



Spelling, Movement and Vision

Have you ever wondered how the young students can spell such difficult words in the National Spelling Bee, while many of our children with developmental delays struggle to learn their simple weekly spelling words? The spelling geniuses will tell you that they see words in their mind's eyes.

Good visualization is the result of a sequence of learned skills that follow specific stages, according to the late GN Getman, a pioneer in visual development:

- General movement patterns *for* action
- Specific movement patterns *of* action
- Eye movement *to reduce* action
- Communication (speech/language) *to replace* action
- Visualization patterns *to substitute for* action and speech

Here are some movement patterns that can increase foundational motor skill levels and improve visualization by moving through the stages. Try them daily to enhance spelling skills in the early elementary school grades.

Combining motor activities, such as dribbling a ball, to the homework routine allows spelling to move to the subconscious brain, thus speeding up the learning process. As a child gains control over the body, more energy is available to spell.

First a child visualizes the movements necessary to reproduce the letters that combine to form a specific word. Then, he/she pictures a hand forming, then speaking, and finally, writing the letters. As a child's visualization skills develop, the movements and auditory input are no longer necessary to visualize whole words.

Grade	Type Of Ball	Bounce/Dribble 1x For Each Letter	Spelling Out Loud
K	Playground ball	Bounce and catch ball with 2 hands. (Parent writes the word on large piece of paper.)	Spell word forward. Spell word backward. Ask, "What letter comes before/after the letter _?"
1	Tennis ball	Bounce ball with right hand, catch ball with left hand. Bounce ball with left hand, catch ball with right hand. (Parent writes the word on large piece of paper.)	Spell word forward. Spell word backward. Ask, "What letter comes before/after the letter _?"
2	Tennis ball	Dribble ball with alternating hands. Visualize the word.	Spell word forward. Spell word backward. Ask, "What letter comes before/after the letter _?"
3	Tennis ball	Dribble ball in pattern: 2x with right hand, 1x with left hand. Visualize the word.	Spell word forward. Spell word backward. Ask, "What letter comes before/after the letter _?"
4	1½" diameter	Dribble ball in pattern: 3x with left hand, 2x with right hand. Visualize the word.	Spell word forward. Spell word backward. Ask, "What letter comes before/after the letter _?"
5-6	1" super bouncer	Dribble in patterns of 3s: 1x right, 2x left, 3x right. 1x left, 2x right, 3x left. Visualize the word.	Spell word forward. Spell word backward. Ask, "What letter comes before/after the letter _?"
7-8	1" super bouncer	Dribble in patterns of 3s, USING ONLY TWO FINGERS. Visualize the word.	Spell word forward. Spell word backward. Ask, "What letter comes before/after the letter _?"

Chart courtesy of Donna Wendelburg, Achievers Wisconsin www.achieverswisconsin.org

Many poor spellers often lack good visualization. Fortunately, visualization can be learned. Developmental optometrists and their therapists have helped thousands of students become good spellers by developing their visualization skills.

To learn more about this often overlooked skill deficit, read two classics: Getman's *How to Develop Your Child's Intelligence* and Ilg and Gesell's *Vision, Its Development in Infant and Child*. Go to www.devdelay.org to order.