

Pointers For Parents

Teaching Children The Art Of Written English

(NAPSA)—With instant messaging, texting and e-mail as primary sources for “written” communication today, many children are growing up without enough practice and understanding on how to structure their thoughts formally in written English.

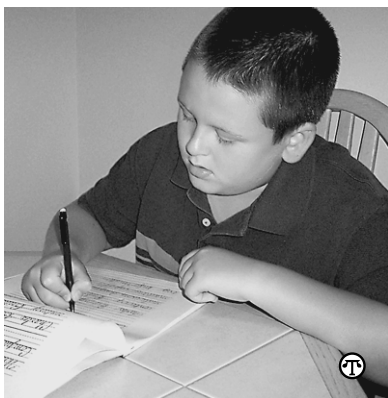
A recent study found that 64 percent of U.S. teenagers use slang in their written schoolwork, including abbreviations like LOL (38 percent) and smiley face emoticons (25 percent). More alarming, only 56 percent of teens surveyed considered “good writing” to be essential later in life. Many parents, recognizing this, lament that writing, at least as they know it, is becoming a lost art.

Exposure to well-written literature, on a wide range of topics, can help children develop an eye for good writing skills. Students will begin to notice varied sentence structure, proper use of grammar, compelling and effective arguments and vivid descriptions.

Kumon Math & Reading Centers offers a number of tips for parents to encourage youngsters to develop their writing skills:

- **Read essays, short stories and editorials:** Reading shorter, well-written pieces broadens children’s knowledge of the world and exposes them to excellent, concise writing, similar to that required on standardized writing tests. The editorial pages of your local newspaper are a great resource. When selecting short stories or essays, children should choose works that interest them. Consult with your child’s teacher or librarian for help.

- **Keep a journal:** Writing requires practice. By writing daily or weekly in a journal, children become more comfortable with putting their thoughts down on paper.



It’s important for children to learn how to communicate through the written word.

- **Enter a contest:** There are thousands of children’s writing contests held each year. Children’s magazines often sponsor such events. Speak with your child’s teacher to see if there are any school or local contests for young writers in your area.

- **Take part in a writing or debate club:** This is an excellent way for children to hone their writing skills in a supportive environment. By participating in a debate club, children learn how to develop arguments, support claims with evidence and deliver a pointed message succinctly. Great writers and debaters know how to construct an effective and influential argument backed by supporting evidence. Writing clubs provide students with a creative outlet that enables them to write about subjects they might be unable to explore in the classroom. If neither club exists in your community, help your child start his or her own. In both cases, children have the opportunity to let their own voices come through in their writing.

To learn more, visit the Web site at www.kumon.com.