



**Qualities of Best Practice in Teaching Writing\***

What Writing Teachers Know	Implications for Parents
<p>1. All children can and should write.</p>	<p>From the time your children can hold a crayon, encourage them to draw, scribble, and write. In order to be successful and fluent writers, students need to know they can write—even if it doesn't look perfect!</p>
<p>2. Teachers must help students find real purposes to write.</p>	<p>Help your children communicate their hopes, dreams, fears, and concerns. When your children see writing as serving a real purpose, they will be more likely to try it.</p>
<p>3. Students need to take ownership and responsibility.</p>	<p>Kid writing should sound like kid writing! When kids believe that their writing is their own, they will become more likely to invest themselves in it.</p>
<p>4. Effective writing programs involve the complete writing process.</p>	<p>Our children, like all writers, have different ways of approaching writing tasks. Tune in to your children's learning styles and needs as writers. Know that some writing is one draft and some other writing takes time and multiple drafts.</p>
<p>5. Teachers can help students get started.</p>	<p>Talk with your children about their ideas and encourage them to draw, freewrite, and make lists or webs in order to get started.</p>

<p>6. Teachers help students draft and revise.</p>	<p>Listen to your children’s drafts and ask real questions about content. Heartfelt questions are the best way to encourage kids to keep on writing.</p>
<p>7. Grammar and mechanics are best learned in the context of actual writing.</p>	<p>If you notice errors in conventions in your children’s writing, pick just one area at a time to work on (such as punctuation, dialogue, or capitalization). You might also refer to real texts (books, newspapers, letters, magazines) to see how published authors tackle issues of punctuation, spelling, and more.</p>
<p>8. Students need real audiences and a classroom context of shared learning.</p>	<p>Help your children find real audiences (family, friends, neighbors) to communicate with.</p>
<p>9. Writing should extend throughout the curriculum.</p>	<p>You can write just about anything at home: letters to family and friends, songs and plays to perform for the family, lists for grocery shopping . . . . The list is endless!</p>
<p>10. Effective teachers use evaluation constructively and efficiently.</p>	<p>Your job as a parent is to encourage and support any effort your children make in writing. Be lavish in praise and specific and limited in your suggestions for improvement.</p>

- Left side adapted from Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde. *Best Practice*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1993: 46-58.
- Right side developed by Cathy Fleischer and Kim Pavlock, Eastern Michigan Writing Project Family Literacy Initiative.