JANE FARRALL

BUILDING LANGUAGE THROUGH EMERGENT WRITING

LITERACY INSTRUCTION AND INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

- Katims (2000) reviewed the history of teaching literacy to individuals with intellectual disability.

KATIMS AND THE HISTORY OF REDUCTIONIST LITERACY TEACHING

- Katims (2000) found that literacy had historically been taught in a hierarchical, highly sequenced way to this group. Additionally, the instruction used isolated skill and practice routines.
- He then reviewed current good practice in special education and noted that literacy instruction is moving towards contextualised and comprehensive literacy instruction.

WHAT IS WRITING?

- To write we need to think. We need language and ideas. We need to be able to produce a narrative.

- We also need to spell and to transcribe those ideas and language in some way.

- Many writing approaches used historically in special education focus on the transcription and don't address other skills needed for writing.

WRITING AND INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

- Writing is an area where instruction for students with disabilities has been done in isolated routines.
- Until recently, many special educators have seen copying, tracing, chunking and hand over hand as acceptable writing instruction.
- None of these approaches teach the diverse range of skills needed for writing.

المادة 1 يولد جميع الناس أحرارًا متساوين في الكرامة والحقوق. وقد وهبوا عقلاً وضميرًا وعليهم أن يعامل بعضهم بعضًا بروح الإخاء.

المادة 2 لكل إنسان حق التمتع بكافة الحقوق والحريات الواردة في هذا الإعلان، دون أي تمييز، كالتمييز بسبب العنصر أو اللون أو الجنس أو اللغة أو الدين أو الرأي السياسي أو أي رأي آخر، أو الأصل الوطني أو الإجتماعي أو الثروة أو الميلاد أو أي وضع آخر، دون أية تفرقة بين الرجال والنساء. وفضلاً عما تقدم فلن يكون هناك أي تمييز أساسه الوضع السياسي أو القانوني أو الدولي لبلد أو البقعة التي ينتمي إليها الفرد سواء كان هذا البلد أو تلك البقعة مستقلاً أو تحت الوصاية أو غير متمتع بالحكم الذاتي أو كانت سيادته خاضعة لأي قيد من القيود.

You could copy this Arabic text. Would it teach you anything about writing Arabic? You could copy this and other pieces of Arabic hundreds of time but would that teach you anything? Even if you spoke Arabic would that help you learn how the spoken language links to the written language? Copying DOES NOT teach students how to write!

WRITING AND INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

- Many individuals with disabilities have also not had the opportunity to learn about writing through emergent writing.

- Writing instruction has, instead, targeted techniques like "copying" which help the student to "look like a writer" without addressing all of the skills and understandings that emergent writers develop.

LET'S TALK ABOUT WRITING DEVELOPMENT

Oral Language Development ↔ Written Language Development
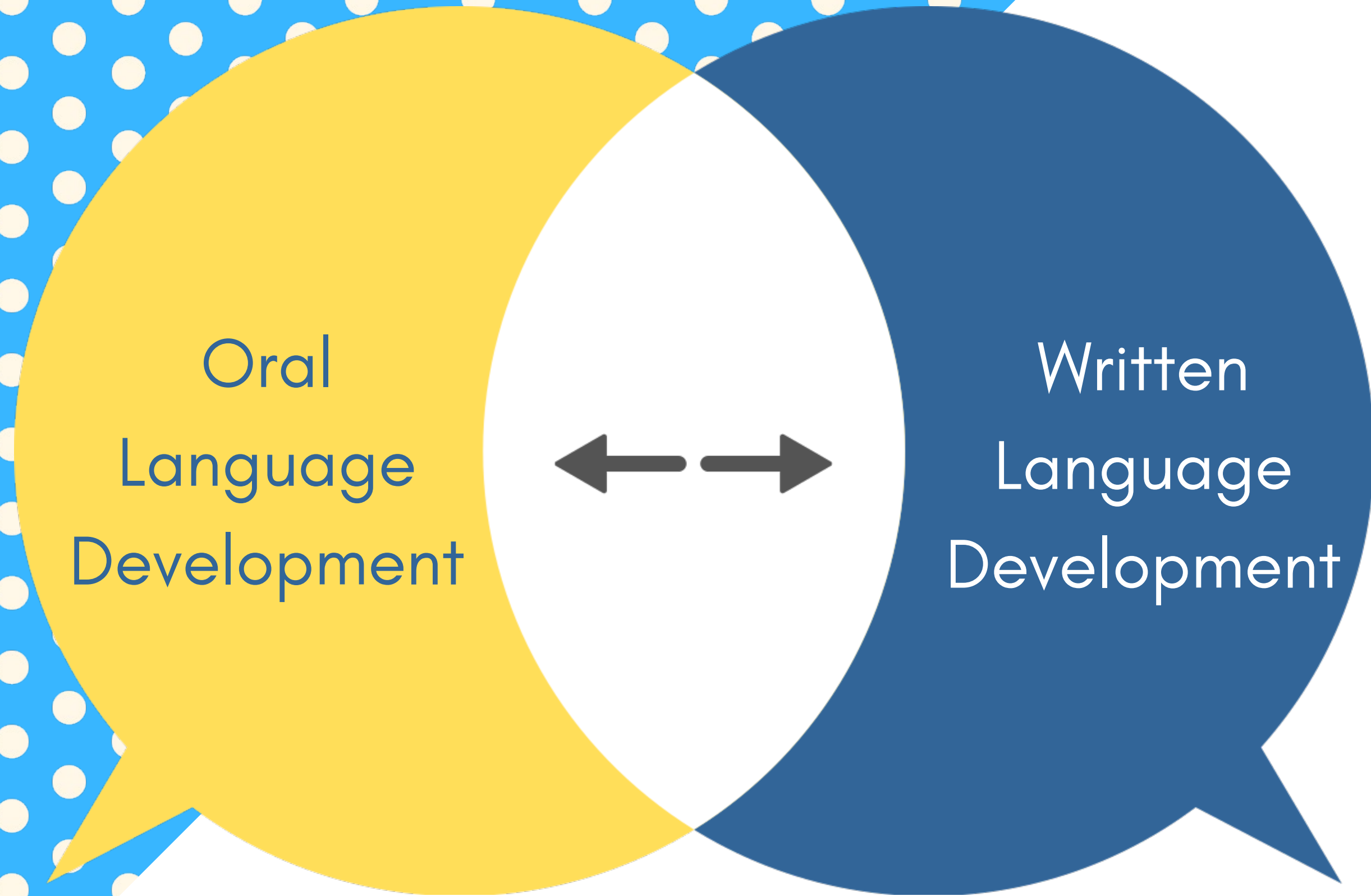
Berninger et al, 2006; Fey, Catts and Larivee, 1995; Scott, 2005; Sulzby, 1985; Tannen, 1982

WRITTEN AND ORAL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

- Bidirectional nature in the development of oral language and written language.
- Oral Language has a strong influence on writing development.
- Without a way to generate ideas and language, none of us could write.
- This also applies to emergent writers.

WRITTEN AND ORAL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

7 - 8 - 18

iovpuveghjvrp

i am in the park playing.

- Writing also has an influence on oral language development – particularly in the form of narratives.
- Emergent writing is often accompanied by a narrative from the writer around the writing.

WRITTEN AND ORAL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

- For emergent writers, their first writing efforts are initially translated by adults using oral language.

- For example, an adult might be drawing with a 14 month old. The adult suggests they draw a bear – and then attributes meaning to a shape on the page saying "oh, I can see you've written a B for bear. Wow."

- As each emergent writer continues to write, they themselves start to use their oral language to translate their writing for others.
- For example, a three year old might make a number of marks on a piece of paper, fold it in half, and then hand it to an adult while telling them that it is an invitation to a tea party. The adult will encourage the narrative by asking questions about the tea party to make it more complex. This is known as co-construction.
- A similar interaction might occur with a four year old – but by this stage the emergent writer will give a more extended narrative about the different people coming to the tea party, the dishes that will be served, etc. using the narrative skills they have learned through co-construction.

INDIVIDUALS WITH CCN AND NARRATIVES

- During the emergent writing stage most children receive modelling of narratives as part of the writing process.
- They also receive co-construction support from adults around them, who prompt them with questions, provide positive praise, etc.
- We need to ensure that individuals with complex communication needs get similar modelling –this needs to happen with their AAC system of course!

Video showing a writing session with a student at Level 3 on the Developmental Writing Scale goes here
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4nC4NZHBt_Q

Solomon-Rice & Soto (2010) identified that child-centered co-construction strategies support personal narrative development for individuals with CCN.
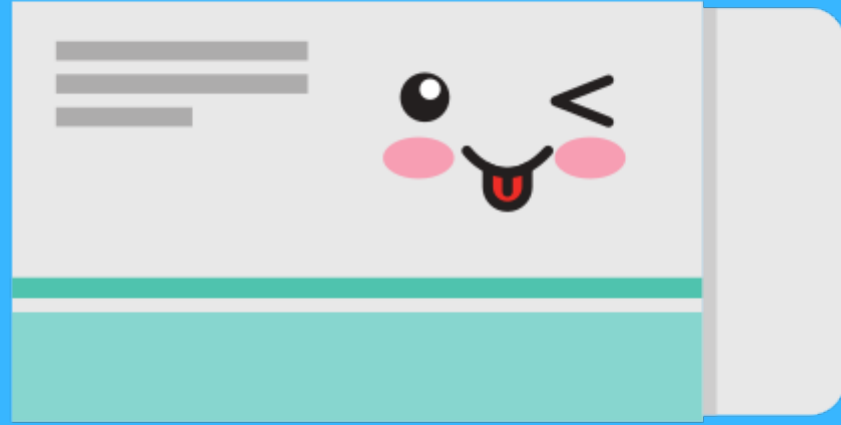
Strategies include question asking, use of prompts, use of positive praise, modelling of vocabulary and grammar.

Strategies should be used repeatedly and systematically.

See https://praacticalaac.org/strategy/personal-narratives-aac/ for more information

EMERGENT WRITING

NEUROTYPICAL EMERGENT WRITING DEVELOPMENT

Just a quick note about....

- 14 point scale.
- Provides us with a tool to assess each student's writing from emergent to conventional (up to Australian Curriculum Grade 4).

EMERGENT WRITING

STARTING WITH FUNCTION

bdf

bumpy

DEVELOPMENTAL WRITING SCALE LEVEL 1

FOCUS ON FUNCTION

- The following slides contain information from "Emergent Writing: Focus on Function" http://www.janefarrall.com/emergent-writing-focus-on-function/

MATHILDA

- 17 months old;
- Loves drawing;
- Takes the drawing to her father;
- He attributes meaning.

"Butterflies and Trees"
Developmental Writing Scale
Level 1

"Butterflies and Trees"
Developmental Writing Scale Level 1

#EMERGENTWRITING

ADULT SUPERPOWERS:

PRESUME COMPETENCE
ATTRIBUTE MEANING

PRESUMING COMPETENCE

- This is something that we do with young children all the time.
- We presume competence because we expect them to become readers and writers.
- With every interaction, we teach them that we believe in them and that we have high expectations of them – we "believe" that there is a "t" in their writing whether there is or not.

PRESUMING COMPETENCE

- But, by presuming competence, we make it more likely that there will be a "t" in the future and we send them a clear message that we know they can do it.
- We also make it more likely that there WILL be a "t" – i.e. we make their writing less random over time.
- We need to do this with ALL emerging readers and writers to convey the same beliefs and expectations, and make their actions less random.

ATTRIBUTING MEANING

- Again, this is something we do with young children all the time.
- We attribute meaning to all their literacy attempts.
- By doing this we teach them that print has meaning – and that it always has meaning.
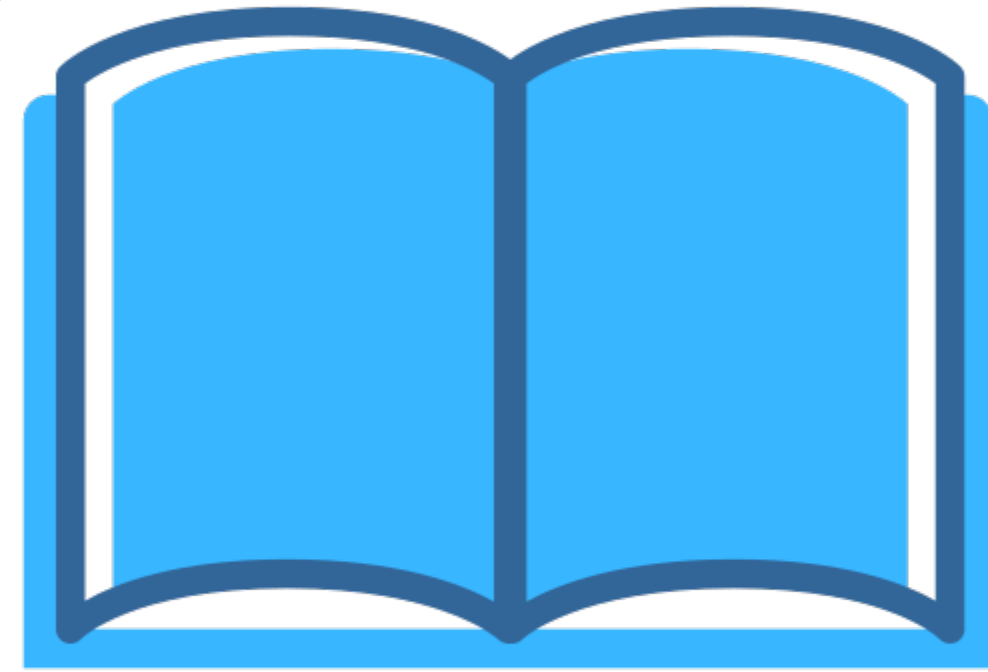- It also teaches them that everything they say they can write.

I AM A WRITER

#EMERGENTWRITING

Most importantly, our habits of presuming competence and attributing meaning teach each emergent writer the first understanding: A belief that "I am a writer"

FUNCTIONS OF PRINT

- At the same time that Mathilda is becoming a budding writer, she is also learning a lot about the functions of literacy and print through other experiences.

ADULTS READ AND WRITE

- Shopping lists
- Bills
- Shared reading
- Books
- Christmas Cards
- Emails
- Text Messages
- Post-It Notes
- etc

Functions of Print:

Everything I say I can write

Print has Meaning

#emergentwriting

FUNCTIONS OF PRINT

- It is extremely important that every emergent literacy learner understands the functions of print.
- This knowledge of how print works, carries them through the rest of their literacy development.
- Without this knowledge, students may learn to decode without understanding that there is meaning behind the words they read.
- Without this knowledge, students may think that they are learning to read a language different to the one we speak.

WRITING WITH STUDENTS WITH CCN AT DWS LEVEL 1 – TEACHING "I AM A WRITER", "PRINT HAS MEANING" AND "TEXT IS A CODE FOR SPEECH"

- At this stage, we are focusing very much on teaching the functions of print.
- Students at this level can write anywhere, anytime and with any pencil.
- Writing about what they are currently doing is often really engaging – and meaningful!
- Remember to use lots and lots of AAC – they need to learn the functions of print and that involves teaching them the relationship between communication and writing.
- And lots of praise – they need to learn that they are a writer!

Video showing a writing session with a student at Level 1 on the Developmental Writing Scale goes here
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wx2wLkWggfM

Let's Write

GUIDELINES FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS AT DIFFERENT LEVELS

These guidelines are provided to assist people to think about how to write with students at different levels of writing.
They are simply a guideline to good practice. We recognise that they cannot be definitive or prescriptive as there are a lot of variables involved – but we hope they are helpful.

Supporting writers who are at Level 1 on the Developmental Writing Scale

Level 1 writers don't yet know that they are a writer and/or they don't understand that there is a difference between print and picture. They need an opportunity to scribble with print and have us attribute meaning and assume competence – which then teaches them that print has meaning and that text is a code for speech. We also give them lots of positive reinforcement because they need to develop a strong self-image of themselves as a writer. Students at this level are also often receptive communicators.

The procedure is:
1. Select a topic for writing – often we use the activity or game that the student is currently engaged with.
2. Get the student to use the flip chart (or other writing tool) to select letters; record or write down the letters as they choose them
3. Use the student's AAC system to attribute meaning – follow up any indications they might make in attributing meaning themselves
4. Write the attributed meaning under their writing and point out any similarities/celebrations. Give them lots of positive encouragement for writing.
5. Use the flip chart yourself around once per week to model the use of it for writing outside of this writing task

A demonstration video for this level is available at
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yk8UNJ5vWt4

Supporting writers who are at Levels 3, 4 and 5 on the Developmental Writing Scale

Once students know that they are a writer and they can identify in a book "which side do I read" they move up to Level 3 on the Developmental Writing Scale. (Students who are using a flip chart or other alternative pencil skip level 2 on the scale.)

The procedure is:
1. Establish topic/purpose e.g photo of child doing something. Use their AAC system to talk about this yourself.
2. For students using comprehensive AAC systems – ask them if they have something to say about the photo/activity. If they don't, model something you might say, and then ask them if they have something to say again. For verbal students – get them to discuss what they are going to write about it. Agree on something they are writing with the student. If you don't get any language selected or generated then move onto the next step.
3. Get the student to use the flip chart, or other writing tool, to select letters. Record or write down the letters as they choose them
4. Write their target language (or the meaning you are attributing) under their writing and point out any correlations, using a phrase like "now let me show you how I would write it..."
5. Use the flip chart yourself around once per week to model the use of it for writing outside of this writing task

Once a student is at level 3 we work on modelling and talking about the use of spaces through the day to help them move up to level 4.
Once a student is at level 4, we work on modelling initial sounds in words to help them move towards levels 5 and 6

A demonstration video for this level is available at
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p9HE7_6sYSQ

Supporting writers who are at Levels 6, 7, 8 and 9 on the Developmental Writing Scale

For conventional writers, we always make sure that we activate some background knowledge and model writing before asking the students to write. Evidence shows that modelling good writing helps students to become better writers. We can also model different strategies during these mini-lessons- we might model "thinking out loud" or "using the word wall" or "sounding it out" or other features of writing. We don't teach spelling during writing and at this level we don't focus on capital letters or punctuation – but we do continue to have a focus on spaces as needed.

The procedure is:
1. Always begin with a mini-lesson, modelling writing yourself about a similar writing task to the students'. Use this as an opportunity to model different skills across time e.g. thinking of ideas, using word wall, sounding words out, writing more, etc
2. Give the student an appropriate writing stimulus e.g. photo, video
3. Ask the student to write. Students at these levels are generally aiming to learn to write one good sentence often 3 - 5 words long.
4. As students are writing, move around and conference with the students. For students who struggle with ideas and language, move to them first. Use AAC to support them in this area.
5. If needed provide scaffolds to help support them in the writing process e.g. lines for the words they are writing or recording the sentence onto a BIGmack switch
6. Continue to move around and support students with writing. If students do not know how to spell a word, encourage them to write down every sound they can hear or use the word wall. Do not correct spelling or work on capitals, etc.
7. Finish up with a short conference about their writing, providing lots of positive feedback, particularly around the area focused on in the mini lesson, and (if needed) writing a "translation" on the back of their work or on a post-it note as appropriate.

This handout references Sturm, J., Cali, K., Nelson, N.W., & Staskowski, M. (2012). The Developmental Writing Scale: A new progress monitoring tool for beginning writers. Topics in Language Disorders, 32(4), 297 – 318.

- Guidelines only!
- Guidelines to support writing with students at DWS Level 1 through to 9.

Supporting writers who are at Level 1 on the Developmental Writing Scale

Level 1 writers don't yet know that they are a writer and/or they don't understand that there is a difference between print and picture. They need an opportunity to scribble with print and have us attribute meaning and assume competence – which then teaches them that print has meaning and that text is a code for speech. We also give them lots of positive reinforcement because they need to develop a strong self-image of themselves as a writer. Students at this level are also often receptive communicators.

The procedure is:
1. Select a topic for writing – often we use the activity or game that the student is currently engaged with.
2. Get the student to use the flip chart (or other writing tool) to select letters; record or write down the letters as they choose them
3. Use the student's AAC system to attribute meaning – follow up any indications they might make in attributing meaning themselves
4. Write the attributed meaning under their writing and point out any similarities/celebrations. Give them lots of positive encouragement for writing.
5. Use the flip chart yourself around once per week to model the use of it for writing outside of this writing task

A demonstration video for this level is available at
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yk8UNJ5vWt4

LEVEL 1 GUIDELINES

DEVELOPMENTAL WRITING SCALE LEVEL 2

"Birthday card to her cousin"
Developmental Writing Scale Level 2

MATHILDA

• 2 years 4 months old

Now a difference between her writing and drawing based on all her literacy experiences:

• adults attributing meaning;

• pointing out print concepts they "see" in her writing;

• assuming competence;

• Shared reading;

• Letters and Sounds;

• Writing with adults;

• Writing from adults.

"Postcard to her Dad"
Developmental Writing Scale Level 2

MATHILDA

- She has had a lot of interactions with print on her own and with other people.
- And in the two months since the last sample the progress in her writing has continued. This postcard to her Dad is starting to show a greater difference between her writing and her drawing.
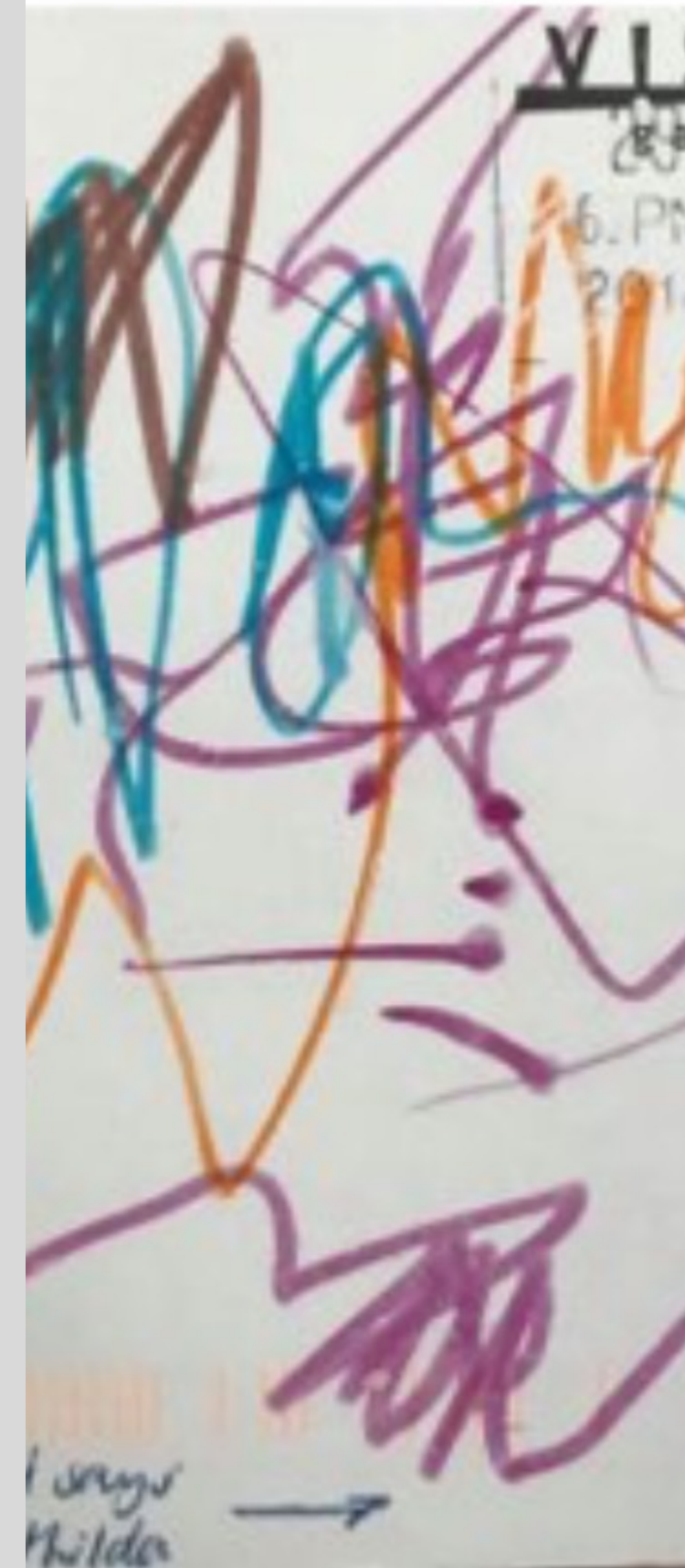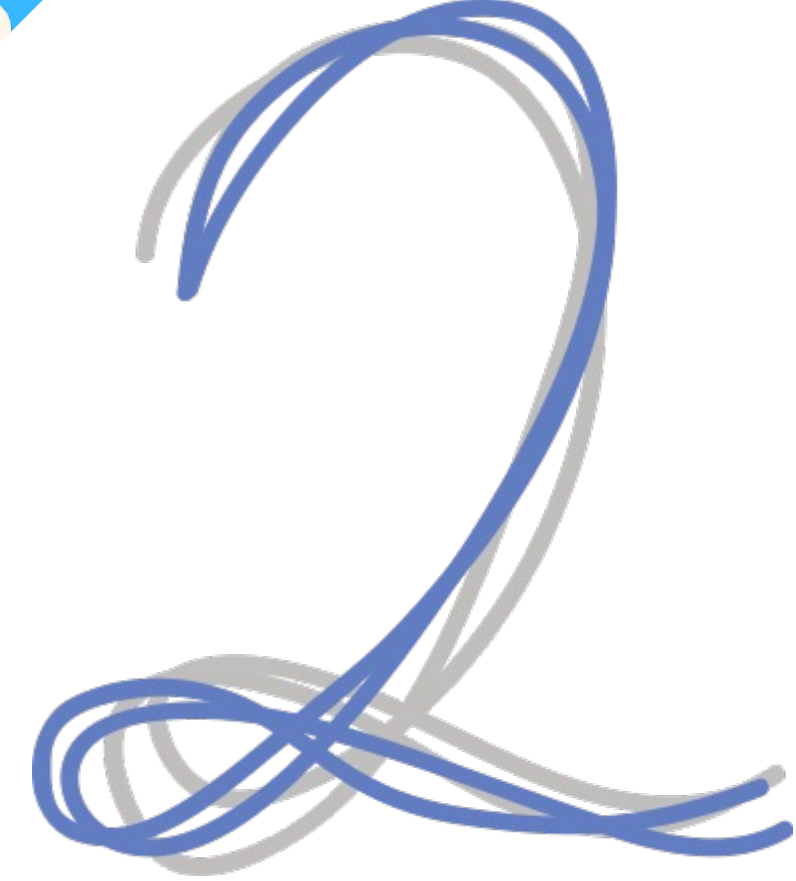
MATHILDA

- Her amazing mother, Yvette, would have made lots of positive comments about the "M" shapes appearing in her writing, and particularly the M appearing in her name signed at the bottom.

- This clearly shows us that Mathilda has mastered the functions of print and is starting to take notice of the forms of print.

- Remember – this progress has happened after 16 months of practice, attributing meaning and assuming competence and ALL those other literacy experiences tied in together. (Plus some playing with the alphabet as well).

DEVELOPMENTAL WRITING SCALE ALIGNED WITH AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

Working within Foundation

Emergent

1 DRAWING
Lines and curves that appear to represent objects.

2 SCRIBBLING
Continuous vertical, circular or wavy lines arranged linearly across the page, which may include letter-like forms, but with the majority of shapes not recognisable as letters. Not observable with an alternative pencil.

3 LETTER STRINGS, NO GROUPS
Handwritten or typed strings of letters but not grouped into words

4 LETTER STRINGS, GROUPED INTO WORDS
Strings of letters grouped into words ie with spaces between at least two groups of letters but with no intelligible words.

5 ONE INTELLIGIBLE WORD
Strings of letters grouped into "words" with only one possible real word (ie two or more letters in length) set apart, written repeatedly or embedded in a string of letters.

Conventional

6 TWO TO THREE INTELLIGIBLE WORDS
Two or three different intelligible words embedded in strings, separated by spaces or in a list format. Single letter words such as "I" and "a" must be separated by spaces to count as a word.

7 THREE OR MORE DIFFERENT INTELLIGIBLE WORDS IN A LIST
Three or more related words.

Working within Year 1

8 PARTIAL SENTENCE OF MORE THAN THREE WORDS
More than three different intelligible words with at least two of them a partially formed sentence.

9 ONE TO TWO COMPLETE SENTENCES
Sentences have a subject phrase and a verb phrase. End punctuation is not necessary.

10 THREE OR MORE UNRELATED SENTENCES (NEITHER COHERENT OR COHESIVE)
Sentences have no coherent topic.

Working within Year 2

11 THREE OR MORE RELATED SENTENCES (COHERENT BUT LIMITED COHESION)
Organised writing with three or more sentences on a coherent topic but with limited cohesion between sentences (ie sentences can be reordered without changing meaning).

12 THREE OR MORE RELATED SENTENCES THAT CANNOT BE REORDERED (COHERENT AND COHESIVE)
Organised writing with a coherent topic (ie on a consistent theme) and use of cohesive devices (e.g. pronoun replacement, logical connectors, conclusions that refer to prior content) across three or more sentences so that sentences cannot be reordered without changing meaning.

Working within Year 3

13 TWO COHERENT PARAGRAPHS OF AT LEAST THREE SENTENCES EACH

Working within Year 4

14 THREE OR MORE COHERENT PARAGRAPHS OF AT LEAST THREE COHESIVE SENTENCES EACH

Sturm J., Cali K., Nelson N., Staskowski M. (2012). The Developmental Writing Scale: A new progress monitoring tool for beginning writers. Topics in Language Disorders, 32(4), 297–318.

- DWS Level 2.
- Not observable with an alternative pencil, such as a flip chart.

EMERGENT WRITING

MOVING ONTO FORM

7-8-18

opocvo op poo

Swimming in the pool.

MOVING ONTO FORM

- The following slides contain information from "Emergent Writing: Moving onto Form"

  http://www.janefarrall.com/emergent-writing-moving-onto-form/

MATHILDA WRITING

- 3 years old;
- Writing a thank-you card;
- Still Level 2.

MOVING ONTO FORM

- Mathilda's writing is showing an increased difference between writing and drawing because of her overall literacy experiences.
- As adults have read books with her, she has noticed that there is a difference between writing and pictures.
- Adults have pointed out "letter-like" shapes in her writing, as her fabulous mother does in the video.
- She has seen adults writing – with pens and keyboards – and she has noticed the difference between that and drawing.

- At around 2;6 years Mathilda started to show a difference between writing and drawing.
- In the video at 3 years of age we can now see that her writing has become a series of wavy lines.
- Her drawing at the same stage is a variety of shapes with increasing detail.

MOVING ONTO FORM

MOVING ONTO FORM

- All of her literacy experiences help her to recognise that there is a difference between writing and drawing and her own "writing" then becomes more and more like the print we see everywhere in the world around us.
- And those adult superpowers still make an important contribution. Every time an adult attributes meaning to Mathilda's writing and assumes her competence it helps her confidence and to move her a little further with her writing development.

#EMERGENTWRITING

ADULT SUPERPOWERS:

PRESUME COMPETENCE

ATTRIBUTE MEANING

CONTINUING TO MOVE TOWARDS FORM

- As Mathilda continues to write and learn about literacy, her writing will continue to change – and we will see more evidence of "form".

DEVELOPMENTAL WRITING SCALE LEVEL 3

CONTINUING TO MOVE TOWARDS FORM

- She will use more letter-like shapes, rather than wavy lines. There may be numbers as well as letters, and over time her writing will gradually move more and more into looking like letter strings.
- This will progress her writing to Developmental Writing Stage Level 3.

Father's Day Card

Envelope for the card

"Father's Day Card"
Developmental Writing Scale Level

MATHILDA

- This example is a Father's Day card from when Mathilda is 3 years 9 months.
- The front of the card shows her drawing.
- The envelope shows her writing moving to letter strings.
- Developmental Writing Scale Level 3.

Father's Day Card

Envelope for the card

WRITING WITH STUDENTS WITH CCN AT DWS LEVEL 3 – MOVING TOWARDS FORM

- At this stage, we are still reinforcing the functions of print, but beginning to help them focus more on form.
- Students at this level can write anywhere, anytime and with any pencil, but are also starting to participate in more of a writing "process". They may make more progress with a flip chart than a full keyboard.
- They can write about photos, remnants or activities and anything else that engages them.
- Continue to use lots and lots of AAC and lots of praise!
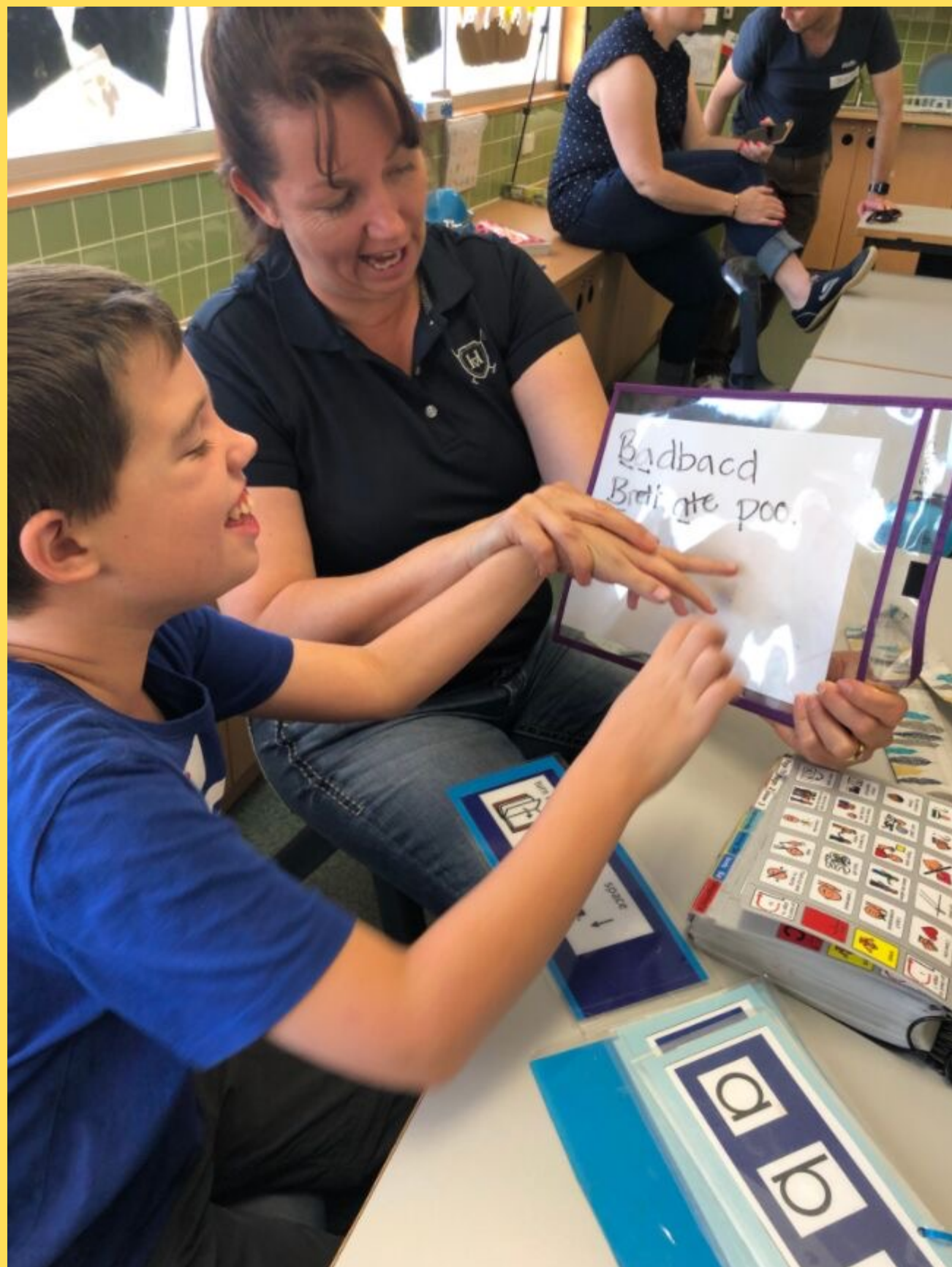
Writing with his Mum about the Principal eating "poo" at weekend AAC camp at Bullimbal School

WRITING WITH STUDENTS WITH CCN AT DWS LEVELS 3, 4 AND 5- CONTINUING TO MOVE TO FORM

- Working to help them focus more on form.
- To help a student move from Level 3 to Level 4, we make sure they have a "space" option available and we work hard to model using spaces ourselves every time we write.
- To help them move from level 4 onto levels 5 and 6, we make sure they know most of the letters of the alphabet, most of the time AND we make sure we model thinking about sounds in words, particularly initial sounds.
- They should be ready to move onto conventional instruction around this time.

Supporting writers who are at Levels 3, 4 and 5 on the Developmental Writing Scale

Once students know that they are a writer and they can identify in a book "which side do I read" they move up to Level 3 on the Developmental Writing Scale. (Students who are using a flip chart or other alternative pencil skip level 2 on the scale.)

The procedure is:
1. Establish topic/purpose e.g photo of child doing something. Use their AAC system to talk about this yourself.
2. For students using comprehensive AAC systems – ask them if they have something to say about the photo/activity. If they don't, model something you might say, and then ask them if they have something to say again. For verbal students – get them to discuss what they are going to write about it. Agree on something they are writing with the student. If you don't get any language selected or generated then move onto the next step.
3. Get the student to use the flip chart, or other writing tool, to select letters. Record or write down the letters as they choose them
4. Write their target language (or the meaning you are attributing) under their writing and point out any correlations, using a phrase like "now let me show you how I would write it..."
5. Use the flip chart yourself around once per week to model the use of it for writing outside of this writing task

Once a student is at level 3 we work on modelling and talking about the use of spaces through the day to help them move up to level 4.
Once a student is at level 4, we work on modelling initial sounds in words to help them move towards levels 5 and 6

A demonstration video for this level is available at
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p9HE7_6sYSQ

LEVELS 3, 4 AND 5 GUIDELINES

MOVING FURTHER INTO FORM

- Around 12 months later Mathilda will move onto a stage where she begins to use spaces – Developmental writing scale level 4;
- Then "one real word" will pop up in her writing – Developmental Writing Scale level 5, approximately 4;6 – 5 years of age. Spaces may disappear at this point.
- Then she will start writing a simple sentence of 3 – 5 words and move into being a conventional writer.

LET'S GET WRITING

- We need to provide emergent students with an opportunity to write at least once every day.
- We need to make sure every student has suitable writing tool(s).
- We need to help them to learn the functions of print.
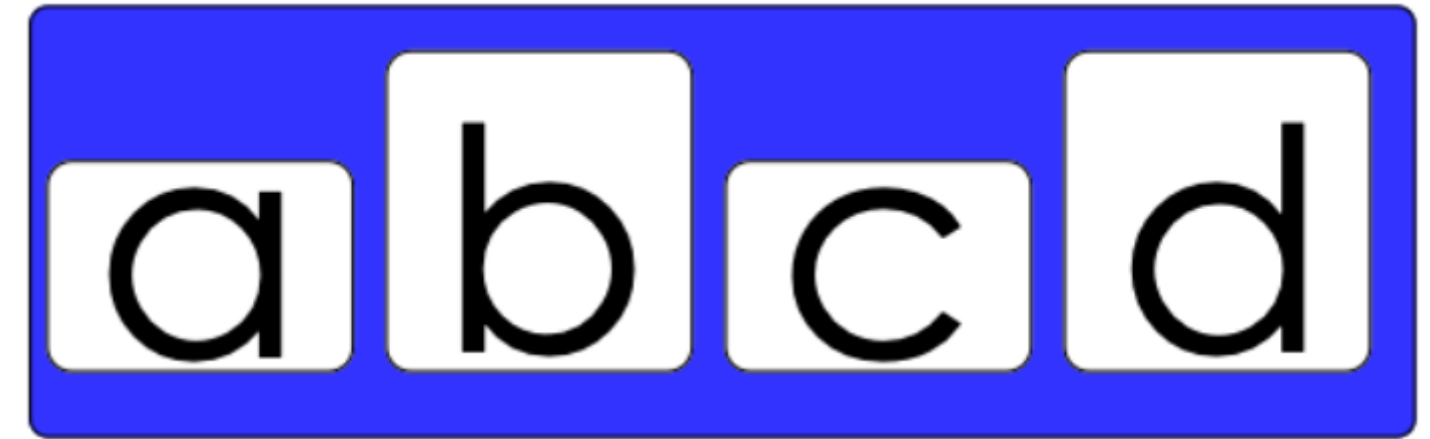- We need to let them scribble!!!!

WRITE EVERYDAY

- Shopping lists
- Stories
- Narratives
- Books
- Christmas Cards
- Emails
- Text Messages
- Post-It Notes
- About activities
- About animals
- etc

JUST WRITE!

- And remember!
- Children typically move through the stages of emergent writing over a few years so we will be supporting emergent writers of all ages to develop their skills over time.

Thanks!

- Mathilda and her family
- Students and staff at Claremont Special School
- Students and staff at Bullimbal School
- Students and staff at Kidman Park Primary School
- Leanne Shane and Zyteq
- Students and staff at The Grove Education Centre