

2022 BACK-TO-SCHOOL EDITION

# Calgary's Child

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**2022**  
**BACK TO SCHOOL**  
Your Smart Start Survival Guide  
✓ positively peaceful mornings  
✓ too sick for school?  
✓ top notch lunches

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What you need, when you need it

**Calgary's Best Sweet Treats**

**Fall is FABULOUS!**  
The Best Places to Bike, Hike & Explore

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find the right sport for your little sport

## encouraging creative writing in children

The power of the creative voice

By Erika Holter

Most of us have experienced the sensation of being moved to tears, or laughter, or fear, through a can't-put-it-down book. Entertainment aside, the many and varied benefits of reading are widely documented and include everything from increasing empathy in readers to boosting intelligence to improved sleep to stress reduction.

It's not only reading that is tremendously beneficial; on the literary flip side, creative writing is an enormously valuable skill. As Calgary-based eighth-grader Megan Lam, recent winner of the Ripple Foundation's Kids Write 4 Kids national writing challenge, can attest to. Megan's story, *When You Wish Upon a Star*, a tale of family, love, and honesty, beat out 580 entries from across the country. Megan, an aspiring veterinarian and avid fantasy reader, has been writing fiction for a few years and has experienced positive ripple effects in many areas of her life as a result of her hobby of choice.

"I find that I read a lot more critically now. It's also been helpful as far as school goes, especially with preparing written assignments."

### Benefits of Creative Writing for Kids

Improved academics aside, there are several benefits of creative writing:

**Better problem-solving skills.** The classic narrative structure typically involves overcoming a problem. If

problems didn't exist, there would be no need for heroes. In conceptualizing these story-based problems, and how to solve them, budding authors are building problem-solving skills that can help them in all areas of their lives.

**Enhanced creativity and imagination.** Storytelling is all about dreaming of what is possible. Ripple Foundation Founder, Ivy Wong, shares why her organization advocates so hard for literacy initiatives, like the Kids Write 4 Kids contest. "Literacy provides a means to express creative ideas and out-of-the-box thinking. Storytelling has been inspiring imagination for generations. Investing in fostering literacy in kids is an investment in our collective future."

**Writing can be a confidence booster.** As any parent knows, raising confident kids is no easy task. Society is full of messages telling them that they're not good enough, and it can be hard for them to find their own voice. When they're given the opportunity to tell their own story, it can help them feel seen and heard. And as they see their ideas come to life on the page, it can give them a sense of accomplishment and pride.

**Enriching vocabulary.** By encouraging kids to express themselves through creative writing, you can help them to develop a strong foundation in language arts as well as build a richer understanding of words and their meanings. Not only will this help them in their future

academic pursuits, but it'll also give them a greater appreciation for the power of language.

### How to Foster an Interest in Creative Writing

The Ripple Foundation is an education charity that advocates creative literacy among children and youth. In addition to their annual Kids Write 4 Kids contest, they offer several creative writing workshops for youth, and will be launching a one-day virtual writing conference this fall.

YouthWrite Society is another option for kids looking to flex their creative writing muscles. Their week-long, Alberta-based camps give writers-in-training exposure to a wide range of writing mediums.

Megan, who thanks to her contest win is now a published author, gives the following advice to any kid interested in further exploring creative writing, but doesn't know where to begin.

"If you are just starting out, write about things that you are interested in so you can grow that passion and creativity that you need for writing. Read a lot, and read a variety of types of books, so you can figure out what genres you like the most, and let those genres influence your writing."

Erika is owner of Buzz Communications, a Calgary-based communications consulting company, as well as a writer for WordPLAY Consulting. Every business, and every person, has a story and Erika loves to tell those stories. **CCM**