

Learning to spell new words at home

Here are seven ideas to help you help your child to learn spellings at home

1. Look, cover, write, check

The word is written at the top of a piece of paper. Ask your child to:

- Look:** Look at the word then say it. Spell the word using **letter names** not the sounds. Close his/her eyes and spell it. Open his/her eyes and check the spelling. If it is not the same, start again.
- Cover:** Fold over the top of the piece of paper so the word is hidden.
- Write:** Write the word from memory. Dot the 'i's. Cross the 't's. Close the o's. Check his/her writing to see that every letter can be read. Encourage your child to join up and use correct letter formation.
- Check:** Uncover the word. Check the spelling with the word at the top of the page.

Continue with the steps again until he/she has written the word three times correctly.

Do this every day if possible

2. Finger tracing

The word is written in large writing and your child traces over the word with his or her finger twice while saying the letters in the word. Use the letter names, *a* (ay), *b* (bee), *c* (cee), not the sounds. The child then writes it twice without looking at the word.

3. Saying the letters aloud

(sometimes called Simultaneous Oral Spelling, or SOS)

The child copies the word twice while saying the letters in the word, and then writes it from memory, without copying the word. Use the letter names, *a* (ay), *b* (bee), *c* (cee), not the sounds.

4. Looking for words within words

Your child will find it easier to remember a word if you can encourage him or her to look for words they know inside words they don't know. You can help your child to think up a sentence that draws attention to it. For example:

- ◆ You *hear* with your *ear*
- ◆ *What a hat*
- ◆ The *e* is at the *end* in *friend*

5. Using rules

Your child can be helped to remember some spellings by learning spelling rules. Your child's teacher will be able to advise on the rules your child should be helped to learn, for example, "*i before e except after c*".

6. Aids to memory

Some words are so hard to remember, it is useful to think of special ways of remembering them.

Using odd pronunciation:

- ◆ Saying *Wed-nes-day* for Wednesday
- ◆ Saying *me-rin-gue* for meringue
- ◆ Saying *bis-cu-it* for biscuit

Using sentences (mnemonics):

- ◆ Saying "*big elephants can always understand small elephants"*
to help spell 'because'

7. Using the sounds in words

If you can spell the word easily by saying the letter sounds, then your child can be encouraged to sound out the word when spelling it. Many three-letter words can be sounded out: e.g. *cat*, *run*, *big*.

Be careful not to put /ə/ (schwa) after every consonant, e.g. *cuh-a-tuh*. This may confuse your child.