

Rebecca Sitton's APPLESEED



PLANT THE SEEDS TO GROW SPELLING AND WORD-SKILL LITERACY.

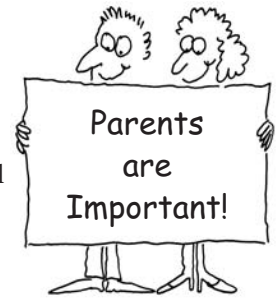
Parents as Partners in Your Sourcebook Teaching

Studies of exemplary educational programs across the U.S. reveal one factor all have in common—a strong parent partnership program. How can you get parents to support your instruction in the Sourcebook for Teaching Spelling and Word Skills? Here are some suggestions you may wish to use in tandem with your Sourcebook Teaching Notes, Parents as Partners.

To introduce parents to the program, invite them to a meeting. Many schools like to incorporate the Tutor Me Parent Introduction CD-ROM into these get-togethers. During this fifteen-minute overview, I explain to parents why the Sourcebook approach is different from a customary method, why the changes are necessary, the benefits for their child, and how they can support their child in the program. The CD-ROM can be used for a large group on a data projector.

You may wish to schedule a series of meetings to accommodate various family schedules. For example, a meeting can be scheduled one morning at 7:30 a.m., one afternoon at 3:30 p.m., and one evening at 7:00 p.m. It's always nice to serve light refreshments, but this is optional.

In addition to, or instead of, Tutor Me, consider answering the following questions for a successful meeting:



Why did we make a change in our spelling curriculum?

- A powerful activity to show a need for change is to use transparencies of students' everyday writing from upper-grade classes and/or a district high school (be sure to remove names!) that show spelling errors. Point out that students must be able to spell in writing, not just on a test. The measuring stick the community and workplace use is how well writers spell in writing—and a spell-check on a computer does not solve a poor speller's problems.
- Note that the Series teaches more than spelling by including word skills for reading, writing, grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, vocabulary development, speaking, and thinking. Research clearly supports instruction that helps students make connections among all the communication skills.

How was the decision made to use the Sourcebooks?

- Explain the evaluation process so that parents know the effort and attention you made to ensure that the best decision was made.

How do the Sourcebooks meet teachers' goals?

- Have the Sourcebooks on display, as well as any of the supplementary materials that you use, such as the student Practice Books. Select one goal, such as providing for students of all abilities. Next, tell how the Sourcebooks allow teachers to meet that goal, such as with the menu of differentiated activities and differentiated spelling lists.

How does the program work?

- You might do an activity with parents that teaches an essential skill related to your state standards or district guidelines from the Build Skills and Word Experiences section of a unit.

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Parents as Partners in Your Sourcebook Teaching (continued)

How does the program work? (continued)

- Some teachers demonstrate use of a Cloze Story Word Test with great success! Make copies so every parent can participate to better understand testing.

How can parents help?

- To introduce Take-Home Tasks, show one on a transparency and explain that essential skills are taught. Parents can assist with the acquisition of these skills by helping their child complete these tasks.
- Introduce other skill-building exercises that their child's teacher may select for homework, such as the Exercise Express activities in each unit.
- Share with parents that proofreading is a focus. Students receive instruction in how to proofread and are asked to apply these skills in their everyday writing. The Priority Words are expected to be spelled with 100% accuracy. Discuss the papers for proofreading that will be sent home. These papers have been proofread by their child at school, but not marked for errors by the teacher. The papers will be accompanied by a letter explaining how they can help their child practice proofreading at home. Explain that words are never mastered for spelling until they can be spelled and used correctly in writing. Further, proofreading is how every spelling achievement test assesses spelling, and students who are able proofreaders score better on these tests than students who have not developed the ability to be a careful proofreader.
- Share with parents that a Words to Learn sheet will be sent home routinely on which their child has recorded words not yet learned. These words are identified for each student at school and are systematically reassessed on unannounced tests throughout the year, and in subsequent years. The goal is to learn the words "forever," because they are essential for everyday writing. Remind parents that spelling is taught for writing. With the Words to Learn sheet, a list of suggestions for learning the words will come home. You may wish to share some of these ideas with the group. (If parents want a list of all words to be tested, send home a copy of the Core Words blackline master, located in each grade-level Sourcebook. A Core Words list is also in each Practice Book.)
- You may wish to send home the blackline master Literature List to parents, particularly for primary students. The spelling and literature tie-ins could be reinforced at home by parent and child cooperatively revisiting the literature.
- Emphasize the importance of being positive and enthusiastic about their child's spelling. Their enthusiasm is contagious, or what they do instead is contagious!



How is spelling graded?

- Show and/or explain the grading system and report card.

How can questions about the program be answered?

- Indicate that you (and other staff members) will visit with parents over refreshments following the meeting.
- Provide suggestions for contacting staff if questions arise later.
- Information and sample lessons can be obtained from www.sittonspelling.com.
- If questions are not satisfactorily answered using these resources, let them know that Rebecca Sitton answers questions from parents and teachers, and can be reached at rsitton@sittonspelling.com or 888-937-7355.