

Oral Language Traditions: Building a Joyful Community of Learners

Our songs, dances, musical dramas, stories, and studies provide the shared experiences needed to build community and belonging.



A gift of literacy from Nellie Edge Online Seminars

Oral Language Traditions: Building a Joyful Community of Learners

Our songs, dances, musical dramas, stories, and studies provide the shared experiences needed to build community and belonging.




It is the familiarity with the English language that allows the children's decoding to be error free, their reading to be fluent, and their writing to be powerful.

Strategies from Nellie Edge Seminars

Share Greetings in English, Spanish, and Sign Language

Hola Mis Amigos/Hello My Friends

Hola Mis Amigos is from **The Magic of Signing Songs, Volume II**, DVD and seminar literacy manual. A complementary instructional  video clip can be found at nellieedge.com, under Video Clips tab.

These short greeting and farewell songs introduce familiar cultural phrases in Spanish and English; American Sign Language provides the bridge of comprehension between languages. Teachers enjoy using these lyrics as a part of their beginning and ending-the-day ceremonies.

Diane Larson is our ASL instructor with vocals by Nellie Edge and Kara Quillo



Hola Mis Amigos/Hello My Friends

Hola, mis amigos,
Hello, my friends,
Buenos dias ¿Como estan?
Good morning! How are you?

Estoy Bien/ I Am Fine

Estoy bien,
I am fine,
Son mis buenos amigos,
You are my good friends.

by Nellie Edge, Gina Edge, and Susan Rodriguez ©2001

Adios Amigos/Goodbye My Friends

Adios amigos,
Goodbye my friends,
Hasta la vista,
Until we meet again.

author unknown

Shared by an awesome Arizona
bilingual kindergarten teacher

Articles and Curriculum Connections: (find these at nellieedge.com under Hola Mis Amigos video clip)

- ASL Instructional Guide: Hola Mis Amigos
- Accelerate English and Spanish Through the Magic of Signing Songs
- Your "Opening the Day" Ceremony: The Transition Between Daily Life and School
- Sing, Sign, and Read: Accelerate English and Spanish
- Download anthology page for children to illustrate
- Our Favorite Sign Language Resources: Where to find them
- A Signing Bear Adds to the Emotionally-Engaging Experience of Signing Songs for Children of All Ages!



Download free Poetry and Song Anthology pages at www.nellieedge.com.

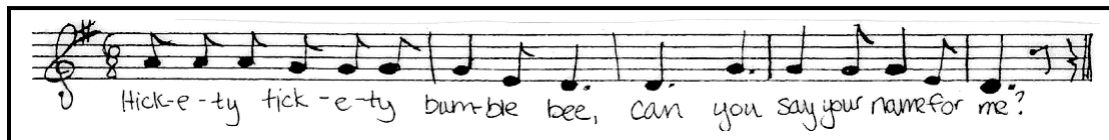
Opening the Day Ceremonies: Playfully Focus on the Sounds of Each Child's Name

Singing and signing songs and playing name-games is a natural way to build community, develop phonemic awareness and support a comprehensive ABC and Phonics Immersion Program.

**The most precious sound to a child is the sound of his or her own name
- the brain immediately pays attention.*

Share songs that teach names and develop the rhythms of sound...

Hickety, Tickety Bumble Bee (Traditional)



Tell children about the friendly bee you have in a box (mime the small box). This bee loves to make friends and she wants to learn your names. Recite this rhyme and then playfully let your finger search for a child, while the "bee" buzzes around and right to a child's arm or cheek. After the child says their name, the teacher repeats the name and invites the class to "say the name...", "say it with a loud voice...(Forté!)," "whisper the name...(pianissimo)," "clap the name...", "bounce the name...", "stomp the name...", "stretch the name...", "sign the initial..." and thank the child.

"Thank you (gracias) Joseph with a "J" j.

Knowing another person's name is the seed that can blossom into genuine caring. Caring strengthens community life.

This name game builds the children's imagery, listening and phonemic awareness skills which will support them in developing as a reader and writer. Make every moment joyful and take advantage of every literacy opportunity.

Phonemic Awareness Mini-Lesson: Play with the nonsense words "Hickety, Tickety..."

Bounce the words slowly off your tongue. Feel the rhythm. Demonstrate how the words sound when you change the beginning sound r-rickety, cl-clickety. Let children create new words that rhyme. This will support their desire to play with phoneme substitutions and rhyming words. **Provide a mini-lesson on the sound "b".** Emphasize the beginning sound in b-bumble and bee while signing the letter "b". Feel your lips when you make the sound - what are your lips doing? (Look in the mirror.) Make a game of repeating an isolated sound like "b" and then brainstorming new words that start with the sound. Children enjoy this silly language game so much that they often take it home to play. One amazed parent said, "He went through the whole refrigerator going "buh-buh-buh-buh-butter, buh-buh-buh-buh-bread, buh-buh-buh-buh-beans." **This kind of language play builds a lively interest in the rhythms and sounds of language.**

Use Co-Active Songs and Dances: Build Laughter, Language and Delight

First focus on building a joyful, non-competitive community of learners and help children know about and care about each other.

In this greeting song, children get to work as partners, choosing a new partner every day. They learn to say, "Will you be my partner please?"

Hello Neighbor Action Song

Hello Neighbor

*Children can smile, **sign hello**, bow, curtsy, or create any gesture of friendship.*

What do you say? (clap!)

It's going to be a happy day!

On this line the clap can lead into a cross-lateral or simple hand-jive.

Greet your neighbor
And boogie on down

Shake hands in rhythm to "greet your neighbor" or slap alternating high fives. Boogie on down to a squat and boogie back up again.

*Give 'em a bump,
And turn around!

Bump elbows, heads or hips and turn around! Then find another partner and do it again.

* Celeste Starr cautions - **teach children how to do a "gentle bump."** Then she adds, "2-4-6-8 find another friend who you think is great!" (Children walk in rhythm with palms facing outward to find a new partner.)

Thank you to Ralph Peterson for sharing this song and for insights into building a "community of learners..." See his book, *Life in a Crowded Place: Making a Learning Community*. (Heinemann, 1992)



Invite children to think creatively.

We let children know that their ideas are valued by inviting them to come up with movements for action rhymes rather than always giving them our ideas about how to express language through action. Sing this joyful song through for the children while demonstrating "boogie on down" and "turn around." Then invite the children to echo after you, repeating each line. Echo with happy voices, echo with loud and soft voices. Once they know the song, it's time to add some movements and connect up with a partner.

Teach children polite, respectful communication skills.

Before asking children to find a partner and perform this as a co-active song, **model** how you expect them to speak to each other. **Let them practice saying, "Will you be my partner, please?"** Learning how to politely ask someone to be a partner and to kindly respond to requests is a very important life skill. Children can learn to include everyone and, when necessary, to politely refuse. Our wise and thoughtful colleague, Janine Chappell Carr, writes in her eloquently written book *A Child Went Forth: Reflective Teaching With Young Readers and Writers*:

In this classroom I want you to choose your own partner each time we have partner reading and I have some expectations for how you will do that. I want you to ask that person politely, "Will you be my partner, please?" **You may not refuse anyone in your classroom unless you already have a partner.** If that's the case, then say, "Thanks for asking me, but I already have a partner. I'd like to read with you another day." If someone is left without a partner, and he or she asks to be part of your group, please accept that student graciously, saying, "Yes, you may read with us." If you notice someone is left without a partner and that person isn't joining a group, please say to him or her, **"You may read with us. We'll make room for you."** Each day I expect you to find a new partner...

"I want the children to respect communication with one another as much as they respect communication with me."

Children will live up to our high expectation and our example of warm, polite communication and kind, caring behavior.

Another recommended book on this subject is *You Can't Say You Can't Play*, by Vivian Gussin Paley.



How do you model and encourage kind language and caring behavior?

- Teach children to say, "Thank you for opening the door."
-
-



When we model respectful, caring language it is because we want kindergarten children to speak to their classmates and others in their lives in kind and helpful tones so their voices will be heard...A caring atmosphere allows friendships to blossom.

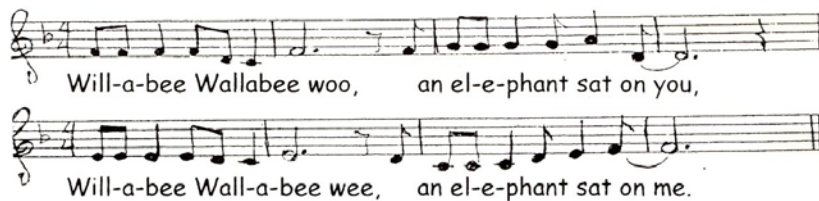


This symbol is for **reflection**: With our **heart** we know how to apply "best practices" research while we **reach for the stars** with the lives of our children.

Oral Language Still Is the Foundation for Literacy

Sign "W" ✋ and Sing 🎵 *Willabee Wallabee Woo* to Develop Phonemic Awareness:
Beginning Sound Substitutions and Rhyming

Willabee Wallabee Woo (An Elephant Sat On You) by Dennis Lee is one of the most delightful name-games I know. We adapt it, changing the spelling to read and sing "Willabee Wallabee Wavid," (and pause expectantly while the children figure out whose name rhymes with Wavid) "an elephant sat on David. Willabee Wallabee Waitlyn, (pause) an elephant sat on Kaitlyn." As you adapt these lyrics to rhyme with your children's names they will be eagerly listening to beginning sounds and learning about rhyming patterns. **Phonemic awareness (the ability to hear and manipulate sounds) is most easily taught through systematic use of adaptable and playful songs.** Use an elephant puppet to add drama, sitting him on the shoulders of the child whose name was anticipated. Photos or child self-portraits can turn this into a class book. Notice we adapted the spelling of this traditional rhyme to be more memorable for beginning readers.



Willabee Wallabee **Wavid**
An elephant sat on **David**

*Willabee Wallabee Woo

by Laura Flocker's kindergarten friends
adapted from *Willoughby, Walloughby, Woo* by
Dennis Lee

*Children might say, "Another alliterative title!"

Dependable sentence patterns from songs give children knowledge about the order and function of words in sentences.

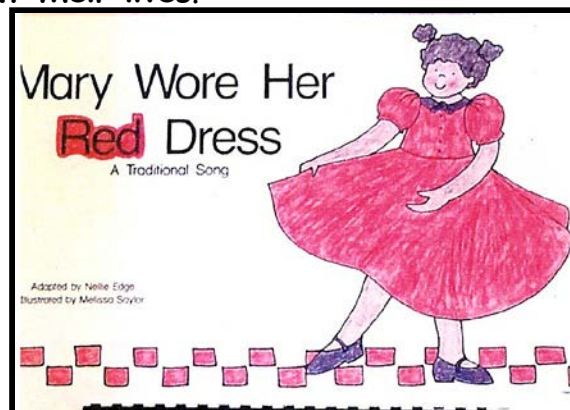
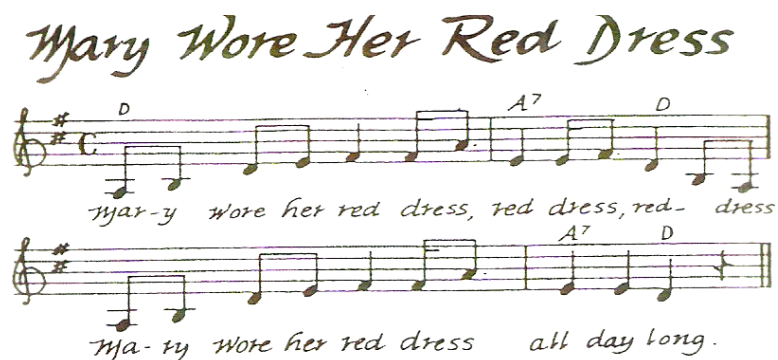
Give children daily experiences singing rhyming words in an engaging, playful way. Then help them see how clever they are to know how to "rhyme words" and make "letter/sound substitutions." Build on success. **We teach phonemic awareness and phonics skills explicitly and implicitly throughout the day in classrooms that celebrate language.**

Willabee Wallabee **Windergarten**
An elephant sat on **Kindergarten**



Sing Songs That Honor Each Child and Develop English Syntax: *Mary Wore Her Red Dress*

At the beginning of the year this familiar Texas folk song becomes a frame to hold the children's ideas. We adapt it to sing about what each child is wearing. The repetition of phrases gives children a feel for the syntax of our language - how words fit together in sentences. Children effortlessly learn color names and articles of clothing. But what they care about most is that school is about their lives.



We read and sing the *Mary Wore Her Red Dress* Big Book, helping children internalize this familiar English sentence by repetition of verses. Then I invite the children to talk about what they are wearing. "What are you wearing today Brittney? What would you like us to sing about?" You can guide each child's responses to be a color word and article of clothing or take their response exactly as they give it (new tennis shoes or safetytown shirt). Fit the lyrics into the song, stretching out the melody as needed. Allow plenty of time for this activity. Every child will want to participate.

After they are familiar with the song, invite the children to draw or paint a picture of themselves - covering a large 11" x 17" sheet of paper. Using the song as a model,

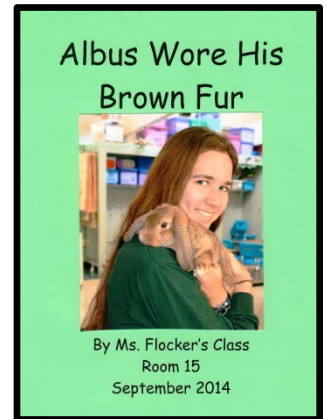
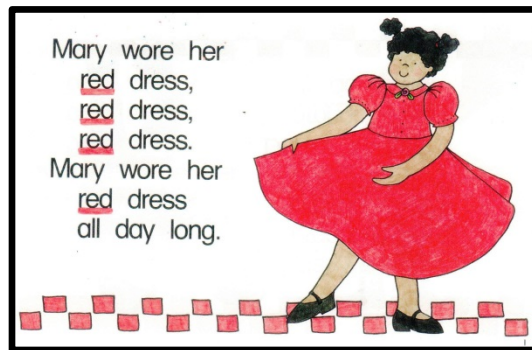
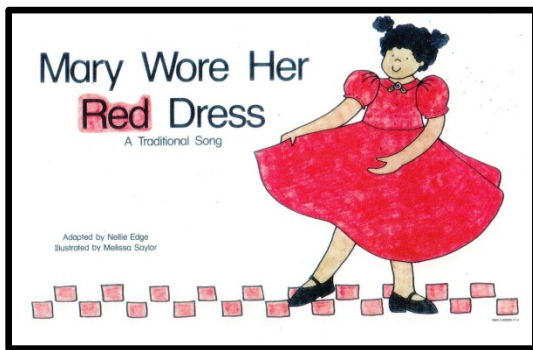


children can dictate a sentence about what they are wearing. To remind the children of the language pattern, I go around and sing to each child while they are completing their illustration... "Joseph wore his..." and then let the child dictate their contribution. The child's self portrait and language can adorn the walls of your class and then be bound into a class Big Book.

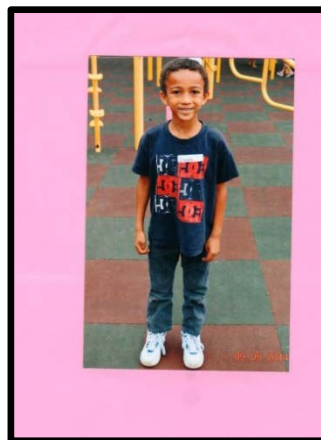
Through giving dictation, children learn that talk can be written down; they begin to develop the concept of a word. By incorporating children's lives into songs and class books, they learn that their lives are worth singing and reading about.

Laura Flocker's Class Book Engages the Children's Curiosity

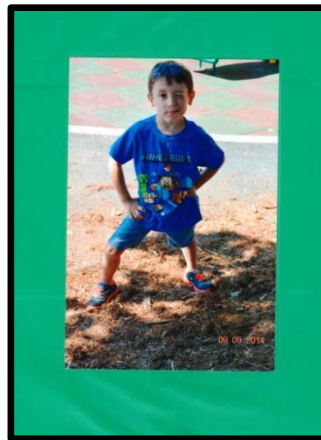
A New Twist on ♪ Mary Wore Her Dress



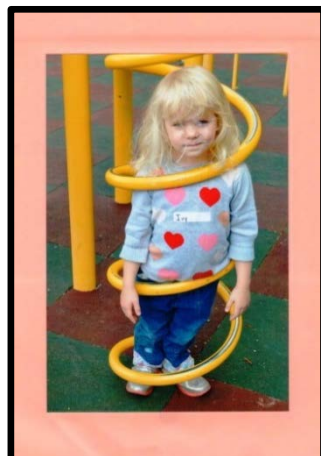
Notice we highlight color words as a reading scaffold.



Isaac wore his
white shoes,
white shoes,
white shoes.
Isaac wore his
white shoes,
All day long!



Canon wore his
Minecraft shirt,
Minecraft shirt,
Minecraft shirt.
Canon wore his
Minecraft shirt
All day long!



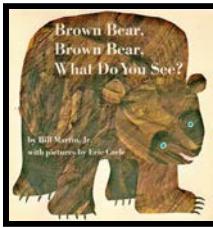
Ivy wore her
Heart shirt,
Heart shirt,
Heart shirt.
Ivy wore her
Heart shirt
All day long!

This delightful book engaged the children's interest in learning more about each other. They started noticing shoes, clothes, names and faces!

We Build on Familiar and Memorable Language Patterns

Adaptations of Brown Bear

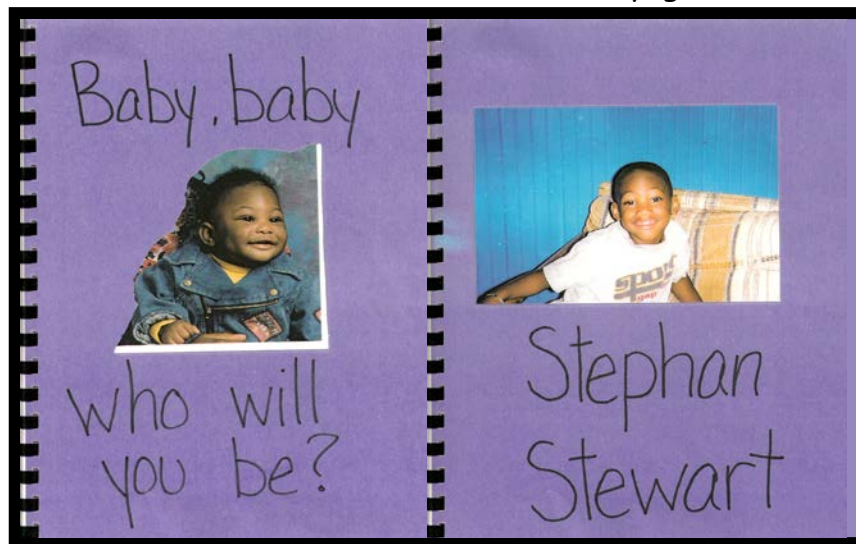
The original book *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Bill Martin, Jr. uses the *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star* rhythm and melody to create this repetitive and memorable rhyme:



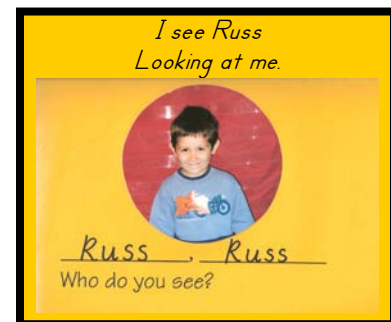
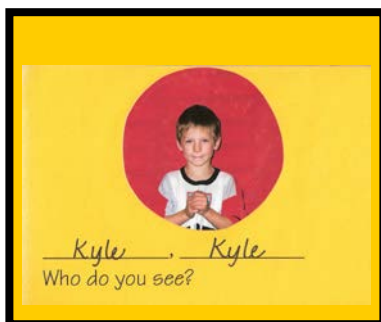
Brown Bear, Brown Bear
What do you see?
I see a red bird
Looking at me.

This is the one Big Book I would love to see in every early childhood classroom. Unfortunately, the later trade book does not have the same high picture support.

Teachers have adapted this pattern to make engaging class books featuring their students. Teacher Nicole Hiley asks parents to send in a baby picture of their child. She takes a photo of each of her new kindergartners the first few days of school and combines this with the child's baby picture and creates a memorable class book. By using several alternating colors, it is easier for each child to find their page.



Another popular photo book that children and their families enjoy reading features pictures of every child in the class. Title: ***Children, Children, Who Do You See?***




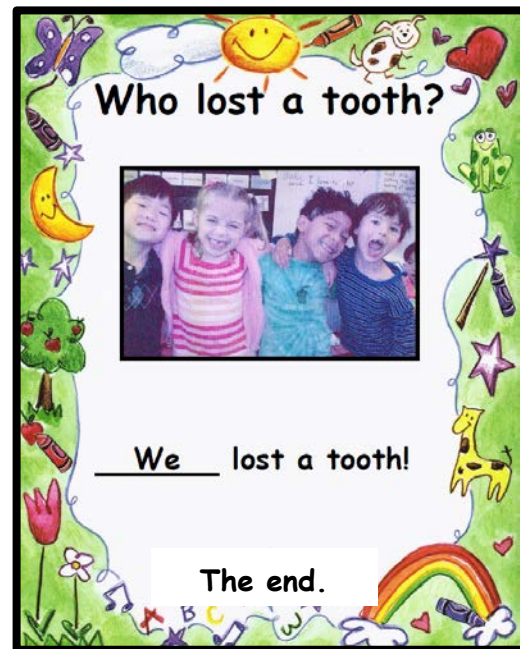
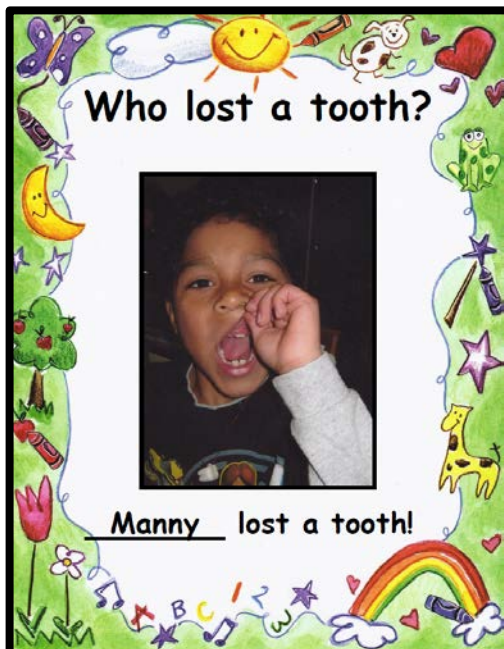
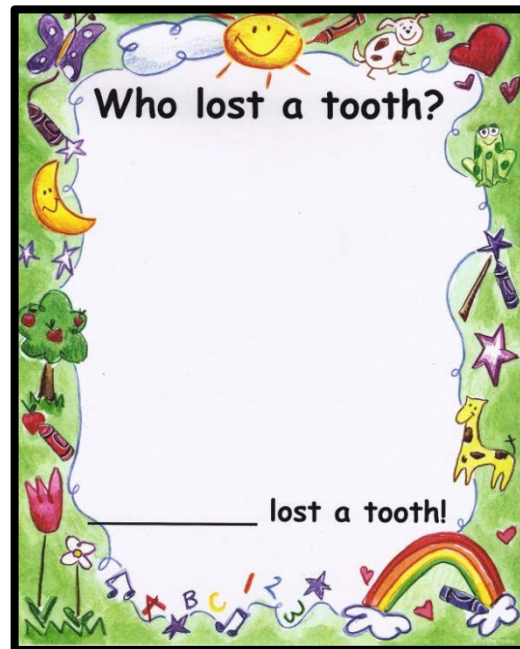
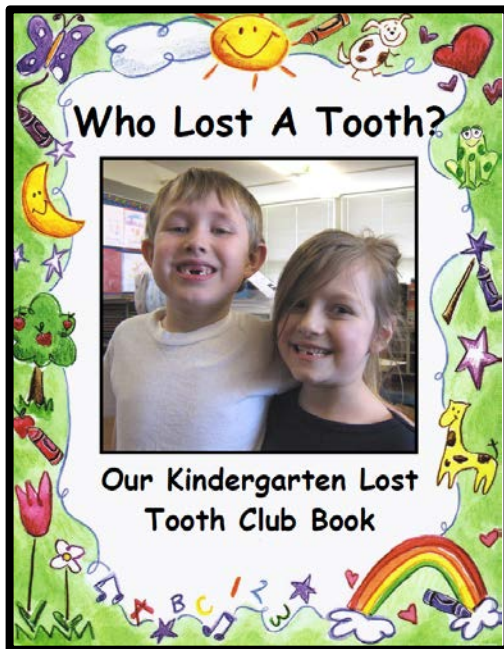
(**Note:** To keep the original *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* pattern with high pictorial support on each page, the first page will only have one sentence.)

Brown Bear, Brown Bear is linguistically perfect because Bill Martin, Jr. patterned it on the rhythmically perfect melody *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*.

We Sing Songs and Create Class Books about the Lives of Our Kindergarten Children: Who Lost a Tooth?

When we create simple, meaningful class books, the children pour over the pictures and read the pages all year long.

Because time is so limited, we like to prepare a frame for this entire book (before school starts) using the same patterned writing on decorative pages (just waiting for a child's picture and name to be added!). Slip the title page into the front of a three-ring binder with a clear view cover. Individual pages of lost tooth photos are put into clear plastic sleeves. Class-made books are one of the ways we build community, celebrate the lives of our children, and give them opportunities to read meaningful text. Each lost tooth is also an opportunity to use the thinking and questioning pattern of "Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How? from the Common Core State Standards. 



These simple, colorful templates are available online for members at www.nellieedge.com and are on the Writing-to-Read CD. We purchased the paper at our local OfficeMax.

Helper-of-the Day Song and Fingerspelling Cheer Builds Community and Phonemic Awareness!




Each day a new child gets to be the helper of the day, determined by the names which are alphabetized and kept on a ring. This daily "coming together" ritual begins with the whole class singing the helper of the

day song. Then the "helper of the day" enthusiastically leads the class in his or her name call/response and fingerspelling cheer.

Initial phonemic awareness and phonics lessons are built on each child's name. Katie Nelson can be heard directing the children:

- *Let's say the name.*
- *Clap the name.*
- *How many syllables do you hear?*
- *Stretch out the name long.*
- *What's the first sound in his name?*
- *What's the last sound?*
- *What are the vowels?*

Multisensory ABC and Phonics Immersion is expanded to connect with each child's names. See  **Name and Fingerspelling Chant** with Katie Nelson at nellieedge.com.

Helper of the Day Song

♫ To the tune of *Skip to My Lou* ♫

by Katie Nelson

(Sung by the entire class.)

Lucas is the helper of the day
Lucas is the helper of the day
Lucas is the helper of the day
Let's give him a big "hooray!"

The Name Fingerspelling Cheer

(Lead by the "helper of the day".)

Give me an "L"! (class) "L"!

Give me a "U"! (class) "U"!

Give me a "C"! (class) "C"!

Give me an "A"! (class) "A"!

Give me an "S"! (class) "S"!

What's it spell? (class) LUCAS!

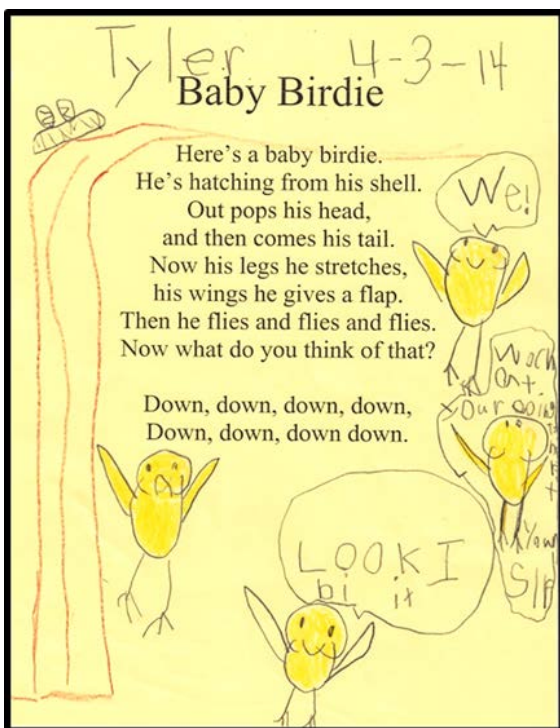
Baby Birdie Drama: Satisfying All Year Long!



Here's a baby birdie...



He's hatching from his shell...



Anthology page from Laura Flocker.



...Now his legs he stretches. His wings he gives a flap...

Kathy Magoun Makes Learning Relevant: *Multisensory ABC and Phonics Immersion Across the Curriculum*



Kathy Magoun, former Teacher of the Year from Connecticut, is a long-time advocate of using sign language for joyful, multisensory learning so she was excited to discover our *ABC Sign Language and Phonics Song*. She integrates ABC/phonics skills throughout her child-centered kindergarten program. Learning ABC skills is rarely an isolated literacy event.

- I asked Kathy, "When and how did you introduce other ABC books?"

"After most children have a memorable sense of *The ABC Sign Language and Phonics Song* (which we sing all the way through often the first few weeks of school), we use the pattern to introduce each new page in other ABC books (e.g., A "a" alligator and A "a" apple). This keeps the learning new and interesting."

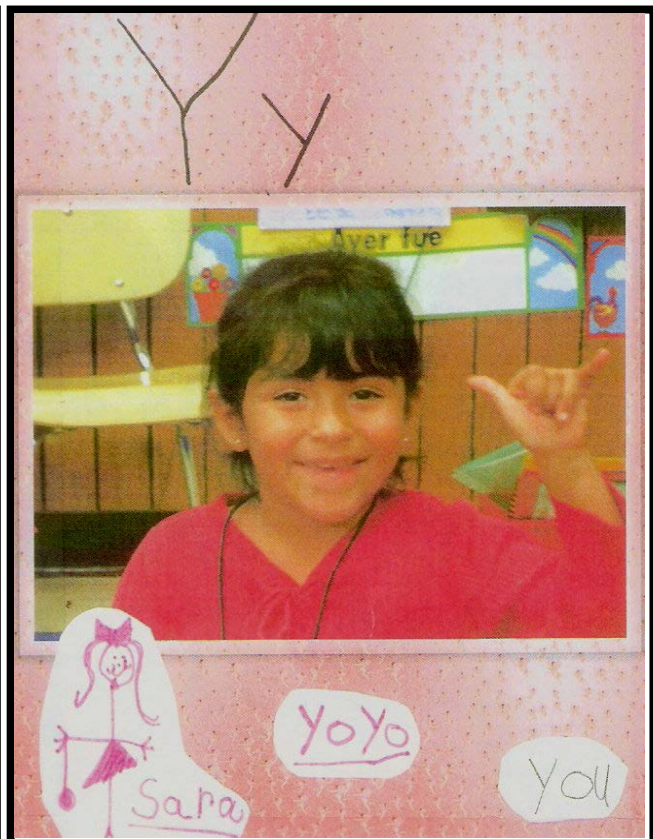
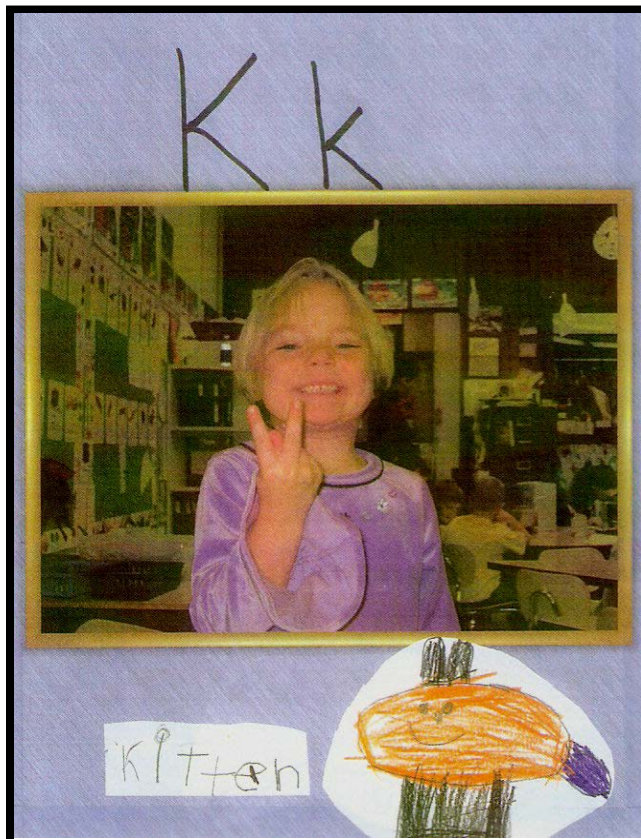
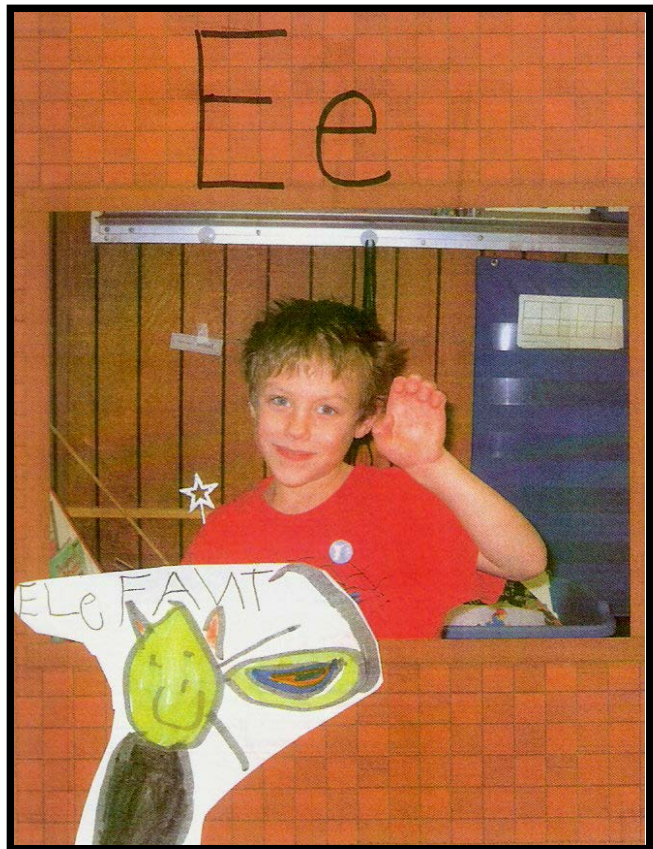
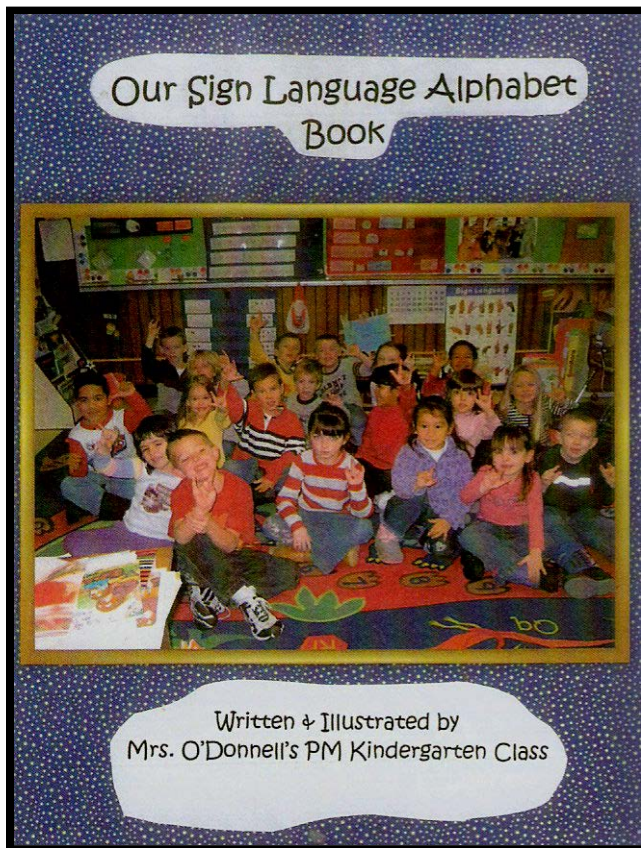
- Kathy elaborated, "We review the letter/sound/sign language throughout the day and across the curriculum whenever it's relevant rather than singing the whole song repeatedly. When we talk about families I say, "F "f" fox and F "f" family..." This way connecting letter/sound/sign language becomes a part of all of our discussions and everything we do - and children learn naturally and almost effortlessly."

Consider connecting our ABC Phonics: Sing, Sign, and Read! book (originally called ABC Sign Language and Phonics Song) with the names of your kinders: A "a" alligator and A "a" Allison, B "b" bear and B "b" Bryon... Nellie Edge



"When the theater for the deaf visited our school, we sang and signed for them. They were so impressed and my kids were so proud!"

Personalize Your ABC, Phonics, and Handwriting Program:
Use *ABC Phonics: Sing, Sign, and Read!* as a model and create a classroom
of Sign Language experts.



What a wonderful ABC memory book: each child's photo, name, writing, and drawing! *Special thanks to Jill O'Donnell for sharing.*

A Favorite Kindergarten Class Book

All About



Mrs. Nelson!

By: Mrs. Nelson



This is my family.



This is my dog.



This is my house.



This is my friend.



I love the Beavers!



I love animals.



I love my daughters.



I love my husband.



I love to bake.



I love Flowers



I love pink!



I love rainbows.



I love strawberries.

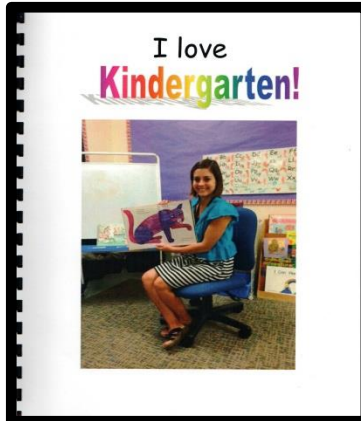
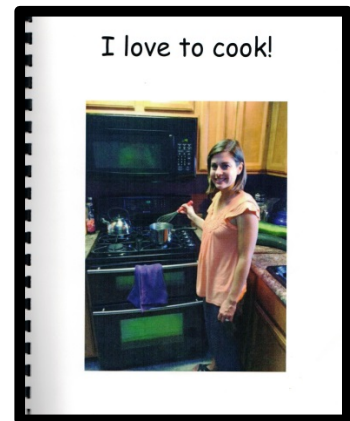
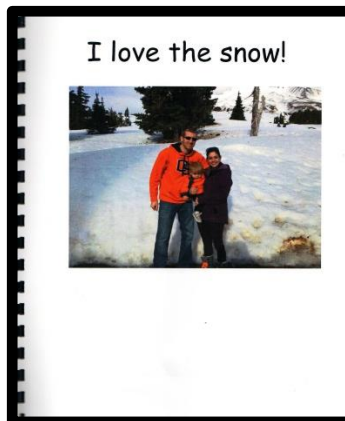
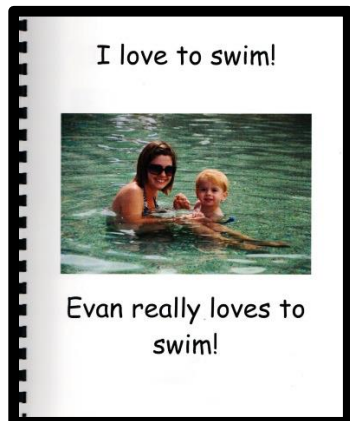
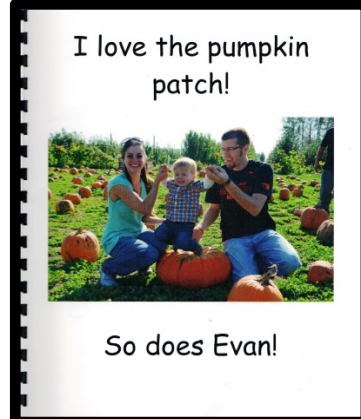
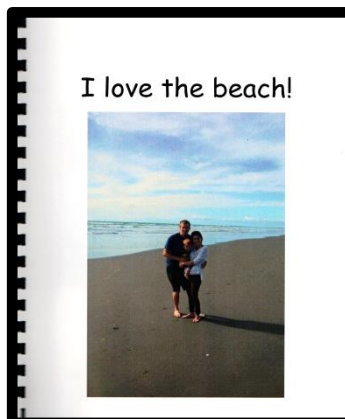
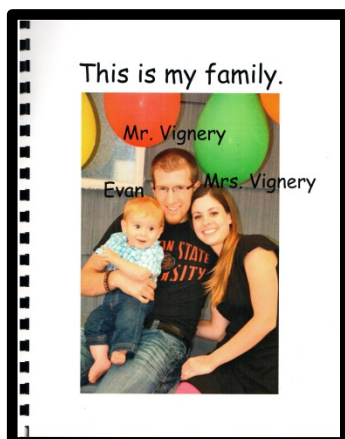
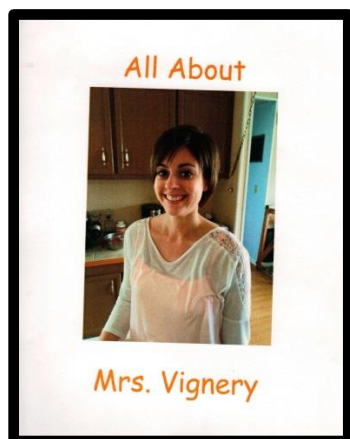


I love to teach
Kindergarten!

The End

A Favorite Class Book: All About Mrs. Vignery

The beginning of kindergarten is all about getting to know each other, building community, learning to care about our friends, and to take care of our classroom.



Kindergarten children love to learn about their teacher. This book by Shabri Vignery at Bush Kindergarten is a very personal way to begin the year and the bonding process. Once children know who their teacher is and that she believes in them, they are much more motivated to achieve high expectations academically and socially.

Thank you Shabri for contributing to Excellence in Kindergarten Literacy.

With Happy Hearts We Dance and Sing

Kathie Bridges uses a rich curriculum of nursery rhymes, songs and dances to accelerate language and literacy

Draw a Bucket of Water

From "Music and You" Kindergarten level, by Macmillan Music.

Draw a bucket of water
For my only daughter
Draw a bucket of water
For my only daughter

One rack-a-shack-a-shack-a
Two rack-a-shack-a-shack-a
Three rack-a-shack-a-shack-a
Four rack-a-shack-a-shack-a

Let this old lady under
Let this old lady under
Let this old man under
Let this old man under

Four in a sugar bowl hop, hop, hop
Four in a sugar bowl hop, hop, hop
Four in a sugar bowl hop, hop, hop
Four in a sugar bowl hop, hop, hop

Children also enjoy:

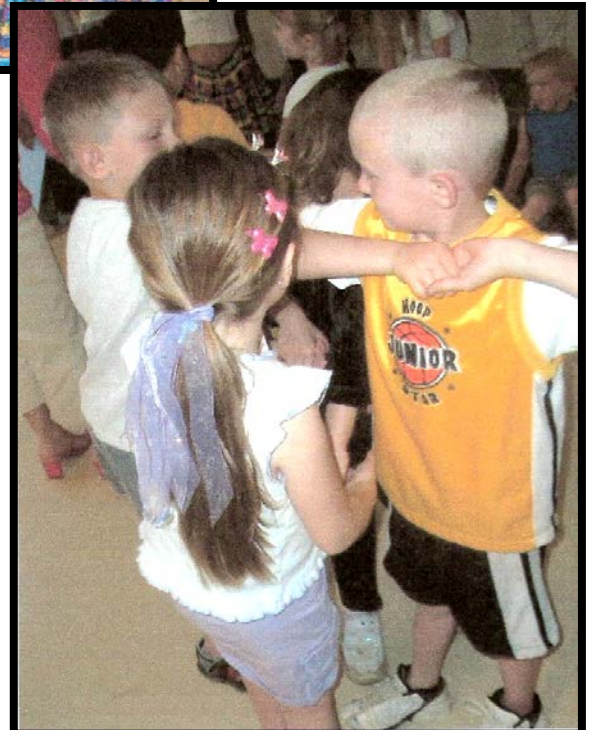
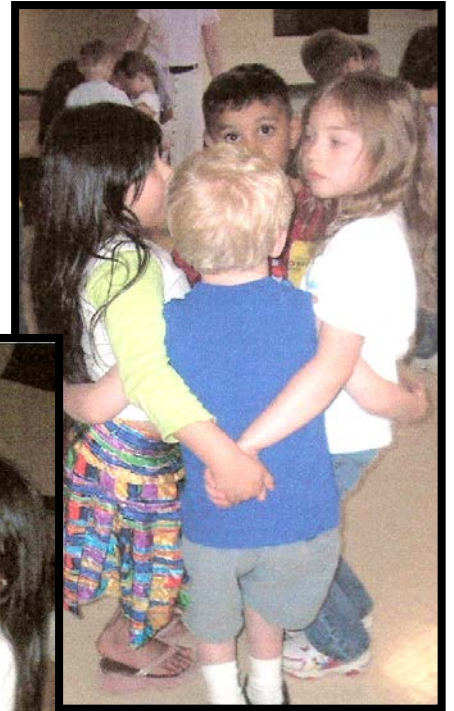
The Macarena Song

The Three Little Piggies Rock Out

The Three Bears Boogie

The New Zoo Review (from Steve and Greg's)

There is hardly a day that goes by that we don't dance together. -Kathie Bridges



Let's Start With the Barn Yard Boogie



*♪ I know a
rooster down
on the farm...*

Barn Yard Boogie is from
Teaching Peace CD by
Red Grammer.

On same CD:

- See Me Beautiful
- I Think you're wonderful



Children cross the midline
with alternating straight
arms from right to left.
(Then boogie and do the
modified Macarena.)
www.redgrammer.com





Watch us Dance the New Zoo Review

The New Zoo Review from
Big Fun Co by Greg and Steve.
This CD also has:

- Chicken Dance Medley.

www.gregandsteve.com



Kathie's other favorite
dance CD is *Once Upon a
Rhyme* by CJ.

- The Three Bears
Boogie
- The 3 Little Pigs Rock
Out!

www.cjtime.com

We dance like elephants, crocodiles, monkeys, kangaroos and black birds...

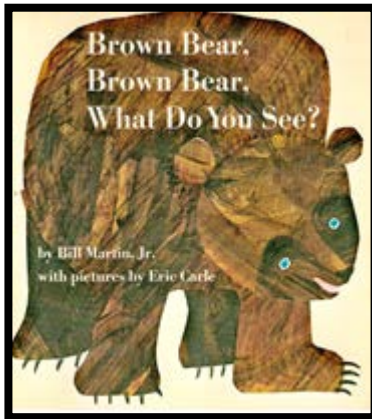
10 Tips to Make Dancing Fun for Everyone

1. Set the parameters for behavior expectations before you even turn on the music.
2. Practice the moves and actions you will be teaching your students on your own before presenting it to them.
3. Walk through some of the tricky moves before you start the music.
4. Make sure you have the CD and player ready to go before you begin.
5. Know what you will do if things start to get out of hand. (I typically turn off the music and review expectations with the students).
6. EVERYONE participates! I find at the beginning of the year there are a few reluctant dancers, but with some encouragement they are soon actively involved also.
7. Be exaggerated in your movements so students will be also.
8. If a movement goes side to side, make sure everyone is following along going the same way. Stop and restart is needed.
9. Dance with the students, especially in the beginning.
10. Be animated and have fun! If you're having fun, they will too!

Begin The Day with Bonding Songs and Name Games



Acknowledging each other through songs helps create an intellectual and emotional readiness for learning. Every child belongs.



Greeting Song - Adapt the *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* pattern to the tune of *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star* and sing about each child in your class: *Joshua, Joshua, who do you see? I see Kylie sitting by me.*

This same pattern may be sung as a "rap" with finger snapping to keep the beat.

See original *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* big book by Bill Martin Jr.

The Friends Song

(Tune: ♪ *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star* ♪)

Friends, friends you can see
My good friends are here with me.
Conner's my friend, Brittni's my friend
Lane's my friend, Katlyn's my friend.
Friends, friends, you can see
My good friends are here with me.



What are your special rituals for greeting children and bringing them together into a community of learners?

Belonging, friendship and "kindergarten kindness" are themes that we carry through the whole year.