

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. I know I’m proud of 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”? What good writing!
- 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 used even more than five colors...
- You remembered the capital letter at the beginning of the sentence and the period at the end of the sentence—good job remembering!
- 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 so much fun!
- What a wonderful new word! You are voracious vocabulary learner!
- You remembered how to write another word “by heart”! Good Remembering!

Talking to Kindergartners About Their Writing, continued...

- Look, you remembered “-ing” from the King of -ing! Let’s highlight that with yellow.
- That reminds me of what author/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 wonderful to be able to write special messages like that?
- I can tell you’re the kind of person who will always love to write.
- What have you learned this week as a writer?
- I noticed you tried a new “expensive” word 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 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.

***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.**