

Why does my child get their spellings wrong when writing a sentence when it was correct on the Friday test?

It's a common problem for many children and adults who visit our clinic that when they were in primary school and learning the spellings for the test on Friday they would spend every night going over and over the words, looking at them, covering them and writing them out. As parents we think they've been learnt but in reality, they have only been memorised. Our children are so intelligent that they realise at an early age that the only way they are going to get 10 out of 10 or anywhere near that score is, in-fact, to memorise the words...They certainly know that if they don't they simply won't be able to write them down correctly.

I actually think that at around age 7, our children start to realise that other people can actually hold on to the words they have learnt and it must come as quite a shock that they simply can't. Considering the amount of work and energy it takes to memorise the spellings, usually in order, is it any wonder that there are tears and frustrations.

Here's one child's description of how she felt about the whole situation she had found herself in by p5.

She said. "Susan, when I'm sitting in the class, trying to write a story, it's as if everyone in the class has a helium balloon with a box on the end of their balloon's string. In their boxes, the spellings that they have learnt over the weeks are sitting waiting to be used. My balloon doesn't have a box at the bottom of my string so whenever I let go off my balloon all my spellings just float away." That one brought a tear to my eye I have to say!

Many adults who come to us tell of the frustration and feelings of embarrassment at the fact that they can't spell.

One 45-year-old guy, who was the managing director of his own firm, told me at our first meeting that he would always make sure that he was the last person into the meeting room. He would organise the chairs, tea, coffee for others, basically anything that would mean that he wouldn't be asked to take the Minutes, read the Minutes from the last meeting or write on the flip chart. He was heart scared of letting others know that he couldn't spell. He also was embarrassed by his handwriting but I will tell you more about that next week.

He started the exercise programme with me and when he came back for his 6 weeks visit I asked him how he felt about the meetings now.

He said. "I'm no longer last into the meeting...I still won't take the Minutes, read the Minutes from the last meeting or write on the flip chart but... My confidence has risen which means that if I was asked to take on those tasks, my mind has cleared enough to be able to say 'No....sure Johnny over there is great at doing that.'" "I feel empowered about what I bring to the company as oppose to feeling embarrassed about what I don't!

So, why does this happen to some and not others?

Our brains are all wired differently which means that our 5 senses may work more efficiently for some than for others. For instance; if our two eyes are not working together in sync it makes learning and retaining spellings very difficult as the words may look different depending on how tired the eyes are and our brains may not be able to process any more new information as it is already in chaos or simply exhausted. It is well known that a child who has to memorise spellings, essays, books etc is working ten times harder than a child whose brain connections are working efficiently.

As parents, if we are empowered to know why our children get their spellings wrong when writing a sentence when they got them right on the Friday test, it will reduce the amount of exasperation, tears and frustration at homework time.

By the way....The child who gave me the balloon analogy above, told me this week, "Susan, It used to take me ages to learn my spellings and then they'd just fall out of my brain again. Now I just look at them once and they stay in." She's a great wee character and like all the children we work with she is so intelligent. These children are smart but they just have difficulty proving it in some areas.

If you would like more information or would like to book a free evaluation please contact us.