

Ideas for supporting your child to learn their spellings

1. Encourage your child to sound talk the word using their phonics and notice any parts of the word that are tricky and cannot be sounded out. Highlight these so they become the focus for the learning.
2. Invest in a set of plastic magnetic letters that are available at many discount, toy, and variety stores. Let your child spell the word by successively placing the magnetic letters on the magnetic board. You can show them the word, then remove it. Have your child name each letter as they locate it and place it on the board. This is good for developing the correct order for letters within the words.
3. Word lists. These can be made using paper available in the house. Print or write the words being studied. Post one copy of the list on the refrigerator, another on the door to your child's room, and another in the bathroom. Maybe another can go over the TV set. Use a different colour crayon for each word-or use a different color for parts of each word regularly confusing your child. For example, if they continue to write "come" as "cum," use black for the "c" and "m" but red for the "o" and "e".
4. Put movement into learning words. Have your child clap for each letter or take a step for each letter as they spell the word orally. This will help "lock in" the correct sequence of letters, as well as develop full recall for the word.
5. Let your child play teacher. Let them teach you the words he/she is learning to spell. Spell them orally. Let your child correct you. Then have your child dictate to you and you write them. Have them score your paper. Make a game of it.
6. Rhyming words is another game that can build spelling skills. "Can you think of a word that rhymes with fill?" As your child says hill, Bill, till, and so on, write them down. They'll soon notice that they have identical endings.
7. Look-Cover-Write-Check. This is a game to develop visual memory. Write one word on a piece of paper. Leave space underneath it. Tell your child to look at it as long as they want, that is, until they can remember the letters, then have them fold the paper so that they cannot see the word. They then try to write the word from memory. Let them check it, and if they have misspelled, try again.
8. Find the wrong word. Write a short sentence for your child. Tell them that there is one word spelled incorrectly. Ask if he/she can find it. To begin, make it a rather obviously misspelled word. Leave a letter out, or add an extra letter to a word. Ask him to first read the sentence, then to circle the misspelled word. Then make sure you erase it and write it correctly.
9. Provide a dictionary and use it together. Remember that dictionaries are more useful if your child has a knowledge of the alphabet and knows how they work.
10. Play 'Spot the Word' whilst reading together. This is good if your child is learning to read and spell simple key words e.g. 'said'. Take a page from their reading book or a book you are reading to them, and see how many times they can spot this word.
11. Sit down with your child, two pencils and a piece of paper. Tell him/her the spelling word you'll be practicing and write the first letter of the word. Pass the paper to him/her so they can add the next letter. You add the letter after that, repeating until the word is spelled.
12. Use websites such as <http://www.spellingcity.com/> or www.discoveryeducation.com/free-puzzlemaker/ Parents can register for the free version and input your child's spelling word lists. Your child can then play games and activities or take practice tests on the site. **But please don't forget to practise writing the spellings also to build stamina for writing!**
13. Use old magazines or newspapers to find spelling words and cut them out. It can be an interesting demonstration of how many times words are used in everyday writing.

Helping your child at home with spelling requires patience and a non-school-like setting. Don't try to be a teacher. Be a parent who teaches. Your child wants to please you – they want your honest, sincere praise. Keep the activities short-and fun, and do them regularly, with variety.