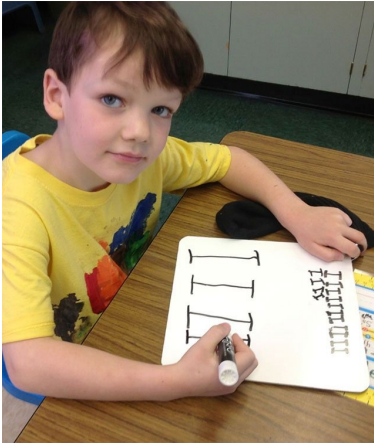


How Do Kindergarten Teachers Create a Culture of Writers?

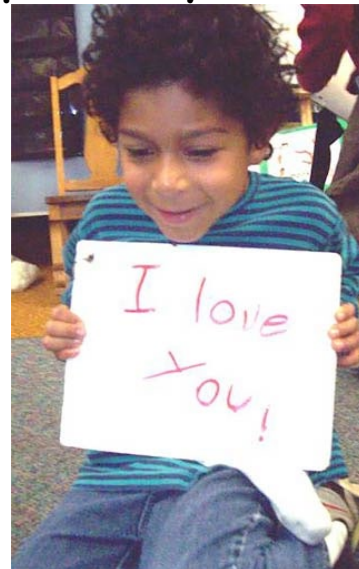
Daily "Heart Word" Sentence Quick Writes Is a Powerful Strategy that Builds Circles of Writing Mastery!

(Updated from 7/23/2022)



It's early in the year and kindergarten children are learning the joys of writing for real-world purposes. They are learning to write their first high-frequency "heart word" sentence: "I love you." With practice this becomes the **first circle of writing mastery**. Daily "quick writes" of "heart word" sentences is the highest-impact strategy I can give teachers: **it is how we increase "word power per minute" (a.k.a. writing fluency and stamina)!** This in turn frees the brain's working memory so it can do the vital work of building phonics skills: encoding sounds to print.

Gradual-release-of-responsibility model



Students learn pink "heart words" using the *Sing, Sing, Spell, and Read!* strategies simultaneously taught with handwriting. In the photo, Katie Nelson teaches kindergartners to **write a whole sentence using a gradual-release-of-responsibility model**. Notice sky writing and use of white/erase boards.

"I love you" is a powerful anchor sentence for practicing efficient handwriting and learning SEL skills.



We give children "I love you" writing models: a crystal-clear example of what good handwriting looks like. *Multisensory ABC and Phonic Immersion, Kindergarten-Friendly Handwriting lessons*, and "heart word" sentences dramatically increase writing fluency and stamina.

Make learning to write a meaningful, social and emotional experience. Invite children to take home and hide secret messages.



We ask children to pause, think, and talk to their writing partner. Who says "I love you" to you? To whom do you say, "I love you"? Finally, they brainstorm where they could hide secret "I love you" messages...

I say, 'I love you' to my Mom... I could hide one in the refrigerator ...under the computer...in Dad's shoe...

I'll get up after my sister is asleep and put one in her room.

Kindergarten-friendly handwriting is part of a comprehensive writing program: It is practiced in a meaningful context.



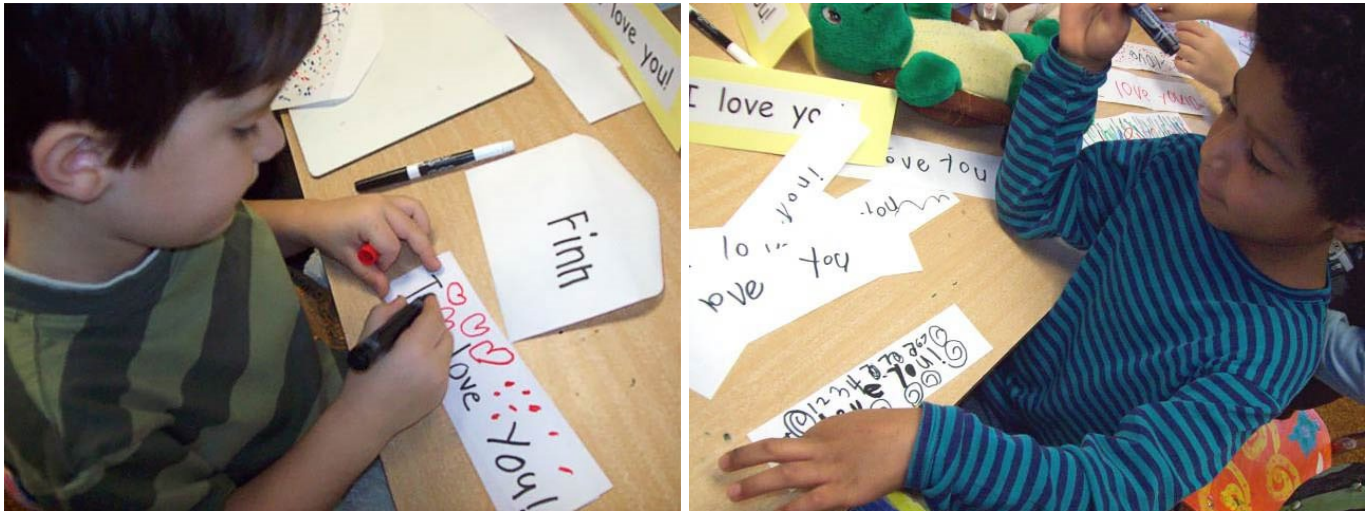
This is what engaged writers look like. Sometimes the biggest challenge is that no one wants to stop and go out to recess! Notice the "I love you" writing models at the table. Writing-to-read "heart words" allow students to write heart connecting sentences.

Help children care about writing: Make writing real and provide support for success!



Younger children—especially boys—come to kindergarten with a wide range of fine motor development. Teachers provide multisensory experiences and individually coach children on efficient motions for letters within the context of real words. They have high expectations and give all children the scaffolding needed to build on success.

Children become engaged and purposeful writers.



I'm going to send this to my Grandma in Arizona, says one ambitious writer. Sometimes the engaged writers pause to decorate their messages.

How many 'I love you' messages will you write?



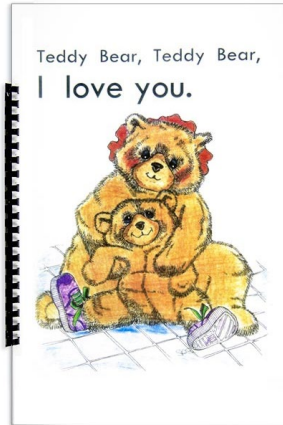
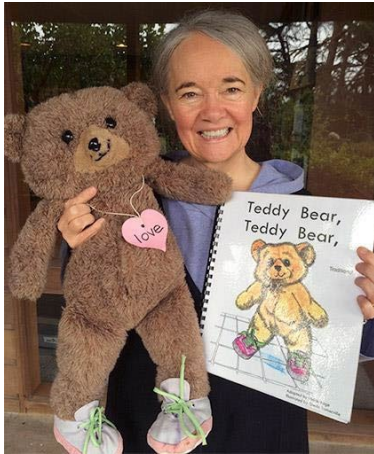
One boy decided to make 10 secret messages to hide all around his home. Another boy decided to write 20 secret messages and number them 1-20!

Writing Teaches Reading and Reading Teaches Writing!

Kindergarten "book lovers" read and reread favorite engaging books. Notice all the opportunities to read "I love you" in well-loved children's literature.

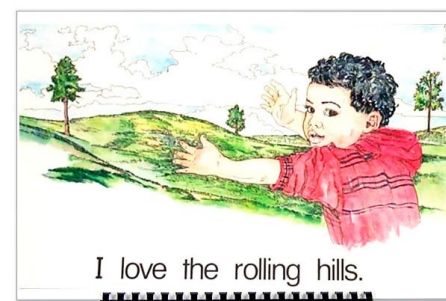
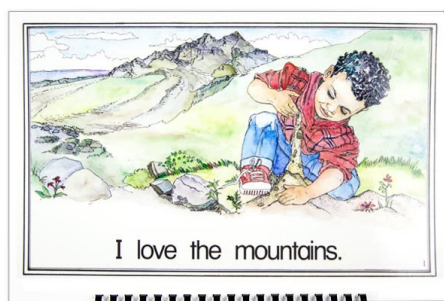
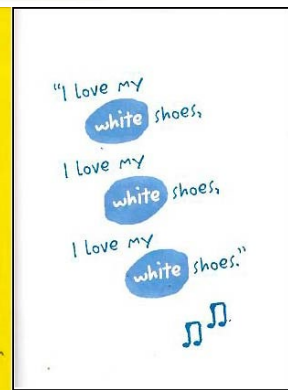
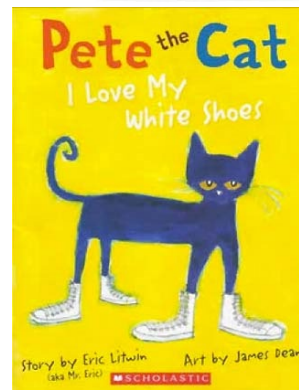
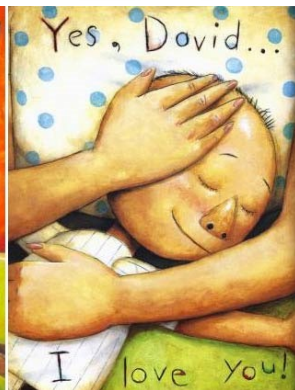
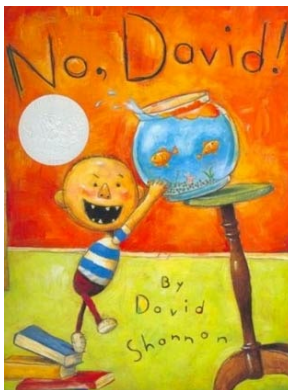
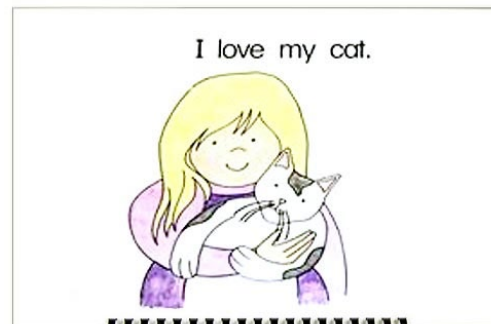
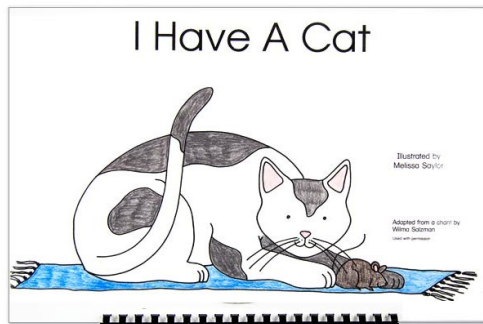
While most of your early reading books will be phonics-based, *"read-all-the-words"* books, this page is filled with books that students *"read-in-other-ways"*.

*I highly recommend reading *Shifting the Balance* by Jan Burkins and Kari Yates for an insightful discussion of the role of quality literature to intentionally develop oral language within a Science of Reading framework.



These books are designed to:

- Build oral language fluency
- Teach new vocabulary
- Train the eyes left-to-right
- Teach concepts of print
- Nurture a love of reading
- Provide a satisfying shared experience
- Keep joy alive



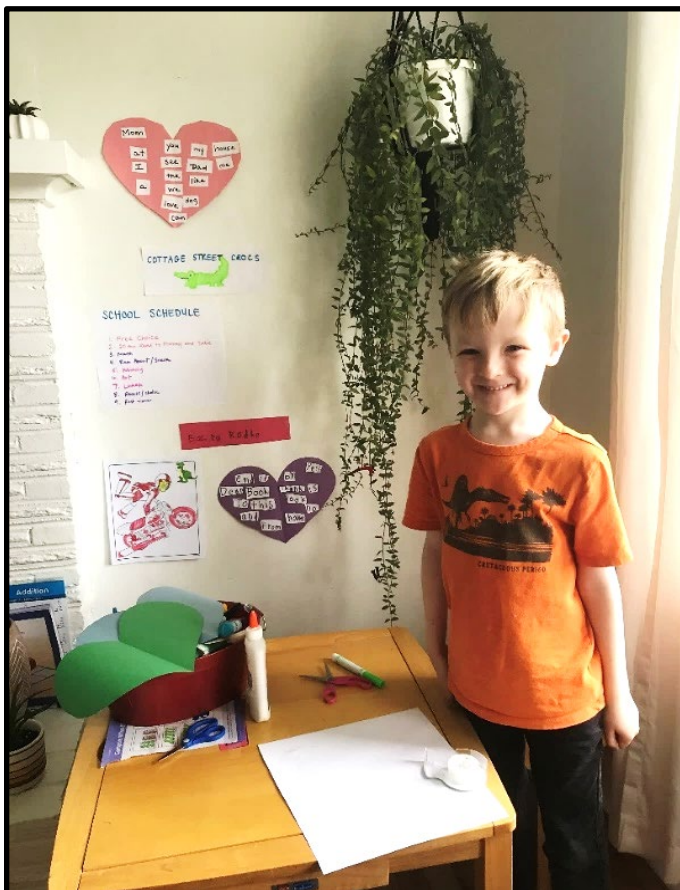
Good Kindergarten Writers Have Fluency with Two Kinds of Words:

1. **A growing collection of writing-to-read "heart words"** We learn them "by heart." Heart word sentences become the first circles of writing mastery.
2. **Words they spell phonetically**, encoding sounds to print. Confidence with phonetic spelling allows students to fearlessly tackle any unknown word!

We systematically **teach both kinds of words** to build writing stamina and proficiency! Once students master "heart word" sentences, they have the memory space to apply phonics skills to tackle any new words.



Families Are Partners in Teaching Writing-To-Read "Heart Words"



Students practice each new set of "heart words" at home—and at school with multisensory teaching and learning.

During times of distance learning, this student decided to re-create his school writing center—at home!

Mastery of "heart word" sentences and phonetic spelling builds engaged and purposeful young writers.

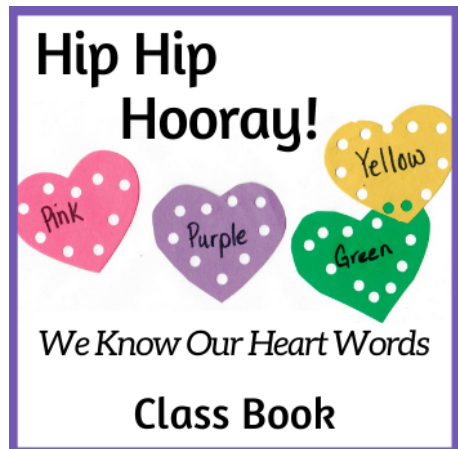
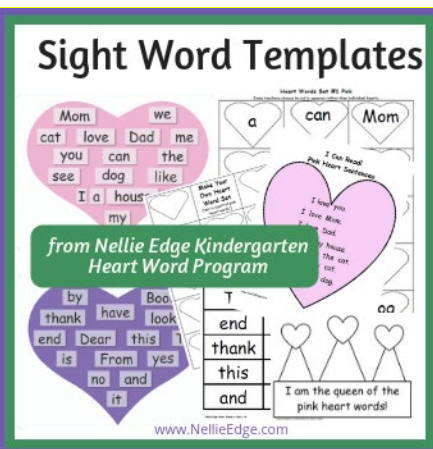
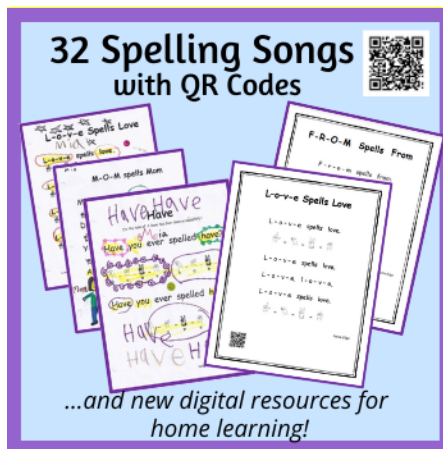
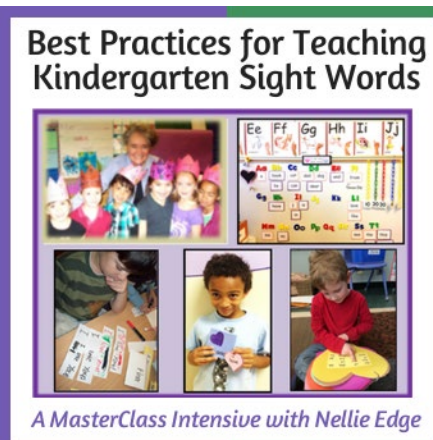
A comprehensive, authentic approach to early writing produces amazing results!

This kindergarten learner proudly recreated his kindergarten writing environment with heart word posters for online learning at home. How fun is that?

**Photos used with permission from families and teachers.*

Nellie Edge Kindergarten Sight Word Program (a.k.a. "Heart Words") Is a Multisensory Learning Approach with Proven Success:

- Integrates handwriting and sight word work to build circles of writing mastery
- Provides crystal-clear learning targets and Differentiates instruction
- Involves Parents as Partners with easy, actionable, targeted, at-home practice
- Provides an art-rich TAG Learning Model for ALL students



Teachers love it. Students love it. Parents love it!

"I absolutely love this program! Integrating handwriting with sight word practice is amazing! Very authentic learning." Jessica H. quote from TpT

"This is amazing and has changed how I teach sight words, into a method that is more meaningful, engaging, and appropriate for kindergartners. Thank you!" -Anastasia I.

"I love this resource for my guided groups, and I love the heart word sentences that come with it." -Shakti B.

"I Love Nellie! I have been using her resources since I took her online seminars. I purchased this resource to have easily available to me when printing. My students love the heart word boards/posters and are so excited when a new color is pulled out."

-Ciara Z quote from TpT