

Kindergarten to Year 3: A quick guide to helping your child with writing and spelling

Your child will learn about words in many different ways. Reading books, watching you write and seeing words in your home and out and about are just some of the ways. There are many things you can do every day to help your child learn about words and develop strong spelling skills.

When your child starts school

- Show your child how to hold the pencil correctly.
- Have blank paper, crayons, pencils and other writing materials handy so your child can write whenever they feel like it.
- Allow time to read to your child. Alphabet books, story books and nursery rhymes are great. Recite them together. As you read to your child, point to words that are easily matched to a picture such as *cat* and *hat*.
- Help your child recognise their name. Write it down and help your child trace over it with their finger while you say each letter. When they become more confident, help your child print the letters in their name.
- Help your child print labels for things like *toy box*. This helps your child to see that spelling has meaning.
- Finger-write a big letter on your child's back. Ask them which letter it is and what sound it makes.
- Point out letters and words that are part of everyday life such as words on traffic signs and food packaging.



As your child becomes more confident and begins to understand the connection between sounds and letters:

- Use magnetic alphabet letters on the fridge to make words.
- Write messages together on message boards.
- Talk about letters, sounds, words and play games with them. For example, say *This is the letter m – What starts with the letter m?*
- Include your child when you write your shopping list. Talk about what you are doing.
- Start a letter search game with your child. For example choose a letter for the day and ask your child to point it out when they see it.

As your child progresses, they will be able to match letters with sounds and be able to know how to spell some words:

- Ask your child to have a go at writing and spelling words before you tell them the answer.
- Make birthday cards together.
- Read newspapers, magazines and comics with your child as this will expand their vocabulary and skills.
- Play word detective. Ask your child to answer questions such as *How many words do you know that rhyme with cat.*
- Sound difficult words out loud as you spell. Ask your child to sound them out with you.
- Once your child knows the names of letters, help them to understand that these letters can make different sounds. For example the letter 'c' sounds different when you say *cat* and *cheese*.



Remember to praise your child. If your child does not know the answers, allow a little time to work it out. Give hints and clues.