

USING FLASHCARDS/SPELLINGS AS A LANGUAGE ACTIVITY www.widgit.co.uk/parents

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Here are some additional activities you can do to make extra use of the time spent on reading/spellings. It will often be very helpful to use symbol support in these activities.

- a) Make sure the child can actually use the word correctly! For example, you have spellings with **all**: **ball, call, fall, hall**. Ask the child to make a sentence for each word and explain a sentence is something we might say or ask. You will be able to tell from the sentence if your child is confusing words which are a bit alike e.g. **all** : **I can have ice cream all jelly** - you spot a confusion with *all/or* and you can sort it out with lots of examples of how we use both words. **(Sometimes practise making questions as well as statements for your sentences – this is very useful.)**
- b) Have the list available and you say a sentence but leave off the final word. The child chooses which word will do. E.g. **Be careful or you might ...**
- c) Write simple sentences and leave a gap where one of the words would fit for the child to fill in. E.g. **Mum will _____ for me at 6 o'clock.**
- d) Make up silly rhymes with lists like this e.g. **I might fall on my ball in the hall.**
- e) Tell a silly story together, taking it in turns to contribute and bringing in the next word on the list. E.g. **All the children went out./ They played ball./ The teacher went to call them ...**
- f) Make up a longer sentence and cut it into chunks for reassembly e.g. **All the children/ were/ in the hall/ on Monday**. If you omit the leading capital letter and full stop, you can often play with the chunks and make different sentences and questions:
all the children were in the hall on Monday
on Monday all the children were in the hall
were all the children in the hall on Monday
This is really excellent practice for reading-for-meaning and sentence assembly skills.
- g) Watch out for opportunities to talk about words that can mean different things, or can be a noun and a verb e.g.
I had a bad fall / You might fall
We will call for you / I heard a loud call / I'll call you on my mobile.
- h) Understand a clue for one of the words. E.g. **This is what you do when you trip.**
- i) Sort out the word if it has been jumbled. E.g. **I a l c (call)**



- j) Occasionally a word will occur for which there is a homophone or same sound word (e.g. **boy/buoy key/quay red/read**). You can point out it is funny we have words that sound the same but are spelt in different ways and refer to completely different things. Even if your child only learns one spelling at a time, it is helpful to be aware that the word is not always the same thing. You can say something like **Do you know: there's another sort of buoy. Isn't that funny? You could tie a boat up to it so the boat doesn't float away. That wouldn't be a boy like John, would it?**

These and similar activities will not only ram home the spellings (particularly if your child writes the list words many times in the different tasks), but back-up language work is going on at the same time.

- k) Give you definitions. This task can require the child:
- to use the given word in a sentence in such a way that the meaning is plain
 - tell several features about the word (e.g. colour/use/location/description ...)
 - provide a mature definition which includes the category+description (e.g. *a cow is a farm animal that provides milk*). Obviously the maturity of the definition varies with the child's age! But answers like *I've seen one/ I don't like them /it's a cow* do not count at any age!