

HELPING YOUR CHILD WITH SPELLING

If your child is learning how to:

- Write some letters.
- Write own name.
- Begin to know the names of letters.
- Begin to know the sounds of letters.
- Have a go at spelling words they need.
- Know the differences between letters and numbers.
- Use the words: letter, sound, word.

You can help by:

- Looking at print in books together.
- Talking about letters and words in books.
- Looking at print all around, including on TV.
- Singing the alphabet song until children know it by heart.
- Writing what children dictate.
- Writing and explaining why eg shopping lists.
- Encouraging children's own writing eg on greeting cards, labels, as part of play.
- Looking out for the initial letter in his/her name.
- Labelling property eg bedroom door, toy box.
- Displaying your child's writing.
- Using the words letter, sound, word from this early stage.

If your child is learning to:

- Understand how sounds and letters relate to each other.
- Represent a word using one, two or three letters, usually consonants.
- Invent own spellings.
- Copy write letter by letter.
- Use sounds best known eg in own name.
- Discriminate between letters.
- Write each letter of the alphabet.
- Use the words: letter, word, sound, vowel, consonant.
- Say words as they are written.

You can help by:

- Continuing to read to and with your child.
- Pointing to words as you read.
- Sometimes commenting on words, letters or letter strings of interest.
- Providing magnetic letters for the fridge door or a magnetic board.
- Continuing to share your own writing eg messages, forms, lists, greeting cards.
- Encouraging your child to 'have a go' at spellings, before asking for help.
- Praising attempts at spelling, pointing out the letters written correctly first.
- Encouraging the use of the "Look-Say-Cover-Write-Check" learning technique and looking closely at the problem parts of words.
- Playing "I Spy".
- Continuing to play car number plate games.
- Providing and helping with a simple dictionary or word book.
- Helping your child to learn to spell some key words by heart.
- Helping him/her to leave spaces between words.
- Providing writing materials and real reasons for writing.
- Continuing to encourage labelling at home.

If your child is learning how to:

- Recognise and write words with common letter string patterns.
- Spell key words.
- Use word books, dictionaries and thesauruses.
- Find words through initial letters.
- Check own writing for correct spelling.
- Spell more complex but regular words.
- Begin to understand and remember spelling rules eg about plurals.
- Memorise a bank of common spellings.
- Memorise silent letter patterns.
- Think about spelling strategies.
- Have a go at more difficult words.
- See words inside words.

You can help by:

- Continuing to read and share books as often as possible.
- Talking about interesting or different spellings.
- Playing word games eg Tongue Twisters.
- Encouraging good spelling by focusing on successful attempts, rather than only picking out errors.
- Playing Spelling Hangman.
- Playing "And the Next Letter is..." eg s _ _ _ _.
- Providing a child-sized quiet writing area with a suitable dictionary, thesaurus and writing materials.
- Encouraging use of the Look-Say-Cover-Write-Check strategies.
- Practising some mnemonics eg necessary uses "one collar" (c) and "two socks" (ss).
- Encouraging breaking words into syllables eg Wed-nes-day.
- Showing how to try out alternative spellings to see which one looks correct.
- Reminding how dictionaries work: finding the right place.
- Reminding him/her about spelling rules.
- Encouraging your child to "have a go" at irregular spellings.
- Sometimes using word meanings to assist spelling eg sign, signature.

If your child is learning how to:

- Check spellings, meanings and word origins in dictionaries.
- Identify root words and additions eg mend, mending, mender.
- Choose between different ways of writing the same sound.
- Use word meaning to help spelling.
- Memorise letter patterns.
- Spell a large bank of words correctly and quickly.
- Use an adult dictionary and thesaurus.
- Recognise when a word looks wrong and think of alternatives.
- Proof read his/her own writing accurately.
- Use a range of strategies to learn and remember spellings.
- Add to her/his knowledge of spelling rules.

You can help by:

- Talking with your child about books you are each reading.
- Discussing newspapers, magazines, adverts and their effects on spelling eg Gazza, Fun 4 Kids.
- Doing crosswords and word puzzles, discussing clues.
- Playing Scrabble as a family.
- Looking up words together of which you are uncertain.
- Providing adult dictionary, thesaurus, spell checker.