



How Can I Support My Adolescent's Development as a Writer?

1. Understand that writing is a process.

Writers do not arrive immediately at polished work. Instead, they go through a process of planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Consider where in the process your adolescent is when you review your adolescent's writing and offer ideas or suggestions.

2. When giving feedback on your adolescent's writing during the planning, drafting, and revising stages, focus on the ideas, development, and organization of the piece. Later, during the editing stage, focus on spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

- Acknowledge the planning and ideas that went into creating the draft, being sure to offer praise and encouragement.
- Ask your adolescent to explain the purpose, planning process, and ideas before offering suggestions or criticism.
- Encourage your adolescent to self-assess the writing before offering your own assessment.

3. Frequently read, write, and discuss something of interest at home, using a variety of texts.

Ideas include reading books, taking notes, writing about a hobby or special interest, collecting and compiling sports information, planning a trip and keeping a travel journal, and writing family stories.

4. Reinforce the idea that writing is a tool for learning. Encourage your adolescent to take notes, write summaries, and keep journals for a variety of purposes and topics.

- Demonstrate how you use writing in your everyday life by pointing out when you make lists, write notes, and communicate with others.
- Point out opportunities for your adolescent to write as they come up in everyday life, such as writing notes, making lists, or keeping a journal.

5. Encourage your adolescent to work on both handwriting and typing skills.

- Research shows that handwriting and typing activate different areas of the brain. Effective handwriting has been shown to increase the quantity and quality of writing and improve content learning.
- Learning to type effectively ensures that your adolescent can use technology without being slowed down by looking at the keys.

The Writing Process

PHASE and STEPS

HELPFUL FEEDBACK

PLANNING

Determining the purpose, audience, and writing form

“Tell me the purpose for this piece of writing.”

“Who is the audience?”

Brainstorming topics and ideas related to the purpose for writing

“What are your favorite ideas for this piece?”

“I love these ideas. This will be an interesting piece of writing.”

Selecting a topic

“Let’s write three ideas that might work for this purpose.”

Researching to gather information

Organizing ideas and information

DRAFTING

Using ideas developed during the planning stage to write an initial version

“Let’s look back at your topic and ideas to remind us of what you planned.”

Reading and rereading to check that the writing makes sense

“Did you reread to see whether your writing is making sense?”

“I like how you are using your writing plan while you write.”

REVISING

Focusing on the content of the draft

“Let’s read it together to see whether you got all your good ideas in.”

Adding or changing content to clearly communicate ideas or accomplish the purpose

“Let’s read it together and think about whether it makes sense.”

Changing the wording, phrasing, or sentences to clarify or enhance the meaning

“I really love [an idea or the overall content] about this writing.”

“How can you change or add something to make it more clear?”

Reorganizing content to improve the flow of ideas

EDITING

Correcting spelling, punctuation, and capitalization

“Great job catching some spelling errors. Now I see two more words that need to be fixed.”

“Let’s read through it and see whether any words might be spelled wrong.”

If your adolescent does not find a misspelled word, point it out and ask, “This word is not quite right; can you see what needs to be fixed?”

“Let’s look at each sentence and see whether it has capital letters and correct punctuation.”

PUBLISHING

Creating a finished product with polished handwriting or typing

“This piece of writing is [interesting, informative, helpful, etc.]”

“This is a piece that you can feel good about sharing!”

Sharing writing with others

“How do you feel about this piece of writing? How does it compare to something you wrote a month ago?”

Reflecting on accomplishments, including self-evaluation, and setting goals for future writing

“How do you think you have improved as a writer? I see that you have gotten better at _____.”