**What is Developmental Spelling?**

* A phonics based program that helps students learn how words work in our English language.
* Word study allows students to look at words so that they can construct an-ever-deepening understanding of how spelling works to represent sound and meaning.
* Students are assessed and grouped according to their appropriate stage of development and they study the structure of words by sorting and comparing them (Word Study).
* Their progress is determined by their effective use of these words in both reading and writing.

**Spelling Stages**

**Letter Name (LN)-** Students learn about beginning sounds, blends (bl, sl, etc.), word families and short vowel sounds. This is the stage in which students are usually taught to read.

**Within Word (WW)-** Students spell most short vowel sounds correctly and they learn about long vowel sounds and patterns in one-syllable words. In this stage students can read and spell many words correctly because of their automatic knowledge of letter sounds and short-vowel patterns.

**Syllable Juncture (SJ)-** Students learn about the conventions of joining syllables in words with two or more syllables. Students are expected to spell many words of more than one syllable. Students consider spelling patterns where syllables meet and at meaning units such as affixes (prefixes and suffixes)

**Derivational Constancy (DC)-** Students learn that meaning as well as sound and pattern are important in the spelling of the English language. This last stage in the developmental model continues through adulthood.

**What Does it Look Like at Various Ages?**

*Kindergarten-* Students begin word study by sorting pictures. They sort pictures by their sounds. As they progress they are introduced to words with their pictures.

*First Grade-* Students use picture sorts and word sorts for their word study.

*Second-Fifth Grade*- Students use word sorts to learn about sounds, patterns, and meaning of words.

**Developmental Expectations of Spelling Stages**

Letter Name (LN) Ages 4-9 Grades K-2

Within Word (WW) Ages 6-12 Grades 2-4

Syllable Junction (SJ) Ages 8-12 Grades 3-8

Derivational Constancy (DC) Ages 10 and Up Grades 5th and Up

**What Are the Benefits?**

* Children who learn to read and spell well relate sound and spelling patterns of new words to the sound and spelling patterns of words they already know.
* Students who sort words they already know with new words that they don’t know build upon their prior knowledge and gain better understanding.
* This understanding transfers to both reading and writing. Students are not just memorizing words for a test, but they are learning strategies that help them remember how to read and write words effectively.

**How is it Different?**

Developmental spelling theory differs from traditional approaches in two ways.

1. It prescribes the direct assessment of a child’s growth as a speller, relating their stage of word knowledge development to both reading and writing.
2. It describes instruction called Word Study that facilitates student’s thinking about written words and how they work.