

## Little Words in Big Words

I explain to students that when readers are stuck on a word, they sometimes look for little words inside of bigger words. I show them a sentence such as:

### **The crying child went to the TEACHER for help.**

In a think aloud, I model how if I were stuck on the word *teacher*, I would first think of people a crying child might go to for help. It could be a *mom*, a *dad*, a *grandpa*, a *policeman*, a *secretary* at school, a *principal*, a *teacher*, or . . . Now, I can combine making sense with trying to see if there is a little word in the big word that will help me.

I write the letters of the word *TEACHER* on separate cards and place them in a pocket chart or on strips of transparency material on the overhead. Now, I show the children how I can look at the word to see if there are any little words I already know. (Note: I am not trying to scramble letters here, I'm just looking for known chunks in the big word.) Moving the letters around, I separate the following words one at a time, showing the students how they are each a part of the bigger word.

her  
each  
teach  
tea

I then might demonstrate by asking myself the question: Who could a crying child go to that has this little word inside? Could it be policeman? Could it be principal? and so on.

Next, I might read *There's An Ant in Anthony* by Bernard Most and keep a list of all the words that had *ANT* in them in the story.

Finally, I send the children to start reading the room, their independent reading books, and their familiar guided reading favorites to look for little words in bigger words and to share with their partners.

Lastly, I monitor the application of this strategy during writing when the children are crafting spellings and during their independent reading in guided reading and reading conferences to see if the strategy is being implemented in real texts.