they are writing.
- Different forms of text will have different **organisational features**. When reading, draw your child's attention to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — headings and subheadings — captions — diagrams and other visual aids (photographs, graphs, tables, cross-sections) — tables of contents — bolded or italicised words — computer menu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — bullet points — blurb — hyperlinks — footnotes — appendix — bibliography — index.
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Discuss the inclusion of these organisational features, where appropriate, in your child's own writing.

Parent Card

Developing Vocabulary and Spelling

Children will use the vocabulary they know when they are writing. It is important to continually provide your child with opportunities to learn new words and encourage them to use the words in their writing. To demand that all words are spelt correctly encourages your child to become a 'safe speller', i.e. they will only use the words they know how to spell. The goal is not only for your child to spell correctly but to use interesting and new vocabulary.

Encourage your child to expand their vocabulary by:

- encouraging them to read a range of texts.
- talking about new vocabulary they encounter.
- challenging them to use new vocabulary in everyday situations.
- talking about things they have done at school, e.g. *excursions*.
- asking them to explain a new game or procedure.
- playing games such as Scrabble, Boggle, Scattergories, Upwords.
- encouraging them to complete crosswords or word puzzles.
- participating in family outings, e.g. *to the museum, art gallery, fishing*.
- Encourage your child to 'have a go' at spelling new words by using a variety of spelling strategies such as:
 - sounding out
 - breaking the word into syllables, e.g. *happiness—happ / i / ness*
 - using knowledge of common letter patterns, e.g. *knowing that /f/ sound can be represented by /ph/*
 - breaking the word into smaller words, e.g. *everywhere—every/where*
 - considering the base word, e.g. *sign—signature*
 - using Greek and Latin roots, e.g. *tele—telephone*.
- Being able to spell high-frequency words automatically helps to free up your child's working memory when they are writing. If your child is still having difficulty with the spelling of high-frequency words, ask for a list of words that your child needs to learn. Use a temporary marker to record these words onto a plastic place mat. Your child can use this as a learning mat and can refer to these as they are writing. You can remove and replace those words your child learns, and add others. Words already learnt can be written on the back of the place mat as a positive reminder of all the words they can spell.

Transitional Card 6 (cont.)

- If your child needs to learn new words, encourage them to use the 'Look, Say, Cover, Visualise, Write, Check' strategy.
 - Look** — Ask your child to look at the word and identify any 'tricky' parts. They may like to highlight these.
 - Say** — Ask them to say the word out loud.
 - Cover** — Have them cover the word so they can no longer see it.
 - Visualise** — Ask them to close their eyes and see if they can picture the word in their mind
 - Write** — Ask them to 'have a go' at writing the word.
 - Check** — Have them uncover the word and check the spelling of the word.
- Fun ways to learn words include:
 - have your child write the word in large letters, then cut the word up into individual letters and put the letters in order.
 - write the word in sand, on a doodle board, into icing or flour.
 - look for words within words, e.g. *friend*.
 - make up mnemonics, e.g. *There are only e's in cemetery.*

Parent Card

Building Vocabulary and Spelling Knowledge Through Games

Below are some vocabulary and spelling games you may enjoy playing with your child.

What Comes Next?

What Comes Next? is an adaptation of what was known as the game Hangman. However, in What Comes Next? your child is required to guess the letters in the correct order.

- Choose a word from something your child has read or from a particular subject area, e.g. *diameter*. Make a dash for each letter in the word.
- Give your child a clue to help them guess the first letter, e.g. *the first letter is between C and E in the alphabet*.
- Allow your child to guess the letter.
- As your child guesses the next letter, a guess that could be a correct English letter sequence is written on the left, e.g. *dr, de*.
- Those that could not be a correct English letter sequence are written on the right as single letters, e.g. *t, b* not modelling incorrect letter patterns.
- A penalty is only given for guesses that could not be correct. When your child guesses a letter that couldn't be right, a segment of the mouse is drawn.
- Have your child continue to guess the letters in order until all letters are written.
- The game ends if the drawing is completed before the word is completed.

WHAT COMES NEXT?

d i a _ _ _ _ _

COULD BE

dr
din
dis



COULDN'T BE

l
w

(The word is diameter.)

Transitional Card 7 (cont.)

Board Games

Games such as Scrabble, Boggle, Scattergories.

Puzzles

Puzzles provide opportunities for your child to investigate both the structure and meaning of words. There are many commercially produced publications (including software packages) incorporating puzzles such as crosswords, and word sleuths, and others such as creating words, finding small words inside larger words and rhyming activities.

Tic Tac Toe

Tic Tac Toe is played in the same way as Noughts and Crosses. However, specified letters, patterns or words are used to create a sequence of three diagonally, horizontally or vertically, instead of noughts and crosses. For example, you may write words that have a particular sound spelt a different way in each word and your child may have to write words ending with 'ough'. If your child is having difficulty thinking of words to add, you both might like to make a list of words prior to beginning Tic Tac Toe.

long 'a' sound

tray
strain
vein
great
cake

tray	enough	strain
	rough	
though	vein	

'ough'

enough
rough
cough
though
through

Odd One Out

Odd One Out assists your child to identify words or parts of words that vary. A series of four words is presented. Three of the words have something in common. The fourth will be the 'odd one out'. Your child needs to select the odd one and suggest why it does not fit.

This activity can be used in many different ways, depending on the words chosen:

- **Number of Syllables:** 'Listen while I say four words: bicycle, January, newspaper, tractor. Tell me which one doesn't have three syllables'.
- **Matching Sounds:** 'Listen while I say four words: strain, vein, meat, great. Tell me which one has a different middle sound'.

The focus can also be on the meaning of the words, e.g. *Which is the odd word out: dams, ice caps, rivers, oceans? The answer is 'oceans' because it is the only source of salt water.*

Word Searches

Transitional writers enjoy the challenge of searching for particular words in magazines, the environment and newspapers. With your child, set the criteria, e.g. *words that begin with aqua*. Have your child keep a record for a week of the words found. You can make this into a personal competition where the child tries to find more of the next word, e.g. *I found 10 words beginning with 'aqua' last week and I found 14 words beginning with 'semi' this week.* They might like to share their findings at school with the teacher and peers.

Parent Card

Supporting Project Work—Accessing and Using Information

You can support your child when they are completing school research by guiding, advising and talking things through with them. If you feel tempted to do the research yourself, ask, Will this help my child to learn?

Suggestions for assisting with research work include:

- discussing what sort of information your child needs in order to complete their research
- encouraging your child to jot down questions about the topic
- asking questions which encourage your child to explore the topic further
- helping your child to find appropriate information by taking your child to the library, providing access to the Internet or providing reference books at home
- if appropriate, having your child request information by writing letters, making phone calls, visiting sites
- helping your child to organise and group information into categories
- encouraging your child to use the following procedure when taking notes:
 - short notes: jot down key words and phrases with the reference material open
 - long notes: close the reference material and use the short notes to make sentences
- talking about the best way to present the research work, e.g. *poster, tape recording, booklet, model, electronic presentation*
- spending time with your child, while they are using the computer, giving tips or assistance when necessary.

If your child has trouble organising their time to complete the project, help them to write goals about what is to be achieved by a certain date.

Parent Card

General Description of Conventional Writers

Conventional writers compose a wide variety of texts such as biographies, web pages and documentary scripts. They can adjust their writing to suit the specific purposes and audiences. Conventional writers write cohesive paragraphs and demonstrate control over the use of grammar, punctuation and vocabulary. They have developed a large range of strategies for spelling unknown words.

How to Support Conventional Writers

Conventional writers will benefit from a range of experiences. Consider any of the following suggestions.

- Ensure your child sees other members of the family writing a range of different texts. This is also an opportunity to share and discuss what the purpose of your writing is and whom you are writing it for.
- Assist your child to select the most appropriate way to organise a piece of writing.
- Encourage your child to discuss how different characters and people are represented in texts, and make comparisons in real life.
- Praise and encourage your child's writing attempts by focusing on what is right.
- Encourage your child to use the 'Writing Process', e.g. *planning their work, drafting what they want to say, refining their ideas and making corrections and then publishing or producing a 'clean' copy for their audience.*
- Encourage your child to refine their writing both alone and with you. This could include:
 - organisation
 - sentences
 - paragraphs
 - spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Encourage your child to continue to experiment with new vocabulary in their writing. Discuss interesting words they have included and their meanings.
- Keep a diary or journal when you go on a trip or holiday. This is especially valuable if you are travelling and your child is missing school. Collect printed material such as brochures, leaflets and tourist guides to include in the journal.
- Talk with your child about the most appropriate way to organise their writing for a given task.
- Encourage your child to talk about the strategies they use to attempt the spelling of unknown words and to try different strategies:
 - breaking words into parts
 - using common letter patterns
 - using letters that work together
 - thinking about the base word.
- Support your child in the completion of research work. Emphasise the process of the work versus the end product, e.g. *planning, drafting, conferring, refining, publishing.*

Parent Card

Writing and Reading Links

- Visit the library often so that your child can check out a variety of texts to sustain their interest.
- Encourage your child to join or start a book club; sometimes these operate from the local library.
- Join online book clubs. This is one way your child can share their thoughts with others, as well as hear others' opinions. Ensure any web sites your child is visiting are legitimate.
- Provide access to a computer so your child can make use of the Internet for research purposes. Often local libraries have computers where the Internet is available.
- Attend bookshop functions by visiting authors.
- Read the literary section of the newspaper, which discusses bestsellers, up-coming books, authors and literary events. Also read the Letters to the Editor section and discuss the purpose and the audience for selected letters.
- Discuss the author's craft with your child, discussing the way the author writes, the language they use, the way they have chosen to present their content, the way they use words, the reasons why the book did (or did not) appeal.
- Write messages, emails, letters and postcards to other family members.
- Have a selection of reading materials such as comics, magazines and non-fiction texts available at home and in the car.
- Display your own collection of books. Discuss why you liked or disliked any of the books. Encourage your child to do the same.
- Encourage your child to set aside a time for reading. Do this yourself so your child can see you as a reader. Exchange books with friends and other family members.
- Encourage children to select their own books and magazines, and give a subscription to a magazine as a gift.
- Show an interest in what your child is reading. Ask them to recommend books for you to read.
- Expose your child to a wide variety of texts, such as biographies, letters to the editor, electronic texts, research papers and newspapers so that your child can be exposed to the organisation of a variety of texts.

Parent Card

Supporting the Writing Process

The Writing Process can be broken into five stages:

Planning — time to gather ideas, brainstorm, read and discuss.

Drafting — time to get their thoughts down on paper, produce their first draft.

Conferring — time to receive feedback from others.

Refining — time to revise, edit and proofread their work.

Publishing — time to share their work with others.

Below are some questions to ask your child as they are working on writing assignments.

At the planning stage:

- What is the purpose of your writing, e.g. *informing, inviting, explaining*?
- How are you going to organise your writing, e.g. *as a letter, a story, a research report*?
- Who is the audience for your piece of writing, e.g. *classmates, penpal, buddy*?
- How are you going to organise your thoughts about what you are going to write, e.g. *brainstorming, listing questions that you need to research, planning headings*.
- How are you going to find the information you need, e.g. *visit to the library, Internet search*?

At the conferring and refining stages:

- Have you read through your writing?
- Do you think your message is clear?
- Have you organised your information logically?
- Is there more information that you can include?
- Have you used the best words?
- Are your sentences well written?
- Have you left any words out?
- Do your paragraphs have topic sentences?
- Do your paragraphs introduce each other?
- Have you punctuated correctly?
- Have you checked all your spelling?

At the publishing stage:

- How are you going to produce a final copy of this work so you can share it with others?
 - Do you need to write it out neatly?
 - Can you type it on the computer?
 - Can you publish it in a different way, e.g. *design a PowerPoint presentation, a chart, a portfolio*?
 - Can you add anything to enhance your published piece, e.g. *pictures, models, diagrams, artefacts*?
- Have you published it in the most suitable way for your purpose and audience?
- How do you feel about what you have produced?
- Is there anything you would do differently next time?

It is important for your child to gain the most from the writing experience, therefore ensure your child has ownership of the work.

Parent Card

Supporting Punctuation and Grammar

As students learn to write, they often can't control all elements at the same time. For example, they may be focusing on the meaning of the story, or writing the information down rather than concentrating on their spelling and punctuation. It is important to remember when working with your child in the area of punctuation and grammar, to focus on one thing at a time so they can gain control over one element of their writing.

Use the following suggestions to assist your child to develop their understanding and use of punctuation and grammar.

- Praise your child's writing efforts and respond to the message rather than focusing on the grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- Talk about how authors have used punctuation.
- If your child asks you to help them refine their writing, remember to only focus on one thing at a time.
- When your child is editing their work, have them read it aloud. This may help them identify if they have left words out or whether their writing makes sense.
- If your child has produced their text on the computer, encourage them to use the grammar checker. Be mindful that not all computer-generated suggestions will be appropriate and that your child will have to make decisions about whether to accept the computer-generated suggestions or not.
- Discuss how your child can make their sentences more interesting. Have them use a highlighter pen to mark all of the verbs they have used. Talk with your child to see if they can think of a more interesting word to replace it with. For example, *Kerry walked along the footpath* could change to *Kerry trudged along the footpath*.
- Ask your child to edit or correct some of the writing that you or other family members have written to give them additional practice in the application of their grammar and punctuation knowledge.

Parent Card

Building Understandings About Different Types of Writing

Every piece of writing has a purpose and an audience. Your child needs to be clear about the purpose and audience of a piece of writing as this will have an impact upon the decisions your child will make about the way the text is organised, the structure, and the type of language used. The following are some suggestions to help you support your child to develop their understanding about different types of writing.

- When your child is reading, discuss the **purpose** of the text, e.g. *why do you think the author wrote this text?* As there are many different purposes for writing, your child will discover there are texts where the prime purpose is to:
 - entertain, e.g. *poems, jokes, cartoons*
 - recount, e.g. *journals, retells*
 - describe, e.g. *contents pages, simple reports, labels*
 - socialise, e.g. *SMS messages, emails, invitations*
 - explain, e.g. *classroom rules, tables*
 - instruct, e.g. *directions, road signs, rules*
 - inquire, e.g. *interview questions*
 - persuade, e.g. *brochures, catalogues*.
- Discuss the **audiences** of different texts. For example, have your child collect the junk mail and then discuss which audience they think the advertisers are targeting. You might like to discuss how the choice of words will be different depending on the age of the audience.
- Have your child collect different forms of text, e.g. *a letter, a recipe, a list, a book about Ancient Greeks, a short story*. Talk about how the layout is different. Remind your child to think about how they need to organise their text when they are writing.
- Different forms of text will have different **organisational features**. When reading, draw your child's attention to:
 - headings and subheadings
 - captions
 - diagrams and other visual aids (photographs, graphs, tables, cross-sections)
 - tables of contents
 - bolded or italicised words
 - computer menu
 - bullet points
 - blurbs

Conventional Card 5 (cont.)

- hyperlinks
- footnotes
- appendix
- bibliography
- index.

Discuss the inclusion of these organisational features, where appropriate, in your child's own writing.

- Different forms of text will have different language features. This refers to the type of vocabulary and grammar that is used in text. Each text form has specific language features that are appropriate to that form; for example, a retelling of an event may include the following language features:
 - specific participants, e.g. *My family and I*
 - simple past tense, e.g. *chases, saw, went*
 - first or first person pronouns, e.g. *I, we, hers, his*
 - linking words to do with time, e.g. *firstly, then yesterday, after.*

Parent Card

Developing Vocabulary and Spelling

- Continue to extend your child's vocabulary by encouraging them to play with words by completing crosswords, cryptic clues, Scrabble, Boggle.
- Develop a love of words by finding out the derivation of words and the stems that created words that we use all the time. Exploring the history of words can be fascinating and can assist your child to spell new words and also to determine the meaning of words.
- Share quality texts with your child and discuss new vocabulary as it is read to encourage an interest in words.
- Encourage your child to talk about the strategies they use to attempt the spelling of unknown words and attempt other strategies.
- Encourage them to 'have a go' at spelling new words by using a variety of spelling strategies such as:
 - breaking the word into syllables, e.g. **en-vi-ron-ment**
 - using knowledge of common letter patterns, e.g. **photograph**
 - breaking the word into parts, e.g. *bureau+cracy*
 - considering the base word
 - thinking about meaning, e.g. *finite/infinite*.
- When writing words, ask your child to carefully consider the base word and the prefix and suffixes to be added. Once your child is clear about prefixes and suffixes, you can assist your child to spell the word correctly, e.g. *pre-script-ion* — *the base word is 'script' and 'pre' is the prefix and 'ion' is the suffix.*

Parent Card

Supporting Project Work—Accessing and Using Information

You can support your child when they are completing school research by guiding, advising and talking things through with them. If you feel tempted to do the research yourself, ask, Will this help my child to learn?

Suggestions for assisting with research work include:

- discussing what sort of information your child needs in order to complete their research.
- encouraging your child to jot down questions about the topic.
- asking questions that encourage your child to explore the topic further.
- helping your child to find appropriate information by taking him or her to the library, providing access to the Internet or providing reference books at home.
- if appropriate, having your child request information by writing letters, making phone calls, visiting sites.
- helping your child to organise and group information into categories.
- encouraging your child to use this procedure when taking notes:
 - short notes: jot down key words and phrases with the reference material open
 - long notes: close the reference material and use the short notes to make sentences.
- talking about the best way to present the research work, e.g. *poster, tape recording, booklet, model, PowerPoint presentation*.
- spending time with your child, while they are using the computer, giving tips or assistance when necessary.
- if your child has trouble organising their time to complete the project, helping them to write goals about what is to be achieved by a certain date.
- providing a quiet space for your child to complete projects uninterrupted.
- structuring time where other family members are not doing 'exciting' things while your child is working on a project.
- providing assistance in publishing or presentation methods.
- editing your child's work by providing feedback and final copy edits.
- sharing project topics with family friends and relatives and discuss various viewpoints and opinions.
- discussing whether the information the child has found is relevant and, if so, how will it be used.
- assisting with technical work, such as photography or construction.

Parent Card

General Description of Proficient Writers

Proficient writers control all aspects of writing and write a wide range of sophisticated texts such as research papers, newspaper articles and hypertexts. They understand how purpose and audience influence writing. Proficient writers are able to convey detailed information and explore different perspectives. They have developed an extensive vocabulary and use many strategies to spell.

How to Support Proficient Writers

Proficient writers will benefit from a range of experiences. Consider any of the following suggestions:

- Ensure your child sees other members of the family writing. Proficient writers benefit from seeing effective writers writing different texts. This is also an opportunity to share and discuss what the purpose of your writing is and whom you are writing it for, whether it be personal or work based.
- Participate in discussions with your child about the writing they have done by posing questions and asking them to clarify ideas.
- Discuss the inclusion of interesting and appropriate vocabulary and suggest possible alternatives.
- Discuss with your child the changes they have made to their writing and explain what effect these changes have on their writing.
- Talk with your child about strategies they have used, e.g. *spelling words, composing paragraphs*.
- Enter writing competitions from magazines, newspapers or online.
- Provide access to a computer so that your child can make use of the Internet for research purposes. Often local libraries have computers where the Internet is available.
- Encourage your child to read and write a wide variety of texts for different purposes. These may include:
 - biographies and research articles for information
 - articles from community and national papers, to keep informed
 - letters to community papers
 - novels and poetry for enjoyment.

Parent Card

Writing and Reading Links

- Encourage your child to set aside a time for reading. Do this yourself so your child can see you as a reader. Exchange books with friends and other family members.
- Show an interest in what your child is reading. Ask them to recommend books for you to read.
- Discuss the author's craft with your child, focusing on the way the author has written the text, the language they used, the way they have chosen to present their content, the way they use words, the reasons why the book did or didn't appeal.
- Encourage your child to read current affairs magazines; comment on articles and discuss them with your child.
- Encourage children to select their own books and magazines, and give a subscription to a magazine as a gift.
- Encourage your child to join or start a book club; sometimes these operate from the local library, or alternatively join online book clubs. This is one way your child can share their thoughts with others, as well as hear others' opinions. Ensure any websites your child is visiting are legitimate.
- Read the literary section of the newspaper, which discusses bestsellers, up-coming books, authors and literary events.
- Attend bookshop functions by visiting authors.

Parent Card

Supporting the Writing Process

The Writing Process can be broken into five stages:

Planning — time to gather ideas, brainstorm, read and discuss

Drafting — time to get their thoughts down on paper, produce their first draft

Conferring — time to receive feedback from others.

Refining — time to revise, edit and proofread their work

Publishing — time to share their work with others.

You can support your child to do the following things when writing:

- Be clear about what they are writing (**purpose**), whom they are writing for (**audience**), and the type of **language** that they will use, e.g. *a report for science to explain an experiment will include technical terms appropriate to the content studied.*
- Plan what they are going to write. This could be done by brainstorming, listing questions for which to collect research, planning headings.
- Construct frameworks for writing as a part of planning, e.g. *a science lab report might include hypothesis, materials, procedure, conclusion and discussion.*
- Set some goals about what is to be achieved by a certain date.
- Determine what is the purpose of the text? e.g. *To entertain, persuade.*
- Determine who is the audience for the text? e.g. *Have they taken into consideration age, cultural background, socio-economic status, academic background? Are they a known audience or are they making assumptions based on what they want to say?*
- Decide what the audience can expect from the text? e.g. *Do they need to read it all or can they pick out points of interest?*
- Think about why they have represented characters, people or facts in a particular way? e.g. *Will they appeal to a particular group? Are they presenting a certain point of view?*
- How they will publish their text that will best suit the audience and purpose? e.g. *Is it appropriate to use hyperlinks, make a poster display, send out a brochure?*
- Determine which devices will be used to best suit audience and purpose?
(See information on the next page.)

Proficient Card 3 (cont.)

Devices can include:

- choice of language, e.g. *descriptive, emotive*
- inclusion or omission of details
- foreshadowing—giving a hint of things to come, e.g. *As the warning alarm sounded, everyone rushed to take cover waiting for the fury of the storm to hit.*
- irony, wit, humour
- flashback—interrupting the text to show something that happened before
- understatement—used to downplay the gravity of a situation, e.g. *'It will be cheap to fix; it's just a slight dent.'*
- symbolism—objects used to represent something else, e.g. *He sat astride the white stallion, his long white beard, flowing hair and white cloak fluttering in the breeze.*
- stating opinions disguised as facts, e.g. *It has been widely reported that ...*
- quoting statistics, e.g. *65% of housewives surveyed ...*
- selecting evidence and proof
- print size
- font selection
- choice of colour/s
- amount of detail included
- size of characters, tables or diagrams relative to others
- composition
- artistic style.

Parent Card

Building Understandings About Different Types of Writing

Every piece of writing has a purpose and an audience. Your child needs to be clear about the purpose and audience of a piece of writing as this will have an impact upon the decisions your child will make about the way the text is organised, the structure, and the type of language used.

Following are some suggestions to help you support your child develop their understanding about different types of writing.

- When your child is reading, discuss the **purpose** of the text, i.e. why do you think the author wrote this text? As there are many different purposes for writing, your child will discover there are texts where the prime purpose is to:
 - entertain, e.g. *poems, jokes, cartoons*
 - recount, e.g. *journals, retells*
 - describe, e.g. *contents pages, simple reports, labels*
 - socialise, e.g. *SMS messages, emails, invitations*
 - explain, e.g. *classroom rules, tables*
 - instruct, e.g. *directions, road signs, rules*
 - inquire, e.g. *interview questions*
 - persuade, e.g. *brochures, catalogues*.
- Discuss the **audiences** for different texts. For example, have your child collect the junk mail and then discuss which audience they think the advertisers are targeting. You might like to discuss how the choice of words will be different depending on the age of the audience.
- Different forms of text will have different **organisational features**. When reading draw your child's attention to:
 - headings and sub headings
 - captions
 - diagrams and other visual aids (photographs, graphs, tables, cross-sections)
 - tables of contents
 - bolded or italicised words
 - computer menu
 - bullet points
 - blurbs

Proficient Card 4 (cont.)

- hyperlinks
- footnotes
- appendix
- index
- bibliography.

Discuss the inclusion of these organisational features, where appropriate, in your child's own writing.

- The **structure** of the text refers to the way ideas, feelings or information are linked within a text. These could include:
 - problem and solution structure
 - compare and contrast structure
 - cause and effect structure.
- Different forms of text will have different **language features**. This refers to the type of vocabulary and grammar that is used in text. Each text form has specific language features that are appropriate to that form; for example, a retelling of an event may include the following language features:
 - specific participants, e.g. *My family and I*
 - simple past tense, e.g. *chases, saw, went*
 - first or first person pronouns, e.g. *I, we, hers, his*
 - linking words to do with time, e.g. *firstly, then, yesterday, after.*

Parent Card

Supporting Project Work—Accessing and Using Information

You can support your child when they are completing school research by guiding, advising and talking things through with them. If you feel tempted to do the research yourself, ask, 'Will this help my child to learn?'

Suggestions for assisting with research work include:

- suggesting topics for research
- discussing what sort of information your child needs in order to complete their research
- asking questions that encourage your child to explore the topic further
- helping your child to find appropriate information by taking your child to the local library, university library and by providing access to the Internet
- if appropriate, having your child request information by writing letters, making phone calls, visiting sites
- helping your child to organise and group information into categories
- encouraging your child to use the following procedure when taking notes:
 - short notes: jot down key words and phrases with the reference material open
 - long notes: close the reference material and use the short notes to make sentences
- talking about the best way to present the research work, e.g. *web page, electronic presentation, lecture, video*
- providing a quiet space for your child to complete projects uninterrupted
- structuring time where other family members are not doing 'exciting' things while your child is working on a project
- providing assistance in publishing or presentation methods
- editing your child's work by providing feedback and final copy edits
- sharing project topics with family friends and relatives and discussing various viewpoints and opinions
- discussing whether the information the child has found is relevant and if so, how will it be used
- assisting with technical work, such as photography or construction.