



How can I help my child with **spelling**?

Everyone, even good spellers, make some mistakes from time to time. The important thing is that we know what to do if a word is difficult or unfamiliar. Good spellers are people who know what to do when they are stuck. Good spellers use strategies.

Here are some strategies that good spellers use.

- They have a store of 'sight words' that they can spell automatically.
- They sound words out.
- They know many common letter patterns so they know when a word looks right.
- They can divide words into syllables.
- They can make links between the meaning of words and their spelling. This is a strategy used by more experienced spellers, eg. Sign, signature, signal.
- They work out spelling rules for themselves and start to understand common spelling conventions.
- They use people and dictionaries to help them.

Children need to be encouraged to have a go at spelling words they don't know so that they will get a chance to practise these important strategies.

I can help my child with spelling by:

- Continuing to read to my child each day and discussing interesting or funny words or words with unusual spellings.
- Reading favourite books again and again and encouraging children to join in and help turn the pages at the right time.
- Looking at alphabet books together using letter names, talking about the letters and the sounds they make.
- Singing alphabet songs together or making up alphabet songs set to well-known tunes.
- Saying nursery rhymes with your child and letting him or her contribute the last word or phrase.
- Talking about print in the shops, street and on television, drawing attention to your child's written name as often as you can.

- Drawing attention to the initial sound of your child's name and connecting this with the initial letter.
- Encouraging your child to write.
- Giving your child paper when you are writing so that he or she can write beside you.
- Always accepting and valuing the writing and using it for the intended purpose.
- Always encouraging your child to 'have a go' at spelling.
- Continuing to play numberplate games in the car, thinking of words which start with the letters.
- Continuing to make attractive paper, note pads and pencils and pens available to your child.
- Helping your child to use a simple dictionary.
- Putting labels on things.
- Using a set of letters and encouraging your child to play with them, making his or her name and other words.
- Always being interested in the work your child brings home and ensuring you focus on what is being said rather than on the spelling.

