

Ideas for supporting spelling

Children,
Parents &
Teachers

Before you start

- Try to establish whether your child's difficulties are with specific words, sounds or blends.
- Find out how the school is approaching the spelling difficulty – perhaps you could be supporting your child by using the same message at home.
- Be aware of the words being used within the classroom. Get lists from the teacher and suggest having access to these words in advance to allow more preparation and learning time for your child.

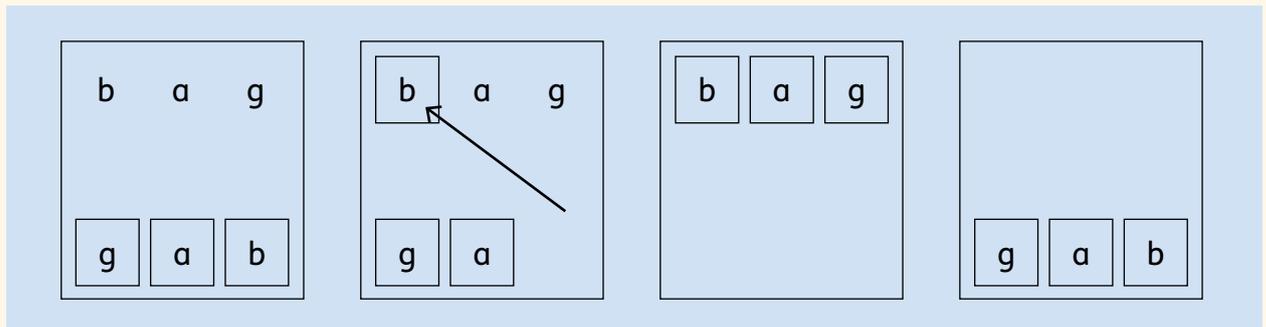
Spelling with the child

- Having fun is important – be creative in this task.
- Create a multi sensory approach to spelling – planning, making, seeing, doing, reading, hearing. By using these skills, your child will be given a wider 'experience' of the words you are working on, which will help their memory.
- Be aware of concentration dropping and don't push too hard when tired.
- Begin with already known words before starting with new ones.
- Involve them in working on words that interest them – their own name, their address, their siblings or friends names, their favourite food, film or computer game. Perhaps 'trade' with them... one word they want, and one word for school.
- Take time to practise these activities in as many different environments as possible – in the kitchen using magnets on the fridge, at the table, playing scrabble as a family, doing word searches, in the car – incorporating in a game of 'I spy'.



How to help at primary school

- Write letters or words in large print in mud or chalk outside and wipe them out with water from a water pistol when he has read them. Or use the water pistol to create letters. This is very good for active children.
- Make cards with individual letters written on them. Write out the individual words from your child's spelling list. Using the letters, match them to words, as shown below. Encourage them to match the letters to the written word several times, before removing the written word, so they are arranging the word without the prompt of the full word. This may help your child with spelling, and in turn writing, and reading.



- The above activity could also be done by using a white board or chalk board, which can be easily found at the supermarket, toy shop.
- The difficulty level can be altered by beginning with the individual letters in the correct order, before shuffling them, or by having additional letters present.
- Encourage your child to feel the letters, trace them with their hands. Do this with their eyes open and closed – this may help them retain this information in their memory.

How to help at secondary school

- Show your child how to use a spell checker. This may take several attempts over a period of months before they are confident to use it independently.
- Teach your child mnemonics. For example: 'because' – Big Elephants Can Always Understand Small Elephants; any – 'Ants Never Yawn'.
- Encourage your child to use appropriate technology that may have been recommended by school. The more they persevere and understand the benefits, the more likely they are to use the equipment at school and home. Help them to develop fast, accurate keyboard skills.
- Teach your child how to use a dictionary – there are dictionaries which are specifically designed for individuals with dyslexia which may be worth exploring such as ACE Spelling Dictionary. Also explore 'visual dictionaries' and electronic spellcheckers (make sure these use 'aural spelling').
- Some people find it hard to focus when there is a quiet room – so perhaps having music on as background noise may increase concentration.



Dyslexia Scotland

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Dyslexia Scotland Helpline

0344 800 8484

helpline@dyslexiascotland.org.uk