Dear Friends,

During this time away from school, your child will be asked to do some writing as part as their set work. In class we have worked long and hard on building their confidence and self-esteem to have a go at writing. It is so, very, important that this time away from class doesn’t restrict your child’s confidence and ability to write. Therefore, I would be grateful if you could follow this guidance and if in doubt, get in touch, I will be pleased to help.

**So, what is ‘emergent’ writing?**

* Emergent writing “means that children begin to understand that writing is a form of communication and their marks on paper convey a message” (Mayer, 2007, p. 35).
* Emergent writing progresses along a developmental continuum. The stages a young child moves through begins with random marks and ends with conventional spelling.

The children in reception class are all able to sound out words and write the matching letter sounds, but they need a framework of support to do so. **Please do not write things down for them to copy out, it undermines their ability and undervalues their attempts at writing**. There is a place for copying and that is as a scaffold for independent writing; have an alphabet strip and phonics cards to hand and the ‘tricky words’ on cards for your child to refer to.

I will now run through how I would support a child to write. In week one I have asked the children to write about their home, so I will use this as an example. What follows is a script of an imagined scenario where I support a child in writing. **‘A’** represents adult’s voice, **‘C’**, the child.

**A** Tell me what you would like to say about your home. (If a child cannot speak a sentence, they won’t be able to write it!)

**C** House

**A** You live in a house, that’s right, you can write ‘I live in a house’. I, live, in, a, house, that’s four words. Do you know what to write first?

**C**  I (child writes I, referring to ‘tricky word list if necessary)

**A** Well done, it says I. Now, what comes next?

**C** Live. L, i, v. (Child writes the sounds that they hear, using an alphabet if necessary)

(Now, we all know that you spell live with an ‘e’ but, it doesn’t matter! What is important is that your child has independently written a word that can be read by themselves and others, that’s perfect!)

**A** Well done. You have written ‘I live’ (point to each word as you say it) What next?

**C** in (child writes in) a (child writes a) house. How do you write house?

(You will want to tell them, every part of you will want to make a correct spelling...resist the urge!!)

**A**  Sound it out with me, ‘h ou s’.

Child writes a version of ‘h ou s’ using their alphabet strip or phonics cards to help. It may be ‘has’, ‘hows’, ‘howz’, ‘howes’ or any other phonetically plausible word.

So they have written a sentence, brilliant. Now read it back together, pointing to each word as you go. Success! Repeat with another sentence.

Children in Reception have been taught about finger spaces and full stops. Prompt your child with ‘finger space’ before they write a new word and ‘what comes at the end of a sentence?’ when they have finished. Always get them to read back what they have written and praise, praise, praise!

I hope that this has helped, your child may be anywhere along the continuum of writing, the road to independence is a long and winding one!

Good luck!

Louise Leaf