

Useful hints for Spelling

- There is no single answer to the spelling problems of each child
- Some children 'catch' spelling unaided
- All spelling activity ought to involve writing
- Oral spelling (by either adult or child) is of very limited short term value
- Children should be encouraged to write from memory
- Spelling should not be a copying exercise
- Priority must be given to high frequency words
- Children must be given the opportunity to experiment with words from as early as possible
- Train them to look intently at their names from an early stage
- Is there a word or common letter string in their name? (Margaret)
- Does their name have any letters in common with other children's names
- Help them to generalise with letter strings (Gary, garden, garage, sugar)
- Do not isolate letter strings from each other because they do not sound the same, e.g. home, some, women.
- Teaching spelling rules does not help the weak speller...there are too many exceptions to most rules and if the rule is complex, the child may not understand it in the first place
- Do not focus on words in isolation...put the words in context
- Children's own writing gives clues to their spelling problems and ought to be the basis for intervention
- Each child should keep a 'personal dictionary of errors' (an ordinary notebook will do) into which troublesome words may be written
- Set up a class 'word-bank' based on letter strings to which you can refer the child to check a word
- Have 'buzz sessions' with the child and discuss troublesome words. Has it got bits that do not cause trouble? What part causes the problem? What do others think? Does it cause anybody else trouble? Are there any small words in it?
- Asking children to write out words a number of times is a waste of time

- Correcting spellings must be both positive and meaningful for the child
- Be wary of homework. Be alert to the amount of words and probable time taken to complete the task of learning at home
- Short snappy spelling sessions are best
- The 'Friday test' serves little purpose
- Doing well in the 'Friday test' is not a real sign of spelling improvement
- Spelling improvement will only be seen in the child's 'free writing'
- Spelling must be seen as something
 - enjoyable
 - to be praised for rather than reprimanded
 - in which the child has a sense of achievement

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