

Bright Horizons at Long Ridge



READY for SCHOOL News:

Building Young Writers

Do you remember the excitement of first learning that the marks you made on paper communicated a thought that someone else could read? Learning to write can be thrilling. It can also become a chore if presented as an expectation rather than as a fun, purposeful activity. The goal of encouraging children to write at home is to keep it interesting and fun in order to build a love of writing. Initially children may tell you they are writing, but their marks won't look like much like the letters you know. They may show you a series of small lines and say "That says 'puppy!'" Later they will try to copy letters. You can give a model that they can copy from. As they become more competent, they will want to create letters without first seeing a model. Invented spelling, where children write the word as they think it sounds, is a developmental stage which later leads to more adult writing. It is appropriate and something to encourage. Children who use invented spelling will transition to standard spelling and writing as they are ready.

Here are a few thoughts for suggested activities at home to encourage writing:

- Have your child create invitations for their own birthday party or a sibling's party, a family gathering, etc. Your child can write the "master" and then you can photocopy the rest. The original can be copied letters or original writing.
- Give your child a disposable camera, show her how to use it and let her take photographs. When the film is developed, let her write a few words about each picture. An alternative is having your child dictate a description of each picture and you write it down. Either way, your child's words are recorded. Mount the pictures and descriptions in a photo album.
- Have your child write signs for your home, such as "Brush your teeth" or "Don't walk in the garden" which can be posted in appropriate places.
- Your child can help you write the weekly grocery list. Offer a grocery circular and have him copy favorite item names onto the list.
- Some children prefer writing on the computer. Their skills with the mouse may be stronger than their fine motor skills needed to manipulate a pencil. Offer both opportunities.

There is a huge feeling of pride in creating your own writing and having it be used in a purposeful way. Offering your child lots of fun opportunities to write and to feel successful can help build a lifelong interest in the written word.

Resource:

Neuman, S. B.; Copple, C.; & Bredekamp, S. (2000). *Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Important Dates

September 15-October 15 is National Hispanic Heritage month!

Curriculum Night
Wednesday, October 8th
6:00pm-7:00pm

The center will be closed October 13th
for Columbus Day

Reasons to Celebrate

Happy Birthday!

Liv A.-8th

Matthew I.-9th

Alina K.-14th

Ms. Wisline-9th

Ms. Brianne-24

Happy Anniversary!

Ms. Nicole- 6yrs 8th

Ms. Nadia-10yrs 21st

Ms. Shatorra-1yr 30th

Connect with Bright Horizons



Classroom Highlights



In the Nurseries our older babies discovered the world of bubbles by watching them float up into the air and trying to catch or stomp them. This activity allowed the children to develop self-concept as they learned about themselves and the world around them. Language development as the children listened to new words that described the bubbles: "light", "fly", "up", "down", and "pop". The toddlers joined us in this fun activity!



Our toddlers explored colors through sensory and science activities. They worked on a big mural using red and yellow paint, glue, pom-poms, glitter, feathers and foam pieces. They also talked about healthy foods. After reading the book *Alphabet Salad*, the children named their favorite fruit, then examined apples, strawberries, bananas and oranges as they cut and mixed their own yummysalad!

The preschoolers have been working on building a caring and kind community in their classroom through games, songs, role plays and stories. As part of Our World curriculum, they are learning *All about Me and My Family*. Each day the children are being introduced to the new steps of Handwriting without Tears and Everyday math. In Kindergarten Prep we are talking about community helpers, experimenting with inclines, and learning about airplanes. The children are excited to record their daily experience in their writing journals.



In the Art Studio all classes are creating open ended projects with a variety of materials. The Kindergarten Prep class recently explored mixed-media on glossy paper. They enjoyed how the paper responded to their pens, pencils, and oil pastels. Preschool 1 and 3 are in the midst of collaborative murals. The collaborative process allows the children to develop social and emotional skills while they explore the material.

READY for SCHOOL News

READY for SCHOOL Parent News: Stages of Children's Writing

Learning to write is a significant developmental milestone in young children's lives. Writing and reading go hand in hand, and the development of one encourages the development of the other. Like so many other aspects of development, writing skills generally unfold in a predictable sequence. The typical stages that children's writing follows are listed below. The ages accompanying these stages are rough guidelines and vary widely.

1. **Making a mark:** (18 months to 2 ½ years) Through experimentation, children discover that the writing instrument they are holding (crayon, marker, pencil) can "make a mark." Initially, children discover this as they experiment with cause and effect relationships, but later, making marks becomes more purposeful. The "doing" of the mark is more important than the end product to toddlers and twos. This stage includes experimenting with all the different ways to make marks, including scribbling, jabbing, or marking back and forth. The sheer joy of making marks is the focus. Older infants or young toddlers may experiment with making a mark, but it becomes more deliberate in older toddlers and twos.
2. **Marks have a meaning:** (2 ½ to 4 years) Sometimes unintentionally, children look at the marks they have made and think they look like something. This is the very beginning of deliberate writing – marking for a purpose. Children will wonder, "How do I make that again?" Some marks might be designated as pictures, while others are designated as writing of some sort, i.e., "That says 'Michael'." The marks may all look the same to adults, but they mean something different to children. Gradually the marks children make for writing begin to look different from the marks used for drawing. At the same time, young children begin to understand that adults use written letters and words to communicate. Understanding that writing has meaning is a powerful motivator.
3. **Marks begin to resemble letters:** (3 ½ to 5 years) Children often start first drawing lines or lots of lines next to each other. Or they may draw lines of scribbling versus circular scribbling. Either way, it begins to more closely resemble letters or even cursive writing. Eventually children move to "mock letters" which resemble letters, but aren't exactly letters (i.e., an E with five horizontal line instead of three). This is typical around age 4. Mock letters typically contain many of the strokes in real letters – straight lines and curves.
4. **Writing more closely resembles standard letters:** (4 to 6 years) Children come to understand that there are a finite number of letters. Mock letters are used less frequently.
5. **Writing includes "mock words":** (4 ½ to 6 years) Children write standard letters in groupings that resemble words, but aren't actual words.
6. **Phonics-based spelling:** (5 to 6 years) Children attempt to write words the way they think they sound. This is typical for many kindergarten-age children.

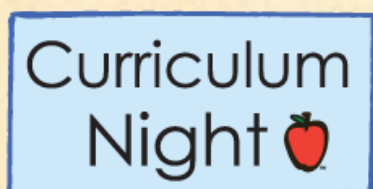
A few ways to encourage children in their writing:

1. Keep a well-stocked writing center in your home with lots of different types of paper (lined and unlined, construction paper, small tablets, etc.) and writing tools (crayons, fat and thin pencils, pens, etc.). You can also add clip boards, erasers, rulers, sample letters to copy, etc. Add new materials occasionally to keep your child's interest.
2. Ask your child to tell you about her written work.
3. Encourage your child to tell stories. Either write down what he says or have him attempt to write it down with support as needed. Write grocery lists, invitations for play dates, or emails to relatives and friends.
4. Offer play dough, lacing cards, manipulatives and small blocks to help build the fine motor muscles necessary for writing.
5. Keep early writing experiences fun and playful. Make them meaningful and relevant whenever possible. For example, children generally gain more from writing a letter to grandma than from completing workbook pages.

Schickedanz, J. A. & Casbergue, R. M. (2005). *Writing in Preschool: Learning to Orchestrate Meaning and Marks*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association

Bright Horizons News

Curriculum Night 2014: "A Day in the Life"



Experience a "Day in the Life" of your child at Curriculum Night 2014. Parents in all age groups are invited to join us for an orientation into your child's upcoming year with Bright Horizons.

During the event you and your family will have the opportunity to: familiarize yourselves with your child's classroom schedule and activities, see how the various pieces of *The World at Their Fingertips*® curriculum are brought to life each day, and meet with your child's teachers to ask questions and discuss learning objectives for the upcoming year.

Share in your Bright Horizons experience and invite your friends and family to join you at Curriculum Night. Please see your Center Director or your child's teacher if you have questions or would like more information about Curriculum Night.

REGISTER NOW: September installment of the Family Matters Webinar Series!

Family Matters

A Bright Horizons Webinar Series

Parenting: Being Proactive and Positive
Tuesday, September 16, 1:00 pm EST

www.brighthorizons.com/positive

Bright Horizons Family Solutions,® presenting in collaboration with guest speaker Amy McCreedy of [Positive Parenting Solutions](http://www.brighthorizons.com/positive), is bringing you the next installment of the Family Matters Webinar Series on positive school-age discipline.

Join us during this webinar to learn and explore proactive parenting techniques that will help to fulfill your child's emotional need, foster good behavior, and eliminate the power struggle that often fuels bad behavior.