

## Learning to Spell: A Procedure for Learning Spelling

### Step One: Introduce Words and Patterns

Begin with the list of words to be studied. Focus on the *general rule* or rules represented by the words on the list. If no rules are obvious, group the words according to the categories you find in the list so that your child will understand the spelling patterns. For example, the short *a* in fat or cat can be used to spell many other words not on the list.

### Step Two: Practice Spelling the Words

Children need to practice words by *hearing*, *seeing*, and *writing* them. Try several different activities because children learn in different ways. Before asking your child to write a missed spelling word, make sure your child can pronounce and spell the word orally. As your child writes the word, encourage him/her to say each letter as the word is spelled.

### Step Three: Use Words in Writing

The whole purpose of learning to spell is to use words correctly in writing. Learning to spell words on a list becomes meaningful when students use the same words in messages of their own. Focus on real life-tasks like letters, stories and conversations. This is the way students learn to spell more challenging words--by using them in a meaningful way.

### Step Four: Review and Extend

Always save time for review. It is not always possible to spell every word correctly on the first try, but your child can look back over what he or she has written and check any words that are misspelled. Once your child understands a spelling pattern, reinforce and extend it by brainstorming other words that fit the pattern but are not on the list.

### Step Five: Evaluate

Have your child write the words on the list as you read them aloud. Emphasize how much has been learned. After checking, have your child correct the spelling by referring to the word list. This self-correction is an important part of the learning process. Encourage your child to keep a record of troublesome words to work on later.