



## LEARNING SPELLINGS WITH CHILDREN

The most effective way for most children to learn to spell words is by using the Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check method:

- Look carefully at the word
- Read the word slowly, running your finger underneath each letter and clearly saying the sounds in the word as you point at the letters
- Cover the word up – you can use your hand or a piece of paper; some children like to make a special ‘word hider’ out of card to put over the word
- Write the word yourself, again saying every sound carefully – and no peeking!
- Uncover the hidden word and compare the two spellings carefully. If you got it right give yourself a pat on the back – if not, don’t worry and try again until you get it.
- When you have learnt to spell the word correctly it is a good idea to write it out a few times every day to make sure it really sticks in your brain – you don’t want to have to learn it again

Some more hints:

- Some children store their ability to spell a word in their short term memory – this means that they can do very well in spelling tests but cannot spell the word correctly in their own writing. Rushed learning of spellings the night before a test has no long term benefit to the child.
- If you test your child on spellings:
  - ask them to write a sentence or phrase containing the word rather than just the word itself
  - encourage them to write the word neatly in cursive handwriting (if they know how to do this) as linking the letters together helps them to learn spelling patterns
  - use a combination of written and verbal spelling – writing down works better but spelling aloud is a good skill too

Making it fun:

We all know children learn best when they are having fun, and especially when they don't even realise they are learning.

- Use magnetic letters on the fridge door, or foam letters that stick to the side of the bath as an opportunity to practise spellings
- Invest in a packet of bath crayons so your child can write their spelling words on the side of the bath
- Hold a 'spelling bee' where you take turns with your child to spell words aloud. Your child learns a lot just from checking whether or not you have spelt the words correctly – keep a score and make sure your child wins when they have tried hard.
- Make some flash cards of your spelling words
- Spell words out aloud, saying a letter each - harder than it sounds
- Play 'hide the word' – using plastic or foam letters hide the letters that spell a particular word around the room. Your child needs to find them all and put them in the correct order to spell the word. Then they pick a word and hide the correct letters for you.
- Write out a passage with some incorrectly spelt words in it – can your child correct it. How many did they spot. Then swap so your child writes a passage with incorrectly spelt words – by being aware that they have to spell something 'nearly correctly' they learn what the correct spelling is.
- Encourage your child to learn to touch type – there are plenty of software programmes available to support them in doing this. By hearing/looking at words and moving fingers to the correct keys without looking your child re-inforces their knowledge of the link between letters and sounds.