

Lots to read and write about

Reading and writing are part of everyday life – without even opening a book! Talking to children about the reading and writing that you do every day will help them understand the importance of these skills – and how useful they are.

Everyday reading and writing also offers children the opportunity to practise the skills they need to become readers and writers themselves.



Reading and writing everywhere

As adults, we use reading and writing in lots of different ways and for lots of different reasons:

- lists – *shopping lists, holiday lists, to-do lists...*
- messages or notes – *to help us remember something or pass on information*
- greetings – *to send birthday cards or postcards from your holiday*
- electronic messages – *emails, texts or other kinds of reading and writing using technology*
- recipes and instructions – *how make flapjacks, put together a new piece of furniture or wash a new item of clothing*
- to find out information – *from timetables, websites, magazines, leaflets, adverts*
- for enjoyment – *reading books, writing a diary, calligraphy*



Reading and writing are useful!



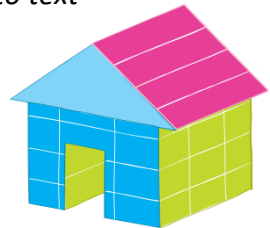
Children learn about reading and writing by watching how, when and where others read and write day to day. They come to realise that reading and writing are useful when they see them used in contexts that are meaningful to them.

Exploring reading and writing together

Everyday activities offer opportunities for you to explore and talk to your child about reading or writing – perhaps by:

- talking to your child about what you are doing and why you are reading or writing – *e.g. reading a recipe to see if you have all the ingredients*
- encouraging them to help make lists – *e.g. deciding what things they need to pack to take to their cousins'*
- asking your child to help you decide what to write in a message to other people – *e.g. what to text back to a friend who has invited you over to play*

Learning about reading and writing begins at home.



Talking to your child about reading and writing will help them to:

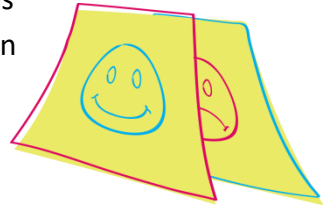
- understand that words, letters, images and symbols hold meaning and can give messages
- understand that reading and writing are connected – that spoken words can be written down and that written words can be read out loud

- recognise how reading and writing can be used for lots of different reasons, and in different ways.

Children learn a lot about reading and writing by watching others.

Messages, signs and labels

Writing their own signs, labels and messages will help your child understand how they can play an active part in making something happen. It helps them to realise that written messages, labels and signs can be a useful way of:



- ‘talking’ to someone – *“Don’t forget your lunchbox!”*
- remembering something – *“Grandad is coming today”*
- giving information to others – *“Amir’s Room”*

Here are some ideas for messages, signs and labels that you could help your child to ‘write’:

- a door sign for your child’s room – *“Sasha’s Room”*
- a sign on the biscuit tin – *“Opening times: 3pm- 4pm!”*
- labels on toy boxes or clothes drawers
- a *“Good night”* text to someone special
- place labels for everyone at dinner time
- a message to Mummy – *“Please buy a loaf of bread on your way home!”*



- a letter or postcard to yourself or someone else in your family – then read it together when it arrives!
(Ask your Peep Practitioner for a Peep Activity Sheet)



Sending yourself a letter can be exciting when you are young!

Encouraging reading and writing

Early reading and writing takes a lot of effort and concentration. Here are some ways that you can support and encourage your child when you are exploring reading and writing together:

- Explain what you are writing – and why.
- It is helpful if you write slowly when your child is watching and read the words out loud as you go – this will help them to understand what the writing says and make the connection between reading and writing.
- Let your child make their own marks when they are ‘writing’.
- Encourage your child to ‘talk’ what they want to write – offer to write down their words and then read them back.

Your child will enjoy reading and writing with you!

