

GOLDEN SANDS SCHOOL:

***CHILDREN AS WRITERS:
A PRESENTATION FOR
PARENTS***

MURRAY GADD: 2020

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I ^{fell} ~~fell~~ off my
^{bike} ~~bike~~ ^{concrete} ~~concrete~~ onto the
~~concrete~~ ^{nearly} ~~nearly~~ ^{cried} ~~cried~~ ^{Lucky} ~~Lucky~~ ^{helmet} ~~helmet~~
~~cried~~ ~~Lucky~~ ~~helmet~~ I
 had my helmet
^{on} ~~on~~

Grandad Works at a Milk Factory

Student's first draft

He has greyish whiteish hair
surculing his head. The top
of his head is shiny where
there is no hair. He's quite
fat and wears a buttoned shirt
and pants. He works at a
milk factory. He's got a
berry bush at the back
of his garden. He likes
having beers at the pub.
He lets me watch sky and
help him pick berries.

My Dad

My dad isn't like any other dad. He is unique in his own special dad-like way. For instance, my dad lets me stay up late to watch a Liverpool game no matter what the time (Liverpool is a soccer team in England, AKA the best team in the world, let's go REDS).

My dad has hazel-coloured eyes that remind me of caramel. He's about as tall as a giraffe. OK, OK, maybe not that tall but you get the idea. He can even be a bit clumsy as well.

My dad is very nice and caring. He would do anything for his family. Just last week, he left work early so he could drop me off at soccer training and the next day he had to work extra to make up for the time he missed. That's just one example out of the billion things he does for his family.

My dad's hobbies include watching sports, especially soccer, rugby and maybe a bit of cricket. My dad's music taste isn't all that bad. He doesn't mind listening to R&B but his sweet spot is rock, eg: Metallica, Foo Fighters, Greenday etc, etc, etc. When he does like a song that I like as well, he kinda plays that song a bit too much and then I just get bored with it.

He loves to make terrible dad jokes. He thinks he's hysterical... I think he's cringey. Here's just one of the terrible dad jokes that he makes: 'Hey dad I'm hungry', 'Hi hungry I'm dad'.

My dad is the best dad in the world. Happy Father's Day DAD.

Aanush, aged 11.

**WHAT CHILDREN NEED TO
BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE AS
GOOD WRITERS**

Children need to:

- Be able to write with a **definite purpose and specific audience** in mind.
- Ensure that the **meaning is clear**.

- Be able to write with **impact**.
- Ensure that their writing is **accessible** to others, ie. it contains correct grammar, spelling and punctuation ('courtesies for the reader').

Note that good writing is not necessarily long writing – we are after **quality** not quantity.

What does a child need to learn to become a proficient writer?

Learning to write is a very complex task – besides having ideas for writing, the emergent student writer needs to be able to:

- learn **some basics about ‘what writing is’** (eg. writing is made up of sounds/letters, words, groups of words with spaces between words; writing moves from top to bottom/left to right);
- learn **what letters (including letter combinations) go with what sounds;**
- learn **how chunks of sounds flow into each other** (this is the beginning of spelling);

- think about the **meaning of words they might want to use** ('Is it the right word?');
- think about the **order or organization of words in a sentence** (based on their knowledge of English grammar);
- write **some high frequency words** (the most commonly used words) correctly;

- develop some **strategies for writing other words** they might want to use as well as they can;
- learn about **basic punctuation forms** and be able to use them to create a sentence;
- learn to **physically create and join together alphabet letters** (this is the beginning of printing or handwriting).

As they get older, children are expected to be able to apply all of these basic skills to:

- texts that have a **specific purpose in mind**, eg. narratives, reports, instructions;
- **texts across the curriculum**;
- **increasingly complex and sophisticated texts.**

This might mean:

- adding concise and relevant **detail** that elaborates on the main points;
- using different **sentence patterns** that are mainly grammatically correct;
- using more sophisticated **vocabulary** and **language features** that are appropriate to the purpose and topic;
- clear and logical **structure** and **paragraphing**.

Parents receive **reports ‘in plain English writing’** twice a year on their children’s progress in relation to school and national expectations.

WHAT CHILDREN DO AS THEY WRITE

- come up with **ideas for writing**;
- decide on the **purpose and audience** for their writing;
- decide on the **writing form**, eg. story, letter, newspaper report;
- **plan** their writing, eg. drawing a picture, coming up with ideas, brainstorming and sequencing ideas;
- **draft** their writing – recording all the ideas/words/sounds they can as well as they can – sometimes on every second line;

- **revise** their writing – re-read it for meaning;
- **edit** their writing – re-read it for impact;
- **proof-read** their writing – re-read it for grammar, spelling and punctuation;
- **receive feedback** from the teacher on the meaning, impact and ‘correctness’ of the writing;
- **publish** the writing, once it is 100% ‘correct’.

HOW CHILDREN LEARN WRITING SKILLS AND STRATEGIES

- By **regular writing**.
- By having **something to write about**.
- By **being exposed to quality writing**.
- By **receiving focussed instruction** on writing practices.

This means demonstrating, teaching and explaining new skills and strategies.

- By being encouraged to **write independently.**
- By **being affirmed as they take writing risks.**
- By **talking about reading, writing and books.**

**WHAT PARENTS CAN DO TO
HELP THEIR CHILDREN
BECOME BETTER WRITERS**

1) Talk with your child about the writing they are doing, especially at school.

2) Talk with your child about what they might want to write about.

This means helping them to come up with the details of their writing.

Remember that 'good writing floats on a sea of talk'.

3) Encourage your child to **'have a go' with new words** when they write.

Don't 'give them words' until they have had a go.

Don't expect 100% accuracy when children draft their writing.

4) Ask them questions as they write – for example;

‘What does that bit mean?’

‘What’s happening there?’

‘What’s going to happen next?’

5) Correct their writing efforts positively and constructively.

In doing this, you must accept that children will not always express ideas as adults will.

6) Praise them to the hilt when they are making a really good writing attempt.

This must include the impact/meaning of the writing as well as the grammar, spelling and punctuation.

Don't judge their ability as writers just on the spelling, punctuation and handwriting.

7) Give them **authentic writing challenges** – for example:

- blogging to friends/family
- keeping a diary
- writing (texting?) their own invitations
- writing (texting?) a letter of thanks
- writing serial stories for the family.

8) Let them **see you writing.**

Remember that:

Writing at school is where students need to be challenged.

Writing at home is where students need to **achieve success.**