

Question:

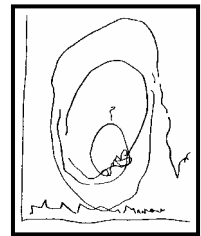
I want my child to be a good reader....What do I need to do?

You are off to a good start by sending your child to Head Start! However, we need your help. Good readers 1) have someone to talk with them about 2.5 hours per day, 2) have someone to read to them several times each week, and 3) have lots of opportunities to write. Children are not in Head Start enough hours for all of this to occur!

EMAA Head Start parents have LOTS of excellent ideas on how our children can become good readers. We will be handing out “EMAA Parents Ideas to Promote Literacy” later this year. In addition, here are some specific ideas that help children to become good readers.

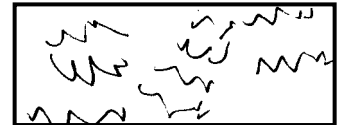
LEARNING TO WRITE

1. *Can you tell the difference between your child's drawing a picture and writing?*
If you are not sure, ask your child to draw him or herself, and then write their name. Here is a 3-year-old's picture with a signature below:



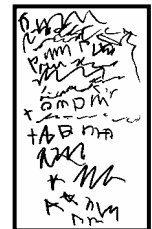
2. *Identify your child's current stage of writing:*

Stage 1. Scribble writing: Children need lots and lots of practice at this stage before the next stage appears. Ask Head Start staff for scrap paper if you need more!



Stage 2. A few letter-like forms appear among the scribbles.

Stage 3. Mock letters: are letter-like forms with perhaps a few actual letters. At this stage, it is time to keep a copy of the alphabet nearby.



Stage 4. Writing with and practicing letters. Some children write a variety of letters; other concentrate on one or just a few. (Note: at this stage, children may appear to go back to scribbling. Actually, they may be just imitating our form of cursive writing.) Here is an example of a 5-year-old's writing:



IDEAS

- When your child asks, “What are you writing?” take this opportunity: a) to explain and b) to encourage your child to do the same.
- Let your child watch you write.
- Store writing tools in a place where your child (and you!) can always find them. Teach your child (as well as yourself) to always put them away in this spot. Where is this spot?

Establish Rules: What are your rules?

1. What can your child write on? Some parents do not mind children writing on themselves; others have a rule that “Writing goes on paper only.” Be consistent.
- 2.. Where can your child write? Some children who know that writing always goes on paper are allowed to write anywhere. Other families say, “Write only on a table.”