

Write an "I Used To, Now I" Poem

Children love watching old home movies or looking at old photos of when they were younger. They are usually amused with their past behavior and often find it difficult to believe they once behaved differently and were unable to do things that come very naturally to them today. In this poetry-writing activity, let your child reflect on the past. This activity is not only a good opportunity for both of you to reminisce, but is also a fun way to practice word usage, writing, and poetic structure.



What You Need:

- Pencil
- Several sheets of lined paper
- Crayons
- Photo albums or home videos of your child when they were younger (optional)
- Computer to publish final copy, or spiral notebook for poetry journal (optional)

What You Do:

1. Start by taking a walk down memory lane. Find and look at old home videos and photo albums to remind your child of who he used to be and what he used to do.
2. As you look through this memorabilia, have your child make a list of things he did when he was a baby, toddler, preschooler, or kindergartener that he does differently now. Things on this list might include: crawling, drinking from a bottle, sleeping in a crib, etc.
3. Using this list, let him choose six to eight behaviors that he used to do differently than he does now. These behaviors will be used to write the "I used to" portion of the stanzas.
4. Write the poem. Each stanza of the poem will consist of two lines. The first line will begin "I used to _", and he can complete it with something he used to do. The second line will begin "Now I _", and he can finish that line with what he does now. For example: "I used to drink from a bottle/Now I drink from a cup."
5. Help him correct any errors on the rough copy then have him begin a final copy. He can recopy his poem into a poetry journal, or even type his poem into a word processing program. In either case, have him center the poem in the middle of the page so that he can draw illustrations in the border.
6. After printing or finishing the final copy, let him illustrate his poem by drawing pictures of the things he wrote.