

# Raising

A  
WRITER



Your in-house scribe will love these activities for budding writers

by Ann Douglas

So you've got a child who loves to write—the kind of kid who enjoys spending his spare time plugging away on the novel or screenplay that he hopes to pitch to Hollywood someday. Here are some kid-approved activities that are practically guaranteed to be a hit with your in-house scribe.

**A NOVEL PURSUIT:** Encourage your child to try his hand at writing a novel. (Who says you have to be a grownup to write a novel? Novelist Gordon Korman wrote his first book when he was 12 years old!)

**DO THE 'ZINE THING:** If your child is more journalistically inclined, help her to start her own 'zine (journalistic lingo for a small circulation publication). Hint: If she wants to keep costs to a minimum, she can publish her 'zine online. Then she won't have to pay for paper.

**MAP MAGIC:** Encourage your child to make a map of the land described in a book he just read. Whether he just voyaged to Oz, Narnia, the Land of Nod, or some other exotic locale, he can create a map that shows the locations depicted in the story.

**A DAY IN THE LIFE:** Create a photo album that captures a day in your child's life. Photograph your child before she gets out of bed in the morning, after she goes to bed in at night, and during every hour in between. (Set a kitchen timer so that you remember to take your child's photo at least once an hour.)

October



2005

One of an occasional series of tip sheets published by  
Page One Productions Inc.,  
3108 Frances Stewart Road,  
Peterborough, Ontario. K9H 7J8  
(705) 742-3265 (phone); 705-742-9672 (fax)  
[www.pageoneproductionsinc.com](http://www.pageoneproductionsinc.com)



Then, when you're ready to create your book, your child can write about what is happening in each of the photos.

### FAMILY TIME CAPSULE:

Help your child to create a time capsule that can be sealed up and then re-opened in five or ten years. Your child may want to interview older relatives, write a letter to himself at age 40, include lists of his current favorites (everything from movies to books to restaurant meals), and so on.

### WHAT'S COOKING?

Encourage your child to collect favorite recipes from friends and relatives and to write his own cookbook. He can give each of the recipes a wacky name and write a small blurb about the person who provided the recipe.

### ANYTHING-BUT-BORED

**GAME:** The only thing more fun than playing a board game when you're a kid is inventing your own. Provide your child with bristol board, markers, and any other art supplies you think she might need to make a truly fabulous board game. Remind her to include a set of rules so that all the players understand how the game is played. (This is where the writing fits in!)

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## About Ann Douglas

This tip sheet was written by pregnancy and parenting book author Ann Douglas, creator of *The Mother of All®* books series and author of the bestselling *The Mother of All Pregnancy Books*, *The Mother of All Baby Books*, *The Mother of All Toddler Books*, *The Mother of All Parenting Books*, and *The Mother of All Pregnancy Organizers*. She is currently writing *Sleep Solutions for Your Baby, Toddler, and Preschooler* and *Mealtime Solutions for Your Baby, Toddler, and Preschooler*. Both books will be published by Wiley Publishing Inc. in Spring 2006.

Visit Ann online for more tip sheets, articles, and resources for parents, as well as information about how you can arrange for Ann to speak to your group: [www.anndouglas.ca](http://www.anndouglas.ca).

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## HOW TO ENCOURAGE A RELUCTANT READER

Not every child considers writing to be fun. Here are some fun ways to encourage even the most reluctant of writers to give his or her writing skills a workout.

1. Encourage your child to play with words—literally.

Whip up a batch of homemade play dough or purchase some modeling clay so that your child can have fun making words and letters out of clay. Note: If your child wants to be able to keep the results of his labors, use a salt dough instead.

2. Smear a layer of shaving cream on a non-stick cookie sheet.

Then show your child how to write words in the shaving cream using his finger. For added fun, add a few drops of food coloring.

3. Give your child "the write stuff."

Give your child an assortment of brightly colored pens that positively glide across the page, as well as some colorful lined paper. Having some extra funky writing supplies may encourage your child to put pen to paper.

4. Tap into the power of pen pals.

Hook your child up with a pen pal—perhaps a long distance cousin or a friend who recently moved to another part of the country. It doesn't matter whether the letters zoom back and forth via snail mail or e-mail. What matters is that your child has a compelling reason to sit down at the keyboard and write.