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Executive Summary

How does journaling help kindergarten children become emergent writers?

Can 20-30 minutes of “unstructured” writing time in a kindergarten classroom help a student develop into an emergent writer? I believe that kindergarteners need a variety and multiple opportunities to write and use writing utensils, and see writing done to be good writers.

Journaling is one way that can give students a chance to experience writing. Prior to this study I was not using the writing journals that we had created effectively. Some of the assignments were lame and aimless. They were not geared to promote and allow students to write and think creatively. Doing research and using the Write More, Writing Works booklet allowed me to organize and create a journaling time slot in the After-School Program that was effective and fun for the students. Journaling allows students to write. The research that I did shows that my hypothesis was correct. Kindergarteners need an opportunity to write on variety of topics that interest them. Discussing the topics and allowing them to share their thoughts with their teachers and peers helps them to verbally think and talk about the topic. When they are allowed to write freely about the topic they build confidence and evidence that shows they exemplify more characteristics of an emergent writer.

As I reviewed all of the data that was collect: interviews, conferences, observations, student journals, student and parent surveys from January 2008 to March 2008 I noticed an overall improvement in all of my students. Some of the skills that I saw an improvement in was a difference in their overall writing abilities. Many children showed more characteristics of an emergent writer and some showed improvement in their confidence level. Overall, I was pleased with the results of the study; journaling can help kindergarteners become emergent writers.