

Ideas to help your child spell

You may be feeling a bit lost with how you teach your child to spell while they are at home. Here are some ideas you can try:

- Always put the word in a sentence to give it some context. This helps your child with knowing what it means, and also helps them when they are spelling words that sound the same but have different meanings. For example: here, hear, hair and hare.
- Make the words out of playdough or mud.
- Cut the words up into individual letters for your child. Give them the letters, tell them the word and ask them to put the word together.
- Have them say the spelling of the word aloud. For example: happy would be said as “h-a-p-p-y.”
- Spell the word forwards and backwards.
- Focus on the sounds in words rather than letter names.
- Write the word down several times.
- Write the word in the air.
- Trace over the word with a pencil, finger or marker.
- Draw the word in sand, dirt, or whatever you have available.
- Spell the word aloud while they are doing something physical. The combination of co-ordination, speaking and spelling requires different parts of the brain to work together.
- Write the words as if they are stairs, adding one letter at a time. For example: To spell the word mother they would go
 - m
 - mo
 - mot
 - moth
 - mothe
 - mother
- Create flash cards for your child. Write the word they are practicing on the front of the card and its definition on the back of it. Have them learn the spelling and the definition.
- Create a Spelling Train. Read the word aloud and have your child write it down. Using the last letter in that word, ask them to write another word beginning with that last letter. They can continue the ‘spelling train’ using the last letter for the word and make as long as they want it to. This helps them learn the spelling of other words as well. For example: a spelling train for the word ‘they’ could be:
 - they
 - yet
 - there
 - ever
 - run
- Toss around a spelling ball. This is a game the whole family can do. Stand together in a circle with a ball. Call out a word, toss the ball to another person, and have that person spell out the word, and so on. If the word isn’t spelled correctly, then whoever has the ball tosses it to another person who will try to spell it.
- Cut out the letters of a word from magazines, newspapers, junk mail, etc. Once they have all the letters, put the word together, read it aloud and spell it out loud. For example: say “they, t-h-e-y.”
Group words with similar spelling patterns together in a list. Write these as a list as this will visually help your child see what the words have in common.
- For example:
 - at
 - cat
 - bat
 - rat
 - sat
 - mat
 - that
- Incorporate Spelling into Reading and Writing. Get your child to make up sentences that use the words they’re learning to spell. Do not write a sentence for each word. Try and write as many words they are learning into once sentence as possible. The sentence has to make sense. For example: if I was learning the words ‘that, she, blue, there, over,’ I could write ‘She said I have to sit on that blue chair over there.’ Ask your child to illustrate their sentences.