

Star Rating System for writing

This reflects the different levels of writing development that children naturally go through. As you have been writing with your child over the past weeks, you will probably be able to see where your child is currently at. The idea in writing is to look at the next stage and gradually build on the skills they have in order to begin to work at the next level. If your child is at the very beginning of independent writing skills, then that is where you start, looking at the next stage so that you know what to talk about and encourage as they work.

This applies to each stage. Do not try and cram in every aspect of the next stage all at once, focus on one idea at a time. It's what we do at school!!

Writing is complex and not straight forward.

Don't worry about where your child is at, what is important is that we consolidate what they know and begin to move them on in small steps.

Remember - they all learnt to walk and talk at different ages, similarly they will all learn to read, and write at different stages.

Here is the same sentence shown in each star rating - The elephant has got big ears.

★ **theelfhsgbgees** - no finger spaces between words, hearing mainly first and last sound, able to spell tricky word the for themselves (we could all do that in March!). Still needing you to prompt what they were trying to write, unable to read back for themselves, can't remember what it says. So ask them to tell you their sentence several times before starting, encourage them to sound out aloud for you, help them to re-read as they finish each word, remind them to leave finger spaces, help them to hear middle sound.

★★ **the elift hasgot big eeyus** - We now have most finger spaces, hearing more sounds. Remembering sentence for themselves and beginning to read back with some independence. Now is the time to talk about a capital letter at the beginning and a full stop at the end. Remind about all finger spaces. Encourage adding a second sentence.

★★★ **The elefant has got big eers. He has a long trunc soa he can get worter.** - Using more of the sounds they know. Thinking up own sentence and holding it in their head while they write. Needing less adult support. To move on, look at the next set of tricky words online (Letters and sounds, phase 3), begin to learn how to read them, write them on a list for your child so that when writing they can refer to them and spell them correctly eg so. Encourage them to become more adventurous with the words they use, extending a sentence using words such as and, because. You could start and build simple stories, adding a few sentences each day, this helps build writing stamina, gives practice reading back what they have written and then gives a sense of pride that they have written at length without feeling daunted at the outset.

Please, always encourage your child to form letters correctly as bad habits are incredibly

Writing alongside your child is always a good way of engaging them. Give a running commentary about how you are going about writing down your ideas.

It could go something like this

mmm, what shall I say about an elephant, I know, I'm going to write, The Elephant has got big ears. Let me say my sentence again so that I can remember it. What was my first word... The! Oh I know how to spell that one, right.... The my next word is elephant, let me listen to all the sounds I might need e-l-ee-f-n-t. I'll need a finger space first though. Then show your child how you are leaving your finger space, resound the word out loud as you write each letter. Now I'm going to see what I've written, I'm going to point to each word as I read. Let me think what my next word is going to be The elephant.... Has. Let me sound out has. h-a-s... I mustn't forget my finger space though. etc

At the end I would then re-read my whole sentence pointing to each word as I read.

I know it sounds laborious, but it really motivates the children and helps them see the thought processes needed to become a writer. As your child becomes more confident and independent, your 'commentary' will change. To something like this.....

'I know what I'm going to write, The elephant has got big ears. I can write the, oh, but I must remember a capital letter because it's the first word., oh and I need to remember finger spaces. Now I need to think about the word elephant. e-l-ee-f-n-t, now I know the sounds I'm going to say them again , but write them down at the same time so that I make sure that I don't miss any out. Now I've got The elephant, what's next ? The elephant... has got big ears. I can do 'has got big'. Now I just need ears, ee- y-ur-z. I know how to write the ee sound, oh and the ur is in the middle of the word so it will be ur, not er, and it sounds like it's 'z' at the end but I know that it will be a 's'