

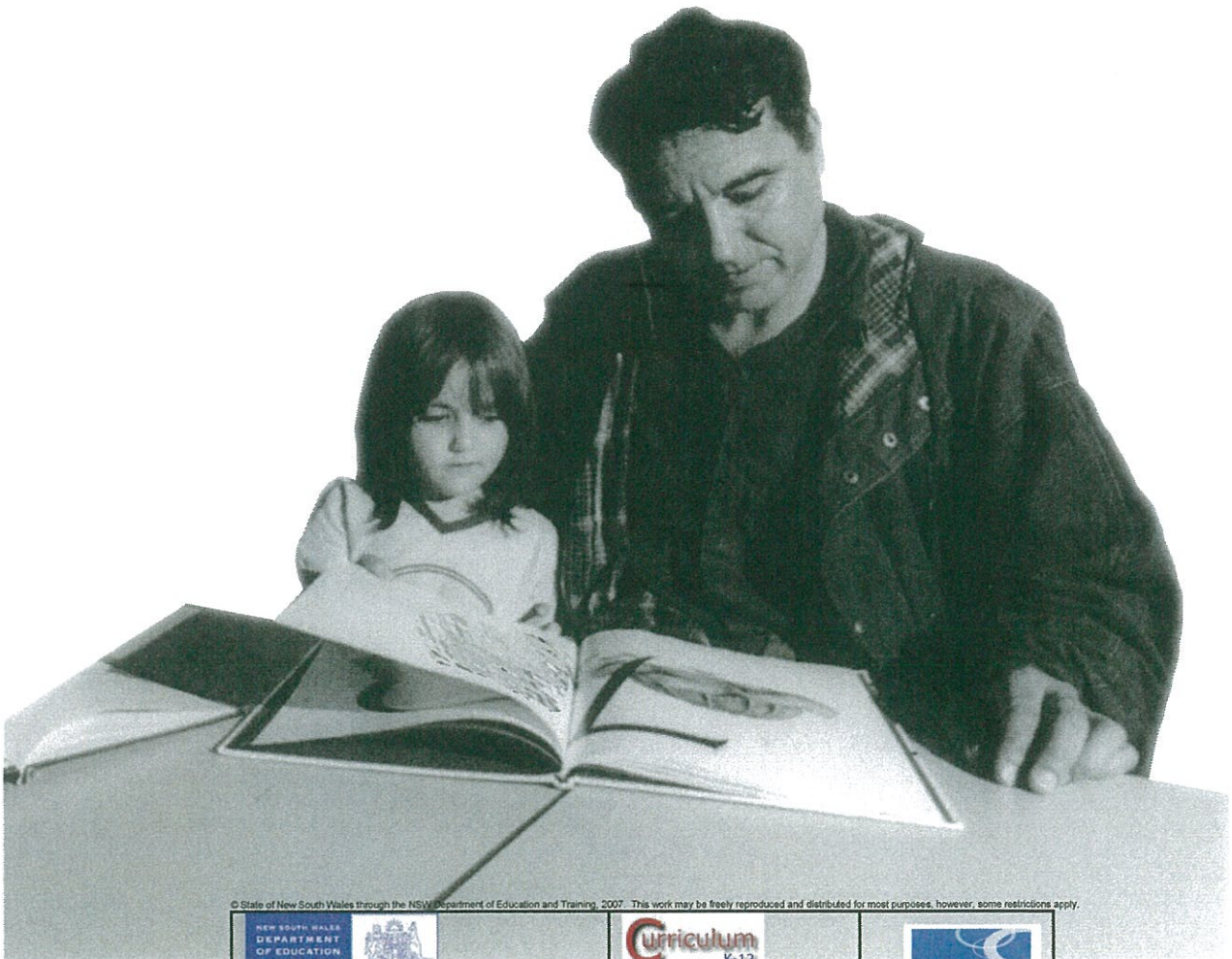
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to

NEW SOUTH WALES
DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION
AND TRAINING



State Literacy Strategy

Helping your child with spelling



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How is spelling taught in school?

- Spelling is taught by considering:
 - how words sound
 - how words look
 - how words change form
 - where words come from.

Students are shown how to spell words using all of these.

- Learning to spell is closely linked with learning to talk, listen, read and write.
- There is a daily focus on spelling.
- Spelling is taught in all grades and in all subjects.
- Spelling is regarded as a tool for writing. It is important that students spell correctly in their writing and that they are able to check their writing for mistakes.

How can I help my child with spelling?

- Help your child with those areas of spelling with which you feel confident.
- Remember that not all English words can be spelt correctly by “sounding out”, e.g. the words *you* and *said*.
- Talk about how you spell, and what you do when you don’t know how to spell a word.
- Have your child write at home, e.g. filling in forms, writing notes to family members, writing phone messages and reminder notes, replying to letters, sending cards.
- Provide a dictionary and use it together. Remember that dictionaries are more useful if your child has a knowledge of the alphabet and how a dictionary works.
- Encourage your child to try words, then praise the parts that are correct, and suggest what else is needed. For example, if your child has written *litle* for *little*, you might say, “You have five of the six letters right. One of the letters should be doubled. Can you tell which one it should be?”
- Encourage your child to look at new words, say them, write them from memory, then check them.

What should I do when my child asks how to spell a word?

- Ask if your child can suggest any parts of the word.
- Make sure he or she has access to a dictionary.
- Simply tell your child how the word is spelt.

Should I correct my child’s spelling?

- First, encourage your child to check his or her own work and find any mistakes.
- If your child has made a mistake with a common word, ask him or her to try to fix it without your assistance.

What should I do if my child finds spelling difficult?

- Continue to encourage your child to have a go when writing, to check words he or she is not sure of, and to ask for help.
- If your child seems to be having problems, consult his or her teacher.

What if I am not a good speller?

- No problem. Use the dictionary together. It is good for your child to see you using a dictionary. Talk about what you do when you don’t know how to spell a word.

Should I let my child use a spell checker?

- Yes. Children need to be made aware that spell checkers can be useful, but that there are times when they are not effective, e.g.
 - when the word is spelt correctly but it is not the right word, e.g. *shore* and *sure*
 - when the computer gives suggestions but the child still does not know which one is correct
 - when the computer uses American spellings.

What is expected of students from Kindergarten to Year 6?

Early Stage 1

In their writing during Kindergarten, students frequently use letters and symbols to represent words. These may or may not match the sounds in the words that they are trying to write. Students would also copy from words written around the room.

As their vocabulary expands, by the end of Kindergarten most students are expected to:

- identify the letters of the alphabet
- write letters for most sounds, particularly the beginning or ending sounds of words
- spell some familiar words
- use sources around them to help them spell, e.g. signs, books.

Stage 1

As their vocabulary expands, by the end of Year 2 most students are expected to:

- spell many words that they read and use frequently
- use sounds to help them spell
- use words they know to help them spell unknown words
- use some spelling rules, e.g. adding *s* to make simple plurals
- find and correct some errors in their own writing
- use sources around them to help them spell, e.g. signs, books, words, dictionaries, other people.

Stage 2

As their vocabulary expands, by the end of Year 4 most students are expected to:

- spell many words that they read and use frequently
- spell correctly a large number of personal words, e.g. family names, interests
- use known word parts to help them spell unknown words, e.g. knowing the ending *-tion* from *action* can help in spelling *mention* and *function*
- use most common spelling rules
- proofread their own writing and correct errors, using a dictionary.

Stage 3

As their vocabulary expands, by the end of Year 6 most students are expected to:

- make informed attempts to spell more difficult unknown words
- spell many words that they read and use frequently
- use most spelling rules
- proofread their own and others' writing accurately
- use a variety of sources to check spelling
- refer to word origins to help them spell, e.g. knowing that the final *t* in French is usually silent will help students spell *ballet*, *valet* and *Monet*
- use known word parts to help them spell unknown words, e.g. knowing that *ough* has many different sounds will help students spell such words as *though*, *tough*, *trough*, *thorough*, *bough* and *thought*.