

Little Authors

Whether your child is just beginning to write his letters or has graduated to entire paragraphs, he can be an author! From a simple counting book to an information-packed travel guide, these projects will boost your youngster's writing skills—and his confidence in himself as a writer.

Counting book

Ask your child to find items in your house to come in numbers from 1 through 10. Perhaps you have 1 refrigerator, 2 TVs, 3 candles, and 4 kitchen chairs. Lay out each set of items on a separate sheet of paper. Staple the pieces together into a book. Then, help your child write a sentence on every page. *Example:* "We have 4 chairs for 4 people."

Fill-in-the-blank story

Your youngster can write her own version of a favorite book with this idea. Read a story aloud to her. Afterward, write sentences from the book on sheets of paper, leaving blanks for the characters' names and for places and objects mentioned. Ask your child to fill in the blanks with new names, places, and things. She might use classmates' names, places she has visited, and items she likes. When she's finished, read her version to you. She'll see how much a story changes based on an author's choices.

Lift-the-flap riddles

Here's a clever way for your child to write riddles. Help him cut construction paper into quarters and staple the pieces together along one edge. He can make flaps by carefully cutting four smaller squares from another sheet of paper and gluing the top of each square onto a page. Next, have him write a riddle on each flap and the answer underneath. He



could get ideas by looking around the room, choosing an object, and thinking about what it does. *Example:* "I'm up and down, but you look the same, you see out. What am I? (A window.)"



My autobiography

Suggest that your youngster write about a familiar subject herself. Give her one sheet of paper for every year of her life, and talk about what might go on each page. For instance, she could find out how old she was when she started school, when her baby brother was born, or when you moved to a new home. She can draw a picture and write a sentence or paragraph about each event.

Publish it!

When your youngster completes a writing project, encourage her to share it using one of these ideas:

- Ask her to illustrate her story. Help her frame her picture and hang it on the wall.
- Add to your child's writing to your family book collection. She could hole-punch stories and put them in a binder or slip them into pages of a photo album. Let her display homemade books on top of a bookcase.
- Hold an "author celebration" when she finishes writing a story or book. Choose a special chair where she can sit and read it aloud to your family.
- Help your youngster type a story and email it to a relative or friend. Or she can write it on paper and mail it.

