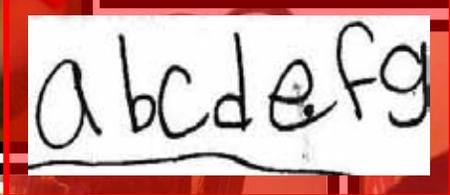


Joyful Writing-to-Read Kindergartens Accelerate Literacy



Promoting Excellence in Kindergarten Literacy
A Complimentary E-Book from Nellie Edge and Colleagues

www.nellieedge.com

Joyful Writing-to-Read Kindergartens Accelerate Literacy and Smiles

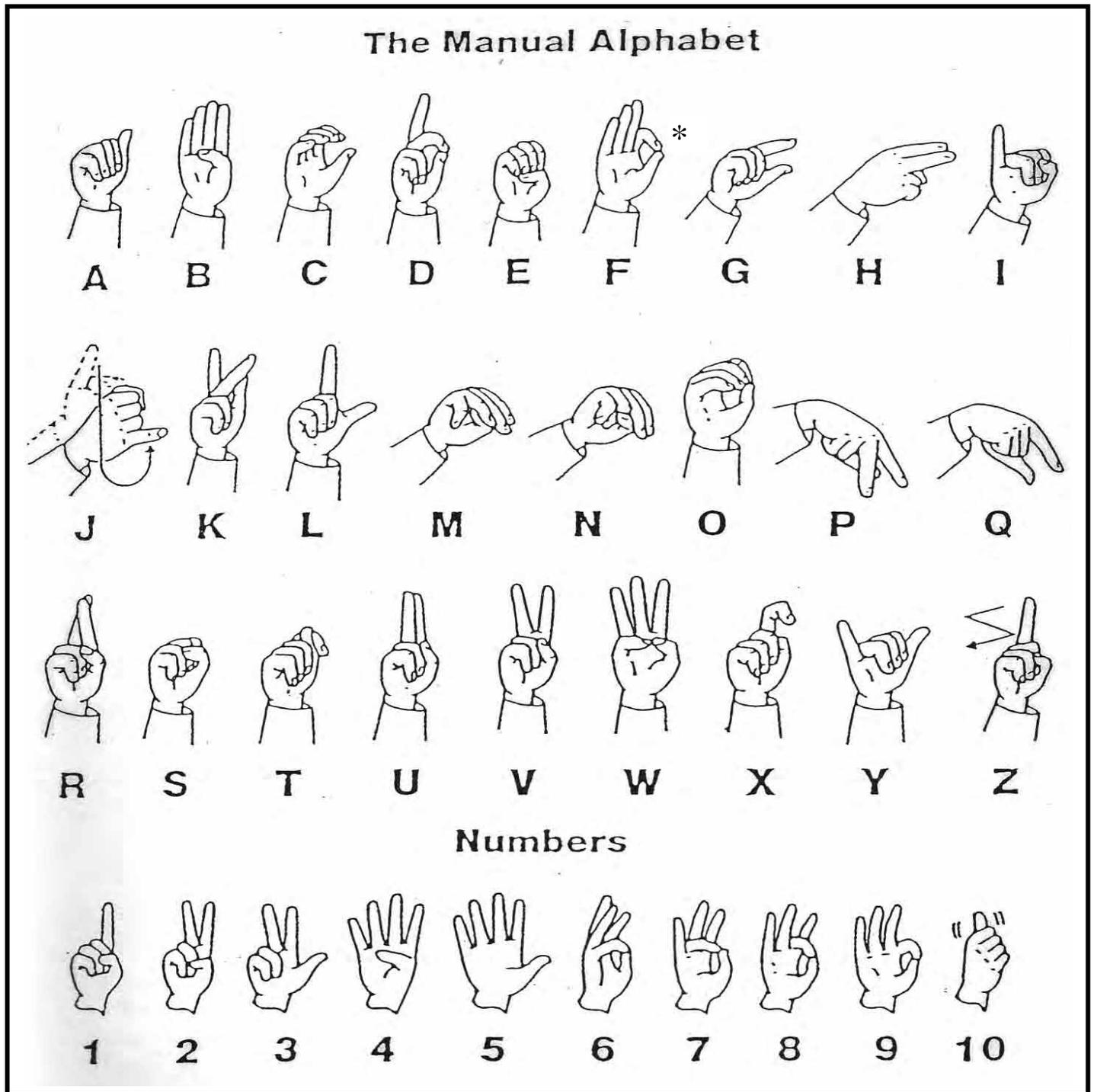
A Complementary e-Book from Nellie Edge and Colleagues

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Use One, Consistent, Multisensory ABC and Phonics Program

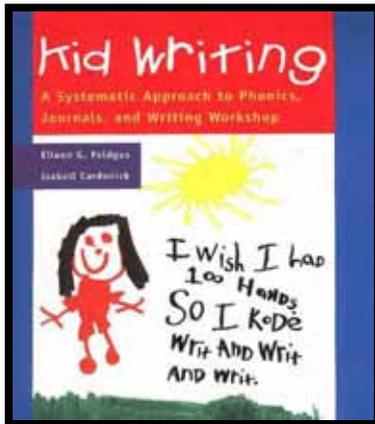
For powerful ABC and Phonics Immersion, add American Sign Language (ASL), fingerspelling and a signed alphabet song book and chart to your classroom. Children more easily access memory for letters and sounds when they fingerspell. Send a copy of your ABC song chart and CD home. Children love sharing this new language with family. **Adding the kinesthetic element of ASL for the ABC's and key phonics symbols creates powerful hooks to long-term memory with whatever ABC and phonics system you are using. Singing allows the brain to chunk all 26 letters, sounds and key phonics symbols into one memory space. We use ABC Phonics: Sing, Sign and Read, by Nellie Edge (available 2009, www.Sign2me.com)**



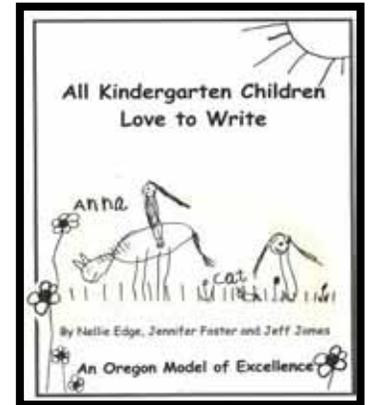
* F is signed both with the three fingers spread and with them closed.
Used with permission.

The Best Practice to Support Multisensory ABC and Phonics Immersion: Daily “Kid Writing” and Skilled Teacher Modeling

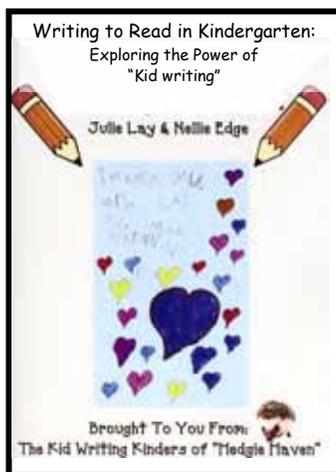
Developing a passion for writing is the key to higher literacy standards in kindergarten. Daily “kid writing” is how we systematically teach and reinforce phonics skills in actual practice. “Kid writing” gives children authentic motivation to want to write letters and words with increasing accuracy. This writing is enhanced by the skilled use of modeled and interactive writing.



Kindergarten teachers have loved using the book *Kid Writing: A Systematic Approach to Phonics, Journals, and Writing Workshop*. Teachers describe “kid writing” as the systematic piece that enhances the New Zealand process writing model. We highly recommend this important and award-winning book. *Kid Writing: A Systematic Approach to Phonics, Journals, and Writing Workshop*. Eileen Feldgus and Isabell Cardonick. The Wright Group, 1999. See www.kidwriting.com to view the awesome classroom and order the book. The book is *only* available through this website.



How do you use interactive and modeled writing to teach skills and engage children in meaningful writing throughout the curriculum? *All Kindergarten Children Love to Write* shows how mentor kindergarten teachers support young writers. This inspiring book demonstrates writing strategies across a meaning-centered curriculum. *All Kindergarten Children Love to Write*. Jennifer Foster, Jeff James, and Nellie Edge. Nellie Edge Resources, updated 2005. (Full-color seminar resource book only available through the training program or on loan from Salem-Keizer School District).



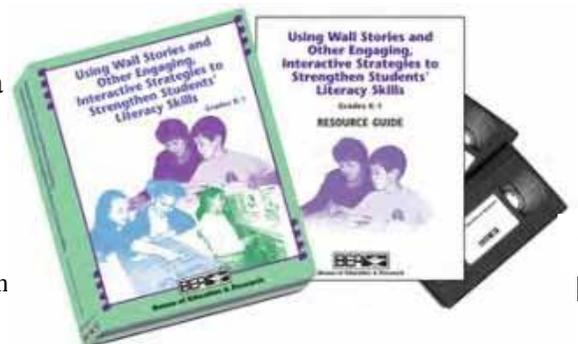
Building on the work from the original *Kid Writing* book and the seminar and book *All Kindergarten Children Love to Write*, innovative kindergarten teacher Julie Lay has developed a joyful, meaning-centered curriculum where children learn to read by writing. She shows how to systematically organize to accelerate literacy and engage children in writing across the curriculum.

Writing to Read in Kindergarten: Explore the Power of “Kid Writing”. Julie Lay and Nellie Edge. Nellie Edge Resources, Inc. 2006, updated 2008.

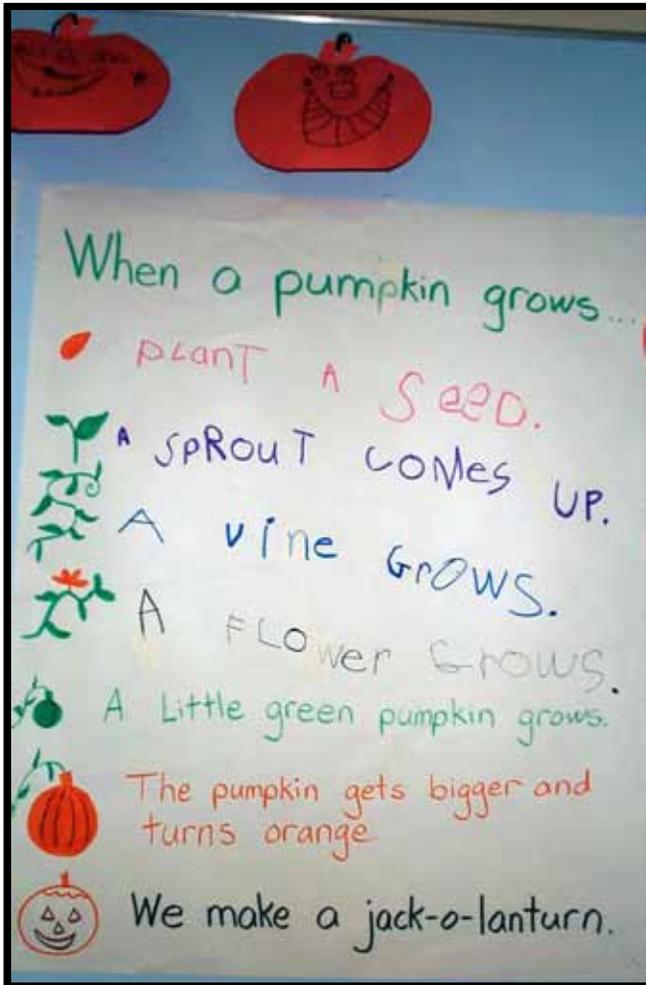
Our other valued resource is: *Units of Study for Primary Writing: A Yearlong Curriculum*. Lucy Calkins, The Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, Heinemann, 2003. “Kid Writing” provides a natural transition into these units of study.

See **BER Videos: Using State-of-the-Art Strategies for Teaching Writing** and **Using Wall Stories and Other Engaging, Interactive Strategies to Strengthen Students’ Literacy Skills** featuring **Darla Wood-Walters**.

www.ber.org. (Darla is one of Oregon’s mentor kindergarten teachers. She has developed a highly successful early literacy model – CHIPS [Children Immersed in Print Successfully].) Darla Wood-Walters is a wise teacher researcher and gifted presenter with a passion for excellence. We can all learn from her in these powerful video programs.



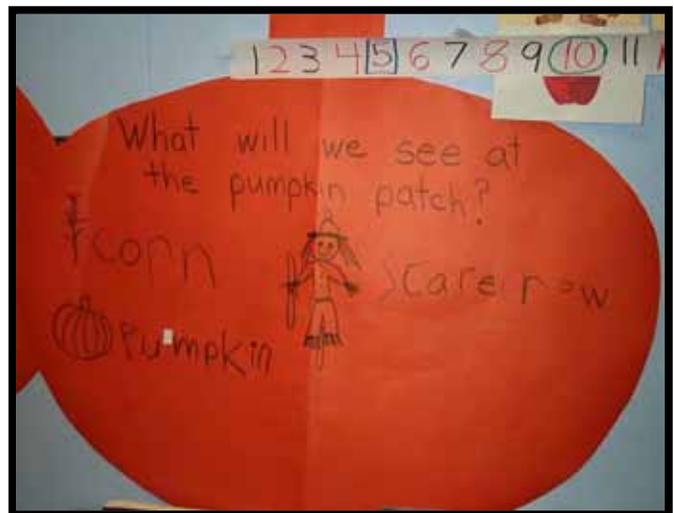
Meaningful Interactive Writing Instruction Begins With Engaging and Meaningful Experiences: Our Trip to the Pumpkin Patch



In this interactive writing piece, the teacher invited children to come up and **share the pen**.

What will we see at the pumpkin patch?

Jennifer Foster's kindergarten children **make predictions** about what they think they will see when they visit the pumpkin patch. When they return from the trip they reread their ideas to see if their predictions were correct.



A Classic Folk Tales Unit and the Drama of Three Billy Goats Gruff Invites Interactive Writing: Children Share the Pen



Magnetic letters and magnetic “star words” facilitate small group interactive writing in Kathie Bridges’ classroom.

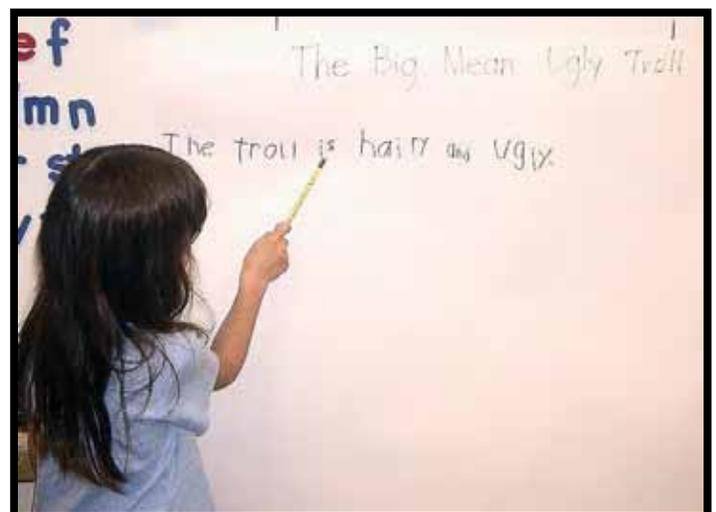
These children have all first dramatized being Billy Goats and the troll: “Trip, trap, trip, trap. Who’s that tripping over my bridge?”



Children compose sentences about *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* and individually help write the words. A child who is not certain of how to form the “s” can use a magnetic letter for support.



The* is a magnetic star word. It is available during interactive writing for visual support.



At the end of the interactive writing session, **each child rereads the sentence.**

All Kindergartners Love to Draw and Write



Vote for (Oregon) Beavers



What accomplished kindergarten teachers have learned:

- Writing is the key to higher literacy standards.
- Learning to draw with increasing detail supports writing development.
- Kid writing is the vehicle for systematically teaching phonics.
- Writing helps all children understand how reading works.
- Children love to create their own "really cool" books.

How do we create a joyful writing-to-read classroom?

Teaching Your Child to Print Their Name Efficiently: The Beginnings of ABC Fluency

Dear Parents,

Learning to print one's first (and later last) name is an important literacy skill in kindergarten. Enclosed is a name card showing how we will teach your child to form the letters. Please encourage your child to practice several times a day at home. Your child will be asked to carefully practice forming the letters on a 2" x 4" blank card and then to name the letters first thing every day in kindergarten. If they make a mistake printing, they just take another card and do it again. Making improvement and giving our best effort is important to learning. We celebrate each child's progress and talk about the "best letter." Then we choose one letter to practice making over and over until the brain and fingers make the connection. Repetition builds control and confidence until efficient letter forms become automatic.

A child's name is the most important word he or she will ever learn to write. Once the child gains mastery over these letter formations, they will have internalized many handwriting principals and other letters will be easier to form efficiently.

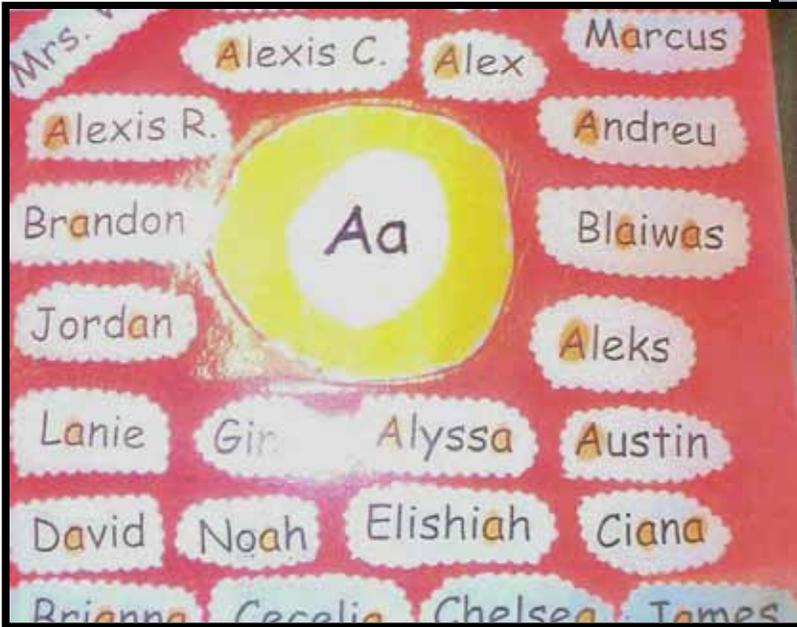
Please post this name card on your refrigerator and keep one copy in the area where your child likes to write and draw. With daily practice at home and at school you'll be amazed at how quickly your child's ability to form letters improves.



- While **good handwriting is not the most important focus for young writers**, learning to automatically control letter forms within a growing number of high-frequency ("by heart") words, frees the child to focus more energy into expressing their ideas in daily "kid writing."
- **We honor and celebrate all children's initial writing explorations and understand that small muscle coordination varies greatly from child to child.** Kindergarten letter formation instruction is always positive, individualized and encouraging. It is integrated into real writing activities so the children are motivated.

Incorrect muscle memories can be hard to unlearn later. Our aim is to encourage efficient letter forms right from the start — beginning with the child's name.

Enhance Your ABC and Phonics Immersion Program: Create Memory Hooks Using the Letters of Each Child's Name

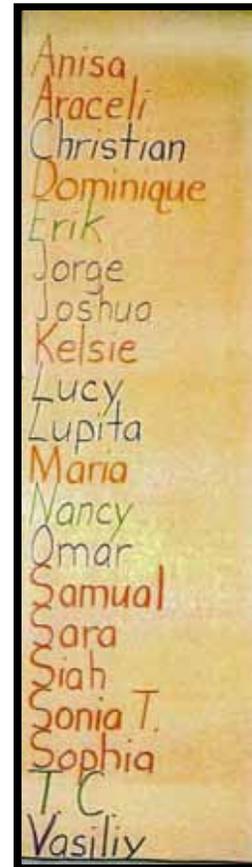


Julie Rundquist created a lovely and colorful ABC book of children's names. "Who has a 'd' in their name?"



Julie Lay keeps this moveable word wall of name cards available for children to use during "Kid Writing" workshop.

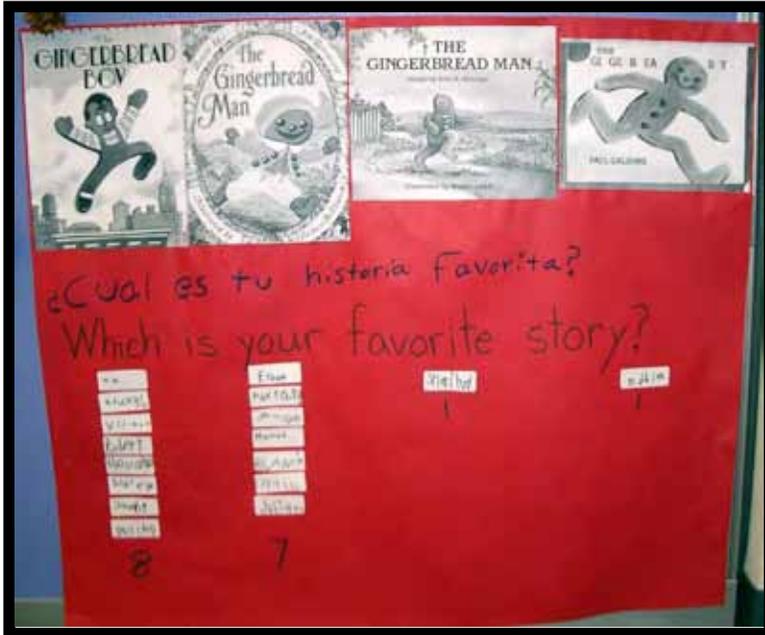
ABC Immersion Strategies – Start with Names



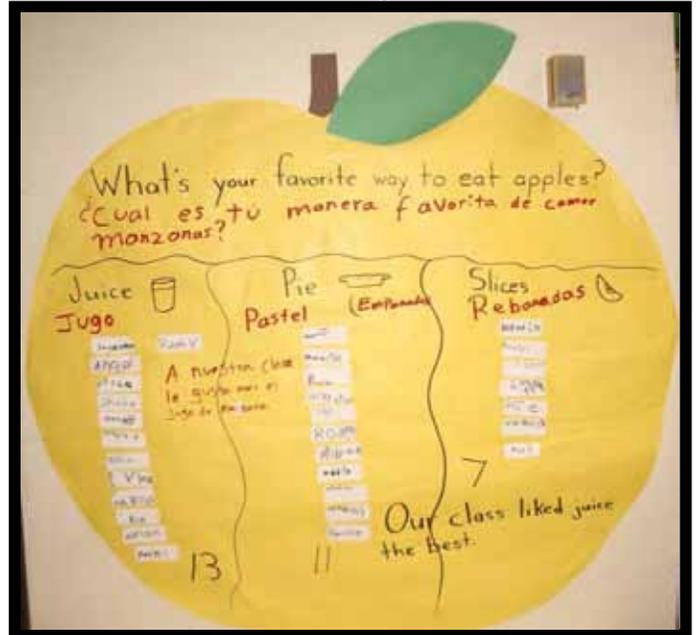
Jennifer Foster posts a color-highlighted, alphabetized list of children's names for comparison and study.

Give Children a Reason to Print Their Name Clearly: Use Name Tickets for Graphing

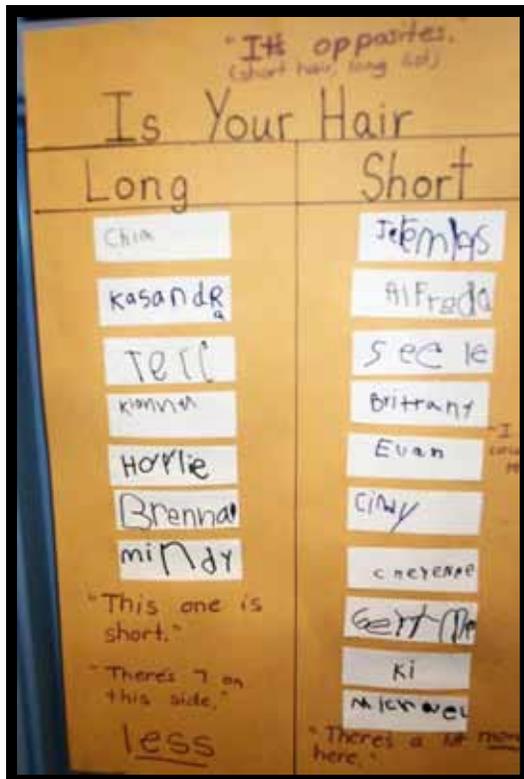
Photos from Jennifer Foster's and Janice Neilson's kindergarten



Which is your favorite version of *The Gingerbread Man*?



What's your favorite way to eat apples?



Other graph ideas:

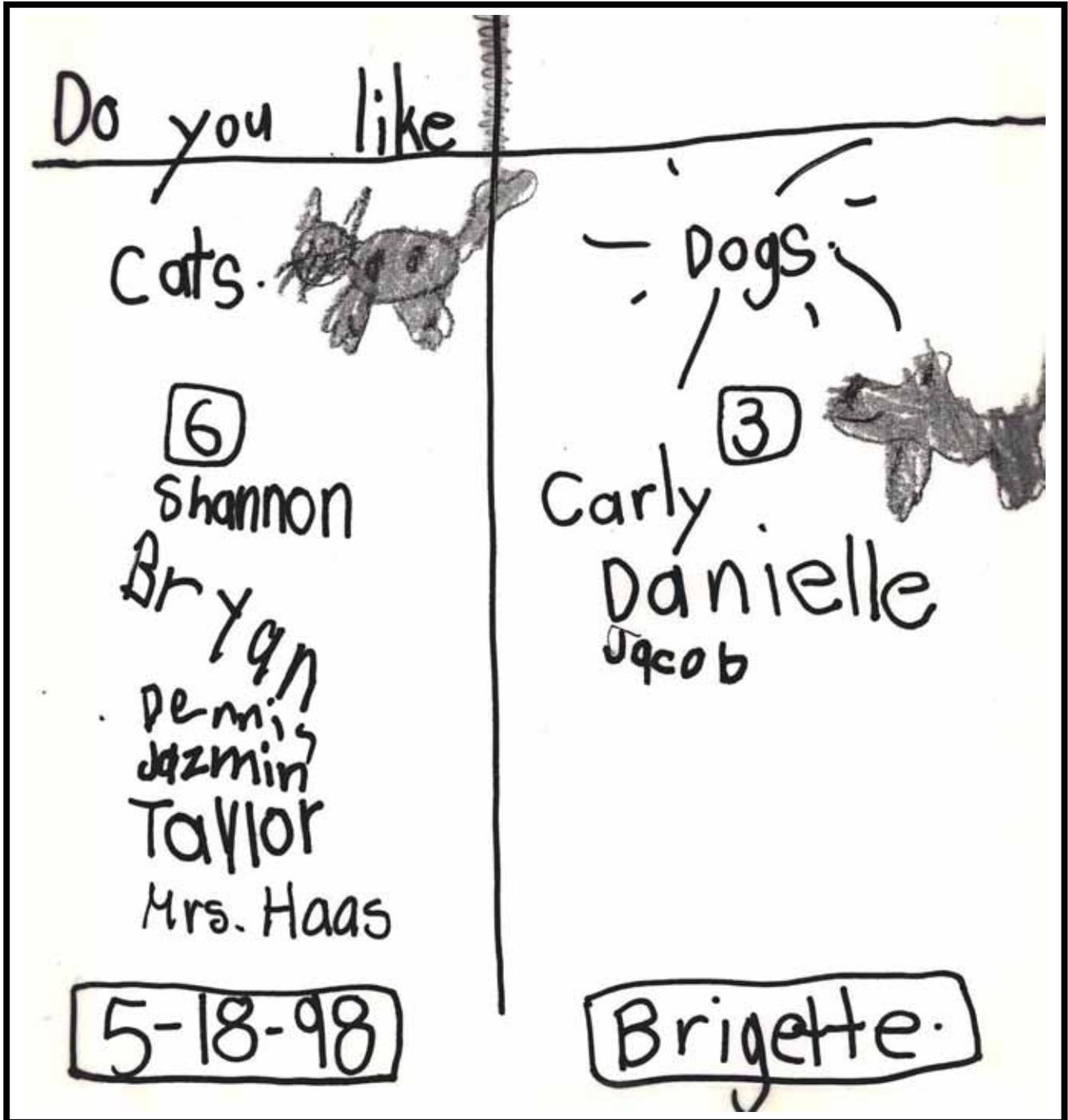
- How do your shoes fasten? (velcro, buckle, tie)
- Would you jump over a candlestick? (yes / no)
- How did you get to school? (bus, car, walking)
- Is your favorite color red, green, or blue?
- Do you like dogs or cats?
- Would you rather have a chocolate kiss or a kiss from Mom?

“A child’s name is an island of certainty in a sea of unfamiliar print.”

– Marie Clay

Kindergartners Use Their Writing to Take Surveys

All they need is a clipboard, paper and pen.

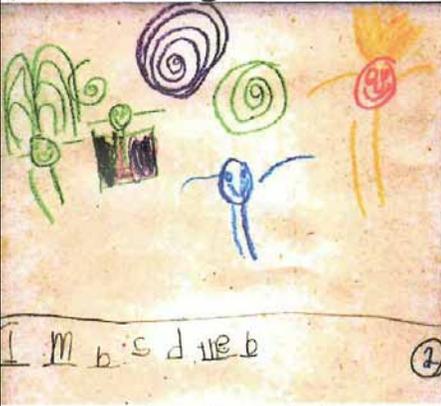


At the beginning of the school year, kindergarten children practice writing their name daily at home and at school using the Susie Haas name ticket strategy*. Efficient letter formation and pencil-holding skills are individually modeled and supported within a context that has meaning to the child. (There are no “ditto” sheets!) Children take pride in printing the letters of their name clearly so that everyone can read it. Automaticity with letter forms and handwriting control is reinforced through daily “kid writing” for real purposes – including taking kid surveys.

**Cornerstones of Kindergarten Literacy: A Balanced Literacy Foundation for Emergent Readers and Writers*, by Susie Haas, Scribbles-n-Dots, 2000.

Writing Rubrics Educate Parents: This is How Children Develop as Writers

In September we ask parents,
 “Where do you think your child is right now?”

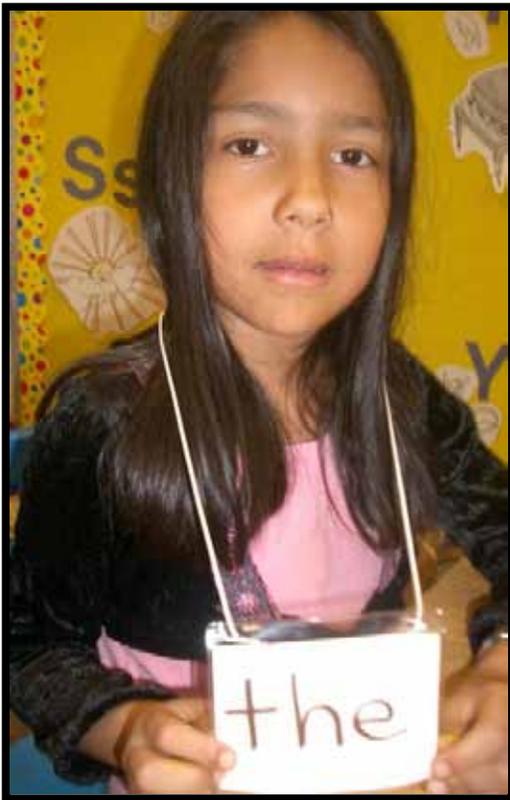
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|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Kindergarten:</p> <p>Writing Rubric Samples</p> | <p>(1) Pre-Writer</p>  <p>A road</p> | <p>(2) Emergent Writer</p>  <p>I am beside the ball.</p> |
| <p>(3) Developing Writer</p>  <p>I play with my mom.</p> | <p>(4) Capable Writer</p>  <p>I watch T.V. with my family.</p> | <p>(5) Proficient Writer</p>  <p>I play with my dad outside playing football. We play at night!</p> |

This rubric is designed by Julie Lay and a team of kindergarten teachers from the Redmond School District in Oregon. (Taken from *Writing to Read in Kindergarten: Explore the Power of Kid Writing* literacy manual by Julie Lay and Nellie Edge. © 2006, updated 2008.)

When we conference with parents early in the year – and throughout the year – we look at the child’s current kid writing samples. We invite the parent to discuss with us how they see their child’s development as a writer. What level is he working towards? We encourage the parent to set up an art/writing area at home and continue involving the families in meaningful literacy projects.

Our goal in kindergarten is for children to reach level 3 or 4. A joyful writing-to-read kindergarten with parents as partners is the key.

Give Children Writing Props: They Delight in Being Word “Experts”



This plastic name badge holder is great for displaying high-frequency words. This girl is the expert at “the” and gets to help the other writers remember how it should look.



“I” is the first word we teach our kinders. The children can wear it on a memory necklace as their first “by heart” or “star” word.



Kid writing hats such as “Wiz of is,” the “King of ing,” and are featured in the book *Kid Writing: A Systematic Approach to Phonics, Journals and Writing Workshop*, by Eileen Feldgus and Isabelle Cardonick. See their website www.kidwriting.com for a variety of photos.



Julie Lay adapted the kid crowns idea and created actual wearable hats with felt writing attached. “Experts” at words wear the hats, which later retire to the Writing Hat Wall.

From *Writing to Read in Kindergarten: Explore the Power of Kid Writing*, by Julie Lay and Nellie Edge.



Teach High-Frequency Words Through Meaningful, Multisensory Learning: Start with the Word “I”

The high-frequency word “I” is often the first word “kid writers” use. It is found in many favorite predictable books, so give children instant success with it early in the year – perhaps the first week – or day – of kindergarten. **Use movement, rhythm and rhyme.** Print a large letter “I” on the chalkboard. Invite children to become the letter “I.” Show them how to stand tall and sweep their hand down from head to toe. Then sweep the hand from left to right across the shoulders and across the feet. Do this several times with animation and energy while chanting in a 4/4 syncopated beat, “I – straight down from head to toe / then across the top and across the toes.” Provide a variety of the multisensory experiences listed below making sure each child has anchored the letter formation correctly and then **invite the children to print “I” on a heart or star shape and wear it home as a memory necklace.** In one kindergarten classroom, the children printed “I” on one side and “the” on the other side of a red heart and they wore their necklaces all week (at home and at school) as a badge of their reading success.

Multisensory Immersion: Practice the letter “I” throughout the day

- **As a group activity, write “I” in the air**, using the whole arm, pointer finger extended. Later write it the floor...on your friend’s back, on your hand. While forming “I,” repeat the language:
“I – straight **down**, then **across** the top **and across** the toes.”
- **Create an “I” design page** with crayons using many different colors. Teach art techniques with repeated “I’s.” (Use heavy lines and light lines, make large and small “I’s.” Later paint “I” designs.
- **Make “I” by rolling up coils of playdough.** Make “I” in different sizes.
- **Finger paint a design with “I.”** Use a salt box to imprint “I.”
- **Individually (as needed) make sure every child begins to develop automaticity with “I.”** Provide positive affirmations. “You know how to write ‘I.’” A child needing extra practice can be encouraged to cover the black board with “I’s.” Guide their arm in smooth motions. What fun is that!
- **Demonstrate “I” at the beginning of a sentence in the first sample kid writing lesson.** Expect every child to know how to write “I” on their first writing pieces.
- Ask the children to brainstorm sentences for an **“I can” or “I like” interactive writing chart.**
- **Use a word catcher** (a fly swatter with a 1 ½ inch window cut out) and look on class language charts to catch the word “I.” Read the walls.
- **Make a “stamp and read skinny book”** using the pattern “I see a _____.” (See *Stamp and Read: Teach High-Frequency Words.*)
- Verbalize enthusiastically **“You can read, write and spell I!”**



Develop top-to-bottom and left-to-right muscle memories for handwriting.

Teach the High-Frequency Word “the” Through a Rhythmic Spelling Chant: Children Love Active Learning!

Teaching “the” **the**

The little word “the” is not an exciting, emotionally appealing word all by itself, yet it is a high-frequency word that young readers will need automatic mastery of early on. Wise, imaginative teachers of young children understand how to use the power of movement, rhythm and rhyme to create memory hooks for word study. They recognize that children are first auditory spellers and they want all children to engage in joyful, satisfying literacy events. Consider the following explicit multisensory teaching:

“You Can Say the” chant... Jennifer Foster shares this jivy chant with her bilingual kindergartners. It demonstrates the two pronunciations of “the” in a rhythmic spelling chant. Start by setting up a **strong 3-beat rhythm, with emphasis on the final beat of each line.** (*stomp, stomp, clap!...*)

*You can say the,
You can say thē.
But it’s always spelled
“T-h-e!”*

“The end” is a meaningful and useful phrase. Our Read and Sing Big Books™ and Little Books all end with the words: “The End.” We want children to confidently anticipate chanting and reading those last two words. To emphasize these words, I teach children to carefully articulate and recite in a 3-beat rhythm: “T-H-E E-N-D, The End! (El Fin).” Children quickly come to recognize the letters and words. Many will write “The end” independently on their own Little Books and writing projects all year long. The repetition builds instant word recognition and automaticity with print. Julie Lay’s kindergartners enjoy a “T-H-E E-N-D – The end, do it again!” spelling chant by standing up and swinging their hips and arms to a “**Cha-cha-cha**” rhythm to celebrate the last page of their Nellie Edge Read and Sing Big Books™.

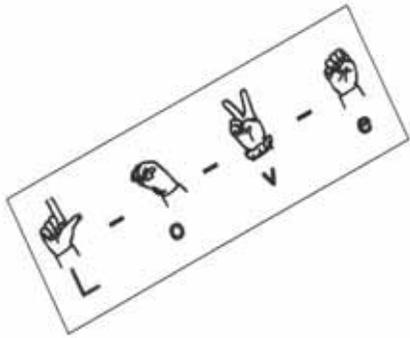


Children’s memory for the visual form and spelling sequence of words is dramatically improved through rhythmic singing, fingerspelling, movement— and joyful, active learning. Diverse learners deserve multiple avenues for literacy success.

Build Fluency and Accelerate Literacy: Sing, Sign and Spell L-O-V-E

L-O-V-E Spells Love

by Nellie Edge



L-o-v-e spells love.
L-o-v-e spells love.
L-o-v-e spells love.
L-o-v-e, l-o-v-e,
L-o-v-e spells love.



ABC fluency practice.

Love: Cross hands (closed in fists) at wrist and place over heart.

Spells: Fingers of one hand make a motion of pushing keys on a typewriter/keyboard, starting with index finger and going to little finger. Hand moves from center, outward as you do this.

L-O-V-E Spells Love

Words and music by Nellie Edge

Sing with a full voice (forté). Sing with a soft voice (pianissimo). **Sing with no voice at all:** mouth the words and use ASL.

This simple melody and rhythm also works for spelling the important friendship word "like"!

L-i-k-e

Like: The thumb and forefinger pinch together by the chest and move outward as if drawing the heart towards something to show an interest (liking) in something.

See ASL Browser: **Michigan State University ASL (American Sign Language) Browser**
<http://commtechlab.msu.edu/sites/aslweb/browser.htm>

Make your own language chart of this song and teach it to the children early in the year. Practice writing "love" efficiently. **Watch the children's joy as they sing, sign, spell and write "love" over and over again.** Soon they will be able to read "love" in any context.

Available on *Music is Magic* CD with Nellie Edge and Tom Hunter.

See video clip at www.nellieedge.com from **The Magic of Signing Songs** seminar literacy manual and DVD II.

Sing, Sign and Spell to Accelerate Literacy

M-O-M Spells Mom

Mom: Touch thumb of '5' hand to chin once or twice.

Dad: Touch thumb of '5' hand to center of forehead once or twice.

You: Index finger points outward to other person.

Me: Index finger points to self (in chest area).

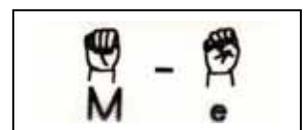
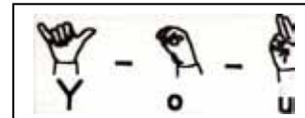
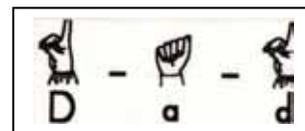
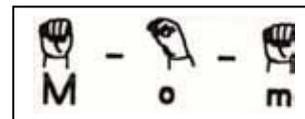
M-o-m spells mom.

D-a-d spells dad.

Y-o-u spells you.

And m-e spells me.*

by Nellie Edge



*Some teachers substitute or add “and m-y spells my.”

M-O-M Spells Mom
 Words and music by Nellie Edge

M - O - M spells "Mom" and D - A - D spells "Dad" Y - O - U spells "you" and M - E spells "Me".



Phonemic Awareness: Build Success Segmenting and Blending

This is a perfect song to develop phonemic awareness. After the children have a memorable sense of the song, sing it in phonemes (no fingerspelling) and then invite the children to join you. “M-o-m is mom...and y-ou is you.” This gives children instant success with the concept of stretching out the sounds (phonemes) in words and blending them together.

Available on *Music is Magic* CD with Nellie Edge and Tom Hunter.

See video clip at www.nellieedge.com from **The Magic of Signing Songs** seminar literacy manual and DVD II.

Your Children Can Read, Sing and Sign

I Can Spell Cat

- Sing this Read and Sing Big Book™ song to the familiar *Skip to My Lou* melody. Discuss the pictures to enhance comprehension.
- **What do you notice** about the cover of this book? Who can find the word cat?
- **Play with the word cat**, and other “at” family words aurally and in writing (segmenting and blending the sounds). Sing through the book again.
- Learn to **fingerspell c-a-t**.
- **Sing, spell and sign** the key words of the song, segmenting the sounds. Change “I can spell” to “I can say.” “I can say cat, c-a-t... I can say rat, r-a-t... I can spell, listen to me.”
- Emphasize the final lines **“I can spell. Listen to me.”** Sing and sign the language with fluency, joy and confidence. **“I can spell” becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy with multisensory spelling techniques.**

I Can Spell Cat

I can spell “cat,” c-a-t.
 I can spell “rat,” r-a-t.
 I can spell “hat,” h-a-t.
 I can spell.
 Listen to me.

I can spell “dog,” d-o-g.
 I can spell “hog,” h-o-g.
 I can spell “log,” l-o-g.
 I can spell.
 Listen to me.

by Nellie Edge © 1994
A Nellie Edge Read and Sing Big Book™



c a t
 r a t
 h a t



Cat is one of my handwriting “anchor words.” It is so much more motivating and meaningful to practice writing “cat” than practicing a single letter.

Use paper or white dry erase boards for a “quick write” to practice for fluency and efficient handwriting. Differentiate instruction and provide individual guidance.

Notice the affirmation: I can spell. Listen to me.

Children can kinesthetically feel how the words c-at and r-at and h-at are different at the beginning of the word but they all end with the same sound.

“By Heart” Word Wall Features Only High- Frequency Words



The main word wall in the room should only focus on high-frequency words. By focusing on only these high utility words, space is maximized for environmental or theme related print in other locations in the room while minimizing the space needed for one permanent word wall. Resist the temptation to display children’s names on this board.

Some teachers call high-frequency words “Star Words” because the words are ‘special’ like stars. Others call them “Popcorn Words” because they are always ‘popping up.’ I prefer the term “By Heart Words” because the children need to know these words ‘by heart.’

Fingerspelling



To help make connections between a written letter and its corresponding sign, I have combined two different alphabets: the heart alphabet and the sign language alphabet. These are displayed at the children’s height so the large sign language hand shapes are easy for them to form. Children practice by holding their hand on top of the picture.

The *Sign Language Alphabet Line* by TS Denison is available at www.frankshafferpublications.com

High-Frequency (“By Heart”) Words That Kindergartners Actually Write and Read

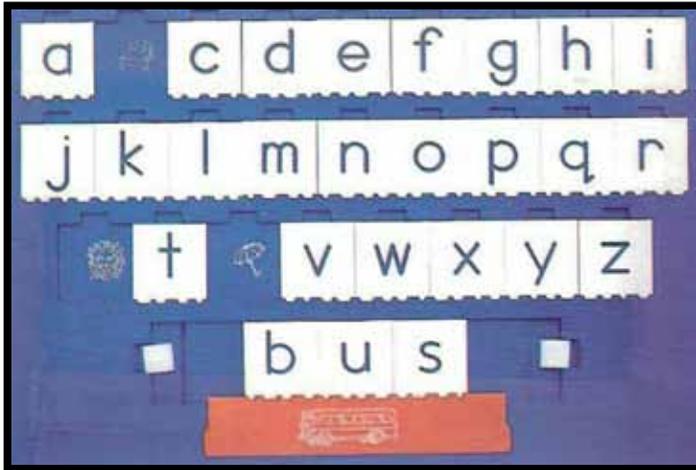
*These 52 words comprise more than 50% of the actual words young children initially write and read.

| | | | | | | | | |
|------|----------|-------|-------|------|--------|-----|-------|-------|
| I | me/we/be | is/it | and | book | dear | for | with | girl |
| love | the | cat | go/no | look | today | was | his | boy |
| you | see | dog | stop | to | he/she | are | her | today |
| Mom | a/A | like | yes | from | get | on | they | said |
| Dad | this | can | my/by | have | thank | am | at/as | in |

An ongoing fluency action-research project, with Nellie Edge and colleagues 2008-2009.

Active and Engaging ABC Centers Differentiate Learning: Daily Word Work Builds Fluency

Self-correcting language boards provide an independent letter/sound challenge that is manipulative and engaging. This phonics board is still our choice for “best word work activity;” only the correct answer will fit.



Insta-Learn materials shown above are:

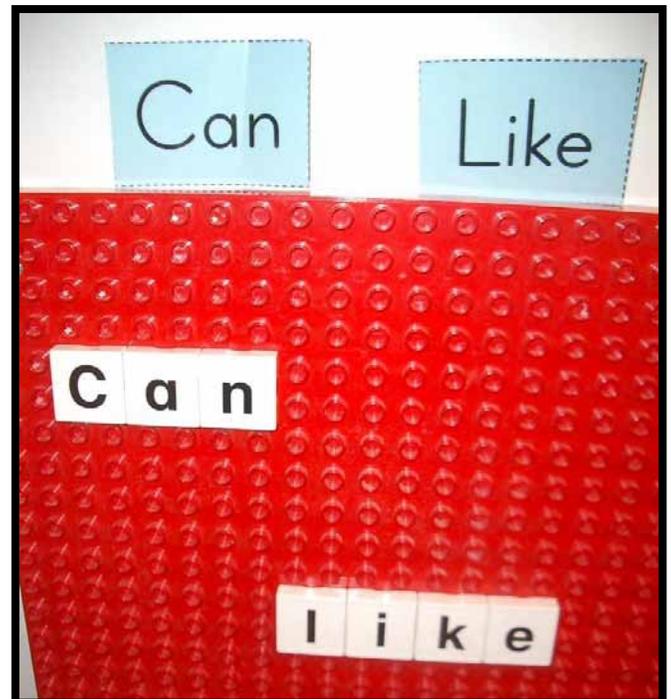
- L400B – Language Board only imprinted w/picture symbols
- L0500 – Lower-Case Letters set
- One strip from L0010 set of 24 strips

Picture symbols include: cat, hat, rat, dog, fox, cup, bus, bed, box, six, rug, pin.
(www.insta-learn.com or 1-800-225-7837)

Letters make words: I can manipulate them; I can write them.



Individual letters have more meaning when they are a part of important “by heart” or “star” words in the classroom. Children move around the room with their clipboard in hand. **How many different high-frequency “star” words can you write?**



Lego letter tiles provide children with a satisfying activity for building high-frequency words. Children can help each other find letters.

We Can Write Nonsense Words: Phonics Fluency



We Can Write Nonsense Words

(to the tune...♪ “Here We Go Loopty Loo”)

We can write nonsense words.
They are so easy to do.
We can write nonsense words.
They’re silly and mean nothing too!

by Diane Bonica

... and we can write real words!

 See free video clip of Diane Bonica demonstrating her “We Can Write Nonsense Words” song at www.nellieedge.com.

We Can Write “By Heart” Words

♪adapted by Nellie Edge

We can write “by heart” words.
They are important to do.
We can write “by heart” words.
Here is our best work for you!

- you may change “best work” to “quick write” depending on your purpose.



From the manuscript in progress, *Joyful and Rigorous Kindergarten Experiences*, by Diane Bonica and Nellie Edge, 2008.

ABC Fluency (Quick Letter Writing) Research and Practice: Kindergartners Can Learn to Recall and Efficiently Print 40 Letters Per Minute



Kindergarten teachers in a study from the University of Washington found that children who could recall (with no abc sample visible) and print letters of the alphabet (first lower case, then upper case) at 40 letters per minute were all very successful with first-grade reading and writing tasks. In fact, there were virtually no reading failures among such children and **normal functioning kindergarten children can all reach this level if they are properly taught.** “Children who write the alphabet at over 40 letters per minute can always name randomly presented letters at least at that rate too.”

Use this powerful mental retrieval exercise in January, or after most children already have mastery of the alphabetic principle and fluency writing their name and several high-frequency words. (Fluency is speed and accuracy.) Prepare children for a “brain exercise.”*

- **Make sure the children all know the traditional ABC song and chant** so the letter sequence is already held in long-term memory.
- **I introduce this by first doing a mental rehearsal with the whole class** gathered on the floor in front of me. We talk about how we exercise our arms and legs: “Now we get to exercise our brain too!” I ask the children to slowly visualize, verbalize, and finger write in the air along with me: a, b, c...z. We practice immediately stopping at the bell sound. Then the children are excused to tables to do the 1-minute brain exercise (also called a “timed ABC write”) exactly as we have already mentally practiced it. Children put their name on their paper and wait until they hear, “ABC: Start now!”
- **Use a timer** (or bell) to signal, “stop writing and put the pencil down.” Ask the children to draw a line across the paper under their first ABC exercise. Pause and challenge them to do one more 60-second “brain exercise.” “See if you can remember the letters even more quickly!”
- **Carefully monitor that the children are all building on success** and understanding what is expected of them. Make sure this activity starts and continues as a positive experience.
- **Stress that once they finish a-z, they can quickly start over with ABC again.** Tell the children to write the letters as accurately and as quickly as possible. **No erasing.** Just keep going.
- **Keep track of the correct number of letters printed. You will gain some surprising insights into children’s alphabetic knowledge and handwriting skills. Date the papers and record progress.**

***Do not do this activity with the entire class if you know it will create frustration and defeat for some of the children.** Provide an alternative activity for these children until they are ready to join the others and build on success. For children who are ready for this activity, it is challenging and fun. We have even seen children choose to practice this on their own (using a timer of course!) during their activity time.

Provide ABC Fluency Practice for Less-Experienced Students



David practices his name, a, b, c, and then adds d. A vertical surface (the easel) facilitates handwriting. Soon he practices meaningful sentences: "I love you."

You probably already know which children **need more time and more carefully scaffolded writing instruction** to be successful and perceive ABC fluency practice ("brain exercise") as an enjoyable challenge.

I recommend giving less-experienced children additional guided writing practice individually or in a small groups, building fluency **with their name and meaningful words and phrases**. Then encourage them to mentally retrieve and write a,b,c, then abcd, and efg over and over in a very non-threatening environment on their name ticket or journals. Keep verbalizing another phrase of the

traditional ABC chant so the children have the internal auditory support. Provide guided imagery rehearsals and teach them to sub-vocalize abcd, efg...as they write. **Train parents and volunteers to work one-on-one with less-experienced students:** write the letters in the air, on salt trays, on etch-a-sketch boards, at the easel, and on the chalkboard. **The key is repetition until each child has quick, confident recall and efficient handwriting for a growing number of letters.** This type of fluency rehearsal may be a more efficient use of time than merely asking children to copy one letter over and over for handwriting practice. **Copying from a model does not require a child to develop quick letter recall.** Perhaps ABC fluency practice even deserves a brief segment of writing workshop time. Once children truly have fluency with most letters and some key high-frequency words and phrases, they can more easily focus on recording their ideas fluently in daily kid writing.

Why is this important?

"The point is the practice in retrieving the picture of the letter

from their brain. You are exercising the brain and setting in stone the path for retrieving words from their brain. When we read, we are retrieving the pictures of words from our brains. And for comprehension to occur, that retrieval has to be fast, or at the rate one speaks. It holds the same principle, it's just that you are practicing the retrieval process to ready the kid's brains for fluent reading."

– 'Pickles' on the mentor kindergarten teachers chatboard



Fluency = speed + accuracy



How do you use high-frequency words to build ABC fluency?



Phonics Fun: The “Silent E” Man Song

♪ Diane’s adaptation of the Superman TV Show
Theme Song ♪

📺 For a video clip of Diane Bonica presenting
the “*Silent E*” Man Song, see www.nellieedge.com.

The “Silent E” Man Song by Diane Bonica

Who can turn “hop”
into “hope”?
Who can turn “hop”
into “hope”?
Silent ‘e’ can.
Silent ‘e’ can.
Silent ‘e’,
He’s the man...
Baby!

(We say baby because we use a Cabbage Patch Doll
as Silent E.)

The ring of cards has several options for new verses. Silent E Man has the “silent e” letter glued to his hand. Each time you sing...hold the ringed cards up first and then slide them next to the silent e.

Some of the words we use are:

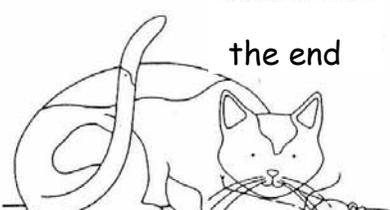
| | |
|----------|----------|
| cop/cope | tim/time |
| dim/dime | dot/dote |
| man/mane | hat/hate |
| not/note | pin/pine |
| cut/cute | rob/robe |

To learn more about this exemplary kindergarten program you can access Diane Bonica’s website from Literacy Award Sites at www.nellieedge.com.

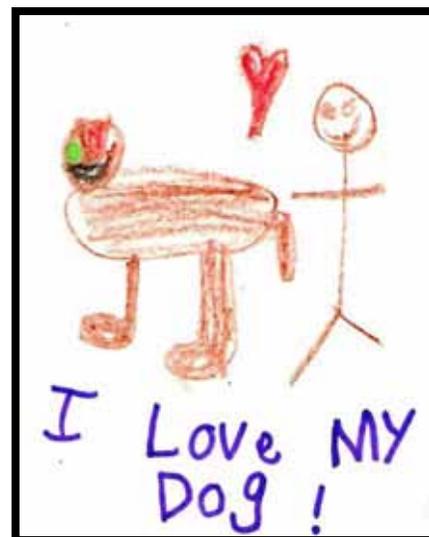
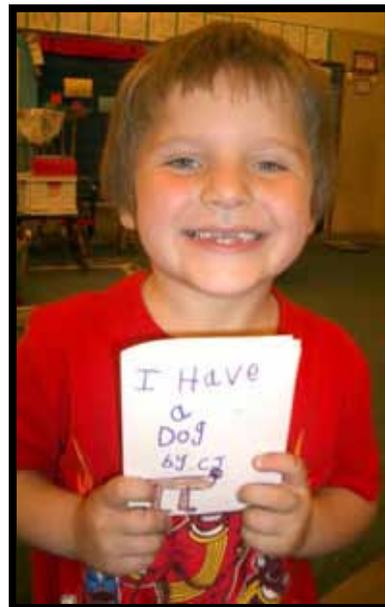


“We Get to Make Really Cool Books in Our Writing Center:”* A Model for Writing Workshop

I Have A Cat
 I have a cat.
 My cat wears a hat.
 My cat is fat.
 My cat says “meow”.
 I love my cat.



For some kindergartners, the path to writing their own stories and making their own book is initially helped by providing them with a model or familiar and predictable story structure to adapt. This is especially helpful for children with limited oral language fluency.



Sing, Sign and Read Nellie Edge Big Books™ and Little Books
How to Fold Nellie Edge Little Books

Each Nellie Edge Read and Sing Little Book™ comes with black-line masters for child-size Little Books that match the text and illustrations of the Big Book. The child-size Little Book format is designed to best accommodate the Big Book text. Find the layout that matches the Little Book you have purchased and follow the instructions.

Fold-A-Book Instructions

Make Friends with Mother Goose, Volumes 1 and 2 and I Have A Cat (Yo Tango Un Gato) are the Little Books using this format. Eight small pages are printed on one side of the master copy. If instruction is given in small groups with guidance, even kindergarten-age children can learn to fold these books. Once children master the fold-a-book technique, they will eagerly use it to create blank books (any size) for their own writing and illustrating purposes.

1. Fold a rectangular sheet of paper in half lengthwise. (We sometimes call this the “hot dog” or “horizontal” fold.)
2. Fold in half again, as for book. Crease tightly.
3. Fold in half again. Crease tightly.
4. Unfold the sheet - hold it vertically* (top and down)
5. Fold in half width-wise (The “hamburger” fold.)
6. Cut along the center crease from the folded edge to the X.
7. Open the sheet again.
8. Return to the original lengthwise fold (as in #1).
9. Push the end sections together, and it will fold itself into the child-size Little Book. Four sections are formed.

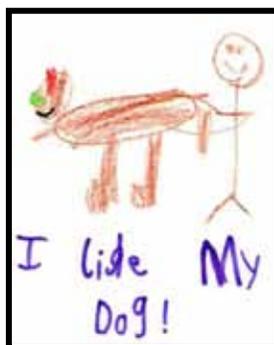
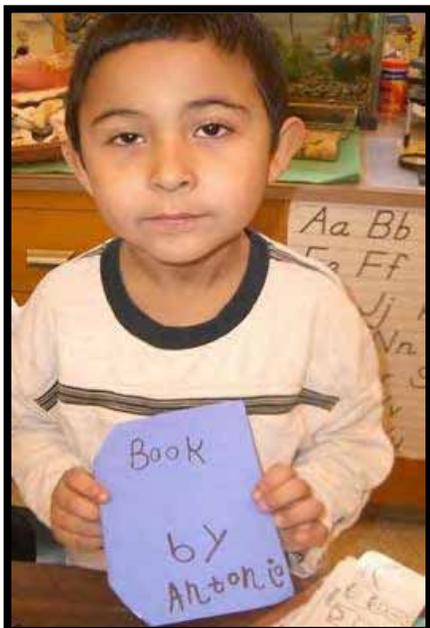
Cut-And-Staple Book Instructions

All black-line masters, except those listed above, are printed with illustrations and text back to back. After photocopying back to back, the sheet or sheets are cut in half or thirds and stapled to form an 8-, 12-, or 18-page child-size Little Book.

* Give children various vocabulary lists.

The *I Have A Cat* book becomes a pattern for children to write “I Have A Dog...” or “I Have A Bunny.” We teach children how to make the fold-a-book and keep blank fold-a-books available at the writing center.

Make enlarged fold-a-books using 11" x 17" paper. Staple the center fold so it stays bound.



As teachers, we create opportunities to celebrate our young authors: they share with their 4th grade reading buddies and classmates.

* Read *About the Authors: Writing Workshop with Our youngest Writers*, by Katie Wood Ray. Heinemann, 2004.



Literacy Centers Provide Authentic Writing Practice



Write a Message Center empowers children to use writing for real purposes. Here they develop efficiency in writing high-frequency words and phrases: to, from, Mom, I love you... Children get to create a message for a friend or family member. **The requirement is** that they write who the piece is “to,” who it is “from,” and **a message for someone to read.** The center tote contains everything needed for this engaging writing activity. The message can be decorated with personal drawings, stamps or

stickers. Children deliver their messages to friends or take them home. The messages to Mrs. Leber are tacked on her special message board.

This center tote contains:

- Picture/name cards of classmates
- Assorted paper and writing materials
- Message idea cards
- Sample “Kinder-created” messages and cards
- Stamps, stickers, old greeting cards



Children are encouraged to assist any new student or less experienced writer by demonstrating how to use the center writing prompts. **Learning is differentiated and cooperative.**

See Photo Essay: *Becky Leber's Literacy Centers* at www.nelliedge.com.

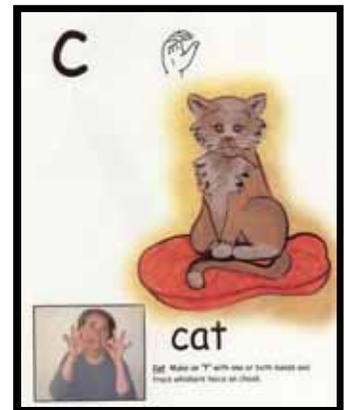
| | |
|--------------------|------------|
| I love you. | Grandma |
| I like you. | Grandpa |
| You are my friend. | Mom Dad |
| Happy Birthday | to from |

So What Do You Wonder About Cats?

Connecting Art and Reading and Writing with Children's Fascination with Pets and Animals

Kindergartners love to do research studies:

- *The ABC Sign Language and Phonics Song* picture book and *I Have a Cat Big Book* connect children with animals that children love to learn about. **Meaningful studies** about cats and other favorite pets invite children to become researchers.
- Who can tell us something about their cat – or their neighbor's cat? **What do we know about cats?**
- Observe, explore and dramatize cat movements.
- **Conduct a guided art lesson** on the different ways to draw cat features.
- **Individual research projects are a great parent-child (T.A.G.) project.** The child can do a presentation and become the “expert” on their animal of interest.
- The entire class may pursue “**Our Study of Cats.**” Begin with a K.W.L. chart and then explore literature, movement, drama and art.
- Children see writing as a way of organizing their thinking.



From *ABC Sign Language and Phonics Song Picture Book*, by Nellie Edge.
(Enhanced version available 2009 from *Sign to Me®/Northlight Communication.*)

K.W.L.

| | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| What do we know about cats? | What do we wonder about cats? | What have we learned about cats? |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|

Fiction

- *Cats Are Cats.* Nancy Larrick, ill. Ed Young, Philomel Books, 1988.
- *Cats Sleep Anywhere.* Eleanor Farjeon and Anne Mortimer, Harper Collins, 1996.
- *Ginger.* Charlotte Voake, Candlewick Press, 1997.
- *Hondo & Fabian.* Peter McCarty, Henry Holt and Co., 2002.
- *Kitten's First Full Moon.* Kevin Henkes, St. Martin's Press, 2004.
- *Millions of Cats.* Wanda Gag, Coward-McCann, 1928.
- *Six Dinner Sid,* Inga Moore.
- *So, What's it Like to Be a Cat?* Karla Kuskin, Atheneum, 2005.

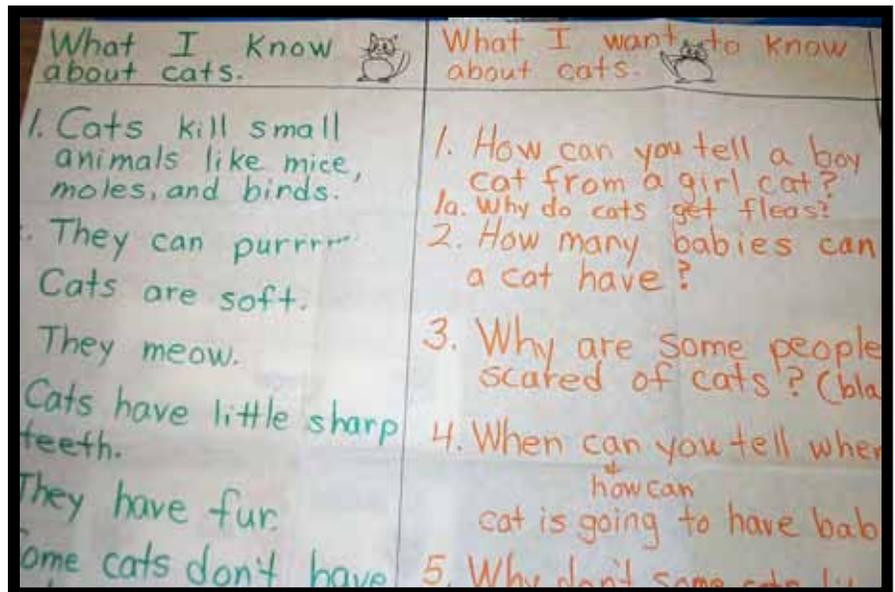


Chart from *Art, Literacy and the Kindergarten Child*, by Laura Flocker and Nellie Edge.

Nonfiction

- *Cats.* Gail Gibbons, Holiday House, 1998.
- *How to Talk to Your Cat.* Jean Craighead George, Harper Collins, 2000.
- *The True-or-False Book of Cats.* Rosalyn Schanzer, National Geographic Society, 1998.

Literacy Play Props Provide Authentic Reasons to Read, Write and Talk: Kindergarten Learning is Social



Jacque Verrall's kindergarten parents take turns changing the literacy play props monthly in the dramatic play center. Here children are creating grocery lists from grocery advertisements and food labels. **This wise teacher knows that authentic and playful literacy tasks motivate children to use their reading and writing skills.**

Jacque Verrall writes, "Dramatic Play Center...in November"

Topic:

<http://teachers.net/mentors/kindergarten/topic12849/11.01.03.18.46.40.html>

"Mine was a grocery store. The parents who organize this had every child bring a small can or boxed grocery item with the caveat that at the end, someone would take all the grocery items to the food bank (I really liked this idea). The parents brought two cash registers, fake credit cards, checks (they loved writing the checks! And I was surprised how knowledgeable they were about checks!), paper bags (small), grocery carts, etc. They have had a great time with it all.

Next week it will change to a space station. The other kindergarten teacher and I encourage our parents to trade set-ups, thereby getting double use of them."

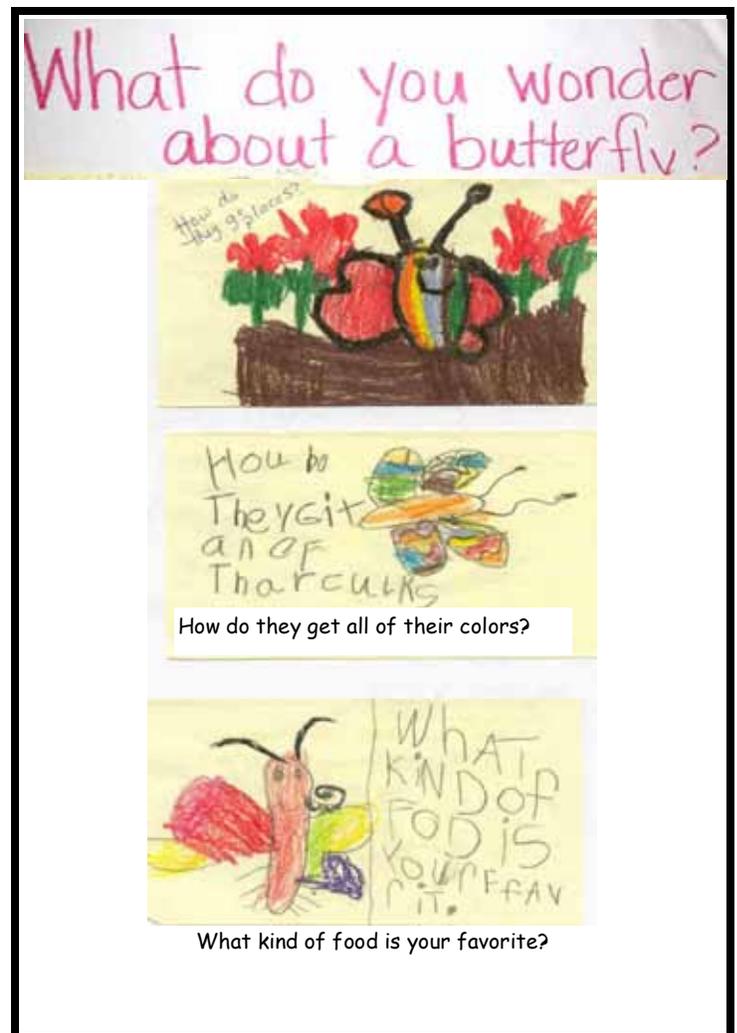


This girl is taking her little dog to the Veterinarian Clinic.

Build Comprehension and Vocabulary Through Word Work: *Science Studies Inspire Deep Thinking, “Kid Writing” and Detailed Drawing*

Comprehension through “word work” became one of the most favorite extension activities during reading workshop. For some children, **I suppose it may have been the novel experience of using post-it notes.** But for many other students, there was genuine excitement in being able to ‘think’ on their own and really ‘listen’ to others’ thinking. My kinders realized that “word work” leads to a deeper comprehension.

At the beginning of a unit on butterflies, and later one on bees, I posed the question, “What do you wonder about...?” The children eagerly took their post-it and went off by themselves or with a partner to draw and write their question.



**Asking questions is a powerful strategy for building comprehension:
What? Where? When? Why? How?**

Joyful Writing-to-Read Kindergartens Brings SMILES



Reading is Fun

Reading is fun.

Reading is fun.

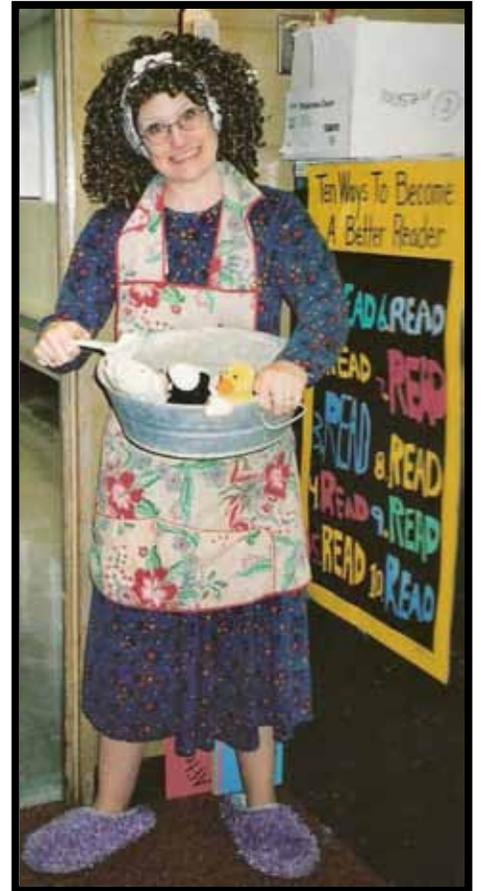
Reading is fun for everyone.

The more you read,

The better you read,

So read, read, read.

by Nellie Edge



Here comes Mrs. Wishy Washy.

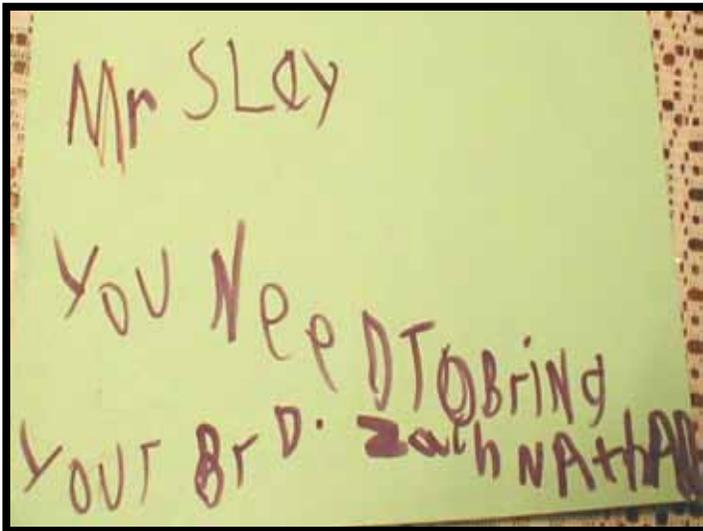
Literature Alive with Katie Nelson



"Charlie the turtle" comes to kindergarten: Children write adoring letters

- Kindergartners can also write letters to an imaginary elf or the class mascot.

Our Goal is Independent Application: Children gain fluency and use their drawing and writing for real purposes that have personal meaning. **Keep a special teacher bulletin board to post these delightful messages on.**



*Mrs. Lay
You need to bring your bird.
Zach and Nathan*



*To Mrs. Leber
From Emily
I love you.*



*♡Mrs. Cutler ♡
We love you. We will miss you!! Mountains
and rivers will curtsy to you
Because you are so nice. ♡♡*



*"My Mom and Dad are getting
married. And they are going to
kiss, and the music is going
da-da-da-da!"*



How will you expand your joyful writing-to-read program?