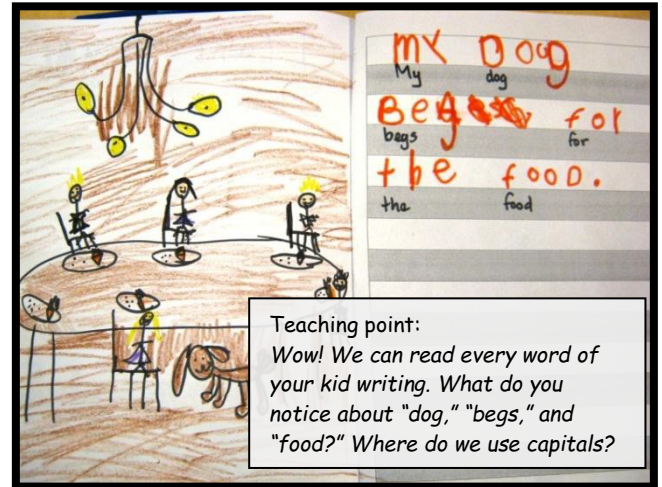


# Kid Writing Workshop: Details and Paper Choice Matter!

I recently spent a winter's morning with master kindergarten and kid-writing workshop teacher Julie Lay in her classroom. I was reminded that for optimum results with the kid writing workshop model, **details matter!**

- Writing paper that offers defined white space for kid writing and gray shaded space for adult underwriting supporting emergent writers.
- Each 20-page book features **24# weight paper** allowing children to use markers without bleed-through.
- Kid writing is done with **thin-tipped washable markers** offering less drag and fatigue for small hands.
- **Adult underwriting is initially done word-for-word directly underneath** the child's writing within the gray shaded space. This allows the teacher (and eventually the parents) to see progress toward spelling goals. It also helps in determining the next steps that will be taken to further the child's writing development. Ongoing assessment drives instruction.



- As the year continues, underwriting is dropped for words that demonstrate correct spelling and legible handwriting. Only words that are phonetically spelled and not comprehensible will need the underwriting. By January, some children will be able to instantly write at least 62 high-frequency words and have confidence in reading and writing phonetically.

- **The quality of the work is noticeably better** when children are taught to first draw outlines of their illustrations using a **black non-bleed marker** following up with color to finish their illustrations. (See "What Makes a Quality Illustration")

**Note:** We do not expect children to prematurely write on traditional forms of penmanship paper that displays the dotted mid-line as this may not be developmentally appropriate for most children until late kindergarten or first grade.

**While there is no one right way to conduct writer's workshop, we see optimum results** when we intentionally model how to stretch through words and listen for sounds, and sound chunks. Children record their "kid writing" in the white spaces on our specially designed paper. **For the beginning of the year,** we orient the paper horizontally facilitating a longer run of words before having a return sweep to the next line.

**Approximately mid-year,** we transition to vertical alignment in book form as children's writing becomes smaller in size of letter formation.

