

Helping Your Child with Spelling

Children can find writing a real challenge; they need encouragement, support and most importantly praise for their efforts! You can best support them by encouraging them to write on every possible occasion, praising their efforts and by letting them see you writing whenever possible. You can play words games (eg I Spy, An Alphabet of...) and spend time discussing interesting or new words.

Most of us, even if we consider ourselves to be good spellers, make spelling mistakes at some point. What is important is that we know what to do when we get stuck and we know how to correct our mistakes. At school, our children learn the rules and strategies needed to become confident at spelling.

Here are some of the strategies used in school that you can have a go at, at home.

- **Sounding words out:** breaking the word down into individual sounds (phonemes), for example c-a-t, sh-e-ll. Many words cannot be sounded out, so other strategies are needed...
- **Using the Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check strategy.** Look at the word and say it aloud, then cover it, write it out and check to see if it's correct. If not, highlight or underline the incorrect part and have another go.
- **Divide the word into syllables.** Say each syllable as the word is written (e.g. re-mem-ber).
- **Using mnemonics to help memorise a tricky word** (e.g. rhythm: Rhythm Helps Your Two Hips Move). Many can be found online!
- **Finding words within words** (e.g. there is 'a rat' in separate, an island 'is' 'land').
- **Making links between the meaning of words and their spelling** (e.g. sign, signal, signature). This strategy is used at a later stage than others.
- **Using a dictionary as soon as your child knows how to.**

Have fun investigating words and their spellings! Encourage your children to have a go and help them by using the strategies above, along with any others you may know!

