

FROM  
 ABOUT THE  
 AUTHORS  
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As children begin using strategies to help them get words down on the page, we must watch very closely to see that they are maintaining a productive level of attention to spelling. We don't want them to be so overly conscious about it that they're writing very little, and we don't want to see them not thinking about it all and just randomly putting letters on the page.

Our youngest writers know thousands and thousands of words and have made these words a part of their oral speech. Many of these words are not ones they would recognize in print yet in their reading, but we want them to be able to use these words in their writing. To help nudge them to do this, Lisa has developed a simple ritual for celebrating when children tackle words that are challenging to spell. A chart in the room reads "I'm not afraid of my words!" and when someone is caught being a fearless speller, the word the child tried is listed on this chart. During share time the class will look at the word and the writer will explain how he or she thought of the spelling. Then Lisa will show the children the conventional spelling and they'll either celebrate how close the writer came or marvel at how different the spelling is from what the writer thought it would be. It's a celebration either way, because the focus is on not being afraid to try a hard word you know, not on getting the spelling right.

So a lot of our earliest teaching about drafting is about getting the words we want down on the page. But as soon as we have almost everyone up and at least trying to do this, we are going to turn our attention to giving students a strong vision for what they might do with these words.

I have a

"I'm not afraid of my words!"

| your name | your word<br>kid spelling | conventional spelling |
|-----------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Heleha    | griseheprw                | grasshopper           |
| Heleha    | ladebage                  | ladybug               |
| Kayla     | byoudfal                  | beautiful             |
| Medina    | SPCES                     | CIRCUS                |
| Joldah    | srf                       | surf                  |
| Folpe     | saeuumekne                | sea anemone           |
|           |                           |                       |
|           |                           |                       |
|           |                           |                       |

You will  
 One sta  
 One fine

FIGURE 4.4 The "I'm not afraid of my words!" chart.