



Dear Parents,

Sharing in class will be a writing experience as well as an oral language experience. Your child may bring the item about which he/she has chosen to write. I am hoping that all students will participate each week on their sharing day. Please help them be prepared!

Your child, _____, may share on _____.

I have reprinted excerpts from a journal article to help you develop a "writing suitcase" for your child. The article suggests items to prepare your child's "suitcase." However, a "suitcase" may be a paper bag and the items may simply include paper, crayons, and a pencil.

You and your child will use this writing suitcase to prepare for his/her weekly sharing day. **It is up to the child** to decide what he or she will do, but let me offer a few suggestions to get you started:

- 1) Draw a picture and write a sentence about the item chosen. In the beginning, your child may wish to tell you the sentence and have you write it. This is fine; soon they will discover that they can do it themselves with help from you in spelling and spacing, etc.
- 2) Cut a picture from the newspaper or from a magazine. Dictate or write a sentence or two about it.
- 3) Dictate or write a story and then illustrate it.
- 4) Fold or staple paper together to make their own short story or picture book.
- 5) Cut out a picture of food and write the recipe. (It may sound silly, but that's fine.)
- 6) Copy a sentence or two from a favorite book and then illustrate it.
- 7) Collect items of interest and excitement throughout the week that will remind your child of an experience and write about it.
- 8) Be creative! These are only suggestions. The older your child becomes and the more practice he/she has with written language, the better he/she will be at writing.

As the year progresses, length and detail of the writing should increase, as will your child's interest and ability in reading and writing.

Thank you for your help and guidance. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to call. I will get back to you as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

What Goes Into a Writing Suitcase?

The following list may be used in preparing a writing suitcase. These relatively inexpensive materials are available in most homes. Other similar items that encourage drawing, writing, and reading might also be appropriate. A Writing Suitcase is a great way for parents to build children's interest in reading and writing.

- paper: various sizes, shapes color, textures, lined and unlined, notebooks, tablets, grocery pads, 3 x 5 cards
- pencils: dark color leads, large primary
- crayons: large and small
- markers: fat and thin, all water colors
- letters: magnetic, plastic, stencils, cardboard
- books: favorite picture books
- scissors: for right or left-handed children as needed
- tape: masking, transparent, colored cloth
- glue: white liquid, paste
- stapler: child sized
- hold punch:
- ruler or straight edge
- chalk and chalkboard
- white board and markers

How is it used?

After selecting the most appropriate items for the Writing Suitcase, conference with the children and/or parents, and explain how important it is for children to draw and write, as both skills are so closely related.

- Ask the child to be in charge of the Writing Suitcase by returning all materials.
- Add other items to the Suitcase if the child agrees, as it is the child's personal space.
- Change the books regularly to offer a variety.

Parents and teachers can demonstrate how valuable printed materials are through everyday activities that give children the experiences which will make the Writing Suitcase activities more meaningful.

- Read aloud each day to children. Let the child choose the book. Talk about the ideas or favorite parts.
- Read newspapers, books, and magazines for your own pleasure. Read signs, grocery labels, directions for putting toys together, recipes or any other printed words as you encounter them