

Family Living

“Write” tips for parents

Remember the film clips of Tiger Woods as a toddler, swinging around a wee-sized club, grinning grandly? Little Tiger, who didn't know how to play golf, learned to play by playing golf.

Think about how children learn to walk: By walking! they arrive hard-wired with the formula: Grab a table leg. Pull up. A tentative sideways step. Boom—the bottom hits the floor. Let's try that again!

Trying over and over is, in fact, the fun of it. (Much later we get this odd notion that trying—but not quite getting—is negative “failure.”) Similarly, children who are around people who talk to them pick it up themselves.

Experts say that we aren't “taught” to talk, we do it on our own.

Writing researchers have noticed that we happily encourage young ones to operate their “Hard-wired” talking and walking formulas for learning: Try, try, and try again. We even heartily applaud attempts failing far from the mark.

So why, when it comes to writing, do we expect children to get it right off the bat writing researchers wonder?

Kids are natural-born writers. From an amazingly early age, they're willing and eager to scribble you their very best thinking, their very best analysis of their pint-sized world. They, in fact, are learners at work, and parents and caretakers can help keep it going.

Here are some writing tips that parents can use throughout the year from Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory writing-assessment expert Vicki Spandel.

• **Let your child see that you enjoy writing**, she advises, and that it is an important skill for everyday life.

• **Let your child see that writing is really thinking**—it's thinking out loud on paper (a notion that many adults may not have realized).

• **Be a writer yourself**—Be a writer, and get help from your child. You probably do lots of writing of various kinds in the normal course of living: grocery lists, to-do lists, postcards, reports, letters.

• **Ask for help**—Ask your child to help you plan your writing: How should we begin? What should we say? How do we end it? Is it too long or wordy? Did we say enough? Should we use this word here? I'm

not sure I spelled this right. Will you hand me the dictionary please?

• **Encourage letters**—Letter writing is a great way to encourage your child in the writing process. Pen pals can be fun, and notes to relatives are treasured.

What happens if we're uncomfortable with punctuation? There's no need to get in a frazzle about commas and semicolons and where to put the darn things.

Writing is about expressing thoughts, says Spandel, author of a parents' guide, and the only reason for a comma—or a period, for that matter—is to help make the thought and meaning clear to the reader.

Good writers think of punctuation marks as traffic signals at an intersection. They keep ideas from crashing into each other, or to prevent the reader from getting into the wrong lane.

Writing well is important to your child's adult future, but that's not the most important reason to encourage your child to write. For now, your child's job is learning, and an important reason for a kid to write is that it helps them to think and to learn.

Tracking children's well-being

The Federal Agency Forum on Child and Family Statistics released in Washington, D.C., a new report that offers a composite picture of the well-being of the nation's children.

“America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being,” presents 25 key indicators on critical aspects of children's lives, including their behavior and social environment, economic security, education, and health.

The National Science Foundation (NSF) is one of eight agencies contributing to the new report.

“This highly informative report on our nation's children represents an important new use of statistical information available from many sources in the federal government,” says Bennett Bertenthal, a cognitive development psychologist and head

of NSF's directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences.

“As researchers, we know that data measuring our children's lives are like individual stars; only by studying the stars, or statistics, in relation to each other, do we begin to see important patterns—a constellation that is far greater than the sum of its parts,” says Bertenthal. “By combining information on numerous topics, this report enables us to gain a better perspective on the whole of our children's lives, and to understand how each facet is related to the others.”

“The value of the report will be realized in future years, as we monitor these and other indicators to learn how children's lives are changing with changes in their environments,” Bertenthal says.

The Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics was founded in 1994 and formally established by Executive Order 13045 to foster coordination and collaboration in the collection and reporting of Federal data on children and families.

Statistical agencies within the departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, Labor, the National Science Foundation and the Office of management and Budget.

For copies of the full report, contact the National Maternal and Child Health Bureau Clearinghouse, (703) 356-1964, or see the National Center for Health Statistics home page:

<http://www.edc.gov/nchswww/nchshome.htm>



BACK TO SCHOOL FASHIONS

Standing tall. Boots are back-to-school “shoes” of choice for juniors this fall. Sears features the Canyon River Blues “Humbug” camel nubuc boots.

Scholarship Auction

Child Support For Children will be holding an auction on October 18, 1997 at The Tiffany Center in Portland, Oregon. The purpose of the auction is to raise scholarship funds to aid graduating seniors statewide who are experiencing financial difficulty attending college due to the non-payment of child support. Individuals and businesses interested in donating either items, services, gift certificates for auction or funds, can call Child Support For Children at (503) 622-3588. All donations are tax deductible and must be received no later than September 1, 1997. Tickets for the auction will be available beginning in August. The children of Oregon need everyone's help. Child Support for Children is a statewide non-profit organization which deals with the issues of child support through education and advocacy to all individuals in need of assistance.

Birth Announcements

Isaiah Alexander Talton

Male; July 1, 1997
8lbs 2oz; 21 Inches
Mother: Anita Bailey
Father: Idris Talton

Savana Sylest Brogdon

Female; June 22, 1997
6lbs 12oz; 19 Inches
Mother: Patricia Center
Father: Harry Brogdon

Conner Christian Nelson

Male; July 2, 1997
8lbs 10oz; 19&1/2 Inches
Mother: Judith E. Slayden
Father: Cleon N. Conner

Brandon DeVal Redeau

Male; July 11, 1997
7lbs 4.5oz; 20 Inches
Mother: Tania Louise McPherson
Father: Terry DeVal Redeau

Happy Birthday Duane Washington!



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1.17 lb.

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- First 2 cartons
- SAVE up to 77¢



88¢

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