

Opinion Writing in Kindergarten

By Jackie Jacobs | Categories: Writing

Children seem to come out of the womb stating (or maybe screaming) their opinions. You know that from the time you dip their toes into their first bath, or when you give them their first bite of pureed peas, or when you try to help them choose what clothes to wear—they all have opinions. They might not be able to explain why they think what they do, but as I parent I definitely know that my [fill-in-the-blank-year-old] child has opinions about things.

Since infants have opinions, it's safe to say that kindergarteners have opinions too. The nice thing about kindergarteners is that they can talk. They can actually tell you what they think about something—what books they like to read, what their favorite food is, and what animal they would like to have as a pet. They can also start thinking about and explaining why they like *Curious George* books, why they like chocolate ice cream more than vanilla, or why an alligator would not make a good pet.

When introducing opinion writing to kindergarteners, it's important to provide lots of opportunities for the students to talk to each other about their opinions before asking them to write about them. Providing the students with time to discuss their opinions and to explain why they think what they do also enables you to talk with them about the social aspects of having opinions. Students can learn that people have different opinions about the same things, and that that's OK. They can learn that they can listen to other people's opinions and agree or disagree in respectful ways. Learning the social skills around stating your own opinions and listening to other people's opinions is an invaluable skill that can begin with our youngest students.

Once students are able to talk about their opinions, writing about them is a natural next step.