

## Activities that Encourage Writing

### Making Menus

#### Materials:

8½" x 11" sheets of cardstock, pictures of various foods (save flyers from newspapers or catalogs), glue, scissors, crayons and markers, fake food for playing restaurant after the menus are made

#### Directions:

Cut out different foods that your child likes and glue them onto the cardstock. (You can fold the poster board in half to make it like a book, or leave it as is—your preference). Label each food item on the menu with the crayons and markers. This helps your child associate meaning with symbol. Feel free to decorate your menu and use it at home for meal times or to play restaurant.

### Cheerio Bracelet

#### Materials:

Pipe cleaners, Cheerios (or any unbranded cereal O)

#### Directions:

Pour a pile of Cheerios on the table in front of your child. Have him or her pick up the Cheerios and string them on the pipe cleaner. When finished, twist the pipe cleaner around your child's wrist as a bracelet. Safety tip: Always check to make sure your pipe cleaner does not have a sharp, pointy end. If it does, you can often bend it a bit to make it safer for your child.

## Activities that Encourage Writing (continued)

### Make Your Own Mailbox

#### Materials:

Tissue boxes, construction paper, glue, markers, paint, crayons

#### Directions:

Have kids decorate their own mailbox to use at home to write notes to family members.

Activities Source: [http://www.kdl.org/kids/go/pgr\\_development\\_activities#writing](http://www.kdl.org/kids/go/pgr_development_activities#writing)

Every Child Ready to Read is a project of the Association for Library Service to Children and the Public Library Association, divisions of the American Library Association.

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## Overview

Whether your child is four days old or four years old, it is not too early or too late to help him or her develop important literacy and pre-reading skills. Doing this now will make it easier for your child to learn to read when he or she starts school.

Five of the best ways to help your child get ready to read are

- Talking
- Singing
- Reading
- Writing
- Playing

These practices are easy to do with children of all ages and can be done at home, at the doctor's office, in the car, or anywhere you and your child spend time together.

This handout's focus is on writing.



## Writing = Getting Ready to Read

Reading and writing go together. Both are ways to represent spoken words and to communicate information or tell stories. Children become aware that printed letters stand for spoken words as they see print used in their daily lives. They see their parents and other adults read newspapers, food labels, road signs, and mail. They watch caregivers write lists, jot down reminders, or make notes on a calendar. Children develop a knowledge of the purpose and meaning of reading through writing.

Once your child can grasp a thick crayon or marker, give him or her unlined paper and plenty of opportunities to draw and write. As children scribble and draw, they practice eye-hand coordination and exercise the muscles in their fingers and hands. This helps develop the fine motor control they need to hold a pencil and to write letters and words.

Talk to your child about what he or she draws, ask questions, and respond to what your child says. You also can make up a story to go with the drawing.

Encourage your children to "sign" their name on their drawings. Even if this begins as a scribble, children learn that they can

write something that represents their name. Later your child will write the initials of his or her first and last name and then the complete name.

Ask your child to label parts of his or her drawings. This also helps your child understand that letters and words stand for things.

## Everyday Activities to Get Ready to Write

- Using scissors (It's OK if your child can't cut on a line at first)
- Coloring, scribbling, painting, and drawing
- Writing with an adult. For example, help your child create a play grocery list when you write yours.
- Playing with play dough. Rolling the dough into small balls or blocks is especially good!
- Stamping paper with rubber stamps
- Opening and closing twist-top jars or bottles
- Building with interlocking blocks such as Legos
- Picking up small objects like Cheerios
- Hole punching
- Manipulating paper—folding, tearing, wadding it into balls