

Helping Your Dyslexic Child Learn to Spell

Learning to spell can be very difficult for dyslexics. Spelling is more difficult than reading because whereas reading involves the recognition of shapes already on paper, spelling requires shapes and sequencing to be produced from within one's head.

There are many ways of practising spellings, what works for one child might not work as well for another.

Most people find that a multi-sensory method works the best i.e. using the senses like eyes, ears, voice and hands.

Try a few activities from each of the sections below, whichever is most successful will be your child's preferred learning style.

Activities for Kinaesthetic learners (learn best by doing/using their hands)

- Write words in sand, sugar, salt tray
- Making words with pipe cleaners, plasticine or clay
- Feeling you spell the words on their backs
- Mnemonic – make a silly sentence/draw pictures, use different coloured pens.
SAID becomes: Sad Ants In Dustbins
Small Animals In Danger
- Act out a spelling mnemonic, creating a 'video memory'

Activities for Auditory learners (learn best by listening to someone or themselves)

- Breaking words down into smaller parts
- Speaking aloud or saying word strangely e.g. weather becomes we-at-her
- Recording spellings onto a tape and listening to them
- Singing spellings
- Follow me – you say it, they say it
- Say spellings as a 'rap'
- Rhythms and tapping to spellings

Activities for Visual learners (learn best by using eyes/looking)

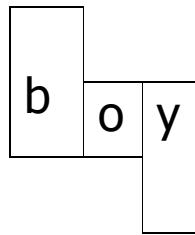
- Look at word and notice pattern
- Say or repeat word, listen to syllables, copy or trace word, cover word and write from memory and check at end
- Write word in the air using a finger or a wand (or a sparkler)
- They write the word on your back with their finger
- Write in large felt tip pens
- Post-it notes round the house
- How many words can you find in this word?
- Flash cards of spellings

- Try exercises on [www.spelling.hemscott.net]

Make practice FUN

Here are some ideas for spelling games

- Make spelling cards into jigsaws
- Make word searches (make sure words run left to right only)
- Unscramble spellings – use a set of wooden or plastic letters
- Noughts and crosses: if they spell a targeted word they can place a nought or cross
- Dominoes: make beginnings and endings of spellings for your child to match
- Hangman
- Board games: use any basic board game to practise spellings alongside. Make rules of your own but an example would be - number spellings 1 -5 on the back of the cards, when they land they have to spell a word from a card and, if they are correct, can move forward the number that is on the back.
- Draw a box round each letter and look for patterns and letters that are tall or hang below the line. Can your child remember what goes in each box?



Other things to consider

Using computer programs to support and reinforce learning spellings.

Some suggestions for software are:-

Wordshark [www.wordshark.co.uk], **Superspell** [www.4mation.co.uk],
Spellmate, Starspell [www.fishermarriott.com], **I Can Spell**
[\[www.resourcekt.co.uk\]](http://www.resourcekt.co.uk)

Electronic spellcheckers: there are two main types:

- handheld similar to a calculator but with a letter keyboard **Franklin Spellchecker, Franklin Spellmaster Plus, Literacy Word Bank**
- those that are part of a word processing program on a computer such as **Write Outloud** [www.donjohnston.co.uk], **Speaking Spellchecker** [www.r-e-m.co.uk]