

**Activity**  
**Spelling**  
**See It, Then Write It**

**Purpose:** Become a great speller.

**Equipment:** Colored markers and index cards or strips of paper.

**Instructions to child:**

Sit comfortably in your chair. Take one of your spelling words and write it on this card using whatever color marker you would like. Make it big and colorful. You can use as many markers as you would like.

(Child writes word.)

Great! I'll take the card from you.

(Hold the card up at your child's eye level and an arm's distance away from her face.)

Pretend you have a camera. With your "camera," take a picture of the word in your mind.

(Take the card away.)

Now, with your eyes open or closed, tell me about your picture. Describe the color of the letters, the size, the texture (rough, smooth), brightness (dull, shiny).

(Pause, wait for a response from your child.)

Raise your hand like it is a larger marker (or a magic wand or laser sword, or whatever your creative child would like to use).

While seeing the word in your mind, trace the letters of the word in the air with your hand (or wand or sword).

**Tips:**

Have fun with this. Allow her to make the letters big, little, fat, skinny. Have your child write the words on a whiteboard, chalkboard, large piece of paper, or even in the sand. Have her pretend she's a musical conductor and she *conducts* by spelling the letters with her magic baton—or a princess with a magic wand or a Jedi with a laser sword;

just make sure there is some type of motor response practiced. Some kids learn to spell when they are jumping on a trampoline, saying a letter of the word with each bounce. The goal is to keep her interested, involved, and successful in the process.

**If your child has difficulty seeing a picture, try the following:**

Show her the card again.

Try holding the card further from her face. Sometimes moving it away gives her more space to see the card. Weird thought, but try it.

Break the word into smaller groups of (2 to 4) letters. And then show the card again. For example, visualize the word TRANSFORMERS. If she can picture the entire word, great! If not, then break the word up into smaller chunks like:

Trans

Form

Ers

**If she still has difficulty seeing any letters, ask her:**

What do you notice about the picture in your head? (She may not see a word, but maybe a picture or an object. That's fine.) Ask her about the object. Keep questioning her on what she notices, just to get her used to being aware of the pictures in her mind. If she seems stuck here, then you may need to go back to the Parquetry Blocks in Chapter 9, *Developing Visual Information Processing Skills*, and work through the steps to build visualization.

Once your child reports seeing the word, say:

Write the word on a board or paper as you *see* it. See if it *feels* right to you.

**Spell It Backward!**

When your child has the spelling strategy down, she can spell it forward or backward. It's just reading the letters off the picture in her mind. To verify that she really sees the word and just doesn't memorize it, ask her to spell it backward.

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**Say to child:**

See the picture of the word in your mind. Spell the word backward.

Listen to the smoothness of her voice. It will help you know if she can see it. If she can't see it, you will hear her say a few letters from the end, then stop and pause, as she tries to go back and forth to figure out the word. Stop the process if you notice this. Go back to flashing the card and seeing the letters.

Remind her to look up if she is stuck on a word.

Parents have expressed concerns, "What if my child spells all her words backward at school?" I reassure them, that if she knows the words well enough to spell them all backward, she won't have a problem.

If you still think you have a problem after she uses this Activity, I'll personally talk to the teacher if she spells backward. In over 30 years of practice, I've never had to talk to a teacher about this issue.

