Help your child to be successful

Your child’s ability to read and write effectively will be one of the most important tools that she or he will use to build a successful future.

Be a part of your child’s learning by encouraging his or her progress and providing everyday opportunities to read and write at home.

Helping your child to think like a writer by noticing details about everyday experiences.

- Ask your child to describe what she or he sees or feels.
- Suggest that your child nurture a special interest by writing to an admired person or taking action on a local issue through letter writing.

Find everyday chances to encourage your child to write.

- Begin a family journal to keep favourite family stories, or create an online space to share family events and updates.
- Get your child involved in writing at home through to-do lists, thank-you notes, invitations or emails.

You can be involved in building your child’s writing skills.

- Reread effective passages and sentences from your own reading or from what your child is reading.
- Discuss your reactions to powerful writing by sharing how it impacts your thoughts and feelings about a topic.

Recognize the signs of a successful writer.

Teachers look at six areas of a student’s writing to identify success, as reflected in the Provincial Achievement Standards for the end of Grade 4. The Dear Mayor Doe letter on this page is an example of acceptable writing by a student at the end of Grade 4.

**Content** is what a student writes. In the Dear Mayor Doe example, the content is an attempt to convince the mayor of the need for picnic tables on the playground. It stays focused and includes details that support the argument (the need for somewhere to sit; seniors could eat lunch with students).

**Organization** means that the writing has a logical order or sequence. Dear Mayor Doe starts by giving the writer’s opinion (I believe there should be...), includes at least three arguments to back up that opinion and sums up these ideas in the final paragraph.

**Word Choice** means some interesting words and phrases are used. The Dear Mayor Doe example uses some effective phrases (joy to the seniors; get them to be more active; Please help us with our lack of areas to sit outside) to convince the reader.

**Voice** means that the student’s personality or style comes through in the writing. In Dear Mayor Doe, the writer makes his or her feelings understood (Please help us; Think of the children; We need this) and gives a glimpse of some personal style (and last but certainly not least).

**Sentence Structure** means the type of sentence(s) used. In Dear Mayor Doe, sentences have a variety of beginnings and are mostly complete. A few longer, more complex sentences are also attempted (Think of the children, the adults and last but certainly not least the seniors).

**Conventions** means spelling and punctuation. In the Dear Mayor Doe example almost all punctuation and use of capital letters is correct. Most common and familiar words are spelled correctly with the exception of “senior” (seniors).

End of Grade 4

Understanding Provincial Achievement Standards in Reading and Writing

Helping your child to be successful

When looking at your child’s writing together, ask these questions with your child to build effective writing skills:

- Did I narrow my focus to one main idea, with lots of detail?
- Did I organize my writing into paragraphs that make sense?
- Did I include a title, introduction and proper ending?
- Did I use a variety of sentences and start them in different ways?
- Did I choose some exciting words and phrases that stand out?
- Did I write about something I care about and share my thoughts and feelings?
- Did I remember to use capital letters, periods, commas and apostrophes?

Help your child be a successful writer.

Tear off these handy tips for helping your child develop strong reading and writing skills.
Help your child be a successful reader.

In Grade 4, your child will read more challenging texts (fiction and non-fiction) for information and enjoyment. You and your child together can help your child read successfully by watching for growth in the following reading behaviors, drawn from the Provincial Achievement Standards for the end of Grade 4.

Knowing when meaning is lost and using reading strategies for understanding

Encourage your child to reread difficult sections and make corrections to reading errors.

Improving in the use of strategies to solve longer words and learning new words independently

Encourage your child to look for clues for unknown words.

Recognizing a growing number of more challenging common words

Practice reading a variety of materials every day. Encourage your child to find common words on websites, in cookbooks, newspapers, magazines, comics….

Reading familiar texts smoothly and with expression

Ask your child to read aloud until reading sounds like talking, with correct pausing, phrasing (grouping of words) and expression.

Using text features (table of contents, glossary, diagrams, headings, graphs...) to locate information

Help your child use all sources of information to better understand content.

Recounting events/instructions/details to show understanding of a text

Engage your child in retelling, explaining, and talking about what they read.

Books to build reading skills

Early Grade 4

- Fantastic Mr. Fox by Roald Dahl
- The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs by Jan Scieszka
- Adventures of the Shark Lady by Ann McGovern
- A Book About Planets and Stars by Betty Poliak Reigot
- Outside and Inside Snakes by Sandra Markle
- Harry Houdini: Master of Magic by Robert Kraske

End of Grade 4

- Encyclopedia Brown series by Donald J. Sobol
- Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs by Tomie dePaola
- My Favorite Dinosaurs by Ruth Ashby

You can be involved in building your child’s reading skills.

Before reading, ask:

- Why did you choose to read this book?
- What do you already know about this topic?
- What do you expect to find out?

During reading, ask:

- What extra information does the picture/diagram tell you?
- Skim this part to find information on and tell me about it.

After reading, ask:

- How are you and the main character alike?
- How are you different?
- What is your opinion of this book?

Glossary

- Amphibian: a cold-blooded vertebrate that spends some time on land but most of its life in the water
- Mucous: a thick, gelatinous fluid secreted by cells that line body organs
- Habitat: Environment in which a plant or animal lives
- Amphibian: A cold-blooded vertebrate that spends some time on land but most of its life in the water
- Mucous: A thick, gelatinous fluid secreted by cells that line body organs

The Department of Education is committed to your child’s reading and writing success. If you have any questions about your child’s progress or how you can be an active part of his or her learning, contact your child’s teacher or the provincial literacy team at 506-453-2812.