

Talking to Kindergartners about Their Writing

"Have grand expectations and honor children where they are." ~N.E.

- Wow! How did you learn how to make those M's so well?
- Aren't you amazed at how much you write in kindergarten?
- I can tell you sure love being a writer.
- I bet you're proud of yourself. Are you?
- And what are you doing as a writer today?
- Can I tell the class about the brilliant thing you did in your writing today?
- Remember the first week of school when you used lots of capital letters? Now you remember to use lowercase...
- ...Oh, you could make a book about that—just like Eric Carle does!
- You just automatically know how to write the word love "by heart?" Wow! You are really growing as a writer.
- You are becoming a prolific writer. Every day you write and write...
- I bet you will want to keep a writing-and-drawing notebook over the summer.
- When you leave spaces between your words like that, it is so easy to read your writing.
- Now you get to make a sign so we can read all about your block building!
- Yes! You did it! You used lowercase letters!
- Look at all the details in your drawing... it is so realistic...
- I see you know how to spell the beginning of ...
- You knew the first letter/sound in that word. Good job listening for sounds!
- Wow! You carefully used five colors. That helps make a quality illustration!
- You remembered the capital letter at the beginning of the sentence and the period at the end of the sentence—good job remembering those important writing details.
- Wow! How did you figure that out?
- You'll get to make some more really cool books at the writing center.
- Aren't you proud of your writing progress? Writing is both hard work—and so much fun!
- What an interesting new word! You are such a voracious vocabulary learner!
- You remembered how to write another word "by heart!" Good remembering!
- You worked on that writing piece over several days; that's called perseverance. Good writers practice perseverance.
- Look at what this prolific writer did today!

Talking to Kindergartners about Their Daily Writing, continued...

- Look, you remembered “-ing” from the King of -ing! Let’s highlight that with yellow.
- That reminds me of what author and illustrator Eric Carle does...
- I noticed you used many different colors and details...
- You get to read and write every day in kindergarten.
- Isn’t it fun to be able to write special messages like that?
- I bet you’re the kind of boy who will always love to write.
- What have you learned this week as a writer?
- I noticed you used a new punctuation mark in your writing today.

What “choice words” and phrases do you use to honor your “Kid Writers”?

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To build emotional resilience, research says, “Praise children’s efforts, perseverance, and willingness to try new things—not how smart they are.” Specific encouragement is much more helpful than generic praise...

Read *Choice Words: How Our Language Affects Children’s Learning* by Peter Johnston, Stenhouse, 2004.

Read *Opening Minds: Using Language to Change Lives* by Peter Johnston, Stenhouse, 2012

Read everything posted by Jacque Verall (NBCT) on the Mentor Kindergarten Chat Board. She has powerful insights into positive discipline and building intrinsic motivation for learning.

Why is daily authentic writing so important?

***Unexpectedly high-achieving schools do two to six times as much authentic reading and writing. The results speak for themselves.**

***Writing is the place where phonemic awareness is authentically practiced and learned.**