My elder daughter loves books and music. My son loves ball games, cooking and maps. And my 4-year-old loves dancing and singing. They all love to write.

When a child has a passion for an activity, parents generally support and nurture that passion. So our three are provided with books, balls and bats, recipes, time for cooking and making music, and unlimited access to our atlas and the street directory. Here are some of the things we do to encourage their passion for writing.

Provide journals
All three have an exercise book. In these journals they write down ideas, stories and poems and jokes. My youngest likes to dictate her dreams after she wakes up in the morning.

Help with starting a diary
A diary is good for keeping the writing flowing. No-one reads my 8-year-old's diary (except her), so she doesn't get bogged down with perfect spelling or sentences and can just get on with writing.

Put in a poetry wall
We use chalk on our green fence in the backyard, but poetry wall possibilities are endless — you could try a blackboard, a whiteboard, a large piece of blank paper stuck on the fridge door … Family members can write poems on the wall whenever it takes their fancy. (If you'd like a peek at our poetry wall, I blogged about it during National Poetry Month.)

Use their poems as gifts
Our grandmas and grandpas always love a home-grown poem on a handmade birthday card. A child's poem written on a paper scroll tied with ribbon makes a lovely gift.

Provide a reason for writing
We look out for opportunities where children's writing can be published. Local councils sometimes publish children's writing and artwork in their newsletters, and some school newsletters have a 'kids' corner' with students' work. Children can submit writing to magazines such as Stone Soup (USA), The Scrumbler (UK), and Alphabet Soup (Australia).

Encourage them to enter writing competitions
Competitions have restrictions as to topic and length and this helps to hone writing and editing skills. You can find a list of children's writing competitions in Australia on wordbox.

Introduce penpals
I have friends overseas and our daughters recently began writing to each other. Finding real mail in your letter box definitely motivates kids to write! It also helps spelling. My 8-year-old's penpal speaks English as a second language. My daughter knows that she needs to check her spelling carefully so that her penpal doesn't get confused.

Listen to their oral storytelling & DIY puppet shows
Oral storytelling is different from writing on a page. Retelling fairy tales or writing a script for a puppet show (and then putting it on) is good story practice for budding writers. My children also love designing a program to give to family and friends at the puppet show performance, including the performers' biographies.

Writing can be fun and extremely satisfying. Don’t be surprised if you start out supporting your child’s passion and end up in your own writing frenzy!

Other ideas to get the juices flowing:
Share with other writers
Older children could start a writing group to meet regularly and read each other's writing.

Email family news to a friend or relation
Children can collate your family's news and keep relatives up to date.

Create a magazine or newsletter on a favourite subject to share with family or friends.

Encourage reading and continue to read to them (even older children)
Every author I’ve interviewed says reading improves your writing. Sign your child up for his/her own library card if they don’t have one already. It’s free!

Audio
If you have the technology, ask your children to write and record a ‘news show’ about what has been happening. Share it with a grandparent, family friend or penpal.

Keep a book diary
Ask your child to keep a list of the books they have read, with a brief review and rating.