Dear Parents,

I am so excited to have your children in my class and to see what new adventures this year will bring. I really want to hit the ground running this first six-weeks, and get the kids writing compositions as almost immediately. This year, we will be working on personal narratives, expository or informational essays, and storytelling. My goal is to have each and every one of my students taking a narrative from draft, to revision and editing, and finally, to publishing, before the six-weeks is through. It may not be easy, but with your help, I'm positive the kids will be successful.

Here are some tips collected by the experts at Scholastic Parents for helping your child improve their writing at home.

**1. Read aloud** to your child every day.

**2. Talk to your child about writing in everyday life**, by writing notes or shopping lists and asking your child to do the same, for example.

**3. Ask your child to draw a picture**, or find one in a magazine or art book, that expresses your child's thoughts. Then have your child write about the picture.

**4. Avoid perfect-speller paralysis.** It's the process of writing that's important, and fear of misspelling should never get in the way.

**5. Help your child choose writing topics** that hold inherent interest for him or her.

**6. Try having your child write on the computer** once in a while if handwriting is a struggle.

**7. Encourage your child to think through how his or her story will end** in order to avoid getting stuck mid-story.

**8. Try not to influence your child's ideas**, directing him or her toward something you "know" will work — tempting as it may be.

**9. If your child is suffering from writer's block**, let him or her walk away for a while and revisit the writing later.

**10. Let your child be unsuccessful**. Kids learn more by seeing where they went wrong than writing it perfectly the first time. It may sound cruel and be hard for you as a caring parent to allow to happen, but it is the best way for them to develop as writers. It is also one of the best ways for me to identify exactly what your child needs and address it with them during our writing conferences and instruction time.

Writing well is not only a valuable skill for your child to learn, it is also a creative outlet and method of expression that helps your child grow as a person. By helping them discover who they are as a writer, you are giving your child the chance to share their voice with the world.

I cannot wait to see what amazing things your children create this year!

Thank you,

Ms. Vaughn

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