

CALT – ADVICE SHEETS

Spelling

Written English has many inconsistencies which means that accurate and fluent spelling can be difficult for some children to achieve. Spelling is important because persistent difficulties with spelling can get in the way of fluent written expression. If your child finds spelling tricky, you may want to try some of the suggestions here.

Learning spellings

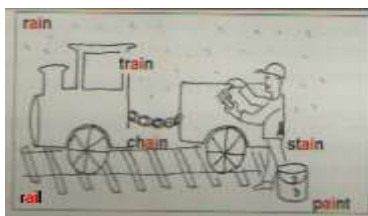
Any work on spelling should address both building words from regular symbol/sound correspondences (e.g. c- a- t, t – r-ai-n, sh-ou-t) and recalling letter sequences of irregular words (eg. should, because). The type of instruction that will be most helpful will depend on the type of word your child is learning.

Learning regular spellings

- Practice letter/sound correspondences – your child’s teacher will be able to tell you which of these your child cannot yet automatically recall. Choose 2-3 at a time and practice.
- Use fingers to separate sounds in words and count them. Draw a grid and, if available, use magnetic letters. Put the letters into boxes, one box for each sound. Then encourage your child to write the word, one sound in each box, counting and pronouncing the sounds as they go.

f	r	ow	n
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- For words with more than one syllable, clap each syllable then separate sounds as above, one syllable at a time.
- Try practicing groups of words that use the same patterns and highlighting the similarities



- Children benefit from over-learning the same information many times, particularly those who find spelling tricky. Repeat the same activities as often as you can to help your child to create connections in their long-term memory.

Learning irregular spellings

English is full of irregularities, and this can place a big load on a child's memory. The more different ways you can find to help them to remember the better.

- Use letter names, not sounds when practising irregular words.
- Teach children to expand and over-articulate tricky words, e.g., wed/nes/day.
- Use as many senses as possible simultaneously when learning. For example, use magnetic letters and trace with fingers whilst saying the letter *name*.
- Highlight the unexpected or tricky parts of words in a different colour – make it visual.
- Visual images can also be useful to prompt memory as in the example below.

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- Write the word on a strip of paper, cut it up and ask your child to put it back together.
- Try speed writing: how many times can you write that word in 30 seconds?

- When checking your child's spelling, focus on the bits they got right

✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
M i n i t _

- Use mnemonics like the example shown below. Ask children to come up with their own phrases and pictures. If possible, try to start each phrase with the target word to help with memory.



- Try to help your child understand relationships between words like in the example below:



If your child continues to have difficulties learning to spell, try to note down what they are finding particularly difficult and talk with your child's teacher about next steps.

You may find the following resources useful:

Nessy Reading and Spelling is an excellent, interactive, structured approach to learning to read and spell. Single or group licenses can be bought so it is ideal to use at home and/or at school: www.nessy.com/uk

Wordshark is good for overlearning at word level www.wordshark.co.uk

Squeebles is a free spelling app for 5-11 year olds:

<https://keystagefun.co.uk/literacy-apps/squeebles-spelling-test/>

This book may be useful, particularly if visual strategies seem to help:

'200 Tricky Spellings in Cartoon: Visual Mnemonics for Everyone' (2016) by Lidia Stanton