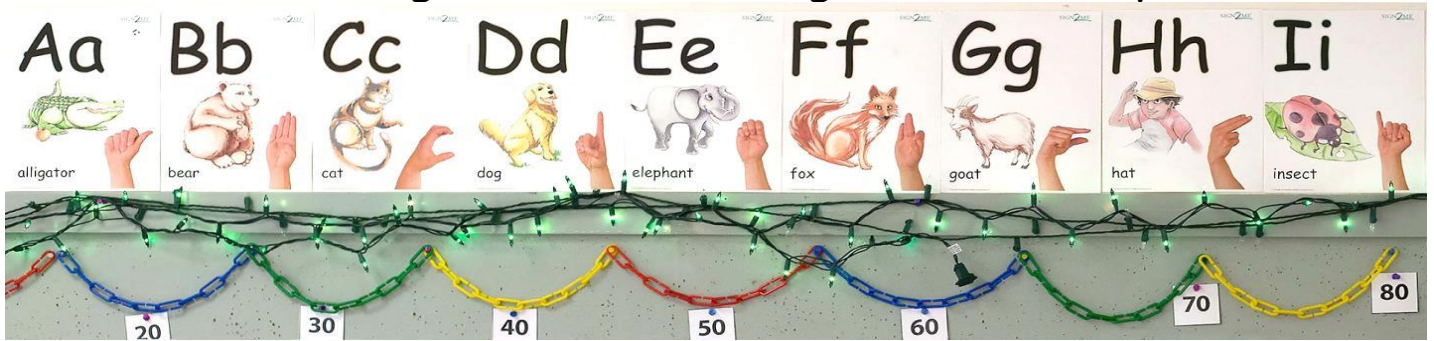
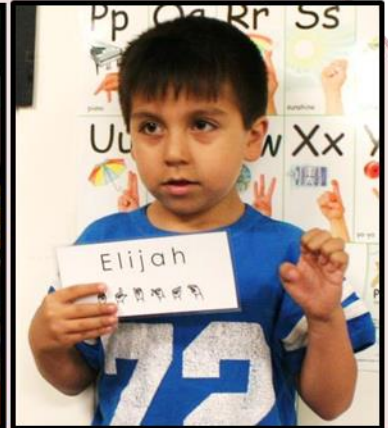


# How the Components of the Nellie Edge ABC Phonics Program Fit Together for Kindergarten Mastery

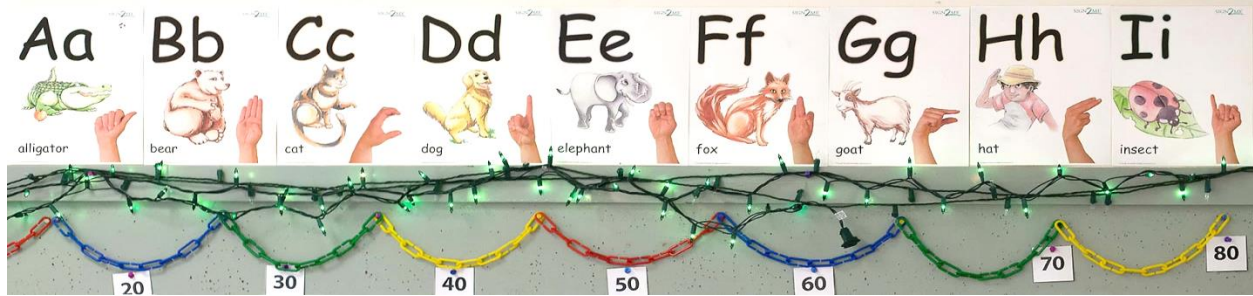


## Step-by-Step Strategies for ABC Phonics Mastery in Kindergarten: A Proven Teaching Progression for Optimum Learning (2017)

Documentation from Nellie Edge and Colleagues

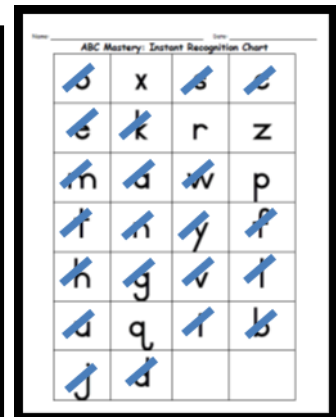
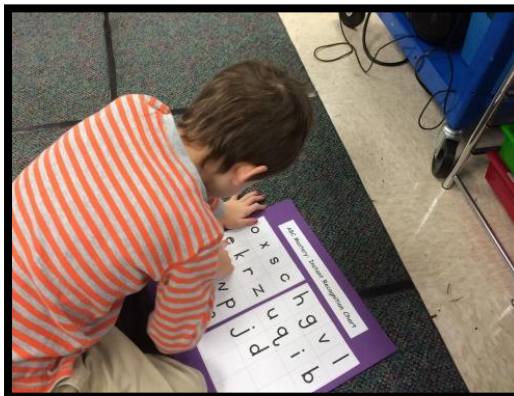


# Step-by-Step Strategies for ABC Phonics Mastery in Kindergarten: A Proven Teaching Progression for Optimum Learning (2017)

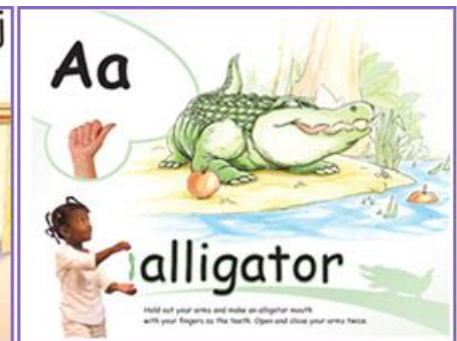
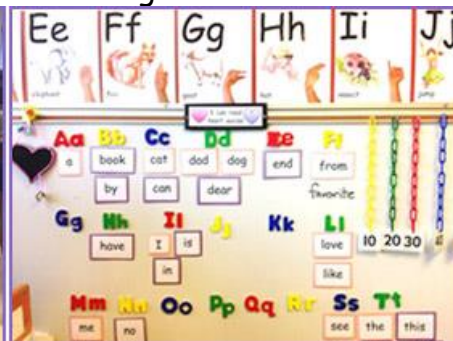


## A Word about ABC Phonics Mastery in Kindergarten:

This *ABC Phonics: Sing, Sign, and Read!* program is one piece of our comprehensive writing workshop model, which has proven successful in diverse kindergartens in Salem, Oregon and across the country. Diverse kindergarten learners thrive with this comprehensive, authentic, and multisensory *ABC Phonics* program. We also know that in both affluent school communities and Title I schools, there are learners who need additional support. Assessment-driven instruction identifies these higher-needs learners early for systematic, intentional remediation that builds on Reading Recovery® research and principles of visible learning. Our engaging, art-rich approach does not let kindergarten learners fall through the cracks.



1. Discover the easiest, most delightful way to teach ABC Phonics skills. Don't wait until kindergarten! First introduce the [ABC Phonics: Sing, Sing, and Read!](#) song with [FREE instructional video clips](#) and support materials to Head Start teachers, families of preschool, and homeschooling parents in the school community. Encourage a culture of family literacy so all children can build a strong ABC Phonics foundation for success of writing and reading fluency in kindergarten.



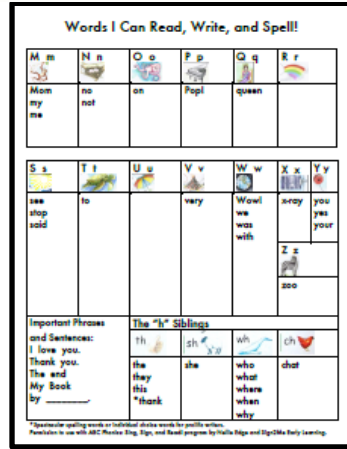
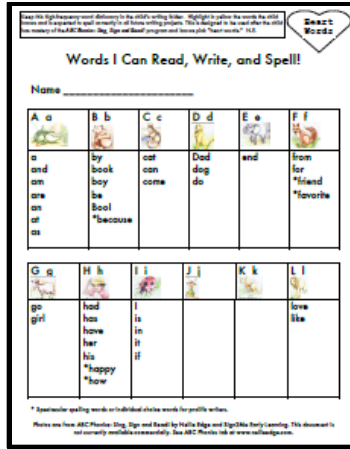
2. During spring kindergarten registration, give families the [ABC Phonics Family Reference Chart](#) and [accompanying letter](#) explaining the program. Do a short *ABC Phonics* program presentation on the actual spring kindergarten orientation day for new kindergarten families (See video clip on "[Multisensory and Phonics Overview](#)" and see document: [Why We Use Sign Language and Fingerspelling](#)) Help parents understand how *ABC Phonics: Sing, Sign, and Read!* builds literacy success for kindergartners with a strong "parents as partners" component. Check out "[Parents as Partners](#)" Resources. Many children master the *ABC Phonics* song and fingerspelling before school starts.



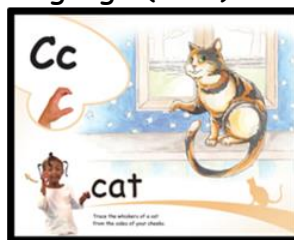
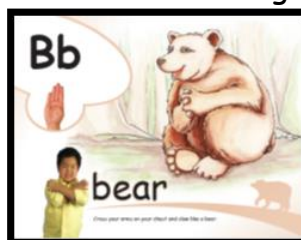
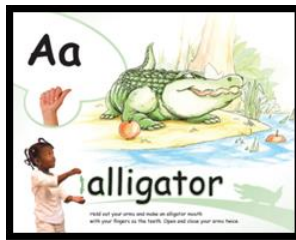
3. As part of **Back-to-School Night**, use a family scavenger hunt to involve families in teaching the fingerspelling of their child's name. (See blog: [How to Have the Best Back-to-School Night Ever.](#)) Give each family a magnetically backed and laminated Family ABC Chart as another reminder to practice at home. (This is a small investment in time and resources that will multiply the teacher's effectiveness.) Families use the chart as refrigerator art and are also reminded to use magnetic letters.



4. Teachers: On the [ABC Phonics page](#), find examples of beautiful and organized kindergarten learning environments with consistent ABC visual props throughout the room from the *ABC Phonics* program: ABC Wall Cards, a vertical poster near the instructional area, miniature charts, books in the library for children to study, and dictionary pages in writing folders (download FREE resources on [ABC Phonics page](#)). Teach children how to access and use them!



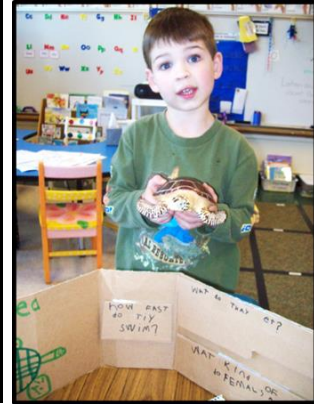
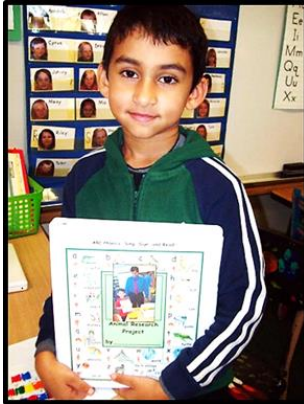
5. Introduce 4 letters and sounds the first day of school and add 4 new letters every 3 to 4 days. Take the [20 days to 26 Letters and Sounds Challenge](#) weaving short, targeted fingerspelling minilessons in throughout the day. (Many children will already know handshapes and simply need to work on fingerspelling with greater precision.) Keep learning joyful with high expectations! Some teachers use the slower version of the *ABC Phonics* instructional DVD to ensure more accurate American Sign Language (ASL) lessons.



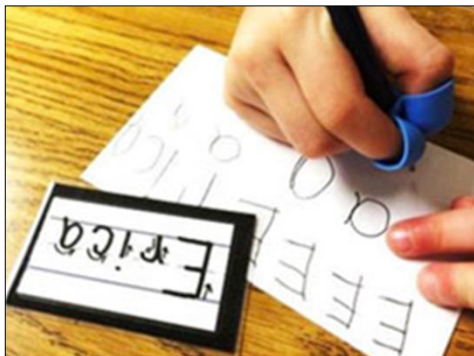
6. Check for fingerspelling accuracy every day the first month of school by using those short segments of time as children are lining up for recess or lunch. **Remind children to practice at home!** *I bet you practiced at home last night! Who thinks they are ready to demonstrate the entire song?* Accurate fingerspelling is a vital piece for harder-to-accelerate students and English learners. The kinesthetic act of fingerspelling with accuracy will help the learners connect with the visual and phonetic components of language. Multisensory learning takes advantage of how the brain learns best!



7. **Differentiate learning for early readers and writers.** Allow them to soar! Provide a comprehensive, early writing program that includes *ABC Phonics Animal Research Notebook* projects. All children deserve a cognitively-challenging curriculum!



8. Provide name-writing lessons with the **"Name Ticket" strategy** from the beginning of the school year. Help children set personal goals beginning with learning to name, write, and fingerspell the letters of their name. Celebrate when a less experienced or struggling learner can instantly name and fingerspell every letter in his or her name. *Wow! You worked hard and focused and now you instantly know every letter in your name. You must feel proud of your new learning. What's your next learning goal? Is it l-o-v-e?*

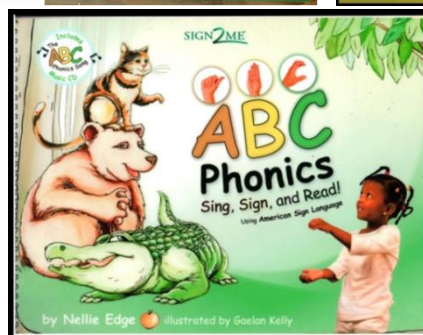


9. **Assess students for letter and sound knowledge the beginning of the year and after 10 days of instruction.** Determine which children may need additional support with auditory, visual, or kinesthetic memory. Aim for mastery of letters, sounds, and fingerspelling within 20-30 days. Remind parents to practice fingerspelling at home every night with the song and ABC Flashcards (Free Download: [ABC Phonics Flashcards Lower Case](#) and [ABC Phonics Flashcards Upper Case](#)). Coordinate with the Response to Intervention (RTI) team, or use

volunteers, IAs, or 5<sup>th</sup> grade reading buddies (during their recess time) for additional support.

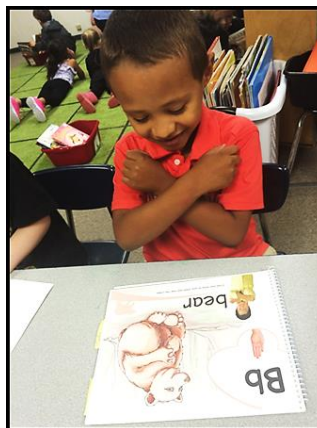


10. **Intervention teams provide the same model of integrated ABC Phonics instruction**, often slower, more intensive, and individualized, or in small groups with more repetition. Children use multisensory tools: salt trays to write words, magnetic letters, flash cards, white erase boards, the *ABC Phonics* book, and the slow teaching tutorial version on the *ABC Phonics: Sing, Sign, and Read!* DVD. They also use magnetically backed letter and sign language images on cookie sheets, [ABC playdough mats](#), and sandpaper letters. **The first ABC goal for ALL children** is to write and recognize the letters within their first name; then "love" and a b c d; and the remaining 15 high-frequency sight words (kindergartners call them pink "heart words"). Children practice their *ABC Phonics* song daily with fingerspelling. They also practice writing and naming letters, and learning to write real words.

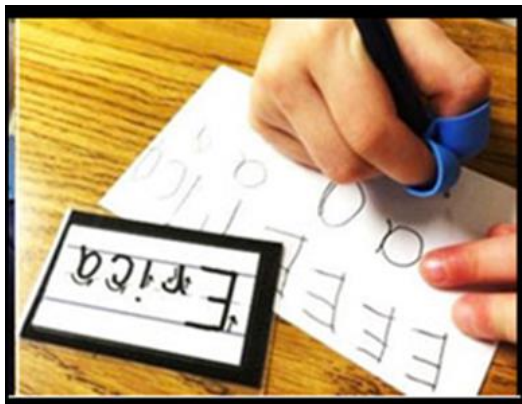


11. **This accelerated literacy model embraces a growth mindset; learning is visible and multisensory and instruction is assessment driven.** Feedback reinforces persistence and hard work towards a goal. More proficient writers are allowed to soar while all learners have the scaffolding for success. We want children to delight in learning new skills!

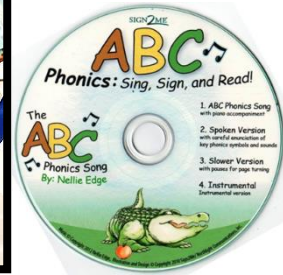
- a. Look at all those letters you already know! When you work hard, you can learn anything!
- b. Wow! How did you learn all the letters in your name?
- c. Your "a" handshape looks just like the one in our book and chart: you sure are focusing.



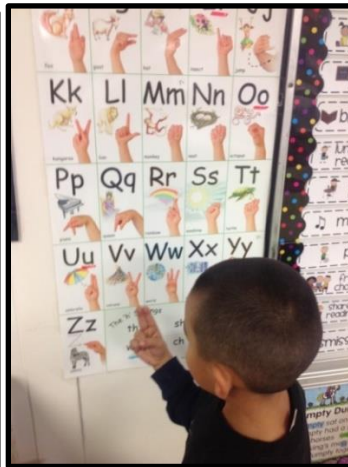
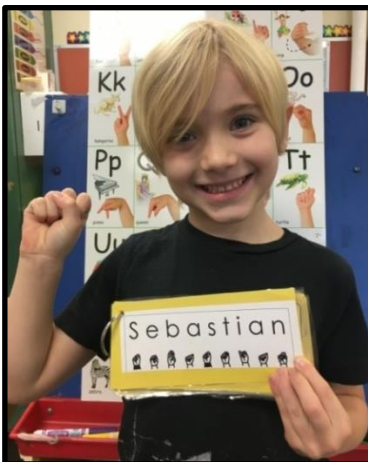
12. Every child in kindergarten is expected to fingerspell and say the letters of his or her name daily until mastery is demonstrated. This happens as a part of their name-writing practice. (We immerse children in print that has meaning to them and continue presenting information in an engaging, integrated, multisensory format.) As much as possible, we personalize and individualize instruction to meet the needs of ALL learners.



13. Provide the song from the *ABC Phonics CD* and accompanying chart at the listening center for children who need more audio support in remembering the sequence of the song. Dance the lyrics with cross-the-body pattern movements for brain breaks! (See "Workout to the Letter Sounds" on Jack Hartmann's CD, *Hip-Hop AlphaBop2*.)



14. Have a vertical *ABC Phonics* chart available in the instructional area; teach children to use it, and encourage them to evaluate and self-correct their fingerspelling. Once they know the *ABC Phonics* song, challenge children to perform the traditional ABC song with fingerspelling! We are building automaticity with the ABC sequence and fingerspelling. This is powerful support for our English learners and special needs students: it builds all children's finger dexterity and visual/kinesthetic memory.

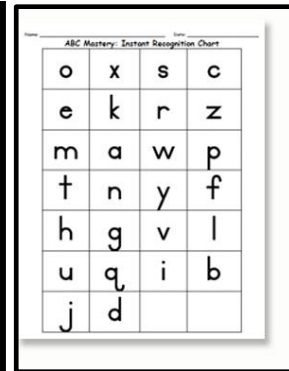
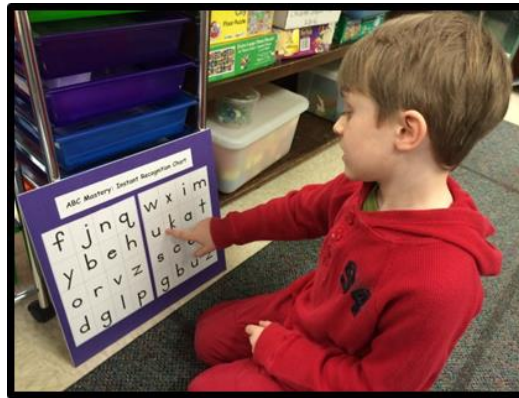
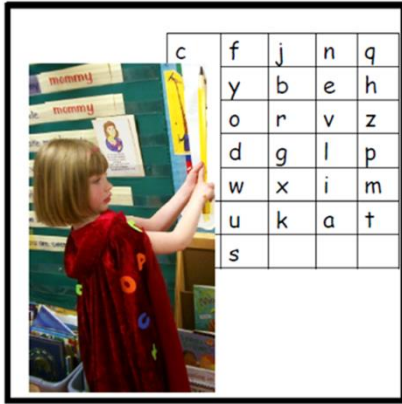


15. Use the *Helper-of-the-Day* song/fingerspelling strategy ([See Katie Nelson's Authentic Writing video clip on Salem-Keizer's website](#)) to teach students the letter names and fingerspelling of their classmates' names. This empowering musical lesson builds community, phonemic awareness, phonics skills, and fingerspelling simultaneously. It is one of a series of joyful literacy lessons for optimal and personalized learning!

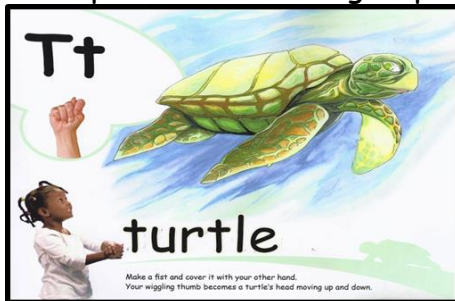


16. Begin transitioning to letter recognition activities without key phonics visuals. Play *Master of the Alphabet* games with both large and small groups as transitions to building quick visual recall of letters and sounds without visual supports. Ask students to verbalize and print letters a-d on the back of their Name Tickets.





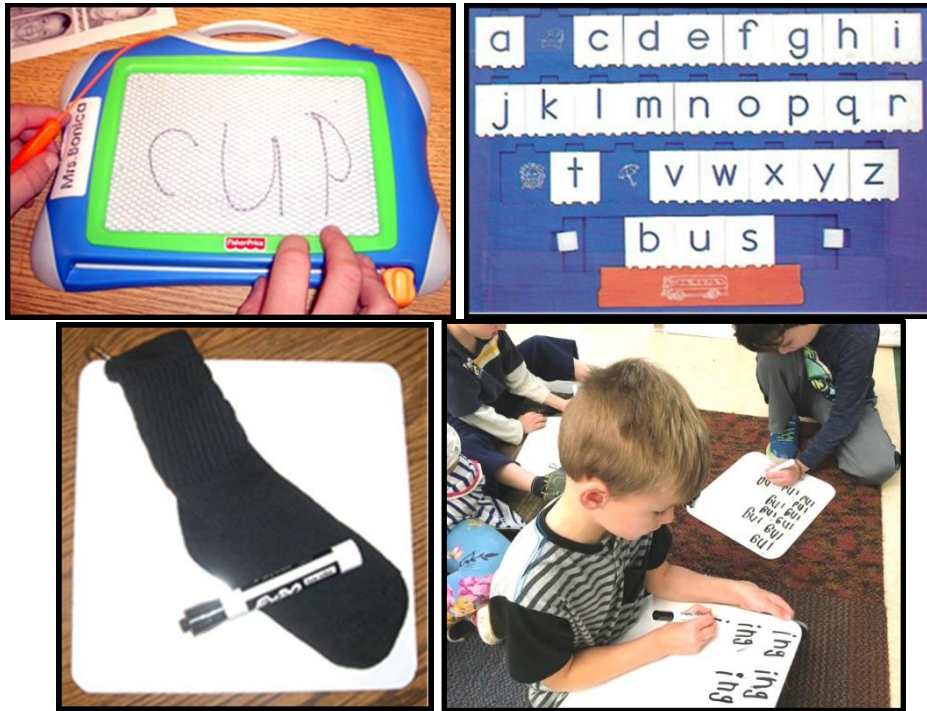
17. The *ABC Phonics: Sing, Sign, and Read!* book has both directional language and scientific vocabulary. Read exact sign language description from several pages a day while practicing fingerspelling because "saying and doing" greatly increases retention of new information. Expect accurate fingerspelling!



*Make a fist and cover it with your other hand.*

*Your wiggling thumb becomes a turtle's head moving up and down.*

18. Keep phonics instruction with CVC words meaningful and multisensory. As a part of a comprehensive writing workshop model, use white boards to provide whole group practice encoding CVC words to print and practicing diagraphs and word endings. Continue to monitor students needing additional support with the intervention team. Keep interventions consistent with the best kindergarten literacy practices as seen on the website pages: [Kindergarten-Friendly Handwriting](#), [Authentic Sight Word Work](#), and [the 10 High-Impact Strategies of a Comprehensive Writing Workshop Model](#).



19. Celebrate student achievement with photos in an *ABC Phonics Experts* book or a class-made *ABC Phonics* book. Invite children to play Master of the Alphabet games with cape and wands or present puppet shows with *ABC Phonics* puppets during literacy play time. Teachers find opportunities during literacy play time to provide additional support to less proficient students - even if the child's rate of learning is the letters within one new word every few weeks!



20. This integrated *ABC Phonics* approach to kindergarten-friendly handwriting and authentic sight word provides optimal learning and more *ABC Phonics* instructional time as it engages children in singing, fingerspelling, naming, and writing letters. Repetition. Repetition. Repetition throughout the day!

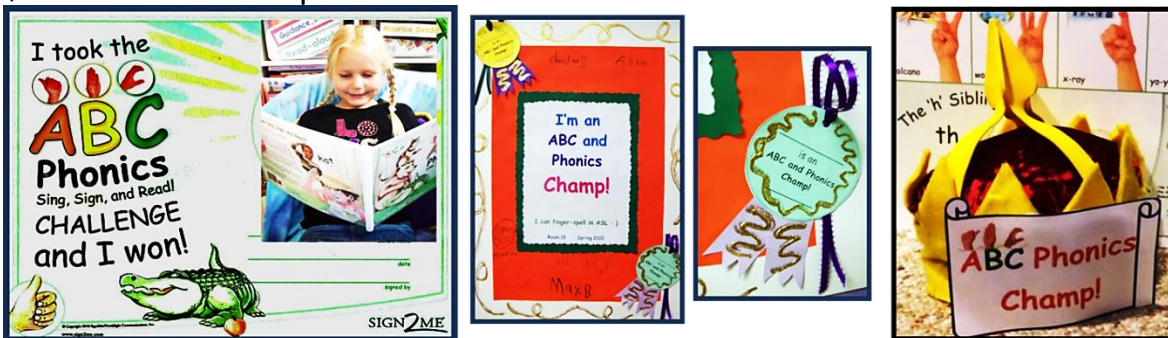


21. Read "Teach Letter Formations with Movement and Consistent Language"

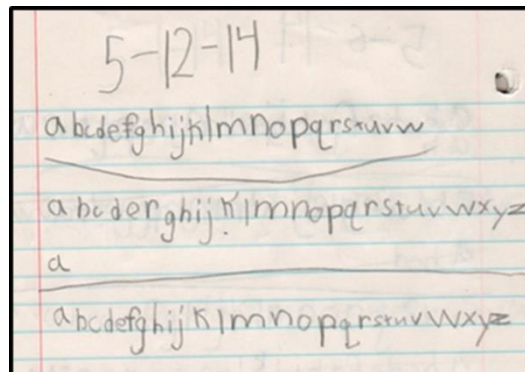
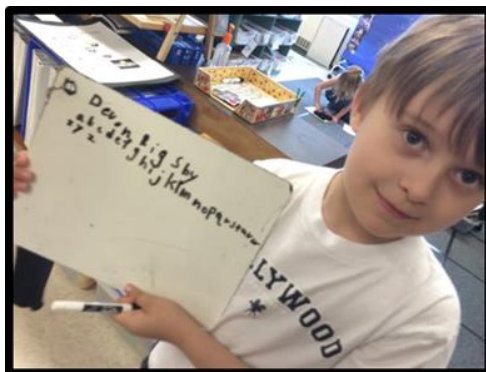
and study [the Handwriting Page](#) to understand how to verbalize directional cues when practicing handwriting motions for letters within real words (e.g. *down, up and around* for the letter "b"). Expect all children to verbalize these cues. "Saying and doing" greatly increases retention of new information and builds vocabulary for English learners.



22. Expect mastery early in the year! Identify children needing additional support. Work with your RTI team and the parents to support this systematic and meaningful approach to teaching and learning. Honor children as *ABC Phonics Fingerspelling Experts* with a crown, a badge, or their name and photo in a class book.



23. During the last two months of the school year, provide ABC brain exercises for fluency each morning using paper or white boards. Be sensitive to special needs students who still may need to see an actual a-z model. Students who have experienced our *ABC Phonics* teaching progression will be able to retrieve and write all 26 lowercase letters from memory in 40 seconds. Research from the University of Washington (and our own action-research) shows this skill leads to highly-proficient first grade writers and readers. (These strategies are documented in [Nellie Edge Online Seminar #1](#), "Multisensory ABC and Phonics Immersion: building the Writing and Reading Brain.")



Prevent reading failure in kindergarten: Provide the intensive, systematic, multisensory—and joyful—instruction that all children deserve.



### How Does the Nellie Edge Approach to ABC Phonics Mastery Fit into a Comprehensive Writing Workshop Model?

Peruse the writing pages at [www.nellieedge.com](http://www.nellieedge.com) for glimpses of kindergarten writing, from authentic word work to published books at the end of the school year.



A special thank you to master Salem-Keizer kindergarten teachers and accomplished teachers from across the country who helped develop and pilot the original *ABC Phonics: Sing, Sign, and Read!* program: Kathie Bridges, Katie Nelson, Jaime Corliss, Laura Flocker, Jennifer Foster, Celeste Starr, Shanda Lung, Susie Haas, Sally Rudnick, Diane Larson, Julie Lay, Joanie Cutler, Susan Handzel, Becky Leber, Kathy Magoun, and Mitzi Shirk.