

EA Literacy Service

Ideas to support a pupil with a spelling difficulty at home



This document has been developed by the EA Literacy Service (Northern Ireland). It is intended for parents/carers who may be supporting a child or young person with literacy difficulties at home. Parents/carers may find some of these ideas useful. This is not a specific programme to be followed verbatim nor is it a prescriptive list of what should be done. It is a range of good practice ideas and activities you may decide to use based on the needs of the child. We hope you and your child find at least some of the content helpful and enjoyable.

*The EA Literacy Service Team
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Some ideas for parents to support spelling:

- ❖ Just **give** the spelling when a child is 'in a flow of ideas.'
- ❖ Encourage them to stretch out the word and listen for the sounds. (They can use their fingers or mime stretching chewing gum)
- ❖ Encourage the child to spell as much as they can, then tell them the 'tricky bit.'
- ❖ Show them how you can take a word and make lots of other words just by changing a letter. E.g. cat - hat / hut- hug
- ❖ Look for the tricky bits in words: chip, meat, station.
- ❖ If the child writes **sno** - don't say 'that's wrong '. Say 'that does say snow but we spell it with '**ow**' - then show them the correct spelling snow.
- ❖ Break words into chunks (syllables), fan / tas / tic, ba / na /na.
- ❖ Play games counting the syllables in words.
- ❖ When giving a long spelling give it in chunks and at writing speed
un... der ... stand
- ❖ Look for the pattern in a list of spellings sleep, meet, feet, teeth.
- ❖ Make up mnemonics for difficult/tricky words 'does' (daddy often eats sweets)
- ❖ Decorate or illustrate words; for example like 'look' or 'see.'
- ❖ Use a dry wipe board to build words using the sounds.
- ❖ Write the sounds on paper squares and build the words.



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- ❖ Get them to use 'Simultaneous Oral Spelling – S.O.S strategy – saying the letter names as you write/trace them.
- ❖ Look, Say, Cover, Write and Check.
- ❖ Colour and trace over the word five times in different colours.
- ❖ Bubble write the words.
- ❖ Make the words using magnetic letters, wooden letters, foam letters, dough letters or trace in sand/salt/flour.
- ❖ Fill a squeeze bottle of water and write words on the ground or on a wall (outside!).
- ❖ Always check words by asking a child to write them down, or to give you the letter names from memory.
- ❖ Make sure that they have a try page for all written homework.
- ❖ Get them to check their written work - use COPS. (See Literacy Service 'Support for Writing' guidance document, page 8)
- ❖ Use a spell checker, for example Microsoft Word spell check, Siri or Alexa (make sure you are using UK spelling settings).



Mnemonics:

Using mnemonics is a fun way to remember how to spell 'tricky words'. The mnemonic should have a visual hook e.g. island. Examples of mnemonics include:

because - big elephants can add up sums easily
said - sally ann is dancing
does - daddy often eats sweets
island - is land



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Learning in sequence:

Constant overlearning and revision are important and help with sequencing sounds and letters to support spelling. Use memory cards and visual aids to prompt:

- ❖ the alphabet
- ❖ the days of the week
- ❖ the months of the year
- ❖ multiplying tables



Singing 'tables' or the months of the year to a favourite tune can be a good way to memorise them.

Assistive Technology/Computers and Literacy Skills:

Word processing is helpful for many reasons: -

- ❖ It is easier and quicker to press a key than to form a letter, typing enhances the presentation of work
- ❖ Parents may be using home devices and software supported through C2k and/or the school

Keyboard Skills:

Word processing is ideal for children with handwriting difficulties; they need to develop keyboard skills. If you have access to a computer/tablet at home, word processing skills can be developed further.

You may wish to use free software such 'BBC Dance Mat typing' or other free online touch-typing resources (more suitable for older children):

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zf2f9j6/articles/z3c6tfr>

This website is a useful resource to develop and improve keyboard skills in a fun way.

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Vocabulary List

- ❖ Developing a vocabulary list is useful and can be done as a multi-sensory activity.
- ❖ Children can have fun while developing their vocabulary by building lists with illustrations.
- ❖ It can be done by writing and drawing or by using word processing software such as Microsoft Word.
- ❖ They can build a list up over time as they expand the vocabulary they have become familiar with.
- ❖ As their vocabulary list grows, it is also a nice way for them to document and see what they have achieved.
- ❖ The following is an example created using Microsoft Word:

Word	My definition	Pictures	My notes
car	It has 4 wheels and an engine. We use it to go to school.	 Mum's car	Mum's car is white.

- ❖ Some text-to-speech and speech-to-text software has in-built features to assist vocabulary development and the creation of vocabulary lists.