

# The 'First Aid' for Home Tutors



**SIDE Primary School**

# *The second aid is the:*

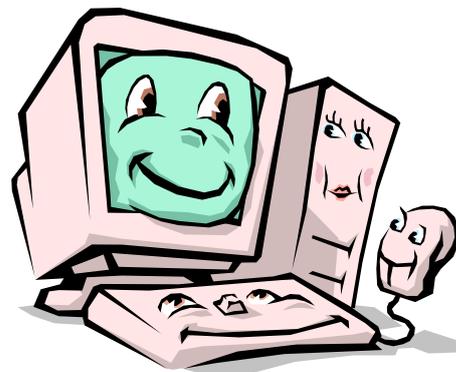
- Phone, or



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# Introduction

## What is this booklet?

A home tutors' first aid kit for when you've run out of ideas and you think there's a problem.

This book was developed by teachers of SIDE as part of the SHEAN Grant proposal and modified by Home Tutors and Support Officer for Learning Difficulties at Kimberley School of the Air.

## Who is it for?

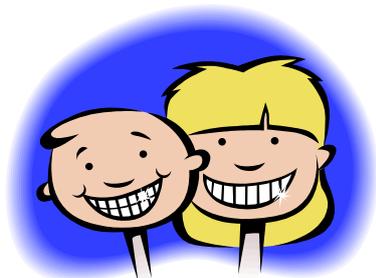
For Home Tutors, parents and teachers of children involved with distance learning.

## How to use this booklet?

1. Decide what the problem is – e.g. my child won't write.
2. Look up the contents page – e.g. look up writing on the contents page.
3. Turn to the relevant page.
4. Try one of the suggested tips.

## Remember:

- Change won't necessary happen overnight.
- At any stage – always contact your teacher.
- Different strategies work for different kids!



# Time Management

ISSUE OR CONCERN	TRY THIS:
<p><b>Child takes too long to complete task</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stop. Change tasks or change subjects.</li><li>• Do some physical exercise</li><li>• Have a drink</li><li>• Stop and come back to it later.</li><li>• Talk through the problem area.</li><li>• Identify the problem and talk through process of solution.</li><li>• Complete activity orally.</li><li>• Inform teacher of the problem with the activity.</li><li>• Make a timetable and stick to it as much as possible.</li><li>• Leave work out if taking too long and let the teacher know what has been done.</li><li>• Make judgements on what your child needs to do. Use the objectives to gauge what the focus of the activity is, and determine whether these meet your own expectations.</li></ul>
<p><b>How much do I need to do?</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discuss with teacher.</li><li>• A small amount done well is often better than large quantities of incomplete or poor quality work.</li><li>• If task is too hard or too much for the child, send in incomplete work with a covering comment to the teacher.</li><li>• Do not always omit play, oral and hands on experiences; these are crucial to your child's learning, particularly in the early years of schooling.</li><li>• Consider the purpose of the activity (at the beginning of every set work). Try not to focus on other aspects of learning, e.g. do not be too concerned with spelling and handwriting if the purpose of the activity is to brainstorm.</li></ul>

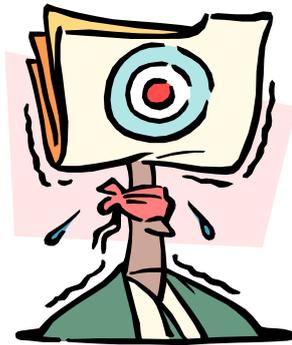


## Do we need to play the games in the workbook?



- YES! - Games reinforce the concept being taught and reinforce understanding. Try and resist the temptation to leave these out just because you 'don't hand it in'!
- They're fun!
- Games help to motivate children in their learning and break up the routine of sitting at a desk and 'working' all day.
- Play the game until you are sure your child understands the concept being taught. Check what the purpose of the game is.

## We are stressed with the work load?



- Take it in little chunks.
- Break up activities with short physical breaks.
- Remove time from activity sheets
- Only work to time allocated.
- Change task and return to the issue later.
- Change your daily target.
- Get the major tasks for the day out of the way first.
- Look at what the purpose of the activity is and only focus on that. Are you expecting too much from your child?
- Do your expectations meet your child's ability level? If not, discuss with your teacher. Remember, every child is different!

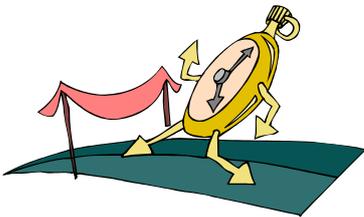


## Timetabling – breaking up the day



- Make a timetable *WITH* your children so you all agree.
- Where possible stick to a routine, but be flexible.
- Alternate subject areas – break up language with maths activities.
- Alternate tasks – favourite subjects with less favourite ones.
- Preparation for day's work is essential – pre-read set requirements the day before.
- Plan for a week or fortnight at a time.
- Teach your child to work independently – praise all efforts!

## Not enough time to prepare for work



- Advanced information on set theme.
- Ensure child has an independent activity to give tutor time to view other work.
- Do it while the kids are doing their school work.
- Prepare work the night before or before school starts.
- Allow the child free choice, e.g. play outside, play a game on the computer – while you prepare next day/weeks work.
- During quiet reading time, read instructions.

## Finding the time to do EVERYTHING



- Prioritise!
- Looking for help from other sources – the child/the father/ the telephone.
- Make lists
- Have a timetable and timetable other activities.
- Give visitors a job that will help you (art and craft, look after young children, weeding, hang out washing etc.)

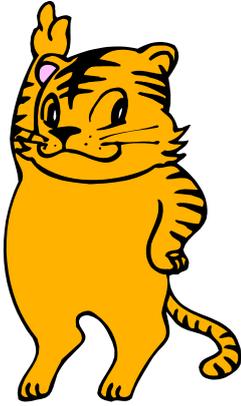


# Communication

ISSUE OR CONCERN	TRY THIS:
<p><b>When do I contact the teacher?</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When you've tried everything and have run out of ideas.</li> <li>• When you are unsure of the program because you're new to the system.</li> <li>• When you can't motivate a child to do an activity.</li> <li>• With behaviour problems.</li> <li>• When instructions aren't clear to you.</li> <li>• To clarify the purpose of an activity.</li> <li>• When you have <i>ANY</i> concerns or issues.</li> </ul>
<p><b>How to avoid interruptions</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a Help Pad (a pad for the child to write questions which they can't ask immediately because you are busy).</li> <li>• Use a 'have-a-go' pad – Do not allow your child to ask you how to spell a word unless they have had a go themselves and have used other resources (e.g. the dictionary)</li> <li>• Tell the child you will be away for a set time and will be unavailable, so child can carry on until you return.</li> <li>• Use dot system to alert HT to child's needs. E.g. red side up means I need help, green side up means I'm OK.</li> <li>• Take the phone off the hook!!!! Or use an answering machine.</li> <li>• Display a sign in front of the classroom to alert others that school is in progress and not to disturb.</li> <li>• Put radio in a separate room to the classroom.</li> </ul>



## What do I tell the teacher in the set reports?



- How much help was given to the child for a particular activity. Write the comments on the worksheet or on the feedback sheet.
- How much effort was expended to complete the task e.g. took 1 hour but he enjoyed it.
- How much work the child did independently, how much did you do.
- Write in a different colour to indicate what you have done.
- Indicate what tasks were done orally.
- Indicate problem areas.
- Was the activity enjoyed?
- Indicate if conditions in the classroom or events at home have affected your child's work.
- When you find the instructions ambiguous.
- Use the HT report or letter to add further information.



# Behaviour Management

ISSUE OR CONCERN	TRY THIS:
<p><b>If you are at your wits end and the classroom is in disarray.</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a break.</li> <li>• Go for a walk.</li> <li>• Talk to another HT on the phone.</li> <li>• Send the child to Dad.</li> <li>• Phone the teacher, the teacher can listen to your concerns and suggest some alternative action.</li> <li>• The teacher can help you access outside support through the Support Officer, e.g. speech therapist, Occupational therapist, psychologist.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reward Systems</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make rewards as realistic as possible. E.g. “If you complete all your work you will be finished by lunch time”.</li> <li>• Catch them when they’re good – verbally praise children for when they are displaying the behaviour you want, and tell them what that behaviour is. E.g. “Well done, you are sitting quietly and doing your work”.</li> <li>• Try and ignore small attention seeking behaviours, instead give them the attention when they are good or on task.</li> <li>• Use stickers/lollies and other rewards sparingly. However, these can be useful to initiate a change in behaviour that is wanted.</li> <li>• Give blocks of time as rewards – e.g. 15 minutes on the computer, playing outside.</li> <li>• If you promise a reward – focus on 1 behaviour only, make sure you give it to your student, never take it away for other behaviours and don’t give the reward if the behaviour intended for is not met.</li> <li>• Ask your teacher for help on the most appropriate way to use rewards for your student.</li> </ul>



## Changing or removing a negative behaviour



- Teach life reality - We all have to do things we don't like.
- Ignore negative behaviour
- Praise/reward ALL positive behaviour as soon as it happens
- Combine 'sitting down work' with fun/play/active work
- Remove yourself from the classroom for a breather
- You still need to do this but lets change the activity for 10 minutes

## Too many distractions



- Air condition school room
- Earphones
- Give in to the distraction temporarily then get back to work. E.g. if a helicopter lands outside the school room, go outside and watch it for 5 or 10 minutes then get back to work.
- Change your physical environment to minimise distractions.



# Motivation

ISSUE OR CONCERN	TRY THIS:
<p><b>My child is not motivated</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A reward system</li> <li>• Always eat a healthy breakfast</li> <li>• Tutor <b>MUST</b> be motivated</li> <li>• Tutor must be positive</li> <li>• Break the day up with the fun activities i.e. games, movement/sport</li> <li>• Tidy classroom</li> <li>• Themes of set around classroom</li> <li>• Change the room around</li> <li>• Change the timetable</li> <li>• Look at the purpose of the activity – are you trying to do too much in one activity and therefore taking too long?</li> <li>• Discuss what needs to be achieved for the day and have your child try and work towards that goal.</li> <li>• Praise often.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ideas to tackle boredom &amp; increase motivation</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A “gifted’ or modified children’s program from Support Officer, if appropriate.</li> <li>• Shortening length of activities – eg. only do 2 examples instead of 5</li> <li>• Have a chart to tick when activities or subjects completed well, independently or without complaint. Reward when chart filled.</li> <li>• Delete activities that are too easy and extend activities that are more challenging</li> <li>• Rewards</li> <li>• Combine sit down work with fun activities eg games/movement</li> <li>• Make some of them hands on</li> <li>• Reward when set finished at best ability.</li> </ul>



### Only one child



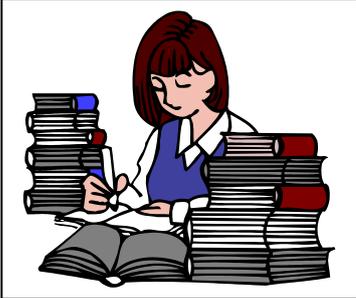
- Move class to more family orientated area
- Set task to tutor as well as child
- Encourage them to call their classmates
- Use of phone to ring class mates/teacher

# Concentration

ISSUE OR CONCERN	TRY THIS:
<p><b>Has difficulties concentrating</b></p>  A cartoon illustration of a boy with black hair, wearing a yellow shirt, eating a large slice of watermelon. He has a large open mouth and is sweating, with several sweat drops around his head.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Early night – good sleep</li><li>• Option to work away, alone</li><li>• Make it fun</li><li>• Remove all distractions</li><li>• Highlight key issues on the topic</li><li>• Keep food supply up – especially brain food!</li><li>• Work times with regular short breaks</li><li>• Break ‘sit down’ work with physical activities.</li></ul>



# Independence

ISSUE OR CONCERN	TRY THIS:
<p><b>How to get kids to work independently</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supervise the beginning of an activity to ensure the child is on the track.</li><li>• Ensure that they are capable</li><li>• Allow the child to make their own timetable so the ownership is on them</li><li>• Give them small tasks to begin with – do not overload with too many instructions</li><li>• Give weekly rewards of a book or something the child enjoys.</li><li>• Ensure your expectations are realistic.</li><li>• Have children write questions down so they can carry on with their work and you can address the problems later.</li><li>• Use a non-verbal gesture, e.g. double sided counter - green side up means I'm OK, red side up means I need help.</li></ul>
<p><b>Child not reading instructions properly</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Highlight key words</li><li>• Get the child to read out aloud a few times until they understand</li><li>• Teach the child to re-read instructions before starting work</li><li>• Company</li><li>• Rewrite instructions simpler</li><li>• If unsupervised/or HT can't be there, get child to read and tape so you can check that they are actually reading the whole, not just a few words.</li></ul>

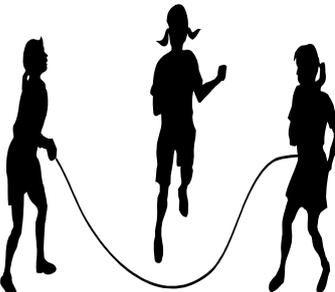


# Confidence

ISSUE OR CONCERN	TRY THIS:
<p><b>How to increase or improve a child's confidence level – realistic home tutor and child expectations.</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Modelling</li><li>• Encourage your child to have-a-go, praise efforts, no need to correct every mistake</li><li>• I really like being with you, you make me happy</li><li>• Make mistakes yourself to demonstrate that making mistakes is OK</li><li>• HT understands reading and writing process and what is expected of each child at different ages/levels.</li><li>• Tell child that nobody gets everything right all the time</li><li>• Reward/Praise what efforts have been made, not necessarily the result</li><li>• For HT to realise that while high expectations are good all children have different levels of development which aren't necessarily the 'norm'</li><li>• Don't set a time limit</li></ul>



# More Than One Child

ISSUE OR CONCERN	TRY THIS:
<p><b>Working with different age groups.</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share time equally</li> <li>• Encourage accepting other child's ideas &amp; tutor &amp; Dads, &amp; anyone else</li> <li>• Peer tutoring</li> <li>• Share activities</li> <li>• Timed competition</li> <li>• Group activities &amp; choose which one you will do – eg. do 1 cooking activity</li> <li>• Partitioning (other child can't see or hear what the others are doing eg. headphones)</li> <li>• Selecting one 'exciting' activity and getting all the children to do it then at their level eg. painting a bonfire K did painting, Yr 2 did choice writing about the painting, Yr 4 wrote report (or procedure) about a bonfire.</li> <li>• Write down timetable</li> <li>• Underline key words or highlight important areas</li> <li>• Re-read instructions if can't do or understand activity</li> <li>• Children's own time table/Rules – ownership</li> <li>• Have a notebook where the child writes down difficulties for HT to see what she/he is timetabled to work with HT</li> </ul>

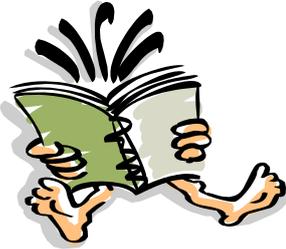


# Reading

ISSUE OR CONCERN	TRY THIS:
<p><b>How can I make oral reading more fun and successful?</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss illustrations throughout book before reading.</li> <li>• HT to read first and then child to read after.</li> <li>• Home Tutor to read a part (sentence, paragraph etc) and then child to read the next part.</li> <li>• Child to read the talking parts and HT to read the rest.</li> <li>• Child to read a small part and then HT to read the rest, then child to ask the parent questions on passage read.</li> <li>• HT to make a mistake in the part read and the child is to identify the mistake.</li> <li>• HT and child to read together – HT to vary voice tone and model appropriate reading habits. As the child becomes more confident HT drops voice level so that the child's voice is dominant. When the child reaches a difficult part, HT to increase voice level and slow down to lead the child through it.</li> </ul>
<p><b>How often should I read to my child?</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyday! Your child is learning about reading while they are listening to you read.</li> <li>• Read to your child until they ask you to stop.</li> </ul>



## How often should my child read orally?



- 10 minutes daily unless the child is happy to do more. It is necessary for the child to practise reading the passage silently before reading it aloud.
- Children in the upper primary years may not need to read aloud as often but some still need to do so.
- Your teacher may also ask to hear your child read over the radio or phone. It is OK for your child to have practiced this reading, unless your teacher says otherwise.

## How often should my child read silently?



- All children should read silently on a daily basis for an increasing length of time as they progress through their school years.
- DEAR time is an essential part of the curriculum, and an essential part of the reading process.
- Remember, looking at pictures, and making up the story, is still an important part of reading as the children are making meaning of the story.

## What sort of reading should I tape?



- The child should read for 2 to 3 minutes, no more than 5 minutes.
- Allow the child to select the book or passage to be read.



## How do I encourage the child to read fluently?



- The reading level of the passage must be appropriate to the child's reading ability.
- Predict and discuss the text, using the pictures, headings, titles, words and bold print to help them.
- Draw the child's attention to difficult words that will be encountered in the passage and revise/drill them if necessary.
- Child **MUST** be given the opportunity to read the passage silently before reading it aloud.
- Read the passage to the child and then ask the child to read each sentence twice consecutively, orally, so that they have the opportunity to read fluently.
- Teach a variety of strategies when learning to read, not just sounding out words letter by letter.

## What if the passage/text is still too difficult for my child?

- If none of the above strategies are helpful and there are no other suitable materials available, contact your base teacher to discuss your concerns.

## How do I help my child read expressively?



- HT read to the child to model expression
- HT read onto a tape and child to read along with HT practising with expression.
- HT explain and help child practise reading according to punctuation – e.g. voice goes up for a question.

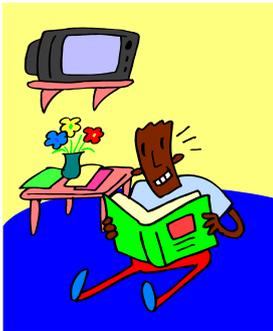


## How do I help my child improve reading accuracy?



- HT to practise/drill difficult words with child.
- HT model reading to child.
- Discuss the story first.
- HT help with breaking up of words into parts (syllables)
- Make sure child practises reading passages more than once.
- Ensure child has a bank of sight words that he/she can read without sounding out.

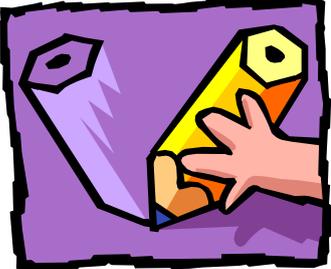
## How do I help improve my child's comprehension?



- Have you asked the child questions about the pictures on the cover and the title?
- Have your child discuss headings, tables, diagrams and key words in the text.
- Have the child retell the story onto a tape and compare with the written version. You may send it to the teacher for comment if you like.
- Have the child use yellow 'post it' stickers to mark areas of difficulty rather than stop and lose the flow of meaning.
- Read on or around difficult words to maintain flow and meaning.
- HT and child use a highlighter to indicate main ideas before reading .
- Have child read questions before reading passage.
- Have child ask HT questions about the text.



# Writing

ISSUE OR CONCERN	TRY THIS:
<p><b>Child won't write:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Pre-Primary/ Year 1</b></li> </ul>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Year 2 onwards</b></li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be aware that at this stage children will be experimenting with writing – don't expect to 'read' what they have written.</li> <li>• Accept all attempts at writing even if it looks like scribble to you.</li> <li>• Model writing to the children – let them see you write a shopping list or letter.</li> <li>• Encourage your child to have-a-go. Resist the temptation to write for them without them having-a-go first.</li> <li>• If your child can identify sounds in words and letters, encourage them to write down the sounds they hear in words. E.g. 'said' may be written as 'sd'.</li> <li>• Praise, praise, praise for any attempts.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As above</li> <li>• Discuss the topic</li> <li>• Brainstorm and list words and phrases they could use.</li> <li>• Use a framework for planning</li> <li>• If all else fails get the child to orally retell then write an event or story they know well – e.g. change topic to one the child feels more comfortable with</li> <li>• Try to resist the temptation to correct all spelling errors and insist on neatness as well as getting their ideas onto paper – children will not write or will stop writing if the expectations placed on them are too high.</li> <li>• Ensure children write EVERYDAY!</li> </ul>
<p><b>Child can't think of anything to write about</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look at books, photos, pictures to get ideas.</li> <li>• Discuss other successful stories they have written.</li> <li>• Use TV programs for ideas.</li> <li>• Speak to your teacher for ideas.</li> </ul>

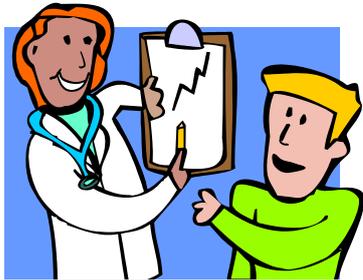


### **Child doesn't know how to start**



- Brainstorm and list words and phrases they could use.
- Phone teacher for story starter ideas
- Give child a couple of opening sentences to choose from.
- For younger children compose sentences using sight word cards.

### **Child hates writing stories**



- Have the child write an alternative form of writing, e.g. a report, description, procedure.
- Use a tape recorder to tape the story.
- Ensure your expectations match your child's ability.
- Try to resist the temptation to correct all spelling errors and insist on neatness as well as getting their ideas onto paper
- Use the computer to write the story.
- Get the student to draw the story then write about each picture e.g. comic, story map.
- Cut pictures out of magazines for the child to write about.
- Use alphabet strategy – write out the alphabet, write a word for each letter of the alphabet, find one word which appeals then use it to start the story. Go back to the alphabet and find another word to use. Repeat this strategy until no longer needed.

### **Child can't think of an ending**



- Find endings in other stories to use as ideas.
- Question child about what happens to characters to prompt more complete conclusion.
- Refer to writing plan.



### **Unsatisfactory ending to story**



- Question child about what happens to characters to prompt more complete conclusion.
- Draw the ending, and then write about it.
- Refer to writing plan.

### **Child hates changing writing**

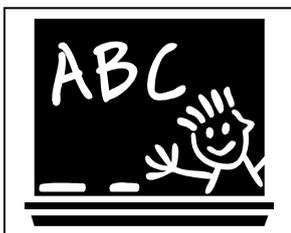


- Don't edit on the same day the child has written the story.
- Choose only one thing to edit e.g. spelling.
- Try not to edit all their work, mainly the pieces for publishing.
- If the child is really upset about editing send the draft to the teacher.

### **Child has difficulty copying from a draft copy to a final copy**

- Use a computer
- Do small lots of copying at a time.
- Use a marker to cover bulk of text, so only 1 line at a time can be seen.
- Dictate the edited version.

### **Child won't write words they don't know how to spell**



- ALWAYS insist that the child has-a-go before you tell them how to spell a word.
- Accept all efforts.
- Ensure your expectations match your child's ability.
- Try and resist the temptation to always insist on correct spelling.
- Ask your child to write what they think and accept their attempt.
- Use a 'have-a-go' pad.
- Display commonly used words that are misspelt around the room. Add these words to their spelling lists.



# Spelling

ISSUE OR CONCERN	TRY THIS:
<p><b>My child is having trouble with sounds.</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure you play the oral language games in the early childhood sets.</li><li>• Highlight the sounds in words.</li><li>• Group sounds/sound sort</li><li>• Make/play games with sounds</li><li>• Ring teacher for other ideas.</li></ul>
<p><b>What are some things I can try?</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Break words into parts, e.g. gl-a-d</li><li>• Highlight/colour troublesome sounds.</li><li>• 'Have-a-go' pad.</li><li>• Display words around the room, even on the desk.</li><li>• Build word families, e.g. fat, sat etc.</li><li>• Build words from small words e.g. in, pin, pink</li><li>• Find small words in large words.</li><li>• Put troublesome words into sentences.</li><li>• Work on words from child's writing.</li><li>• Spell words orally.</li><li>• Arrange words in alphabetical order.</li><li>• Complete words which have missing letters.</li><li>• Jumble/unjumble troublesome words</li><li>• Use computer software</li></ul>

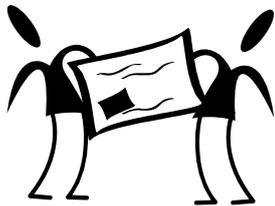


**Child doesn't know the rules.**



- Focus on the spelling rules that are focused in the set work.
- Break words into chunks, clap the syllables.
- Revise 1 or 2 rules at a time (though try not to over teach rules as this can become too daunting)
- Refer to spelling journal.
- Include difficult words into daily spelling.

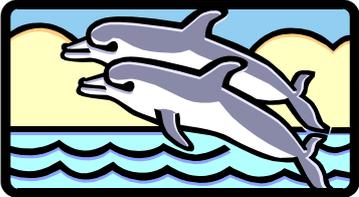
**How can my child see an improvement in spelling?**



- Test and record results on graph.
- Set next goals.
- Praise, praise, praise.



# Home Tutor Help

ISSUE OR CONCERN	TRY THIS:
<p><b>Home Tutor abilities &amp; expectations</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to your teacher</li> <li>• Reflection</li> <li>• Gender difference knowledge</li> <li>• Confidence building</li> <li>• Comparison in mainstream or samples of work</li> <li>• Chill out, we will get there in the end</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reading &amp; writing process</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More training for Home Tutors in Literacy &amp; Grammar</li> <li>• Brainstorming</li> <li>• Modelling</li> <li>• How to behave/how to hold the pencil, scissors etc</li> <li>• Multi sensory</li> <li>• Keeping up with trends in Grammar</li> <li>• Practice</li> <li>• Sharing with children/home tutors</li> <li>• Let the child control/select &amp; have ownership</li> <li>• Have a go pad/Post it notes</li> <li>• Make mistakes for the children</li> <li>• Speak to your teacher</li> </ul>

