

Top Tips for Improving Your Child's Spelling

- Remember that not all English words can be spelt correctly by "sounding out", For example, the words 'you' and 'said'. If this is the case, try asking your child to think about when he or she may have seen that word elsewhere or give them a clue for the part which is causing problems.
- Talk about how **you** spell, and what you do when you don't know how to spell a word. It's okay to let them know that adults make spelling mistakes too!
- Have your child write at home, e.g. filling in forms, writing notes to family members, writing phone messages and reminder notes, replying to letters, sending cards. All practice is useful!
- Provide a dictionary and use it together. Remember that dictionaries are more useful if your child has a knowledge of the alphabet and how a dictionary works. If words have tricky starting letters that cannot be guessed – for example 'know' or 'psychologist', then start your child off by directing them to the relevant page and asking them to search that page for which word looks correct.
- Encourage your child to try words, then praise the parts that are correct, and suggest what else is needed. For example, if your child has written *litttle* for *little*, you might say, "You have five of the six letters right. One of the letters should be doubled. Can you tell which one it should be?"
- Encourage your child to look at new words, say them, write them from memory, then check them.



Should I correct my child's spelling?

- First, encourage your child to check his or her own work and find any mistakes. Provide a highlighter so that your child can mark potential errors as he or she writes. After the writing is completed, use a dictionary to check the potential errors for accuracy. This will mean that the 'flow' isn't stopped and the child will still feel confident enough to attempt exciting, more complex words.
- If your child has made a mistake with a common word, ask him or her to try to fix it without your assistance. If this doesn't work – help by working it out together.

What if I am not a good speller?

- No problem. Use the dictionary together. It is good for your child to see you using a dictionary. Talk about what you do when you don't know how to spell a word.

Should I let my child use a spell checker or autocorrect on their phone or computer?

Yes. Children need to be made aware that spell checkers can be useful, but that there are times when they are not effective, e.g.

- when the word is spelt correctly but it is not the right word, e.g. *shore* and *sure*
- when the computer gives suggestions but the child still does not know which one is correct
- when the computer uses American spellings.

Remind your child to always check what they have written afterwards when using autocorrect, in order to prevent silly errors!

