

## **Daisy's, Violet's and Fish Oh My.** FLJ, Nov. 2013, John T. McMahan III

Writing in the literacy realm may play the biggest role in determining how successful your children will be and how fast they will progress through a given curriculum. Writing as we know goes hand in hand with reading and together may determine ultimate success. Getting your child writing at an early age is an important step to sticking their toe into the educational waters of early curriculum and instructional formation. This early formation of teaching can be lead and should be led by mom and dad. The earlier these educational connections can begin and be made habitual can be a wonderful and positive introduction into education but also reveling in family interconnectedness.

One of the first things we can do with our very young child is to get them a notebook of some type and begin journaling with them as soon as they can hold a pencil or pen. Journaling can commence with simply beginning to copy or create pictures to ultimately working with your child on the alphabet. As these initial journaling moments grow, a portfolio can be created by mom and dad and these initial creations can be the start of a portfolio continuum that grows on a daily or weekly basis. This portfolio allows mom and dad to collect and catalogue their child's writings and create a place that their child's work can be organized in one place and growth can be seen on a regular basis. It is also a fun place where your child can go back and review all the things they have created from day one and marvel at what they were thinking about or creating at an earlier time in their writings.

There are many places that you can share these writing moments with your child. I think one of those ways or places can be a naturalistic approach and get the family outside together. Parents can take their kids into the yard, meadows, woods or if you are lucky enough to live along a creek and have great interactions with the myriad of nature's delights that surround you. Questions can be asked and topics created that your child can journal about. Tell me about the prettiest flower in the meadow or what is your favorite colored rock in the creek and write a short paragraph about it. Nature can provide some of the best writing topics. Just ask Robert Frost. Naturalistic themes can provide some of the best conversation that you can have with your child and what an amazing way to spend some time with your family.

Another activity you can do in a naturalistic setting with your child is work on vocabulary. You can text your child words and have them tell you what the word is and what it means. This is a fantastic way to grow vocabulary with a 21<sup>st</sup> century flair. Amy Burzanko does this with her preschool son at McDonald's. As they are eating, she sends her son Ryan words that he will identify for her. What an awesome way to grow vocabulary. This would be a great way to journal as well. Electronic journals can be a way of getting your child to write. Electronic

portfolios can also be used, as folders of work can be saved and organized to review at a later date as together, you as a family can remark on the progress that your child has made writing.

Activities that you can share with your child in an educational setting can enhance learning while sharing precious family time can be some of the greatest memories you can make with your kids while complementing learning moments. Family time can have many faces and there is no better face than a daisy in the meadow, a fish in the creek or a violet on the edge of the woods.