



Ideas for supporting spelling

Spelling can be a challenge for many children, especially those with dyslexia. This leaflet provides fun, practical ideas to making spelling a more positive experience at home and school.

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 methods at home.

Be aware of 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 their concentration dropping and don't push too hard when they're tired.
- Begin with words that are already known before starting with new ones.
- Focus on words that interest them - their own name, street name, their favourite food, film or computer game. Focus on 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, doing word searches, on car journeys.

How to help at primary school

- Write letters or words in large print in mud or chalk outside and rub them out with water from a water pistol or hose when they have read them. You could also use the water pistol to create letters.
- Make cards with individual letters written on them. Write out individual words from your child's spelling list and match the cards with letters to the words. Match the letters to the written word several times before removing the written word until they can arrange the letters without the written word.
- 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

- Teach your child mnemonics. For example, 'rhythm': Rhythm Helps Your Two Hips Move.
- 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.