



# Lawn Primary and Nursery School

## Parent Advice Sheet

### Suggestions Sheet for a Child Finding Spelling Difficult

Spelling can be a challenge for many children, but with the right strategies, it is possible to improve.

The English language is tricky and there have been lots of influences on our language. There are rules and then exceptions to the rules, there are letters or groups of letters which represent different sounds in different words and there are many words that cannot be spelt using our phonics code.

The sounds we hear are called phonemes and the sounds we write are called graphemes. Some phonemes can be represented by many different graphemes eg the sound "s" can be written as s, c, ce, se or ss.

Below are some fun and effective suggestions that can help your child become more confident and successful in their spelling journey:

Remember it is always worth getting your child's eyes tested to ensure they can see well and also get their ears checked to ensure they can hear the sounds.

#### 1. Break Words into Syllables

- Help your child break words into smaller parts (syllables). This makes them easier to remember and spell.
- Example: "wonderful" → "won-der-ful"
- You can clap the syllables out or underline them when the word is written.

#### 2. Use Mnemonics

- Create memorable rhymes or sayings to help your child remember tricky spellings.
- Example: said is **Silly Ants In Dresses**
- These can also be backed up with a picture or visual to help
- At Lawn Primary we have a standard list of mnemonics that we use so that children do not get confused which may occur at transition time if each class were to have a different one
- Or you can make little reminders to help them remember a word
- Example: "I before E, except after C" (for words like "receive").

#### 3. Use Visual Aids

- Many children remember words if they have a picture or symbol associated with them
- Sometimes even a little story about the letters can help them remember a word
- Write words on flashcards or large paper and have your child trace over the letters with their finger.

- Use coloured pencils to highlight tricky parts of the word – some parts of the word will always be easy and some parts will be the tricky parts. Make reference to any silent letters or letters that are linked in a group.
- Encourage them to picture the word in their mind when spelling it.

#### **4. Practice Writing Words in Different Ways**

- Try different ways to practice – best if this is a range of multi-sensory ways:
- Engage multiple senses in learning to spell: look, say, write, and listen. For example, have your child say the word out loud, write it, then check it.
- Use clay or playdough to shape letters and make words.
- Use letter magnets to form words. This can be on the fridge or a rainbow alphabet on a tray.
- Write the words in a tray of sand or rice with their finger or an implement.
- Write the words in water on the patio.
- Write the words in chalk on the pavement.
- Write the words in different writing eg bubble writing, dot writing, fancy writing, joined writing.
- Write the words with their finger on sand paper.
- Write the words with their eyes closed (really have to think about it!)
- Write the words in fancy pens, different colours etc.
- Write the words on your back or your hand, with their finger and you have to guess the word.
- Write the words in the air with a finger.
- Write the words joined up.
- Try SOS Spelling or a Spelling Shield – videos on Youtube.

#### **5. Play Spelling Games**

- Make spelling fun by turning it into a game.
- Use apps, board games, or online resources that focus on spelling.
- Some great games include Scrabble, Boggle, or spelling bees with family members.
- Look at the shape of words.

#### **6. Use a Spelling Dictionary**

- Teach your child to use a spelling dictionary or an online tool when they are unsure how to spell a word. Ensure they can find a word quickly in the dictionary – practice with them.
- A Barrington Stoke dictionary can be really helpful – this has words listed in the ways that your child may spell them thus making them easier to look up and then find the correct spelling.
- Encourage them to make their own dictionary of words they find difficult – eg get a small notebook and label the pages with the each letter of the alphabet. Overtime add in words they find tricky so they can refer back to it.
- This practice can help build their confidence and encourage them to find words independently.

#### **7. Start with Word Families and Patterns**

- Teach word families (groups of words that have the same ending, like "-at": cat, hat, bat) or the same start, such as child and children.
- Once your child learns a word family, they can apply the pattern to other words.

- Lots of words are related and come from the same origin. You may know some of these or you can look them up online.

## **8. Read More Together**

- Reading aloud with your child , whilst letting them see and follow the text, helps them see and hear how words are spelled.
- Have discussions about the spelling of new words as you read.
- Encourage them to read a variety of books at their level, which can expand their vocabulary and spelling ability.

## **9. Repetition and Practice**

- Repetition is key to mastering spelling. Create a regular time each day for spelling practice.
- Use small spelling tests that are not too overwhelming.
- Positive marking – mark every letter they got correct with a tick. This way they can see that they got most of the letters correct just one or two were not.
- Try pyramid spellings for the word they :

t

th

the

they

- Try rainbow writing – keep writing over the words with different coloured pens.
- Try some fancy pens and notebooks – most children love these!
- Once your child has practiced their spellings a few times, get them to write the words with their eyes shut – they will really have to think and will remember the words more.
- Encourage you child to write and spell often – eg writing a letter or card, writing the shopping list etc

## **10. Focus on the Sounds (Phonics)**

- Focus on phonics to help your child understand the sounds each letter or combination of letters makes.
- Use activities like singing songs, using rhyming words, or listening for sounds in words.
- Underline the different sounds (phonemes) in words. Some tricky words this is hard to do and it works a lot better for simple, decodable words.

## **11. Correct Gently**

- Offer positive reinforcement when they get words right, and gently correct mistakes without making them feel bad.
- Praise their effort and improvement, not just the result.
- See positive marking as detailed above.

## 12. Use Technology

- There are several online games, apps, and tools designed to help with spelling.
- Encourage your child to use these fun tools for extra practice.
- Type words on a laptop – any misspelt words will be underlined. Teach them how to use spell check.
- Use spelling based games online. Eg Homophone games : [Homophones - English - Learning with BBC Bitesize](#)

## 13. Group Words by Theme

- Help your child categorise words by theme (like animals, food, or colours) and practice words within each group.
- Draw a label a picture with words with the same sounds in it eg for the ea sound you could draw a beach, ice-cream, sea, meat, steam, leap, cheap etc...Keep the pictures in a folder and keep referring back to them and adding to them
- The visual aspect again can help them to remember the words.

## 14. Keep Spelling Practice Short and Manageable

- Start with a small set of words to practice at a time. Overloading them can lead to frustration.
- Just practice for short amounts of time – frequent and often.
- As they master easier words, gradually increase the difficulty.
- Keep referring back to words that they have learnt already so that these are not forgotten.

## 15. Look at Environmental Text

- Look at words on road signs, labels in shops, on packets etc and discuss how they are spelt and what you notice about the word.

## 16. Use the sound mat to help with spellings

- At school we use the Read Write Inc scheme.
- Each phoneme has a rhyme to help remember it.
- Children are encouraged to “Fred it Out” when trying to decide which phonemes to use. Pinch each sound on their fingers.
- Ask your teacher for a copy of the sound mat and any further explanations about the Read Write Inc scheme.

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### Remember:

- **Patience and encouragement** are key! Spelling can take time to master, and each child progresses at their own pace.
- Celebrate small successes along the way to build confidence and make spelling an enjoyable experience.

Good luck, and enjoy the process of learning together!

**Books and Resources that may help :**

The building blocks of grammar by Lydia Stanton

Lydia Stanton's 200 tricky words in cartoons

I hate to write by Cheryl Boucher

The Spelling Rulebook from the Dyslexia Charity

The Dyslexia Shop does a Spelling Rules Flipchart

Morph Mastery by Louise Selby

Speed up by Lois Addy

Chimp fu can help support the understanding of how syllables work and is available as an app.

Morrells Handwriting Website

Choosing a book for your child to read to you..... Use the Five Finger Rule :

<https://youtu.be/UuOs31Bk0s4?t=57>

Before they start, ask them to turn to a random page in the book and read it. For every word that they don't know, they should hold up a finger.

Your child can use the following guidelines according to how many fingers they hold up:

**0 or 1** – Most probably too easy for your child.

**2** – A good choice that will give your child a reasonable challenge and allow them to learn new words.

**3** – Your child might need some help, but still a good choice if they're up for a challenge.

**4** – May be too difficult for your child to read on their own. If you are on hand to give them help or read along with them it can be suitable, but if they are reading on their own, choose a different book.

**5** – Most probably a bit too advanced, try a different book.