



# Growing readers!

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## When writing is hard

Let's face it: Not all kids love to write. For some, it's hard to come up with anything to write about. Other kids have a lot to say, but it's hard to get the ideas written down in a meaningful way. For a small percentage of children, every step of the writing process is difficult — from processing the ideas to forming the letters to write to conveying the right message. These children may have dysgraphia, a learning disability that affects writing. Kids with dysgraphia may struggle with spelling, poor handwriting and getting their ideas onto paper. Learn more about dysgraphia and ways you can help your child.

### Young children

It's important to recognize when there's a problem and to know who to turn to for help. If your young child has a tight or awkward pencil grip, avoids writing, and has trouble forming letter shapes, talk to your child's teacher.

Preschool and kindergarten teachers can often offer other types of writing paper and pencils to find something more comfortable for your child. They can also help you understand how to teach proper pencil grip and provide suggestions for fun ways to practice letter formation.

### School-age children

School-age children may exhibit other signs of difficulty. These include illegible handwriting, avoiding writing, and having difficulty completing a writing assignment that makes sense. Often these kids have to focus so much on the act of writing that they omit simple words or really simplify what they want to say as a way to use easier words and shorter sentences.

Parents can provide support by having their child type assignments when possible, and structure homework time to allow for extra time for completion. When reading a draft, focus on the content of the writing rather than the neatness or the spelling. Once the content reflects what the child wants to say, turn your attention to some of the more mechanical aspects of writing, like spelling and punctuation.