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**Supporting your child with Spelling: Part 1**

Spelling can be an area of persistent difficulty for children and adults with dyslexia. Part 1 of our newsletters on spelling looks at why your child may find spelling difficult and suggests an approach for learning ‘tricky’ words, which are often words which we write most often.

# **Dyslexia and Spelling**

Some words have **regular** letter-sound correspondences, e.g. a word like **ship** can be segmented (split up) into its separate sounds (**sh i p**) when spelling.

However, your dyslexic child might find it difficult to match sounds with the correct letter representation, which could result in the word **ship**, being spelt as **sip**, **chip** or **shib.**



A word like **sail** also has regular letter-sound correspondences (**s ai l**). However, a difficulty for your child might be remembering how to spell the **ai** sound in the middle of the word, as there are different ways to represent this sound, e.g. **ai**, **ay, or a** (in a word of more than one syllable). Another confusion might be with the word **sale**, which sounds the same but has a different meaning and spelling.

Other words have **irregular** letter-sound correspondences and cannot be spelt the way they sound. These are often referred to as ‘tricky’ words for that reason.

Examples include words like, **said, does, one.** These ‘tricky’ words are often ones children use frequently in their writing. Difficulty with visual sequencing may make it harder to learn these tricky spellings. Your dyslexic child/young person will need explicit teaching of spelling, using a multi-sensory, cumulative (building on previous learning) approach.



# **Tricky words: using a multi-sensory approach**

Look at your child’s writing to find the common ‘tricky’ words they find difficult to spell and try this multi-sensory approach.



* Look at the word (visual)



* Say the word and name each letter (visual/auditory)



* Write the word/trace it with a finger/make it from plastic letters/write it in sand (tactile) while saying each letter name (auditory/visual/tactile)
* With ‘tricky’ words, use letter **names** rather than sounds, as sounds may be misleading

# **Handwriting and spelling**



It’s best for your child to learn to use a fully cursive script: fully joining throughout a word encourages a muscle memory for whole words.

Pausing frequently when writing, to recall a spelling, could be a reason for poor letter formation and handwriting, so becoming automatic with spelling common words can help.

**Spelling Part 2** (Issue 6) will give you more tips for helping your child with spelling and suggest some useful resources!