

“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.