

Irregular Plurals

It is very important that your child is using regular plurals (*i.e. adding an 's' at the end of their words*) before you start this work.

Irregular plurals are where the plural word does not just need an 's' adding e.g. toy - toys. They are a bit trickier and your child will need lots of exposure to them in order to learn them and confidently use them.



Here is a list of some of the commonly used irregular plurals in English:

feet	geese	teeth
men	women	firemen
policemen	children	leaves
scarves	knives	thieves
wives	loaves	elves
wolves	calves	bookshelves
hooves	mice	fish
sheep	deer	moose

How can I help my child develop and use irregular plurals?

- Your child will first need to understand how irregular plurals work. Explain to your child that when there is more than one of something, the word sometimes changes. Give lots of examples within your day-to-day routines. For example, 'Look at the **men**' or 'put your socks on your **feet**.' Don't worry if your child says 'mans' or 'foots' to start with, this is what typically developing children do.
- Give your child lots of praise when they remember to use irregular plurals, e.g. 'well done, you used the word mice instead of mouses, you are clever!'

Use the pictures given to you by your therapist or cut out pictures from magazines, newspapers or catalogues.

- You can use them to play the following games: Pairs, snap or lotto games. Make sure you say the word every time you or your child put down or pick up a card, e.g. 'foot' or 'feet.'

- You could play a ball and skittles game with a picture under each skittle. Take turns to roll the ball and knock the skittles down. You and your child name the pictures under each skittle that is knocked down.
- Try playing a bean bag game, where you lay the pictures, face down, on the floor and then take turns to throw a beanbag onto the pictures. Each of you names the picture you land on. Who's got the most?
- Put the pictures in a pile and play any board game. Take turns to turn over a card and name it – use singles and irregular plurals. If you name the picture correctly you then roll the dice and take a turn on the board game.
- Read/make up a story e.g. going to the park; 'They went walking in the park. In the lake there was a goose, then another goose came along so there were two geese.' See below our 'Sam's day at the farm' story and use this as a starting point.
- Once children have learned the main groups, there are only a few left to learn.
 - ⇒ f → ves e.g. hoof/hooves
 - ⇒ an → en e.g. man/men
 - ⇒ oo → ee e.g. tooth/teeth

Self Correction

- When your child becomes more familiar with using irregular plurals prompt your child to use them more consistently day-to-day by giving choices e.g. 'Have you brushed your tooth or teeth?'
- Give your child choices, e.g. 'Do you want to crunch in the leaf or the leaves?'
- Encourage your child to monitor and self correct 'You have fooks? Does that sound right?'



Use this story to see how many irregular plurals you can spot.

Sam's Day at the Farm

One day Sam got up early because his class were going on a school trip. He was very excited and got dressed very quickly. When he came downstairs his mum said "Have you cleaned your teeth?" Sam was so excited about his trip he had forgotten, so he went back upstairs to clean his teeth. His mum was pleased because his teeth looked so shiny and clean.



Not long after Sam arrived at school he got on a bus with all the other children and set off for the farm. He wondered what he might see, maybe some sheep or even some geese. He had never seen geese before. He'd seen sheep because he had passed a farm.



When he got to the farm he saw 2 men, they were the farmers. There were 2 women as well, these were the farmers' wives and they both had scarves on their heads. The men and women each took a small group of children to visit the animals. Guess what.... there were some geese! The geese had orange beaks and feet. They didn't have any teeth because birds don't have teeth.



In the barn were some sheep with some new lambs. Sam had seen sheep but never seen lambs that were so tiny before.

In another barn were animals the children were allowed to hold. Sam particularly liked the mice, although the farmers' wives thought they were scary.

Before getting back on the bus to return to school the children had a picnic. The farmers' wives brought out loaves of home made bread and big pieces of cheese which they cut into smaller pieces with their knives.

