

# Social Emotional Learning in Kindergarten

Celebrating Islands of Excellence with Joyful,  
Authentic Teaching and Learning

## Book and Supplement Part 1



Nellie Edge

*"I know well that only the rarest kind of best in anything can be  
good enough for the young."*

-Walter de la Mare, *Bells of Grass*

# **Social Emotional Learning in Kindergarten: *Celebrating Islands of Excellence with Joyful Teaching and Learning***

*Featuring Nellie Edge and Colleagues*

***Welcome to our kindergarten community:***

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***I dedicate this book to the kindergarten teachers whose  
beautiful, nurturing, and joyful classrooms inspire my work:  
Shanda Lung, Celeste Starr, Katie Nelson, Laura Flocker, Jaime  
Corliss, Kathie Bridges, Jennifer Foster, Jacque Verrall, Diane  
Bonica, Winter Curry, Diane Larson, Sally Rudnick, Becky Leber,  
Joanie Cutler, and Bobbi Fisher.***

***A special thank you to my Kindergarten Cadre  
Study Group for their generous sharing and their  
passion for authentic, art-rich communities that  
honor diverse learners.***

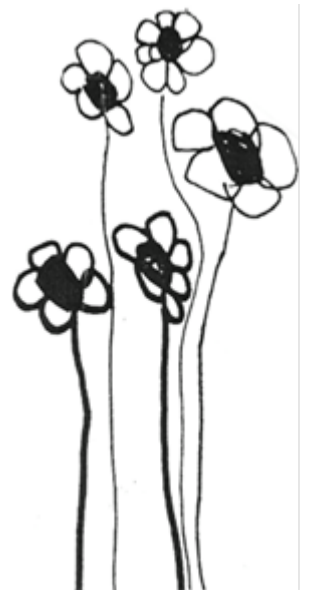
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# Social Emotional Learning in Kindergarten: Celebrating Islands of Excellence with Joyful Teaching Learning



Nellie Edge Professional Development Workshops and Online Seminars are committed to helping all children including English Language Learners (ELLs) achieve the rigor of the English Language Arts State Standards through joyful pathways to learning. Our workshops, presented by outstanding teacher-researchers, are designed to integrate current research and state-of-the-art literacy practices that are meaning-centered and in harmony with how the young child's brain learns best.

Our action-research has documented that joyful writing-to-read strategies within a comprehensive literacy framework accelerate literacy and produce unexpectedly high outcomes. Our purpose is to share "best practices" in Social Emotional Learning and literacy; to inspire reflection, collaboration, and intentional teaching. *How can I do an even better job reaching every child? and How do I create a classroom community that recognizes the social nature of learning, the importance of the mentor-apprentice relationship, and the vital role of the educational arts?* When teachers truly understand the writing and reading process and the power of multisensory teaching, they can more easily and effectively create responsive environments that embrace the diverse learning styles and gifts that our children bring to school. **Rigorous standards are reached when children are deeply engaged in authentic literacy experiences and challenged to become ambitious readers, writers, and thinkers.**

Bruno Bettelheim's research reminds us that how children perceive themselves in the act of learning to read generalizes to their whole self-concept. With this in mind, we are committed, through our professional development programs and literacy resources, to assist teachers in creating engaging and caring learning environments that will provide all children with the foundations they need to build on success. **We believe learning to read and write must be a systematic, meaning-centered process.** Our expectation is that every child can and will develop high levels of literacy skills while building belief systems of competence, belonging, and an "I can do it" growth mindset.

Our workshops and resources support our commitment to excellence in literacy, the honoring of childhood, and our belief that educators can and must positively influence the lives of children and the future of our democratic society.

**Our vision is... creating schools worthy of our children:**  
joyful and rigorous learning communities with strong family connections

## Study Questions for Professional Learning Communities



You will see this symbol in our resource materials. This symbol is for reflection: With our hearts, we know how to apply "best practices" research while we reach for the stars with the lives of our children. Social Emotional Learning underlies everything we do.

# Social Emotional Learning in Kindergarten:

*Celebrating Islands of Excellence with Joyful Teaching and Learning (Part 1)*

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## Chapter 1

# Research and Beliefs about Teaching and Learning



*Becky Leber's kindergarten friends*

*Becky often asks: How can we help our friends?*

*We create **beautiful, organized, language-intensive environments** that are **emotionally safe** and noncompetitive. We have **high expectations!** We **weave Social Emotional Learning (SEL)** and the **educational arts** into all areas of curriculum. Our children develop friendships: They learn to work hard and be kind. Children are given opportunities to make choices and be involved in **meaningful projects**.*

— Nellie Edge,  
*S.M.I.L.E Approach to Joyful Accelerated Literacy*



## ***We Use Memorable Rituals, Traditions and Celebrations of Learning to Build Emotional Intelligence in Kindergarten***

Over the years, my colleagues and I at Nellie Edge Seminars, have shared many vignettes of memorable classroom rituals, traditions and celebrations. For us, **school has always been a “celebrative place.”** We delight in making each child's learning experience more memorable and meaningful through thoughtful attention to classroom rituals, traditions and celebrations. These symbolic acts help us build a thriving community of learners. Children come to school with diverse background experiences. **It is the stories we tell, the songs we sing and traditions we build that bind the children together emotionally and intellectually, creating an optimal climate for learning.**

Teachers across the country have added layers to our collective stories of building a joyful learning community. These stories and “best teaching practices” have touched our hearts and stirred our imaginations. They deserve to be shared with a wider audience, and thus comes my motivation to begin this manuscript. At the center of many of the following vignettes is the need to symbolically transform experiences and to communicate thoughts and feelings. At the core of these powerful teaching strategies is our proven belief that **music is magic in creating the optimum climate for bonding and learning.**

We believe that in order for all children to reach high academic levels, we must create a classroom community that reinforces the belief that **I can learn**; that provides personally meaningful experiences so each child feels **I care** about learning; and that gives the child the security and confidence of knowing that **I belong**. Becoming an ambitious reader, writer, and self-directed student is supported by such a rich social context for learning.

We have been instructed and inspired by the gentle wisdom of Ralph Peterson and his important book, ***Life in a Crowded Place - Building Holistic Learning Communities***. His voice reminds us, *Once you get the community right, the levels of learning soar.* Excerpts from his book are included in this manuscript. Those of you who have studied with us over the years will recognize the influence of our colleague's, Pat Wolf, work on brain research. Her writing and brain-friendly teaching reminds us to design emotionally engaging learning experiences. You will also feel the influence of Regie Routman, Bobbi Fisher, Jacque Verrall, Bev Bos, Diane Larson, Tom Hunter, Janine Chappel Carr, and Kay Goines on the following pages. Their teaching integrity and respect for childhood supports our vision of “creating schools worthy of our children.”

We often echo these words from Tom Hunter's song,  
***♫ May the work we do make the world we live in a little more  
worthy of our children. ♫—Tom Hunter***

A heartfelt thank you to these colleagues and to the many unnamed teachers who have shared this teaching journey with us and have touched and instructed us with their stories and their passionate commitment to our children. Let us always remember that as teachers of the young, we are responsible for the memories of childhood and we're in charge of celebrations.

I sincerely hope that these excerpts from earlier manuscripts, though still in draft form, will be a helpful guide and springboard for you as you **develop rituals, traditions and celebrations that will bring dignity and delight to your children and their families**. These bonding times form the foundation for building Emotional Intelligence and making all learning meaningful and memorable.

When the children step into your unique community of learning and you become their teacher, mentor, and friend, remember you're also in charge of celebrations! Greet the children individually and start the year with bonding rituals and joyful learning experiences so the children will love coming to school. **Bring the pieces of the day and year together and end on a happy, harmonious note so the child's memories of your time together will be satisfying.** You probably have vivid memories of beginning and ending the year celebrations from your own early years in school to reflect back on.

At the end of the year, your **children will need to express the joy of being a part of something bigger than themselves, but they also will experience the sadness and loss at separation.** These feelings need to be given symbolic order for the teacher and the children so that the day and the year feels complete.

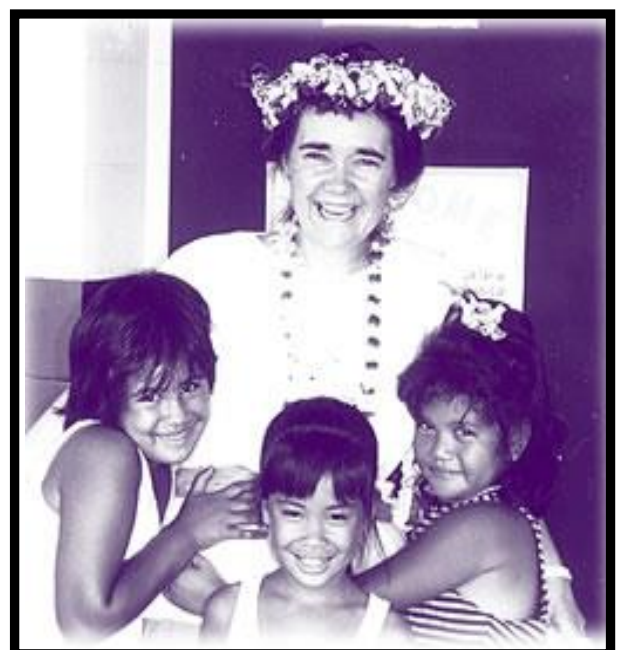
As you plan now for the beginning and/or end-of-year activities, I encourage you to keep **them simple and keep them meaningful!** Many of the most meaningful rituals and traditions will evolve naturally as the children are working and learning together. Other symbolic gestures will involve more thought, parent help and planning.

I often think of a quote from Mother Teresa, **"There are no great things, only small things done with great love."** Perhaps that is the emotional key to "good first teaching" and to creating "just right" celebrations.

**May you reach for the stars with the lives of the children that you touch. Do it simply—and with great love.**

Wishing you memorable rituals, traditions and celebrations,

Nellie Edge





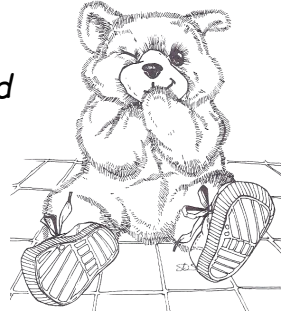
# It is “Developmentally Appropriate” to Have High Expectations for Our Kindergartners: First Create an Emotionally Safe Learning Community

We always ask:

*How am I developing attitudes, behaviors and the habits of mind needed for children to do well in school—and in life?*

*Is this activity meaningful, multisensory and memorable?*

*How am I developing a love of learning and positive social-emotional skills?*



*We need to grapple long and hard with the concept of 'development,' and consider how learning (and teaching) may enhance and encourage development. We need to recognize that active teaching and active learning go hand in hand. - Donald Graves*

- **“Developmentally appropriate” practices somehow have been misinterpreted to mean we just wait for a child to develop skills, interests and abilities.** For some of our hardest-to-reach children, this is a great disservice. I wonder how our limiting beliefs might limit the richness of what we offer children? We know how to skillfully scaffold learning so all children can build on success. We understand the power of building a joyful learning community, the social nature of learning and the roles that motivation and parent involvement play in learning. kindergartners love to learn! They love to draw and write—and sing and sign. Workbook sheets and one-size-fits-all curriculum are not **“developmentally appropriate” experiences for young children—active, meaningful engagement in science, literacy and the arts is!**
- Some of us were taught that we would squelch the child's creativity if we provided guidance in teaching them to draw. Yet **experiences learned from the Reggio Emilia's Preschools of Italy have vastly expanded our vision of how the capable young child is to think, plan, draw and create through the many languages of childhood. We can—and must—reach for the stars with our children's minds and skillfully scaffold higher-level learning experiences.**
- I am continually amazed and delighted by the **incredible vocabulary children are capable of developing** if they are around adults who have a passion for playing with wonderful words and rich language patterns. Children in such environments have verbalized that they want to be **paleontologists or entomologists** when they grow up.!

**Children deserve our highest expectations.** Becky Leber, a mentor kindergarten teacher who celebrates childhood, explained, ***I raised my expectations and my students far surpassed them.***

*As we raise the English language arts and literacy standards, we must do it in such a way that we are also raising our expectations for children's social-emotional development and love of learning.*

***Children deserve to develop attitudes and habits of mind that will support them in being successful in school—and in life.***



## The SMILE Approach to Accelerated Literacy: Take Advantage of How the Brain Learns Best

The SMILE approach to literacy is systematic, multisensory and engaging for young learners. It embraces and supports diverse learning styles and the wide range of language and literacy needs seen in most early childhood classrooms. This accelerated learning model is especially powerful for our high-needs children. In Katie Nelson's classroom, which incorporates SMILE principles, **the entire class enjoys literacy experiences with quality literature, songs, poems, rhymes and dances.** This invites the children to relax, have fun and feel a sense of belonging while enhancing oral language skills and physical coordination. **Then we build on success through differentiated instruction that is active, motivating and appropriate for individual learners while fostering a love of language.** Our comprehensive instructional model acknowledges the social-emotional aspects of learning and children's inherent love of nature. Katie and I celebrate the power of music, movement, sign language and the educational arts as translators of meaning. Our teaching makes us smile and it makes children smile. It also delights the hearts of parents as they see their children's enthusiasm for learning. **Brain-friendly literacy™ always evokes a SMILE and thus our acronym:**

Systematic, scaffolded.

Meaningful, multisensory, memorable, motivating.

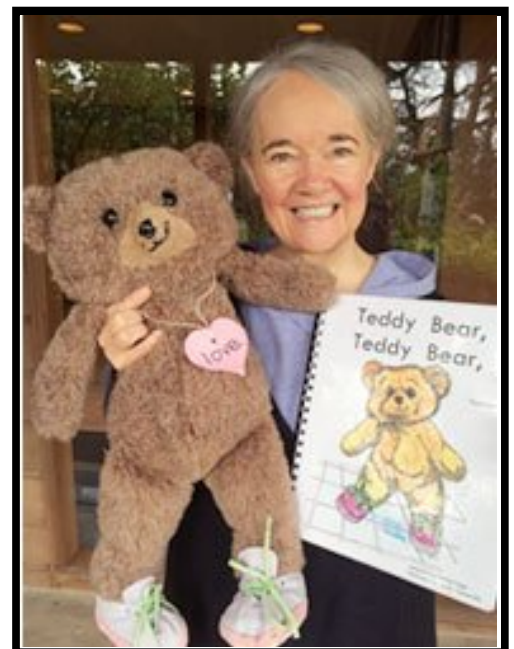
Integrated (with the arts, science and children's lives), intentional.

Literacy (literature and language with love).

Experiences. Engaging ones!

The SMILE instructional model assumes that **teachers' first concern is in creating a joyful community of learners and bonding with each child and their families.** We recognize the vital role of the emotions and parent collaboration in learning. Our teaching colleagues have proved that once we create a caring community and an engaging curriculum with parents as partners, the levels of learning soar for all children. The intrinsic reward of this type of meaning-centered learning is high motivation for children--and their teachers.

I was honored when the **term SMILE was first used to describe our Nellie Edge Seminars approach to language and literacy instruction by the Kapa'a Elementary School primary teachers (on Kauai).** After receiving professional development, they used our accelerated literacy model to create a K-2 "school within a school" in 1995, which they called SMILE (**School for Meaningful Integrated Language Experiences**). Our expanded acronym is still true to the heart of that original title. Remembering my visit to these engaging Kauai classrooms where children sang, signed, and performed language still brings a SMILE and warm "aloha."





# The SMILE Approach to Joyful and Accelerated Literacy:

*Principles and Practices That Celebrate Language, Honor Childhood, and Enhance Social Emotional Skills*

*We know how to reach high ELA standards in kindergarten—a CHILD'S GARDEN!*



We create **beautiful, organized, language-intensive environments** that are **emotionally safe** and noncompetitive. We have **high expectations**. We **weave the educational arts** into all areas of curriculum. Our children develop friendships. They learn to make choices and are involved in **meaningful projects**. As educators we are reflective, continuously learning how to provide the scaffolding needed for every child to build on success, every day. We teach systematically and intuitively. **We take advantage of how the brain learns best**—and we save time for serendipity.

**These 14 principles, within a loving, disciplined and joyful atmosphere, provide a foundation and framework for excellence:**

- **Bond with students and create a joyful community** where children care and share and learn together. Our carefully chosen language builds trust, nurtures self-esteem, and develops responsibility.
- **Kindergarten is for language:** Phonemic awareness is "language play--every day, books and songs -all day long." The biggest single kindergarten predictors of phonemic awareness and later reading success are still oral language development. We can be systematic in our teaching--and playful!. We know that the body needs to move, the human heart needs to sing, and the brain was created to learn through music.
- **Engage "the heart of kindergarten":** Create memorable rituals, traditions, and learning celebrations that accelerate literacy. Weaving joy, personal meaning, and depth into the learning community creates a love of learning.
- **Use Multisensory ABC and Phonics Immersion strategies:** Children deserve emotionally engaging instruction that is also explicit, systematic and differentiated for their needs. Accelerate mastery of the alphabetic principal through singing, fingerspelling, signing, and reading one consistent ABC/phonics song several times a day with parent collaboration. Our action-research team demonstrated phenomenal results with these practices.



See **ABC Phonics: Sing, Sign, and Read!** by Nellie Edge and Sign2Me, 2010.

For teacher support, see **ABC Phonics** tab at [NellieEdge.com](http://NellieEdge.com).



- **Involve parents as partners:** Multiply your teaching effectiveness. This is not an option. All parents want their children to be successful in school. Parents and teachers jointly share responsibility for educating their children. There will be intergenerational benefits.
- **Teach concepts about print, handwriting, high-frequency words, and build reading stamina – their way:** Use auditory spelling strategies, name tickets, word matching, sentence building, singing, signing, "stamp and read books," daily "kid writing," and independent reading time. Create literacy work centers where children use reading and writing for real purposes. Skillfully transition from "magical memory reading" to guided reading. Use the Neurological Impress Method (NIM) to build fluent independent reading. Differentiate instruction through individual reading conferences and teach children to choose "just right" books.

- **Build a systematic and engaging "writing to read" and reading is fun culture.** All kindergartners love to draw, write, and make books. Daily "kid writing" teaches reading. It allows children to practice phonics in action. Drawing and writing are reciprocal thinking and symbol systems that honor the child's voice and vision.
- **Develop comprehension strategies and thinking skills** with quality fiction and nonfiction and meaning-centered activities throughout the curriculum. Engage children in dialog and develop metacognition (thinking about our thinking).
- **Awaken children's love of nature:** Connect children with the natural world outside the classroom. Create a classroom of bird watchers, stargazers, rock collectors, tree experts, and animal and plant enthusiasts. Use children's fascination with nature and their social connections to create a compelling reason to read and write. (And always there is poetry and song!)



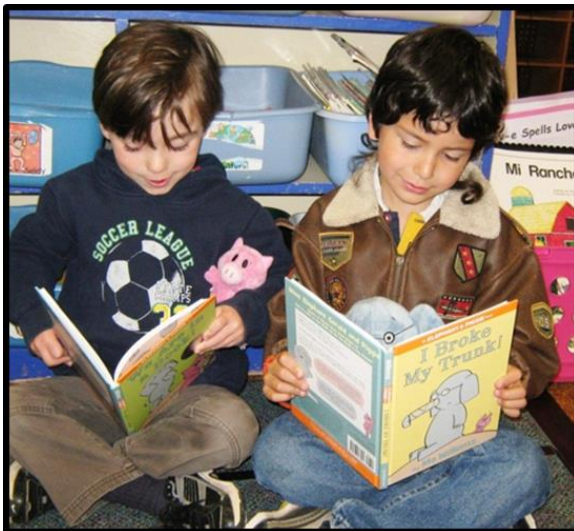
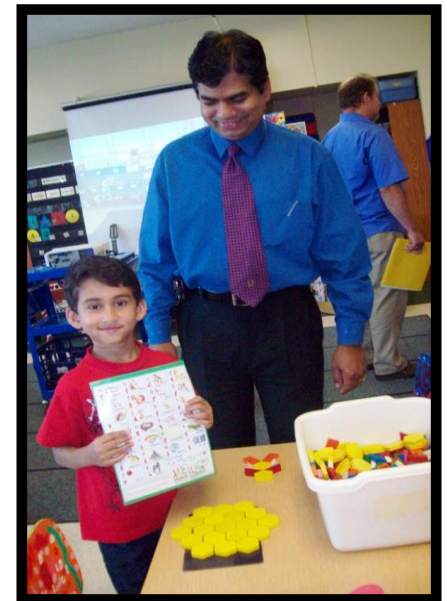
- **Honor the vital role of play in children's cognitive and social-emotional development.** Put learning in the children's hands. Give children ownership, responsibility and choices in their learning. Make cooperative learning come alive through dramatic play, block building, group field trips and hands-on experiences. Challenge children to set high personal goals, empower them with "I can's." We are developing literacy--and life skills.
- **Build voracious vocabulary learning habits** explicitly, systematically, mindfully and playfully throughout the curriculum. **Create a talking classroom.** Reinforce basic language concepts and expand children's responses to who, what, where, when, how and why questions. Introduce powerful vocabulary through rich project learning and poetry. Watch children become collectors of wonderful new words.





- **Teach in an emotionally engaging way and celebrate the educational arts as translators of meaning:** Integrate music, drama, art, movement, dance and sign language (and love, joy, laughter, and enthusiasm) throughout the curriculum in everything you do. Bring your passions into the classroom. **Love books, love learning, and love the children.** They remember what we love. Children see a reflection of who they are and who they can become through our eyes.

- **Authentic assessment empowers children to take responsibility for their learning and pride in their accomplishments.** Student-led parent conferences help children set personal goals, evaluate progress and celebrate their accomplishments. We build intrinsic motivation for children to do their best.
- **Create a beautiful learning environment:** Involve the children in creating an environment that is warm, comfortable and home-like. Create order and harmony and give children responsibilities for maintaining the environment. Classrooms need live plants, flowers, good lighting, art prints and photos of the children engaged in meaningful studies and playful explorations. Let the walls of your classroom reflect the lives of the children. Celebrate childhood and celebrate learning.



**The S.M.I.L.E. approach to accelerated literacy is developmentally appropriate and takes advantage of how the brain learns best. (Systematic [scaffolded], Meaningful [multisensory], and Integrated Literacy Experiences)**



**Think back to your earliest experiences in school. How were you taught in the best of your memories?**



# Children Deserve a Beautiful, Organized Kindergarten to Work and Play and Grow In



Silent fingerspelling helps children visually focus: "If your name begins with 'R' you may be excused." Shanda Lung uses the multisensory *ABC Phonics: Sing, Sign, and Read!* program by Nellie Edge.



Outside the door of Room 102 is a sign that reflects a deep commitment to the whole child: *Kindergarten is you know a garden where the children grow...*



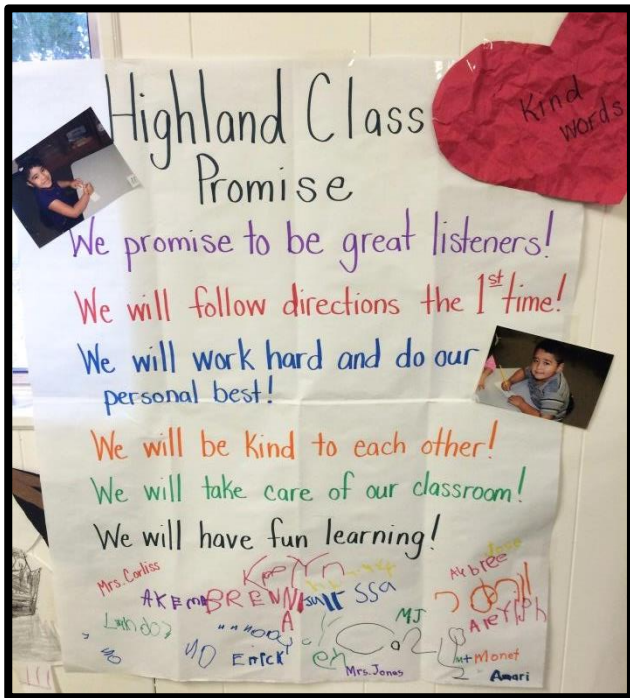
The lives of the children adorn the classroom walls in this beautiful kindergarten.



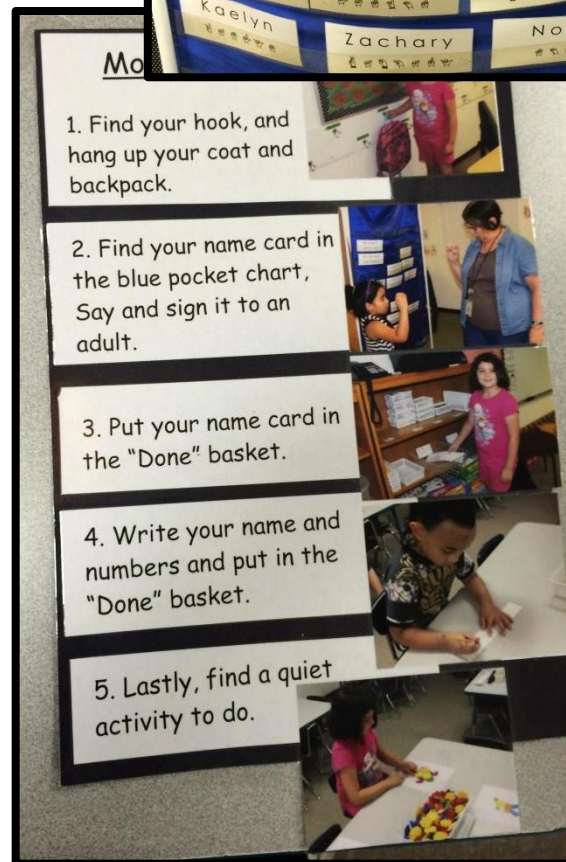
Name/photo word wall helps children make personal connections with letters and the beginning sounds of their classmate's names. The prepared environment is always our first teacher!



# The Walls of the Classroom Honor Our Learning Process

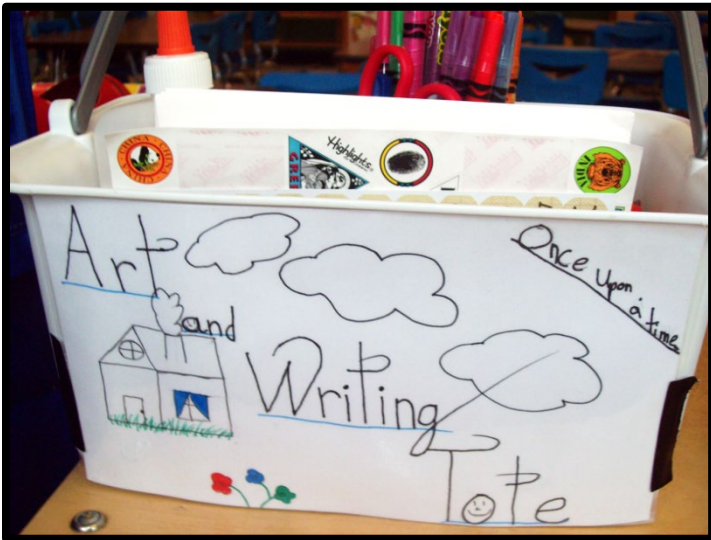


- The classroom door features children's home family and school family through photos.
- Notice a focus on names: There is nothing so precious to a child as the sound of their own name.
- Jaime Corliss uses anchor charts to make learning real.!





# Organized Writing Totes Allow Children to Be Self-Directed Learners

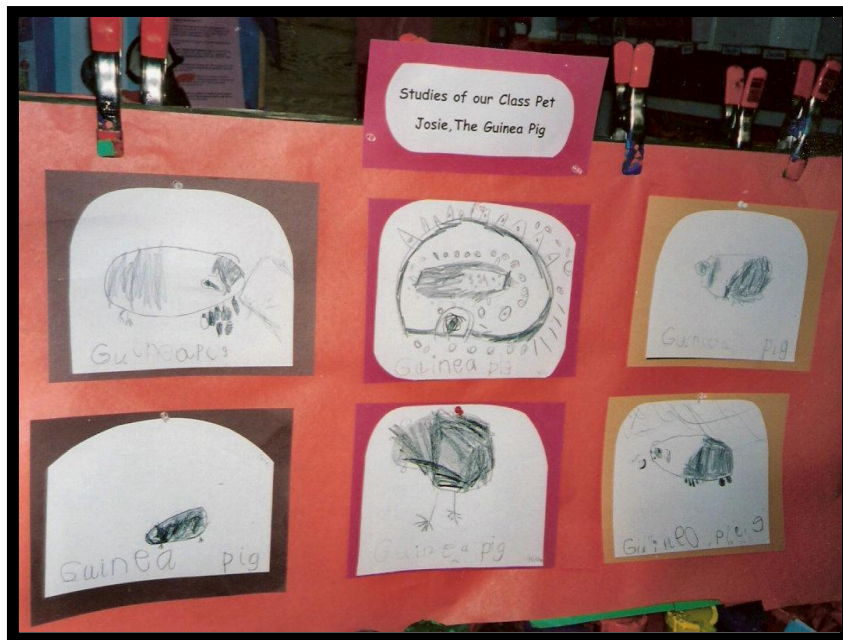


- Each tote contains all of the materials 5-6 children need to write and draw and create their own books and lists.
- They also contain **volunteer information** for differentiated learning: an "I" chart for independent work, and expectations and guidelines for how to complete a project.
- This helps volunteers feel secure and work wisely, encouraging children to be self-regulated learners.

From *Kindergarten Writing and the Common Core: Joyful Pathways to Accelerated Literacy* by Nellie Edge.  
See ["Independent Writing Centers"](#) on Nellie Edge TPT



# Class Pets Build Community and Provide Another Reason to Read, Write, and Draw: Studies of Josie the Guinea Pig



- Children read books about guinea pigs.

*I Love Guinea Pigs*, by Dick King-Smith, Candlewick Press, 1994.

*Pet Care Guides For Kids: Guinea Pigs*, by Mark Evans, ASPCA

- They observe and discuss the guinea pig's needs: water, clean cage, and good food (children love to pick clover for her to eat.)

- After studying about guinea pigs, children do sketches of Josie, the Guinea Pig. They carefully learn to print "Guinea Pig" in Joanie Cutler's kindergarten.



During choice time children love to hold and pet the guinea pig they put it in a little basket with paper and they run out to get grass. Usually an adult is standing close by.

- Some families take the guinea pig home over the weekend or for a

holiday. This can provide another experience to draw and write about in the child's journal.

# **We Have Decades of Best Practice Research:**

*Take Advantage of How the Brain Learns Best and Watch Social-Emotional Development and Literacy Soar!*

***The Basic School: A Community for Learning***, by Ernest L. Boyer. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1995.

***Becoming Literate: The Construction of Inner Control***, by Marie M. Clay. Pearson Education, 2015.

***Brain Matters: Translating the Research to Classroom Practice***, by Pat Wolfe, 2nd ed. ASCD, 2010.

***Brain Words: How the Science of Reading Informs Teaching***, by Richard J. Gentry and Gene P. Ouellette. Stenhouse, 2019.

***Building the Reading Brain***, by Pat Wolfe and Pam Nevills. ASCD, 2009.

***Celebrate Language and Accelerate Literacy: High Expectations • Joyful Learning • Proven Strategies***, by Nellie Edge, 2nd ed. Nellie Edge Resources, 2015.

***Choice Words: How Our Language Affects Children's Learning***, by Peter H. Johnston. Stenhouse, 2004.

***Conscious Discipline: Building Resilient Classrooms***, by Dr. Becky Bailey. Loving Guidance, 2018.

***Creating the School Family: Bully-Proofing Classrooms Through Emotional Intelligence***, by Becky Bailey. Conscious Discipline, 2011.

***The Daily 5: Fostering Literacy Independence in the Elementary Grades***, by Gail Boushey and Joan Moser. revised ed. Stenhouse, 2014.

***Dancing with Words: Signing for Hearing Children's Literacy***, by Marilyn Daniels. Greenwood Publishing, 2001.

***Engaging Children's Minds: The Project Approach***, by Lillian G. Katz and Sylvia C. Chard. Greenwood Publishing, 2000.

***Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ***, by Daniel Goleman, 10th anniversary ed. Bantam House, 2006.

***Excellence in Kindergarten Literacy: High Expectations and Proven Strategies that Honor Childhood!***, by Katie Nelson and Nellie Edge. Nellie Edge Resources, 2015.

***The First Six Weeks of School***, by Mike Anderson. Center for Responsive Schools, 2015.

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***Social Emotional Learning in Kindergarten: Celebrating Islands of Excellence with Joyful, Authentic Teaching and Learning***, by Nellie Edge. Nellie Edge Resources, 2023.

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# ***Shifting the Balance: 6 Ways to Bring the Science of Reading into the Balanced Literacy Classroom***

by Jan Burkins and Kari Yates, Stenhouse, 2021

*Here is my choice for Kindergarten Cadre book study! This comprehensive and practical book helps educators understand the science of reading and provides lessons in responsive reading instruction. I especially appreciate the research on intentionally building oral language which is often the missing component in Science of Reading programs. Burkins and Yates are gifted writers, and researchers. They understand authentic teaching and learning. -Nellie Edge*

## **Excerpts from Chapter 1: Rethinking How Reading Comprehension Begins**

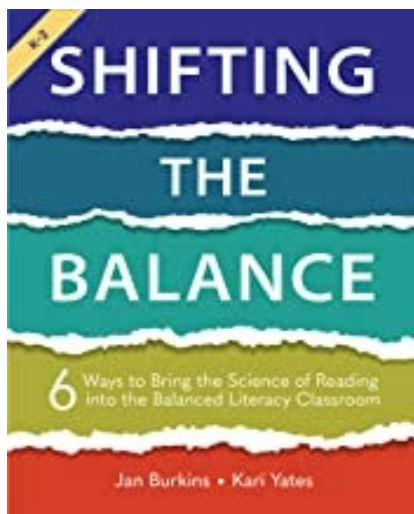
***...Listening comprehension—which is built through language interaction—is, after all, an essential precondition of reading comprehension.***

***...This means that opportunities to grow oral language—including vocabulary, background knowledge, sentence structure, and more—actually develop the comprehension mechanisms of reading*** (Quinn et al. 2015; Lerv g, Hulme, and Melby-Lerv g 2017...

***...No amount of word recognition skill will compensate for the limitations a child's listening comprehension puts on reading comprehension*** (Cervetti et. Al 2020...

***Strong oral language can reduce the need for comprehension strategy instruction...***

***Given how important listening comprehension is for later reading comprehension, it is imperative that we intentionally support oral language development in the classroom...***



*Burkins and Yates are intent on building a bridge in Shifting the Balance by finding compelling opportunities in K-2 classrooms to align research and instructional practice. One of the several issues they discuss is intentionally supporting oral language development in the classroom, a key aspect of literacy instruction that is missing or misunderstood regardless of approach. They find common ground and build a broader understanding that leads to a strong comprehensive literacy design. -Adria Klein, Professor Emeritus, CSU San Bernadino*

# Share Your Teaching Philosophy with Parents: *Social Emotional Learning Underlies Everything We Do*

by Nellie Edge



**I believe that respectful, caring bonds with children and their families are the vital foundation for an engaging kindergarten experience.** As educators of the young, we share with parents the responsibility for teaching their child.

**I believe that each child comes with unique strengths,** varied prior language learning experiences, and social-emotional skills. Our instruction must provide enough challenge and enough support for each child to build on success and develop positive attitudes about learning.

**I believe that emotional engagement is the key to all powerful learning** and creates joyful pathways to accelerated literacy. That is why we bring love, laughter, passion, and meaningful project work into kindergarten. We look for ways to personalize learning and engage the child's imagination.

**I believe kindergarten is for language. Immersing children in the English language underlies excellent English language arts instruction.** This familiarity allows the child's decoding to be error-free and reading to be fluent. While systematically "playing" with language, children begin mastering phonics skills, building oral language fluency, and reading with comprehension.

**I believe that children deserve to memorize, recite, and perform many wonderful pieces of language** in kindergarten to turn print into sound and then turn the pleasures of sound over to an appreciative audience. Our curriculum invites children to talk, sing, dramatize, and perform language. Developing the child's capacity for language and thought underlies everything we do.

**I believe that rich experiences in the many expressions of art, music, drama, dance, and storytelling help children find personal meaning in school learning.** Intentionally encouraging multiple "ways of knowing" promotes creative and higher-order thinking.

**I believe we must choose only the finest literature, nonfiction, songs, poems, and rhymes to give our children.** These language models are the seeds that grow powerful writers and thinkers. We want imaginative language, poetic phrases, and metaphors to become a part of our students' thinking, speaking, and writing. Quality literature informs, delights, and motivates young readers.

**We have proved that writing is a key to unlocking higher literacy standards** in kindergarten, and young children love to write. ALL children deserve our best strategies as they learn to write and draw and illustrate from the very first days of kindergarten. Within the context of writing, students systematically encode sounds to print, giving phonics meaning. A comprehensive writing curriculum helps children understand how the reading process works.

**I believe that joyful, multisensory ABC and phonics immersion strategies (singing and signing and fingerspelling accelerate phonics awareness and phonics skills.** These instructional practices are consistent with how the young child's brain learns best. Active and engaging strategies build motivation and enthusiasm for learning.

Building social emotional skills and an **"I can do it" growth mindset underlies everything we do** in kindergarten.

**I believe that all young children deserve to learn memorable songs in American Sign Language.** Children fortunate enough to learn ASL and experience performing lovely songs for appreciative audiences have a lifelong advantage of developing dynamic communication skills.

**I believe that we need to support and honor “magical memory reading” and “reading the pictures” as essential language experiences for young bilingual children who may have limited English language and print experience.** Memory reading and reading the pictures with nursery rhymes and song picture books represent “other-ways-to-read.” These strategies intentionally build oral language fluency and supports reading comprehension. Opportunities to role-play themselves as successful readers while learning concepts about print accompanies traditional shared and guided reading instruction, especially for children who have not had years of repeated “magical memory reading” experiences at home. Teachers can also use nursery rhymes and read and sing books as phonics readers (aka “read-every-word” books).

**I believe that parents must be partners in nightly reading aloud: Engaging with real books grows readers and book lovers and loving family memories.** Research shows that being read to and reading books of one’s own choosing every day is a proven way to become a better reader.

**I believe that by awakening children’s love of nature and sense of wonder, we create compelling reasons for kids to want to read, write, and learn about the world.** Children are fascinated with books about the real world. As we bring our connections with nature back into the classroom, we create a more engaging and alive learning environment. Children who learn to observe closely and respect the natural world will make wiser ecological choices now ... and in the future. They may become our future STEM leaders.

**I believe that kindergarten is a time to nurture social emotional learning (SEL) in each child and create school memories** of belonging, joy, and success. Our memorable rituals, traditions, and celebrations are rich in language and SEL lessons. When we value dramatic play, block building, dance, movement, exploration, and the many forms of literacy play, we encourage active learning and disciplined, creative thinking. Our students learn to make good choices and cooperate; to work hard and to be kind. We want children to love coming to school each day.

**I believe that young children deserve a multisensory, comprehensive, and differentiated literacy program** within a joyful, caring community of learners--*a child’s garden*. Their lives must be valued, celebrated, and incorporated into the literacy curriculum so they care about school and develop a love of learning. Authentic, meaningful learning always elicits a SMILE.





## **Chapter 1**

*Research and Beliefs about Teaching and Learning*

## **NOTES**

## Chapter 2

# Oral Language Traditions: Building a Joyful Community of Learners

*Our songs, dances, musical dramas, and stories 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.*

— Nellie Edge,  
from *Celebrate Language and Accelerate Literacy:  
High Expectations • Joyful Learning • Proven Strategies*

# Share Greetings in Spanish, English, 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](http://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**  
(tune: ♪ Goodnight Ladies ♪)

Hola, mis amigos,  
Hello, my friends,  
Buenos dias ¿Como estan?  
Good morning! How are you?  
Estoy bien,  
I am fine,  
Son mis buenos amigos,  
You are my good friends.

by Nellie Edge, Gina Edge and Susan Rodriguez ©2001



©2001 Nellie Edge, Gina Edge and Susan Rodriguez: Permission granted for teachers to make multiple copies for classroom use only. September Themes from Nellie Edge, 2008.

## Hola Mis Amigos/Hello My Friends

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

*Shared by an awesome Arizona  
bilingual kindergarten teacher*

## 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.

*Shared by an awesome Arizona  
bilingual kindergarten teacher*

See "Articles and Resources" for curriculum connections (Find songs and articles at [NellieEdge.com](http://NellieEdge.com) under Videos/ Favorite ASL Songs)

- 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 "I Can Read" page for children to illustrate



See Social Emotional Learning Supplement for song pages.

The Songs We Sing Together Help Build Our  
Community of Learners  
*Begin and End the Day with Songs of Friendship*

## 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,  
Son mis buenos amigos,  
You are my good friends.

*by Nellie Edge, Gina Edge, and Susan Rodriguez*



♪ (Sung to the tune of Goodnight Ladies)

Permission granted for teachers to make multiple copies. Poetry Notebook: September, Nellie Edge. ©2008, updated 2020.



See song in *Social Emotional Learning* supplement



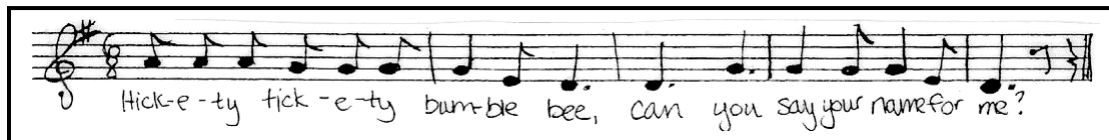
# Opening the Day Ceremonies: Playfully Focus on the Sounds of Each Child's Name

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.**

# Knowing the Names of Our Classmates Is a Seed that May Grow into Genuine Friendship



*My name  
Is  
Most especially  
The thing  
They use  
For calling  
Me*



**To “speak” another child's name is to acknowledge their presence!**  
(And for each child it is to have identity.)

## **Names in Rhythm:**

Find the beat in your name. Clap out each name in your group.

\_\_\_\_\_ ♪  
"Her name is Ky-lie."

\_\_\_\_\_ ♪    ♪    ♪  
"His name is Jer-a-mi-ah."

As you clap out each name, the group can do it, too. Then choose one name and let the children walk it, which means stepping the rhythm with their feet, first in place and then around the room.

Once again, we are training the ears to hear the rhythms of language. We are developing syllabification, which is a part of phonemic awareness.

**Add the rhythm of the last name** in another complete line and you will have a longer sequence to experiment with:

\_\_\_\_\_ ♪  
"My name is Han-nah."

\_\_\_\_\_ ♪    ♪  
Han-nah El-der-ber-ry."

## **Let Drums Speak the Names in Rhythm: Listen to Drum Conversations**

Native Americans and African drummers have been speaking with drums for ages.

*Adapted from Kay Goines seminar notes.*

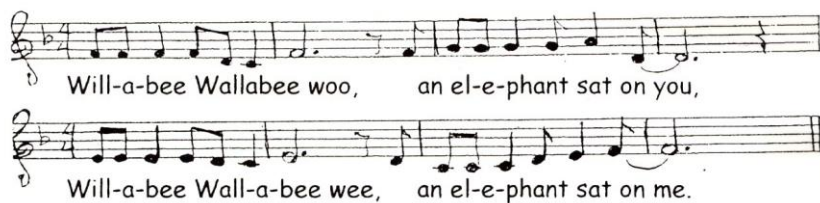
***"A child's name is an island of certainty in a sea of unfamiliar print." ~ Marie Clay***



# Oral Language Is Still 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.**

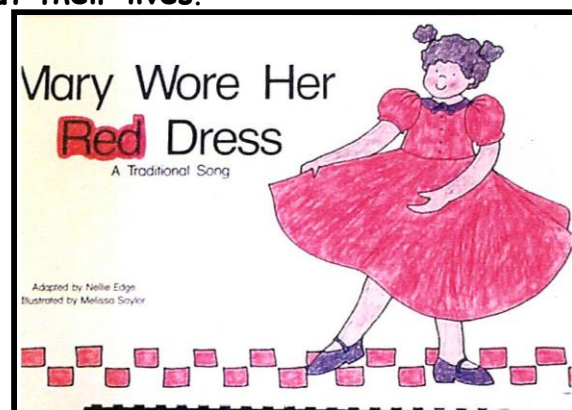
Willabee Wallabee **Windergarten**  
An elephant sat on **Kindergarten**





# 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.

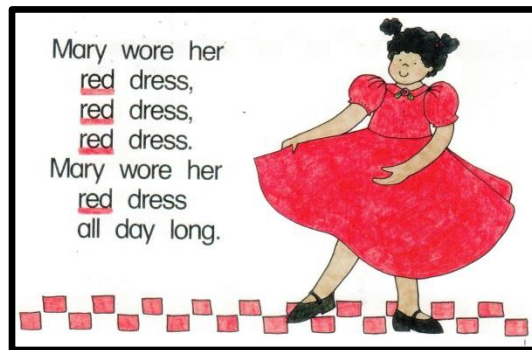
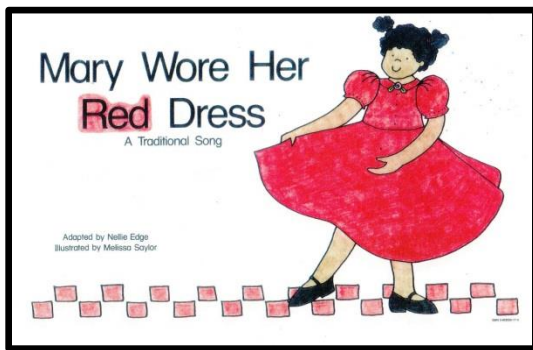
After they are familiar with the song, invite the children to draw or paint a picture of themselves - covering a large 11" x 17" sheet of paper. Using the song as a model, children can dictate a sentence about what they are wearing. To remind the children of the language pattern, I go around and sing 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.



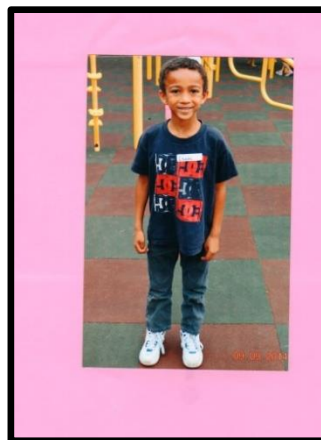
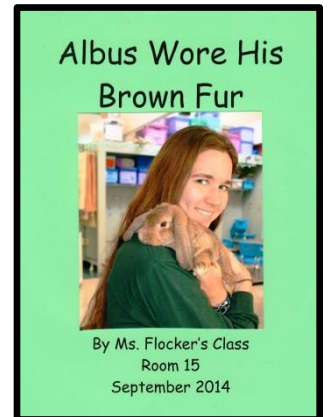
*Through giving dictation, children learn that talk can be written down; they begin to develop the concept of a word. By incorporating children's lives into songs and class books, they learn that their lives are worth singing and reading about.*

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

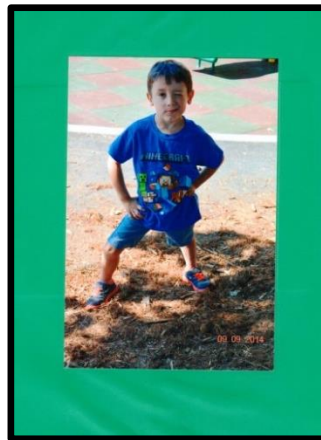
## A New Twist on ♪ *Mary Wore Her Dress*



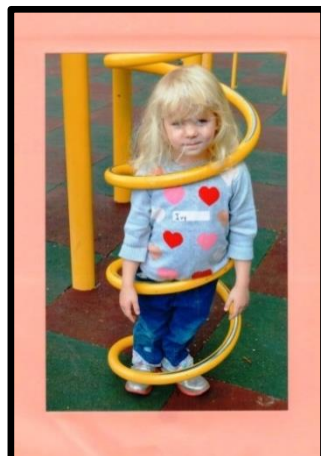
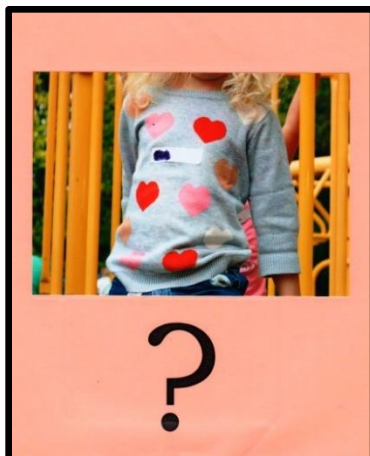
Notice we highlight color words as a reading scaffold.



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!

See **Class-Made** book resources on **Nellie Edge Kindergarten TPT**.

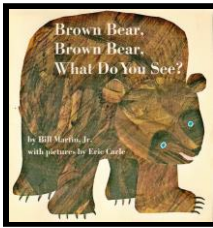




# We Build on Familiar and Memorable Language Patterns

## Adaptations of Brown Bear

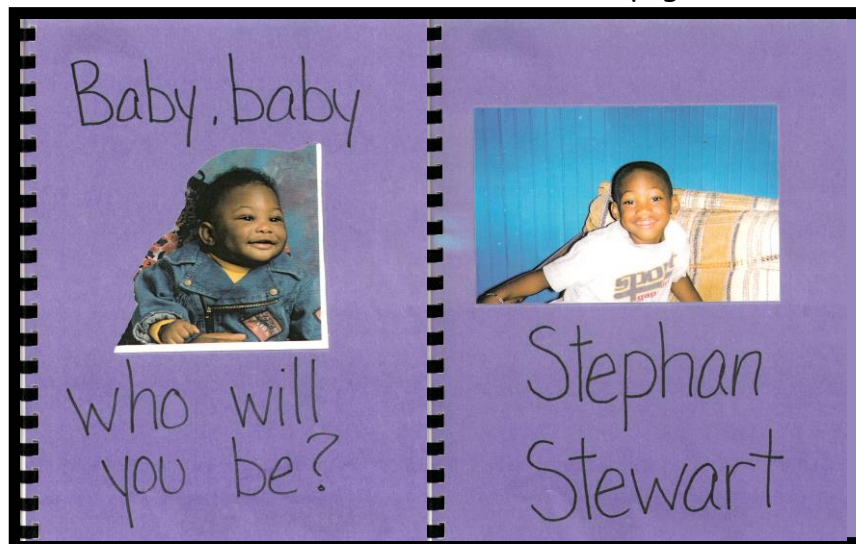
The original book *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Bill Martin, Jr. uses the *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star* rhythm and melody to create this repetitive and memorable rhyme:



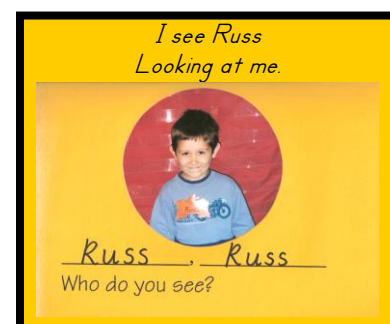
Brown Bear, Brown Bear  
What do you see?  
I see a red bird  
Looking at me.

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.)

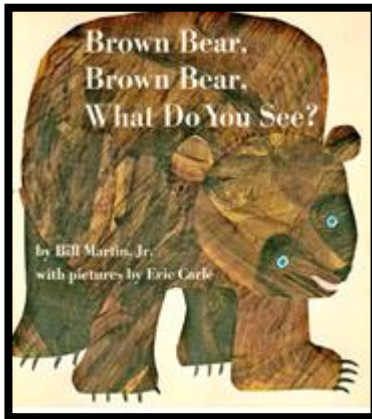
*Brown Bear, Brown Bear* is linguistically perfect because Bill Martin, Jr. patterned it on the rhythmically perfect melody *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*.



# 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?

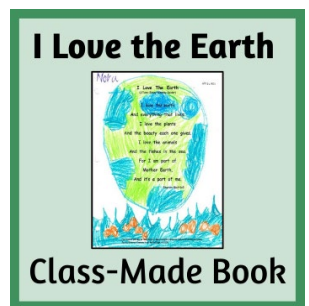
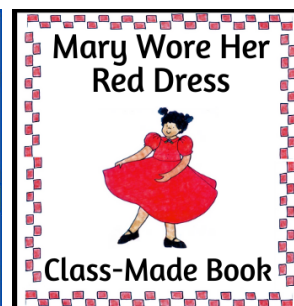
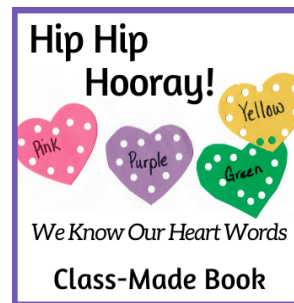
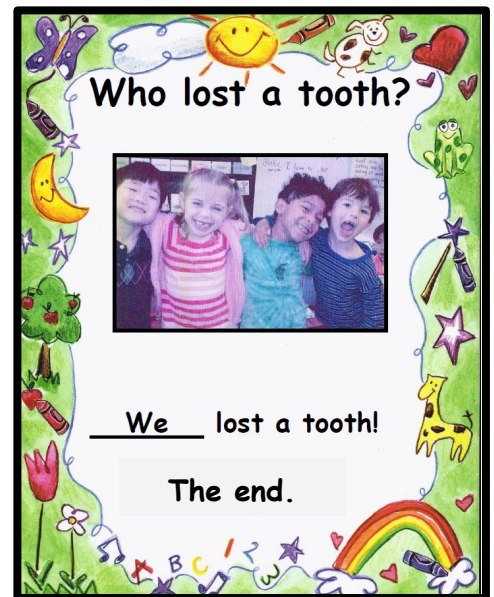
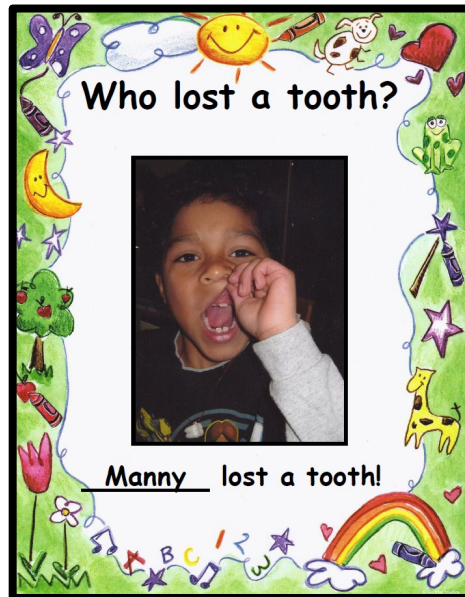
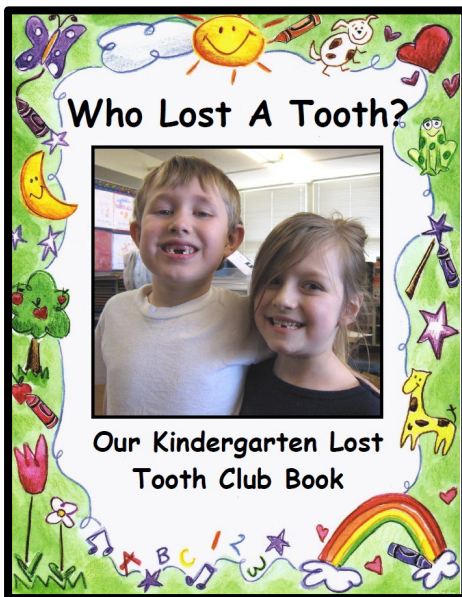
***Belonging, friendship and "kindergarten kindness" are themes that we carry through the whole year.***

# Sing Songs and Create Class Books about the Lives of Kindergarten Kids: Who Lost a Tooth?

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

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.

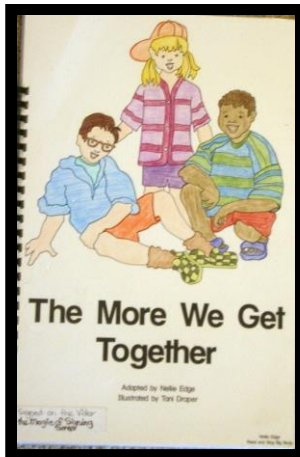
Each lost tooth is also an opportunity to use the thinking and questioning pattern of "Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How? from the Common Core State Standards. 



See [Who Lost a Tooth? FREEBIE](#) and [Class-Made Books BUNDLE](#) by Nellie Edge on TPT.



# Sing Songs That Build Friendships, Language Fluency and Literacy



## Entre Más Nos Reunimos

Entre más nos reunimos,  
reunimos, reunimos,  
Entre más nos reunimos,  
Más felices tú y yo.  
Mi amigo es el tuyo,  
y el tuyo es el mío,  
Entre más nos reunimos,  
Más felices tú y yo.

El fin

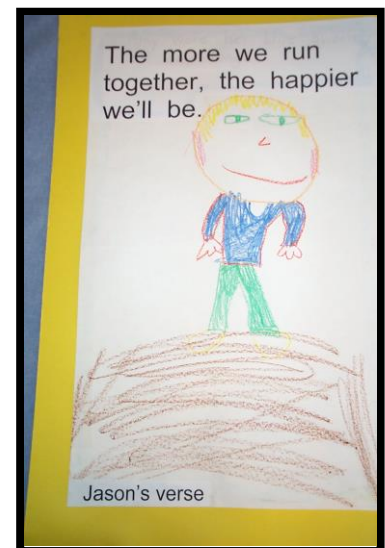
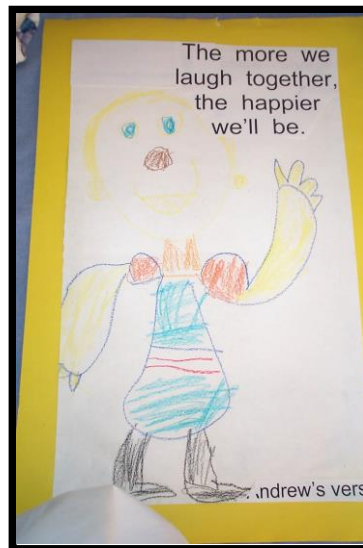
## The More We Get Together


The more we get together,  
together, together,  
The more we get together,  
The happier we'll be.  
For your friends are my friends,  
And my friends are your friends.  
The more we get together,  
The happier we'll be.

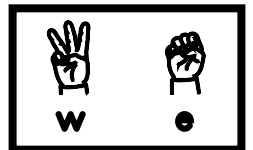
The end

## The Spelling Chant

You can say th  
and  
You can say thē  
But it's always spelled  
t-h-e



- Study and fingerspell the high-frequency word **we**, "w-e spells we".
- Invite the children to look for "the" as they do a shared reading of the Big Book. Highlight "**the**" with yellow tape.
- Sing and learn to sign the language. (See  ASL Instructional Video)
- Do a jazzy "**t-h-e e-n-d, the end!**" chant with cha-cha-cha body movements when the children stand and read "The end."
- Invite the children to sing and sign this song and create new verses. Their ideas can be illustrated for a class book.



See ASL Instructional  Video Clip featuring Diane Larson at [www.nellieedge.com](http://www.nellieedge.com)

## Visual Images for Key Signs - American Sign Language

Happier - Happiness flows upward from your heart.

Friends - This is a linking together of fingers or "finger hugs."

**The More We Get Together/Entre Mas Nos Reunimos** A Nellie Edge Read and Sing Big Book™, 1996. Recorded in English on *Music is Magic* CD and in Spanish on *Music is Magic in Teaching Spanish* CD. Also featured on *The Magic of Signing Songs* Seminar DVD Volume II and ASL guide.



See **Social Emotional Learning** supplement for Songs and Rhymes



# 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](http://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"!

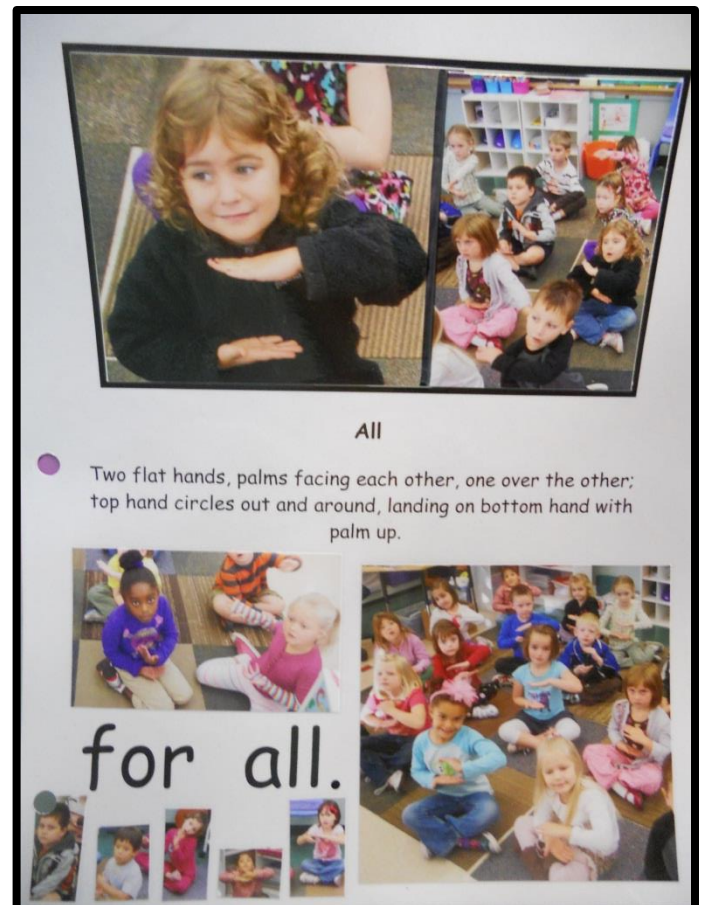
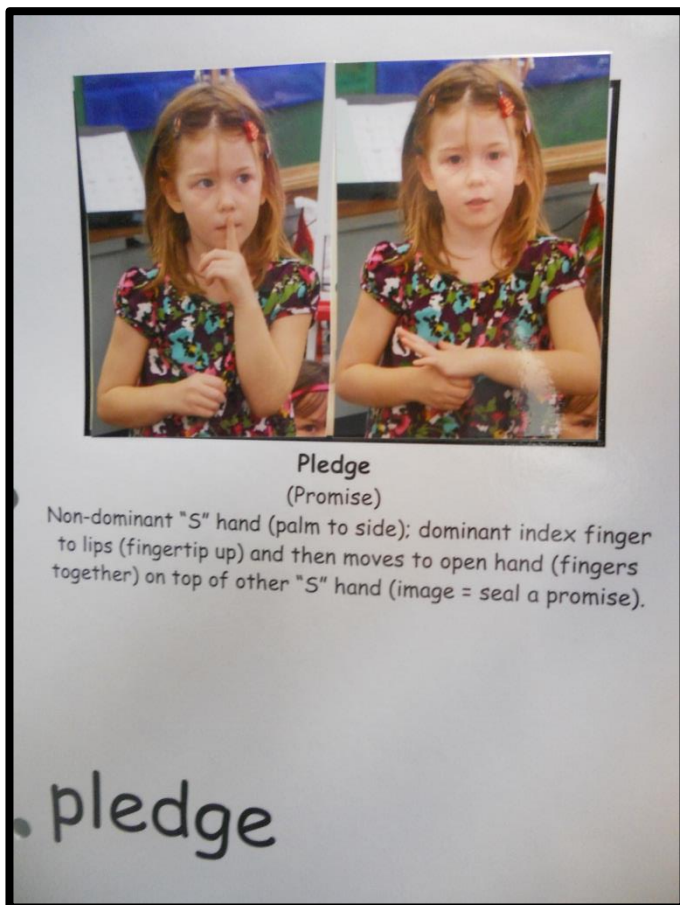
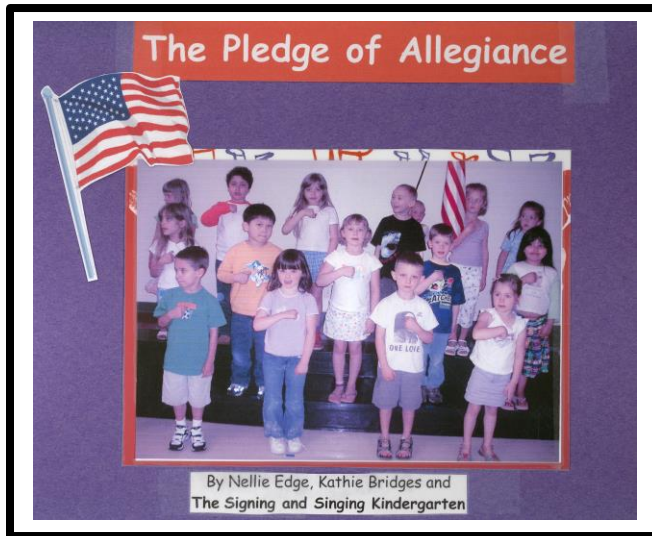
Give me an "A"! (class) "A"!


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

What's it spell? (class) LUCAS!




# We Sing, Sign, and Read *The Pledge of Allegiance*: Two Different Class Books Feature Kindergarten Experts!



 Give Children Authentic and Powerful Language to **Memorize, Recite, and Perform:** Build Comprehension, Vocabulary, and Deep Learning Connections with Symbols of our Country

Singing and Signing the musical version of *The Pledge of Allegiance* by Lee Greenwood (American Patriot CD) becomes an emotional powerful parent performance.

 See instructional video clip of *The Pledge of Allegiance* at [www.nellieedge.com](http://www.nellieedge.com) and download the template for this book.

 See Social Emotional Learning Supplement, Part 1



# All Children Deserve to Know This Beautiful Spanish Song: De Colores (The Colors)

This is one of the most beautiful and, perhaps, the best-loved song in the Spanish-speaking world. People often hold hands and sway as they sing it. The lovely melody and the beautiful lyrics make memorable this anthem of the United Farm Workers of America, founded by Cesar Chavez.

## De Colores

Traditional

De colores,  
De colores se visten  
Los campos en la primavera.

De colores,  
De colores son los pajaritos  
Que vienen de afuera.

De colores,  
De colores es el arcoiris  
Que vemos lucir.

Y por eso los grandes  
Amores de muchos  
Colores me gustan a mi.  
(cantar do veces)

Canta el gallo,  
Canta el gallo con  
El kiri, kiri, kiri, kiri, kiri.

La gallina,  
La gallina con el cara,  
Cara, cara, cara, cara.

Los polluelos,  
Los polluelos con el  
Pio, pio, pio, pio, pi.

Y por eso los grandes  
Amores de muchos  
Colores me gustan a mi.

El Fin



*You can  
sing and  
sign the  
English  
translation!*



## De Colores

Translation by Hector Pichardo

De colores,  
Bright with colors the mountains and valleys  
Dress up in the springtime.

De colores,  
Bright with colors all the little birds  
Fill the skies in the daytime.

De colores,  
Bright with colors the rainbow brings joy  
With the glory of spring.

And a bright love with colors has found us  
With peace all around us  
That makes our hearts sing.  
(sing twice)

Hear the rooster,  
Hear rooster singing  
Kiri, kiri, kiri, kiri.

In the morning,  
In the morning the hen sings her  
Cara, cara, cara, cara.

All day singing,  
Baby chicks, all day sing  
Pio, pio, pio, pio, pi.

And a bright love with colors has found us  
With peace all around us  
That makes our hearts sing.

The End

Recorded by Hector Pichardo on *In Celebration of Spanish Folk Songs* CD and on *De Colores* individual teaching cassette to accompany Nellie Edge Read and Sing Big Book™ of same title. **These songs are now available as digital downloads.**

**FREE** Little Book at Nellie Edge Kindergarten TPT

**Hector Pichardo is uniquely qualified as the translator, consultant, and musician for our Spanish Big Books and audio cassettes. A certified court interpreter and native Spanish speaker, he enjoys translating and recording popular music for Spanish listeners. While pursuing degrees in education and linguistics, Hector used his musical talents as a California Head Start aide. He fondly remembers singing with his Mexican godfather and continues to pass on this rich musical heritage. His translations work aesthetically and musically.**



# We Celebrate the Changing Seasons and Weather Patterns with Observation Songs and "Writerly/Scientific Walks"

(Lucy Calkins phrase)

With clipboards and pens in hand, children gather information.

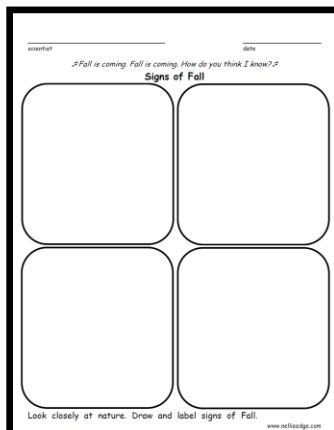
*♪ Fall is coming. Fall is coming. How do you think I know? ♪*



*Leaves are falling, I know it must be so. ♪*



Anchor chart from Jaime Corliss



**Information writing:**  
Children label signs of fall.



Observing and drawing small details from nature and noticing living things:  
The beginning of Information Writing (CCSS) and Next Generation  
Science Standards (NGSS).





# Together We Celebrate Fall and Our Connection to Nature Through The Drama of Falling Leaves: *Confidence and Friendships Grow*

Children explore the school grounds, gather leaves, and look for signs of the season. Returning to the classroom, they are immersed in literature, poems, and songs. With leaves in hand, the children experience the cycle of nature again through drama. **Meaningful "parents as partners" connections encourage families to take walks with their child and collect leaves.** The leaves are pressed, returned to school for science, drama, and art explorations. When the child brings home their Poetry ("I Can Read) Notebooks featuring poems about leaves, the parent and child can celebrate the language of fall together.

Children sing and dramatize the poetry of *Falling Leaves*:  
*♪Leaves are falling; Falling to the ground.♪*



*See them gently twirl around; Dancing 'til they touch the ground.*



*Leaves are falling; Falling to the ground.*

## **Favorite information picture books:**

*Leaf Man*, Lois Ehlert  
*Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf*, Lois Ehlert  
*Look What I Did With A Leaf!*  
Morten E. Sohi

## **Songs and rhymes to memorize:**

*Leaves Are Falling*, Nellie Edge  
*Like a Leaf or a Feather*, anonymous  
*One By One*, Margaret Wise Brown  
*Who Has Seen The Wind?*,  
Christina Rosetti



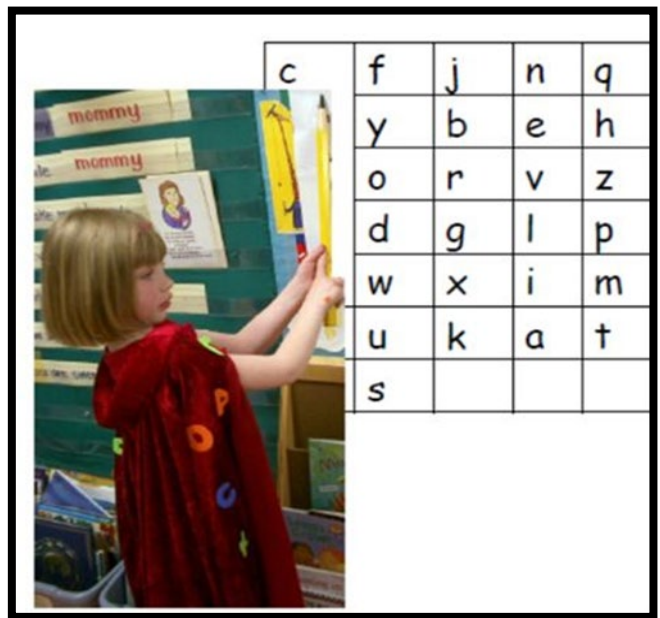
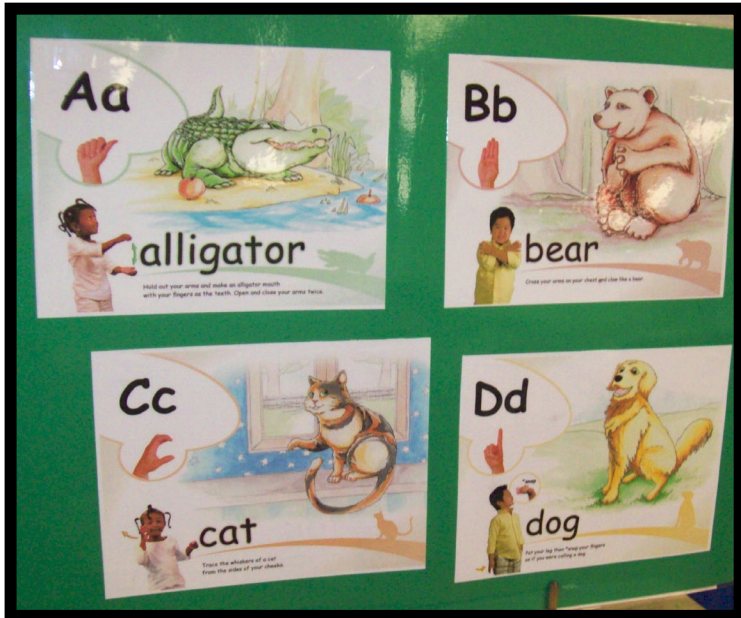
- Nonfiction
- Conventions of Standard English
- Vocabulary Acquisition and Use
- Speaking and Listening



# Children Sing and Sign for Multisensory ABC and Phonics Immersion: Taking Advantage of How the Brain Learns Best!

*Use Total Emotional Body Response to Language: Simultaneously engage visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modalities to create optimal learning.*

*♪a/"a"/alligator, b/"b"/bear, c/"c"/cat, d/"d"/dog...♪*



Special thank you to Diane Bonica for her playful approach to assessing for mastery.

**Engage Parents as Partners • Teach for Mastery • Build the Reading Brain for Rapid Recall**

ABC Phonics: Sing, Sign, and Read! by Nellie Edge and Sign2Me. Free ASL videos at [nellieedge.com](http://nellieedge.com).



# Even Our Kindergarten-Friendly Approach to Handwriting Begins With Affirmation Songs and Chants!

## I Always Start My Letters

(adapted by Nellie Edge)

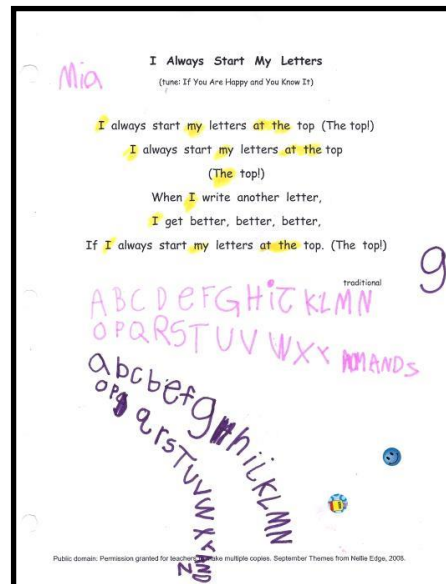
I always start my letters at the top (the top!)

I always start my letters at the top (the top!)

When I write another letter,

I get better, better, better

If I always start my letters at the top (the top!)



## 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, L-O-V-E,

L-O-V-E spells love.

## M-O-M Spells Mom

(by Nellie Edge)

M-o-m spells mom.

D-a-d spells dad.

Y-o-u spells you.

And m-e spells me.

## We Can Write Nonsense Words

(by Diane Bonica)

(to the tune . . . "Here We Go Looby Loo")

We can write nonsense words,

They are so easy to do.

We can write nonsense words.

They're silly and mean nothing too!

## T-H-E Chant

(traditional)

You can say "the"

And you can say "thē"

But it's always spelled, T-H-E!

## The Printing "I" Chant

(by Nellie Edge)

I—straight down from head to toe.

Then across the top and across the toes.

That's how "I" goes—I KNOW!

## Top to Bottom, Left to Right

Tune: Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes

(author unknown—shared at National ITeachK Conference)

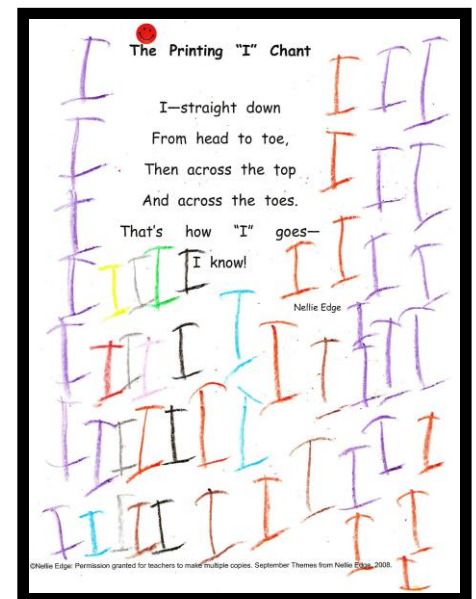
Top to bottom, left to right,  
left to right

Top to bottom, left to right,  
left to right

That's how we read and  
how we write

Top to bottom, left to right,  
left to right!

*After children can verbalize the "I" Chant, they illustrate the chant for their Poetry and Song "I Can Read" notebook.*



## We Can Spell

"Because"

(Tune . . . "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star")

B-E-C-A-U-S-E

B-E-C-A-U-S-E

## We Can Write By "Heart Words"

(our adaptation) Tune: Here We Go Looby Loo

We can write "by heart" words,

They are so easy to do.

We can write "by heart" words.

We'll write them, and read them to you!



# Children Delight in a Musical Drama of Starting from Something Small and Growing into Something Big!

*We integrate Social Emotional Learning, (SEL) through the lens of State ELA Standards, Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), and the arts.*



Musically children experience signing and moving up and down the scale from middle C. (All teachers need is a xylophone.)

Repetition helps children internalize the language of this song so they are eager to illustrate it for the "I Can Read" Anthology Notebook.



**RI.K.10.** Actively engages in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.

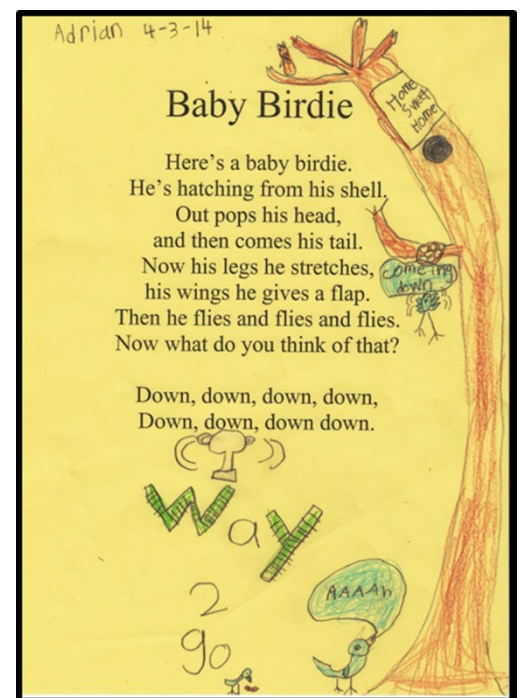
**L.K.1.** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

**SL.K.6.** Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly..

## Baby Birdie

Here's a baby birdie,  
He's hatching from his shell.  
Out comes his head,  
And then comes his tail.  
Now his legs he stretches,  
His wings he gives a flap.  
Then he flies and flies,  
Now what do you think of that?  
Down, down, down, down, down,  
Down, down, PLOP!!

Poetry Notebook Bundle: Sciencing on TPT



Connection to living things. Observation and study of birds.

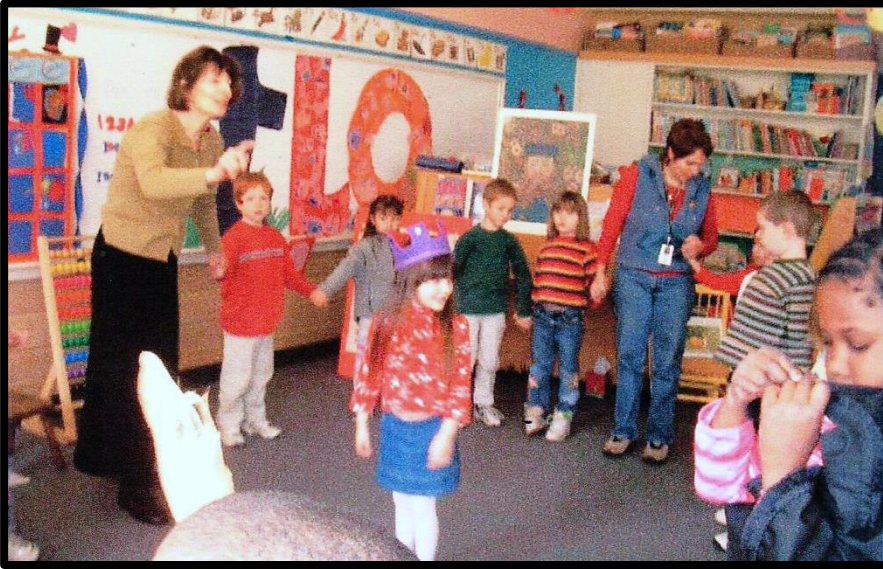
**K-ES3-1** I can use a model to represent the relationship between the needs of different plants or animals (including humans) and the places they live.



See **Social Emotional Learning** Supplement, Part 1



# Comprehension, Social Emotional Learning, and the Language Patterns of Folk Tales Come Alive Through Song and Dance



## *Sleeping Beauty*

♪ *There was a princess long ago...*

♪ *She lived in a great high tower....*



♪ *A handsome prince came riding by...*

It is the songs, dances and stories we experience together that build memories and bonds of belonging.



What songs and dances are a part of your classroom community?



# With Happy Hearts We Dance and Sing and Nurture Social Emotional Skills

## An Old German Princess Song

from Joanie Cutler

There was a princess long ago,	A great big forest grew around, etc.
Long ago, long ago,	A gallant prince came riding by, etc.
There was a princess long ago, Long ago.	He took his sword and cut it down, etc.
And she lived in a big high tower, etc.	He took her hand to wake her up, etc.
One day a fairy waved her wand, etc.	So everybody's happy now, etc.
The princess slept for a hundred years, etc.	



Invite the children to dance, dramatize the action, and create new verses:  
"They danced and ate to celebrate, etc."

- The 'princess' stands in the centre of the ring of children.
- The children sing and circle around the princess, or the children raise their joined hands to make the tower.
- One child chosen as the fairy waves her arm over the princess.
- The princess lies down and closes her eyes.
- The children wave their arms as trees.
- One child chosen as the prince gallops 'round the outside of the ring.
- He pretends to cut down the trees with an imaginary sword.
- He wakes up the princess.
- Children side-step 'round clapping their hands.

- Traditional



# Children Sing and Sign This Well-Loved Song for Parent Performances and Mother's Day



## You Are My Sunshine

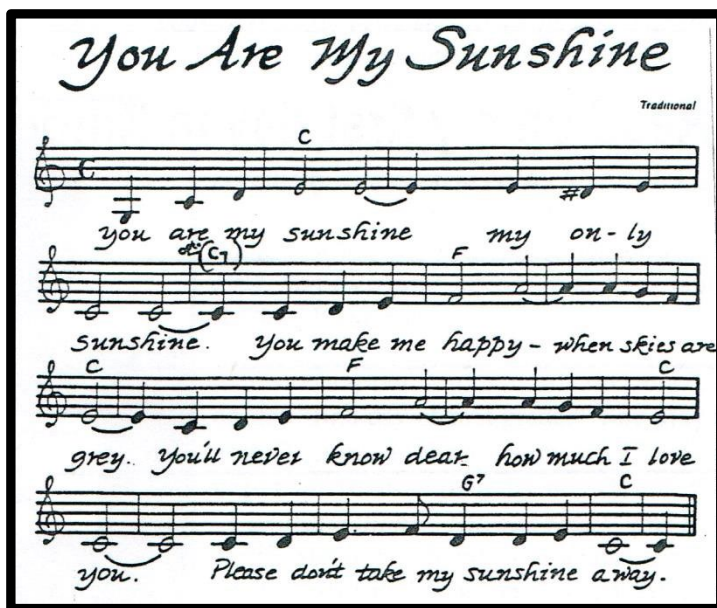
You are my sunshine,  
My only sunshine.  
You make me happy  
When skies are gray.  
You'll always know, dear  
How much I love you,  
For I'll tell you  
Every day.

Adapt this well-loved song by changing "sunshine" to a child's name, mommy, daddy, grandpa, etc. One mother sang "You'll always know dear, how much I love you. For I'll tell you everyday." This endearing song belongs in every child's "I Can Read" Anthology Notebook.

We are told that variations of this song are used during **Conscious Discipline** teacher training with Dr. Becky Bailey. Here is one version:

### You Are My Friends

You are my friends.  
My school friends.  
You make me happy  
When skies are gray.  
You'll always know, friends  
How much I love you.  
For I'll tell you every day.



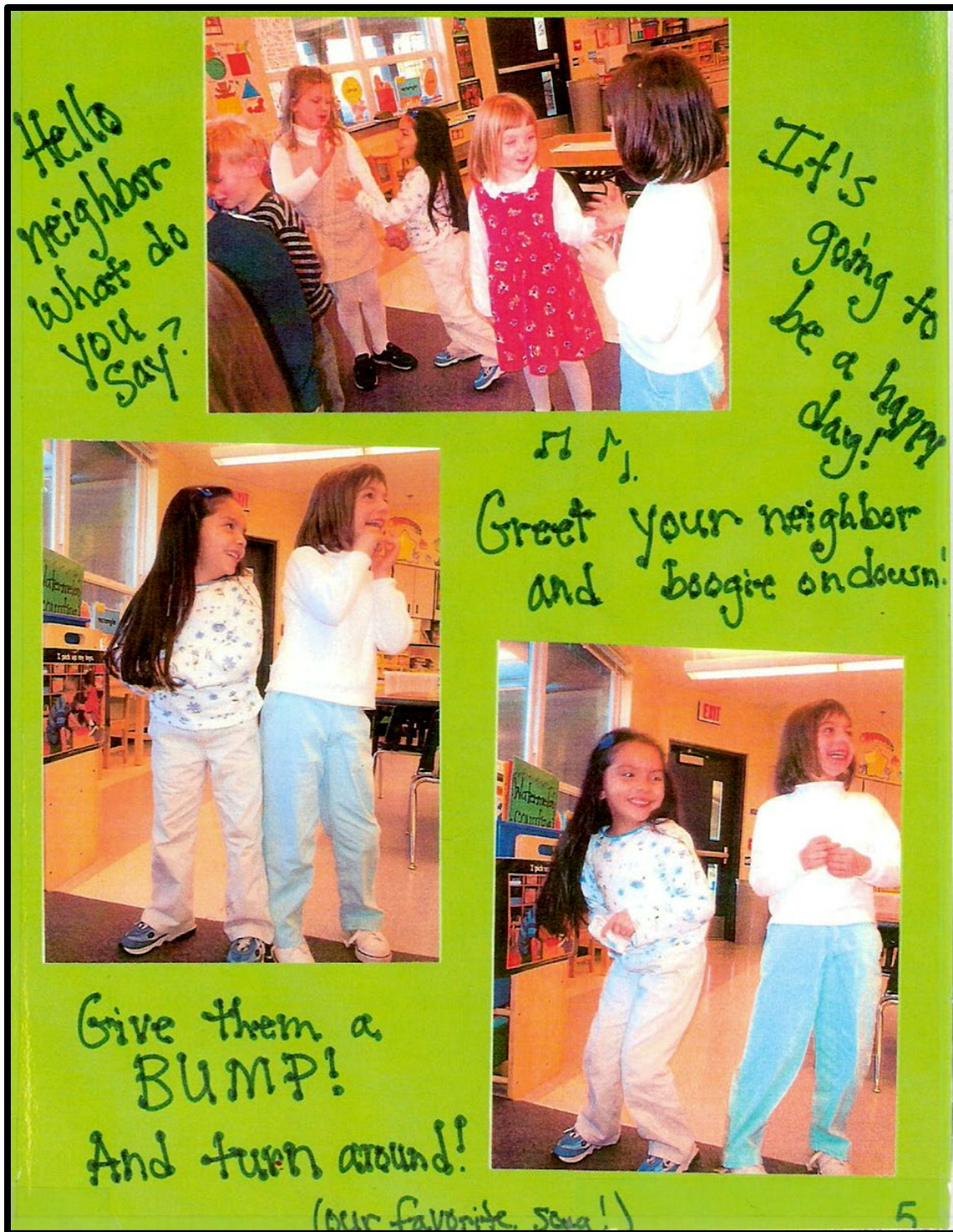
The sign for **friends** is "finger hugs."

**Happy** is to move hands upwards from the heart with a happy face.



# Oral Language is the First Curriculum Priority, So Bring Back the Out-Loud Culture:

With Happy Hearts We Dance and Sing and Develop Social-Emotional Skills



Children in Celeste Starr's kindergarten sing and dance to "Hello Neighbor."  
"Once you get the community right, the levels of learning soar."

— Ralph Peterson



# 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. Your 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.

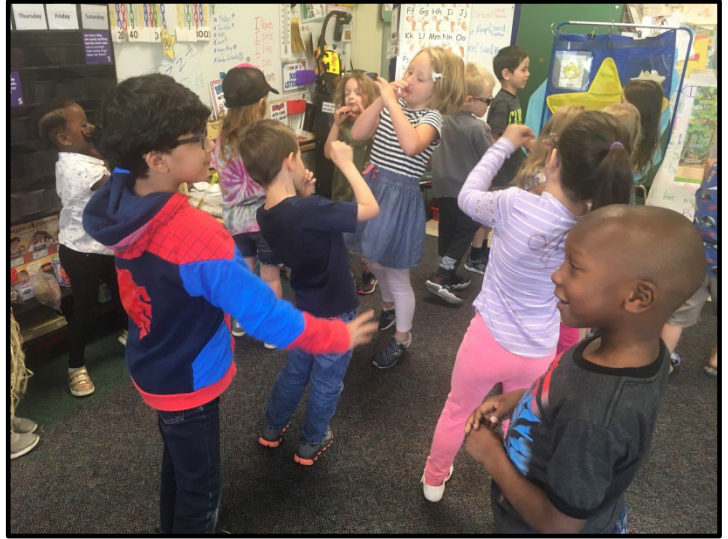
# The Mirror Dance:

## Social Emotional Learning (SEL) at its best!

Music by Rosalie Karalekas, photos used with permission from families

This dance teaches students to choose a partner, follow and change leaders, adapt to different music, and mimic creative movement patterns.

This is the kindergartners' all-time favorite dance in Celeste Starr's class!



- Teach children to establish eye contact, choose a partner, and say, "Will you be my partner please?" "The other child might say, "Yes, I'll be your partner" or "I already have a partner, but I'll be your partner tomorrow."
- If one child remains, children learn to say, "You can be our partner too."
- The teacher may choose the partners randomly using name sticks.

Email Rosalie at [Salemperformingarts@msn.com](mailto:Salemperformingarts@msn.com) for a digital MP3 of her music. Pay using PayPal.



# 10 Tips to Make Dancing Fun for Everyone

by Kathie Bridges, Celeste Starr, and Nellie Edge

1. **Set the parameters** for behavior expectations before you even turn on the music. (**Make an anchor chart** of essential expectations. If you can, use photos of students actually dancing.)
2. **Practice the moves and actions** you will be teaching your students on your own before presenting it to them. Choose dances they know and enjoy!
3. **Walk through some of the tricky moves** before you start the music.
4. **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. **Intentionally plan and make a list of the key vocabulary** and language concepts that will be part of the children's movement experience.
7. **EVERYONE participates!** At the beginning of the year, there are often a few reluctant dancers, but with some encouragement they are soon actively involved also. This provides rich social emotional skills for diverse learners!
8. **Be exaggerated in your movements** so students can follow the strong motions.
9. If a movement goes side-to-side, make sure everyone is following along going the same way. **Stop and restart as needed.**
10. **Dance** with the students, especially in the beginning. **Be animated and have fun!** If you're having fun, they will too!

## **Celeste's Tips for Mirror Dancing:**

- Model how to choose—and NOT choose—a partner (*Will you be my partner please?*)
- "Helper of the Day" student partners with teacher to demonstrate ways children can choose which partner goes first
- With music, demonstrate how—and how NOT to be the dance leader.
- During **Mirror Dancing**, demonstrate the types of movement and how children will start, stop, and switch partners at each BING in the music.



Celeste Starr's kindergarten

# **Make Friends with Mother Goose:**

## *Develop the Sounds of English and Build a Community of Friends*

### **Make Friends with Mother Goose**

*Immerse young children in the wonderful language of nursery rhymes. Recite them with different voices, sing the melodies, march to their rhythms, and dramatize the actions. Research shows that sharing nursery rhymes with young children is highly related to reading success in the early years. Introduce nursery rhymes through the age-old tradition of the rhythmic chant, carefully articulating and modeling the sounds of the language. Make Friends with Mother Goose! It's an acquaintance your children will enjoy for years to come.*

*Invite groups of children to take turns dramatizing and reciting the rhymes while the remaining kids practice being good listeners. Children delight in the shared literacy experience of acting out rhymes with their friends. Social-emotional learning grows in a community of friends.*

**Childhood is for language.**

**-Lewis Thomas**



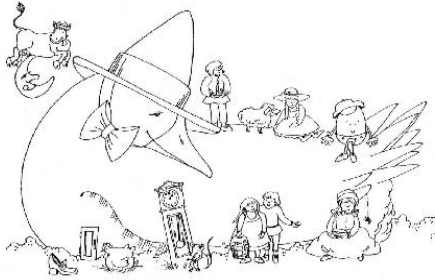


# Our Gift to Families: Make Friends with Mother Goose!

## Give Every Family a Collection of Your Favorite Rhymes

### Make Friends with Mother Goose

16 Favorite Nursery Rhymes to Memorize,  
Recite and Read



















Compiled by Nellie Edge

Illustrated by Melissa Saylor

**Note for Parents and Classroom Teachers:** Consider binding or stapling this collection of rhymes into a book so families can enjoy reciting them together. See *Parents as Partners in Kindergarten and Early Literacy* by Nellie Edge, for literacy connections, research and the benefits of memorizing nursery rhymes.

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#### 1, 2, Buckle My Shoe



1, 2, Buckle my shoe;

3, 4, Shut the door;



5, 6, Pick up sticks;

7, 8, Lay them straight;



9, 10, A big fat hen.



#### Humpty Dumpty

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,

Humpty Dumpty had a great fall;

All the King's horses



and all the King's men



couldn't put Humpty

together again.

[Download](#) and bind or staple the pages of this Mother Goose book.  
Give one to each child's family.

## Memorize, Recite and Perform Language: Turn Print into Sound

*The performers develop speaking skills and oral language fluency as they dramatize and articulate Hey, Diddle, Diddle. As kids connect language to print, they become motivated readers!*



**The audience practices good listening and giving feedback.**  
Soon it will be their turn to perform. Thus, the language of favorite nursery rhymes is rehearsed over and over again, supporting phonemic awareness.



Becky Leber's Kindergarten

**The science of reading supports a comprehensive approach to kindergarten literacy:**  
*Vocabulary, comprehension, a love of words, and oral language fluency develop simultaneously with a systematic approach to phonics instruction.*



# Use *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star* Rituals to Develop the Sounds of the English Language

## Make Friends with Mother Goose!



The beautiful melody of *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star* makes it a perfect song for children of all ages. **I wonder if there will be stars out tonight?** To capture children's imaginations, sometimes I provide props and tell little stories as introductions to songs.

One night when I was walking home, I saw a star twinkling so brightly that I just stopped and looked at it. And then I noticed fairies dancing around the star, and I heard a melody. (Hum *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*) Do you know what they were singing? They were singing, *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*. And as I started singing, they came right down beside me and floated around. (I bring out a silky fairy puppet with a tinkly bell and let it float from child to child.) **Can you help the fairy sing?**

**Make a simple fairy puppet by laying two square scarves over several balls of cotton that have been scented with lavender oil. Tie a ribbon under the cotton balls to form a head and secure the scarves. You may want to add a little jingle bell on the ribbon.**

Enjoy the poem *Fairies* by Sir James M. Barrie, *When the first baby laughed, the very first laugh...*

**The delicate sound of finger cymbals might also suggest the twinkling of stars.** Children can pretend to be stars, moving lightly and spreading a sparkling glow about the room.

*Baa, Baa, Black Sheep, Humpty Dumpty, and The ABC Song* all use this favorite melody composed by Mozart in 1778.

Have you ever made a wish on a star? Here's a favorite wishing chant:

Star-light, star-bright, first star I see tonight,  
Wish I may, wish I might, have the wish I wish tonight.



From *Music is Magic for Your Child and You!* Book and CD by Nellie Edge, Nellie Edge Resources, Inc. ©1988

*Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star* is featured on the DVD, *The Magic of Signing Songs, Volume I.*

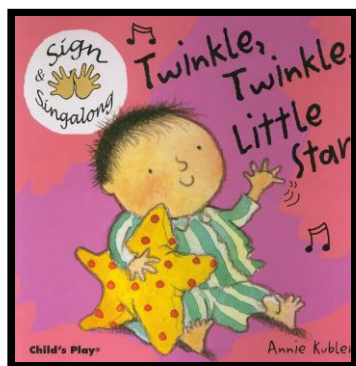
See free  ASL instructional video of *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star* at [www.nellieedge.com](http://www.nellieedge.com).

# Children and Their Families Learn About the Stars

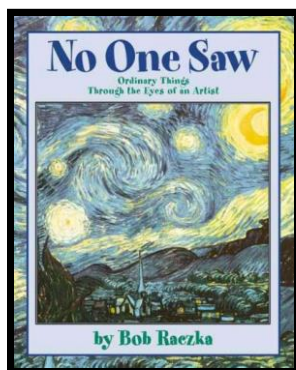


Awaken the child's love of nature and sense of wonder. "Learning About Our Earth and Solar System" is part of a year-long study in Joanie Cutler's kindergarten in Eugene, Oregon. The children even learn Greek myths about the stars and learn to locate familiar constellations. Throughout the year, families are encouraged to take night walks and observe the changing stars. Children draw

their pictures of stars spinning in space, creating a star mural in the style of van Gogh, and developing what may become a lifelong interest in astronomy. **Teach for deep learning.**



After children have learned to sign the song, they enjoy reading the *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*, sign and sing-along board book, by Annie Kubler, Child's Play, 2004.



We love the beautiful book *No One Saw: Ordinary Things Through the Eyes of an Artist*, by Bob Raczka, Millbrook Press, 2002.



Find Mother Goose Photo Essays and resources [www.nellieedge.com](http://www.nellieedge.com), YouTube, and Nellie Edge TPT Store Little Books and "I Can Read" pages

## Celeste Starr Teaches Children How to Draw a Star: Body Movement and Language Builds Brain Connections

1 & 2 = Make an "A" (A= ) (with body also)



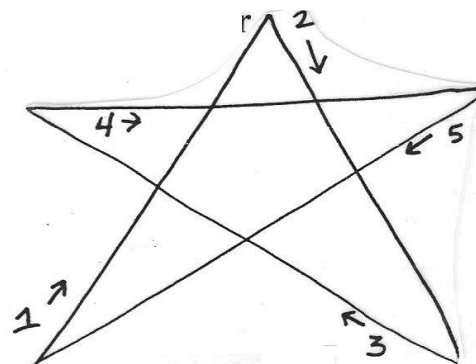
3 = Kick up your foot



4 = Cross your heart



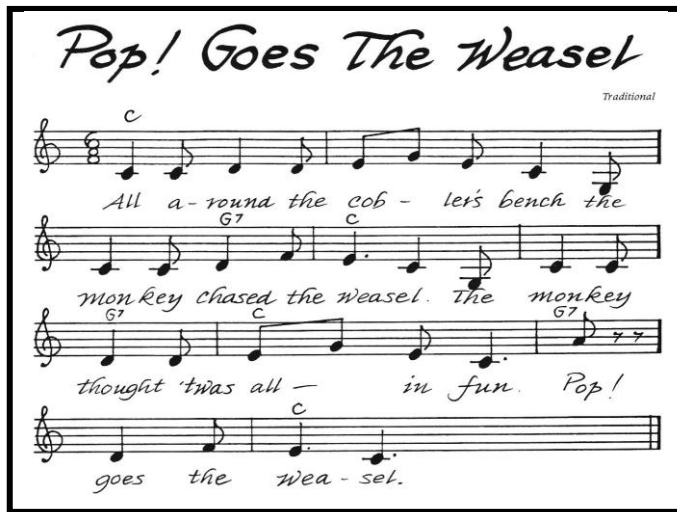
5 = Touch your toe



Children also learn to draw spiral and twinkling stars. One child exclaimed to Dad, "This is my van Gogh-like star." ( See ASL video clip, ASL guide, and curriculum connections at [www.nellieedge.com](http://www.nellieedge.com))



# Pop! Goes the Weasel



Bring a jack-in-the-box into the classroom and sing along with this jingling melody. Children love to anticipate the popping up of a jack-in-the-box. And it's even more fun for them to actually become a jack-in-the-box. Believe in magic and your children will enter into the fantasy. "I'm going to turn you all into jacks-in-a-box." Touch each child's head or back as you gently push her or him down in the imaginary box. Use the winding circular motion of your hand on the child's back as you sing the rhyme. Watch the excited children pop up at the end of the song. **Children will want to be pushed down repeatedly to prolong this little drama...** "Let's do it again!"

- Letter the rhyme on a language chart and highlight all the high-frequency ("star" or "by heart") words.
- Find "the" five times and recite a catchy *T-h-e Spelling Chant* to reinforce "the" as a word children can instantly read, write and spell.
- Explore the word "pop" and the (exclamation) "excitement mark!" Grab the word p-o-p. Stretch it out and make a fist at the end. Pull the excitement mark out of the sky - "whee pppt!"
- Read and re-read the language from the language chart or pocket chart, and the "I Can Read" Anthology Notebook or folder.



# Learning to Be Good Speakers and Good Listeners are Important Life Skills: *Give Children Specific Positive Feedback*

Children develop better listening skills when instructed on how to practice being good listeners. Consider making a good listener chart. Add photos of your children listening attentively. **Specifically and frequently acknowledge them for looking at the speaker, staying in one place, and making thoughtful comments.**

**I am a good speaker.**

**I remembered to:**

- Look at the class and smile.
- Speak clearly and keep the rhythm.
- Use a strong, dramatic voice and arm gestures.
- Speak slowly.
- Thank the audience for their applause.

**I am a good listener.**

**I remembered to:**

- Look at the person speaking.
- Stay in my place.
- Listen carefully.
- Think of comments to make or questions to ask.



**SL.K.2.** Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood.

**SL.K.3.** Ask and answer questions in order to seek help, get information, or clarify something that is not understood.

**SL.K.6.** Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.



See *Social Emotional Learning* supplement



# Use Co-Active Finger Plays and Action Rhymes: Develop Language, Literacy, and Social Skills



Children stand and perform this rhyme on their partner's back:

*Crisscross.  
Applesauce.  
Spider climbing up my spine.  
Tight squeeze.  
Cool breeze.  
Makes me get the  
Giggles!*

**Crisscross Applesauce** and **One Potato** are included in the Anthology Collection: *Child Lore*, by Nellie Edge.

Children make two fists and alternately build on their partner's fists:

*One potato,  
Two potato,  
Three potato,  
Four.  
Five potato,  
Six potato,  
Seven potato,  
More.*



**CC SS** *Row, Row, Row Your Boat* gives children a creative problem to solve co-actively. "How can you connect up with a partner and share a rowing movement?"

- The rhythms of sound have a powerful effect on cognition.
- Social interaction enhances language and literacy.
- Let's help all children be "language smart" and "people smart." We can do it through the delightful language of co-active songs and rhymes.

# Pease Porridge Hot: Teach Children to Hand Jive and Feel the Rhythms of Sound!

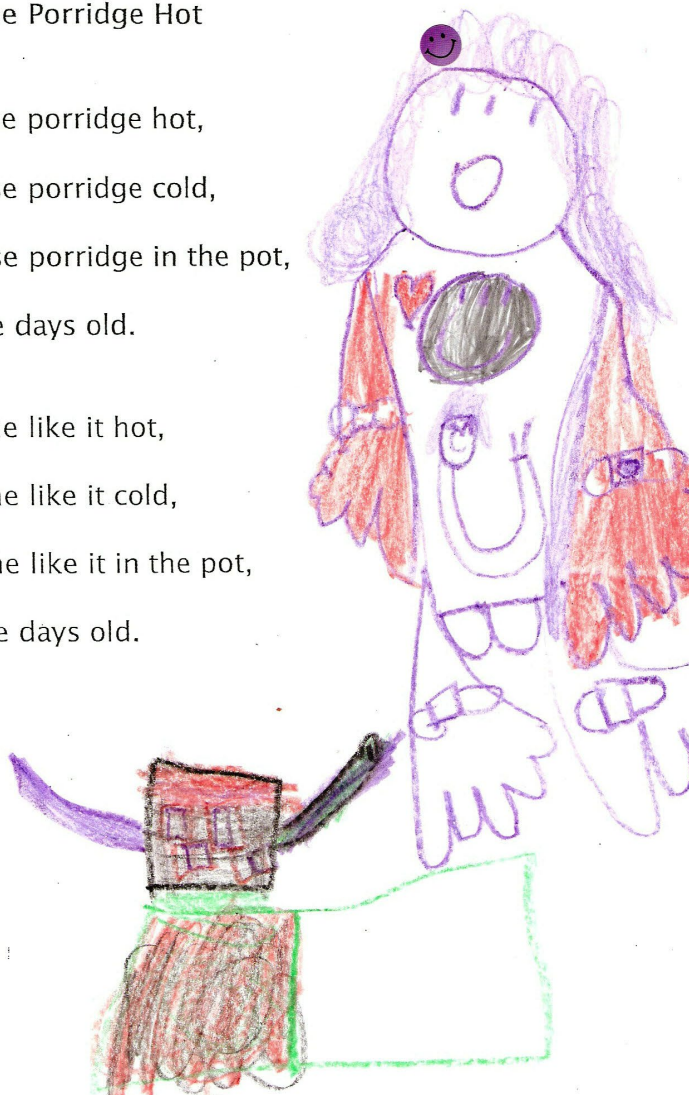
Katie invites the entire class to "be my partner" in a hand jive. This allows her to model the clapping pattern and teach children to feel the rhythm of this traditional rhyme. Then they politely learn to choose a partner. They establish eye contact, use a pleasant voice, and say, "Will you be my partner, please?" Children always enjoy connecting with a friend and performing language, hand jiving with rhythm.

Nursery rhymes develop phonemic awareness.  
Marie Clay's research shows that **"rhymers are readers."**

Pease Porridge Hot

Pease porridge hot,  
Pease porridge cold,  
Pease porridge in the pot,  
Nine days old.

Some like it hot,  
Some like it cold,  
Some like it in the pot,  
Nine days old.



After children have internalized the language of each new song and rhyme, they illustrate another page for their "I Can Read" poetry notebook. Children reread the pages and take them home for family sharing.



What songs and rhymes do you use for hand jiving?



# Handjive and Move to the Rhythms of Language

*The rhythms of sound have a powerful effect on cognition. Children who cannot keep a steady beat and respond to the rhythms of language have a hard time reading fluently. So – handjives, dances and jump rope chants are a necessary part of a comprehensive and multisensory literacy program.*

**Miss Mary Mack** – A Nellie Edge Read and Sing Big Book™, recorded on *Music is Magic* CD

Simple clap/cross slap pattern

Miss Ma-ry Mack, Mack, Mack

Clap slap clap slap clap slap

All dressed in black, black, black

With silver buttons,

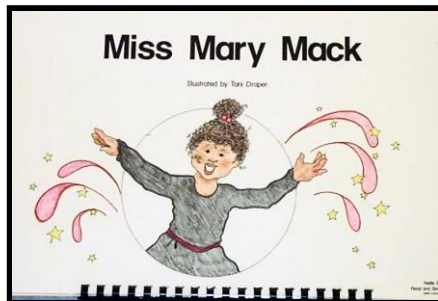
buttons, buttons

All down her back,

back, back.

She asked her mother,

mother, mother



For fifteen cents, cents, cents

To see the elephants, elephants, elephants

Jump the fence, fence, fence.

They jumped so high, high, high

They touched the sky, sky, sky

And they never came back, back, back

Til the fourth of July, ly, ly.

No they never came back, back, back

Til the fourth of July, ly, ly.

**Playmate** – A Nellie Edge Read and Sing Big Book™, recorded on *Music is Magic* CD

(Pattern starts after 2 sways) Sway sway clap/slap clap/slap clap/clap 2 hands back slap 2 hands front slap (repeat)

Sway sway clap/slap clap/slap clap/clap

Say, say, oh playmate,

2 hands back slap 2 hands front slap clap/slap clap/slap clap/clap

Come out and play with me.

2 hands back slap 2 hands front slap clap/slap clap/slap clap/clap

And bring your dollies three.

Climb up my apple tree.

Call down my rain barrel.

Slide down my cellar door.

And we'll be jolly friends forever more.



**Consider Core Standards: Handjive!**



**RF.K.2** Recognize and produce rhyming words.

**RF.K.4.** Reading: Literature

**L.K.5.** With guidance and support from adults, explore word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

**L.K.6.** Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts.

**SL.K.6.** Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings and ideas clearly

**RI.K.7.** With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the text in which they appear (e.g., what person, place, thing, or idea in the text an illustration depicts)

**RI.K.10.** Actively engages in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.

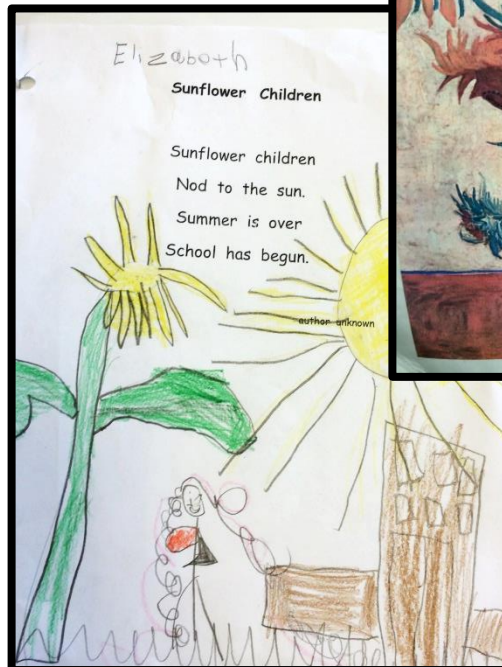
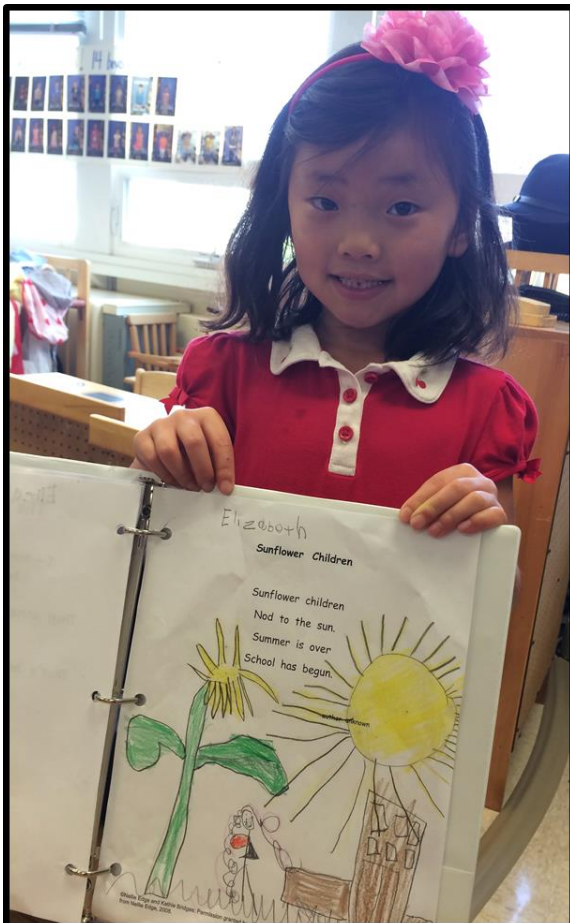


See **Social Emotional Learning** Supplement, Part 1

# Sunflower Children in September: Combining Experiences in Poetry, Art, and Connections to Nature



**Sunflowers**  
by van Gogh



What's the **most important thing** you notice about this painting?

What is the **title** of this poem?

Students memorize, recite, and illustrate poetry to build language skills and confidence drawing.



# Fill the Days With Memorable Songs, Poems and Rhymes: Build Community, Language Comprehension, Fluency, and Joy!

We share language that we love, knowing these songs and poems may be forever on the walls of the children's minds. Children take to heart what we love, and that adds an emotional dimension, fortifying the memory of language.

*"I know well that only the rarest kind of best in anything can be good enough for the young."*

-Walter de la Mare, Bells of Grass

## Songs That Build Community and Establish Routines

*De Colores, Las Mañanitas* (In Celebration of Spanish Folk Songs CD)

**\*\*Hola, Mis Amigos** (Nellie Edge - Magic of Signing Songs Volume 2, DVD.

Complimentary online video at [nellieedge.com](http://nellieedge.com))

*Good Morning* (Greg and Steve)

*I Think You're Wonderful* (Red Grammer)

**\*The More We Get Together/ Entre Más Nos Reunimos** (Nellie Edge - Music is Magic CD and complimentary online video)

*We All Live Together* Volume 1 (Greg and Steve) *Quiet Time* is the last song on the CD

*Days of the Week* (Adams' Family tune)

*Hello, Neighbor* (Ralph Peterson)

*Number Rock/ABC Rock* (Greg and Steve)

**\*Playmate** (Nellie Edge - Music is Magic CD)

*Helper of the Day/Star of the Week* (♫Skip to My Lou tune)

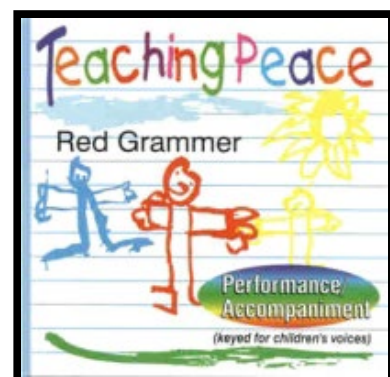
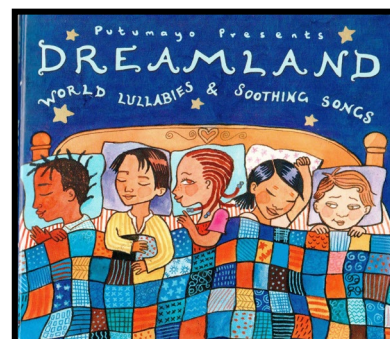
*Willoughby Wallaby Woo* (Raffi)

**\*\*See You Later, Alligator**

*You Are My Sunshine* (Nellie Edge - Music is Magic CD)

*Dreamland: A Collection of World Lullabies and Soothing Songs* (Putumayo Kids)

*Workout to the Letter Sounds* (Hip-Hop AlphaBop 2)



## Movement, Handjives, Spelling, and Jump Rope Songs!

**\*\*Pease Porridge Hot**

**\*\*Head, Shoulder, Baby**

**\*Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear** (Nellie Edge - Music is Magic CD)

**\*My Aunt Came Back** (Nellie Edge - Music is Magic CD)

*Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes* (traditional)

*Looby Loo* (traditional)

*Hokey Pokey* (traditional)

*Tooty Ta* (Jack Hartman)

*Che Che Kola* (Nancy Raven)

*Sing, Sign, Spell, and Read!* (Gina Edge and Nellie Edge) *L-O-V-E Spells Love* and 32 other spelling songs

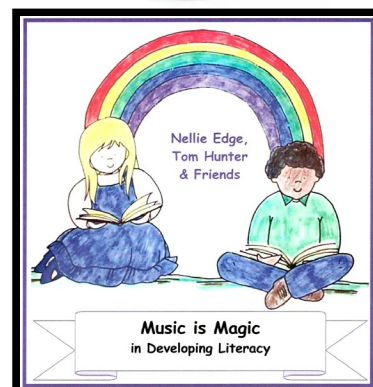
## Nellie Edge Read and Sing Big Books™: Bridge Oral Language Into Print!

*I Love the Mountains/Amo Los Montes*

*I Have A Cat/Yo Tengo Un Gato*

*Magic Penny*

*Down By The Bay*



## Seasonal Songs with Science Connections

**\*\*Leaves Are Falling** (Nellie Edge)

**\*Sing a Rainbow** (Arthur Hamilton from Nellie Edge - CD)

*Seed In The Ground* (Tom Hunter)

*The Garden Song* (Rise Up Singing)

*The Tree Song* (Dr. Randy Hitz)

*Snowflake Song* (Dr. Randy Hitz)

*I'm A Little Snowman* (source unknown)

*5 Little Speckled Frogs* (Nellie Edge Read and Sing Big Book)



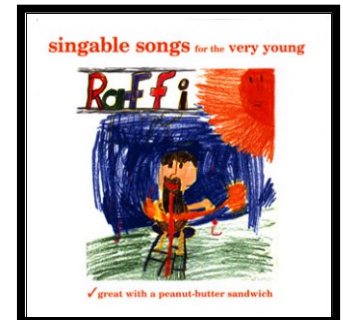
## Call Response/Echo

*Little Sir Echo* (Greg and Steve)

**\*Miss Mary Mack** (Nellie Edge - Music is Magic CD)

*Did You Feed My Cow?* (Ella Jenkins)

*Sing a Song of Sunshine* (Dr. Randy Hitz)



## Songs That Children Request All Year Long!

*Baby Birdie* (traditional)

*Mr. Sun* (Raffi)

*Robin in the Rain* (Raffi)

*Baby Beluga* (Raffi)

*Brush Your Teeth* (Raffi)

**\*I Can Read Colors/Se Leer Colores** (Nellie Edge - Music is Magic CD)

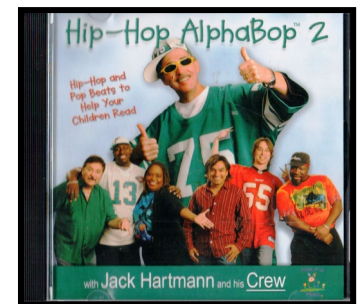
**\*Goodnight, Irene/Buenas Noches Irene**

(adaptation on Nellie Edge CD)

*This Land is Your Land* (Rise Up Singing)

*Keep on the Sunny Side* (Rise Up Singing)

*Take Me Out to the Ballgame* (Rise Up Singing)



## Resources

**\*Nellie Edge Read and Sing Big Book™**

**\*\*Nellie Edge Poetry Anthologies**

Nellie Edge, *Magic of Signing Songs DVD; Volume I and Volume II*

Greg and Steve, *We All Live Together, Volume I*

Red Grammer, *Teaching Peace CD*

Dr. Jean, *Dr. Jean and Friends CD, Kiss Your Brain CD*

Raffi, *Singable Songbook and Rise and Shine CD*

Tom Hunter, *Come on Over, I'll Sing for You, Handed Down, Together and Hand in Hand CD's*

Ella Jenkins, *You'll Sing a Song CD and I'll Sing a Song CD*

Rise Up Singing, *The Group Singing Songbook*

Dr. Randy Hitz, *Sing a Song of Sunshine: Original Songs and Games for Young Children*

Jack Hartmann, *Hip- Hop AlphaBop 2*



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## Sources for Children's CDs:

Nellie Edge Resources, Inc.

[www.nellieedge.com](http://www.nellieedge.com)

Crystal Springs Books

[www.crystalspringsbooks.com](http://www.crystalspringsbooks.com)

Amazon Books

[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

Dr. Jean and Friends

[www.drjean.org](http://www.drjean.org)

Red Note Records

[www.redgrammer.com](http://www.redgrammer.com)

Charlotte Diamond

[www.charlottediamond.com](http://www.charlottediamond.com)

Raffi

[www.raffinews.com](http://www.raffinews.com)

Jack Hartmann

[www.jackhartmann.com](http://www.jackhartmann.com)



## **Chapter 2**

*Oral Language Traditions: Building a Joyful Community of Learners*

### **NOTES**

## Chapter 3

### **Nurture Social-Emotional Skills Within a Joyful Classroom:** *Give Students Engaging Curriculum, Positive Discipline, and Carefully Chosen Songs, Poems, and Literature*

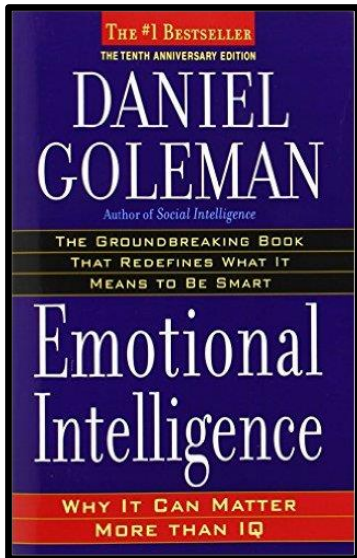


*"Kindergarten is for sharing kindness, building friendships, and nurturing the imagination." -Nellie Edge*



# Daniel Goldman's Groundbreaking Book Supported our Commitment to Joyful, Social Emotional Learning in Kindergarten

Emotional intelligence is more important than I.Q.  
for success in school – and in life.



*"Emotional intelligence ...includes self-control, zeal and persistence, and the ability to motivate oneself. And these skills, as we shall see, can be taught to children, giving them a better chance to use whatever intellectual potential the genetic lottery may have given them."*

*"The question is, how can we bring intelligence to our emotions – and civility to our streets and caring to our communal life?"*

Quotes from *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*, by Daniel Goleman. Bantam Doubleday & Dell, 1995.

## Create a lending library for families: Share Social Emotional Learning resources!

Bailey, Rebecca Anne. *Easy to Love, Difficult to Discipline: The 7 Basic Skills for Turning Conflict into Cooperation*. Loving Guidance, 2002

Campbell, Don. *The Mozart Effect for Children*. Harper Collins, 2000.

Daniels, Marilyn. *Dancing with Words: Signing for Hearing Children's Literacy*. Bergin & Garvey, 2001.

Edwards, Carolyn. *The Hundred Language of Childhood: The Reggio Emilia Approach to Early Childhood Education*. Prentice Hall, 1997.

Faber, Adele and Mazlish, Elaine. *How to Talk so Kids Can Learn – At Home and in School*. Scribner, 1995.

Fay, Jim and Cline, Foster W. *Discipline With Love and Logic Resource Guide*. Love & Logic Press, 2001.

Hart, Betty and Risley, Todd R. *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children*. Paul H. Brooks Publishing, 1995.

Healy, Jane. *Your Child's Growing Mind: A Guide to Learning and Brain Development from Birth to Adolescence*, 3rd ed. Harmony, 2004.

Kohn, Alfie. *Punished by Rewards: The Trouble with Gold Stars, Incentive Plans, As, Praise, and Other Bribes*. Houghton Mifflin, 1993.

Lickona, Thomas. *How to Raise Kind Kids: And Get Respect, Gratitude, and Happier Family in the Bargain*. Penguin Books, 2018

Nelsen, Jane. *Positive Discipline*. Random House, 1996.

Paley, Vivian Gussin. *You Can't Say You Can't Play*. Harvard University Press, 1992.

Ripley, Amanda. *The Smartest Kids in the World*. Simon and Schuster, 2013.

Sokol, Bryan, Muller, Ulrich, Carpendale, Jeremy, Carpendale, Young, Arlene, and Iarocci, Grace. *Self- and Social-Regulation: The Development of Social Interaction, Social Understanding, and Executive Functions*. Oxford University Press, 2010.

Wojcicki, Esther. *How to Raise Successful People: Simple Lessons to Help Your Child Become Self-Driven, Respectful, and Resilient*. Mariner Books, 2020.

# Discipline Is the Absolute Hardest Part of Teaching: Thoughts on Why I Use Positive Classroom Discipline

Excerpts from postings by Jacque Verrall, National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) of kindergarten from Edmonds, Washington on teachers.net Kindergarten Chatboard

...Stickers and other extrinsic rewards are short-term solutions that seem to work quickly, but offer no long-term learning... when the sticker is removed there is no motivation to continue the desired behavior. **What we want is to create long-term solutions, motivating students to do their best, because it's the right thing to do, not because they will get something for it...**

It takes longer to use intrinsic motivation, but it is what offers long-term results with students striving to do and be their best because it is the right thing to do:

**Intrinsically motivating children begins by us looking for ways to individualize positive praise** (no more "good job"). ...recognizing the power our positive words have on children (or adults). **It requires forming solid, powerful relationships with children/parents** and really using observational skills to hone in on what they do.

- "Wow, how did you learn to make those "B's" so well?"
- "Your picture reminds me of a storm, look how wonderful those two colors blend together making it look like a dark, storm cloud."
- "Brady, thank you for picking up that trash, it wasn't even yours, but you saw it and picked it up - you really know how to take good care of our room."

**It's really difficult for a child to misbehave for someone that he/she really feels loves or appreciates him/her. Many misbehaviors are simply because a child has not been taught appropriate ways to get their needs met.**

**Single out children doing the right thing** - "Everyone, put your eyes on John, I know he's ready to go to Library because he has his eyes on me, his hands are down at his side and most importantly, his mouth is quiet." Choose a few others who are modeling what you want to see too. **Do not go anywhere until they are all perfectly quiet.**

**Be calm no matter what. Be matter-of-fact.** Be consistent. Don't give too many chances. I give one warning, they don't need more than that. Try to make consequences be logical ones...

**Be understanding and convey that you really are on their side.** You understand how they might want to \_\_\_\_\_, but it wouldn't be safe, kind, honest, (whatever) and at school this is inappropriate. **Love and logic works very well... especially being empathetic while still enforcing rules.**

*"...Where did we ever get the crazy idea that in order to make children do better, first we have to make them feel worse? Think of the last time you felt humiliated or treated unfairly. Did you feel like cooperating or doing better?"* Excerpt from *Positive Discipline*, by Jane Nelsen.

See also *Teaching with Love and Logic*, by Jim Fay and David Funk.

Jacquie Verrall is featured on the literacy award site tab on nellieedge.com. We read everything she writes!



## Rituals That Build Our Learning Community... "The Lighting Circle"



**"The Lighting Circle" is a much-anticipated ritual conducted twice a week.** On Monday, children enter the room with the main lights turned off. As they quickly put backpacks and coats away, they are already thinking about what they will share about their weekend. After everyone is seated quietly in a circle, the candle is lit. I focus them further by saying, "Think about what you did, places you went, or people you saw this weekend...when you have your idea in your head, put your thumb up to let us know you're ready." Red, our class-sharing hedgehog, is passed from child to child as they share a highlight or thought from their weekend. After sharing, we announce our learning circle is open for the upcoming week, and one child blows out the candle. This process allows me to peek inside their heads and get a sense of what I can draw on for their writing, especially if they encounter "writer's block."

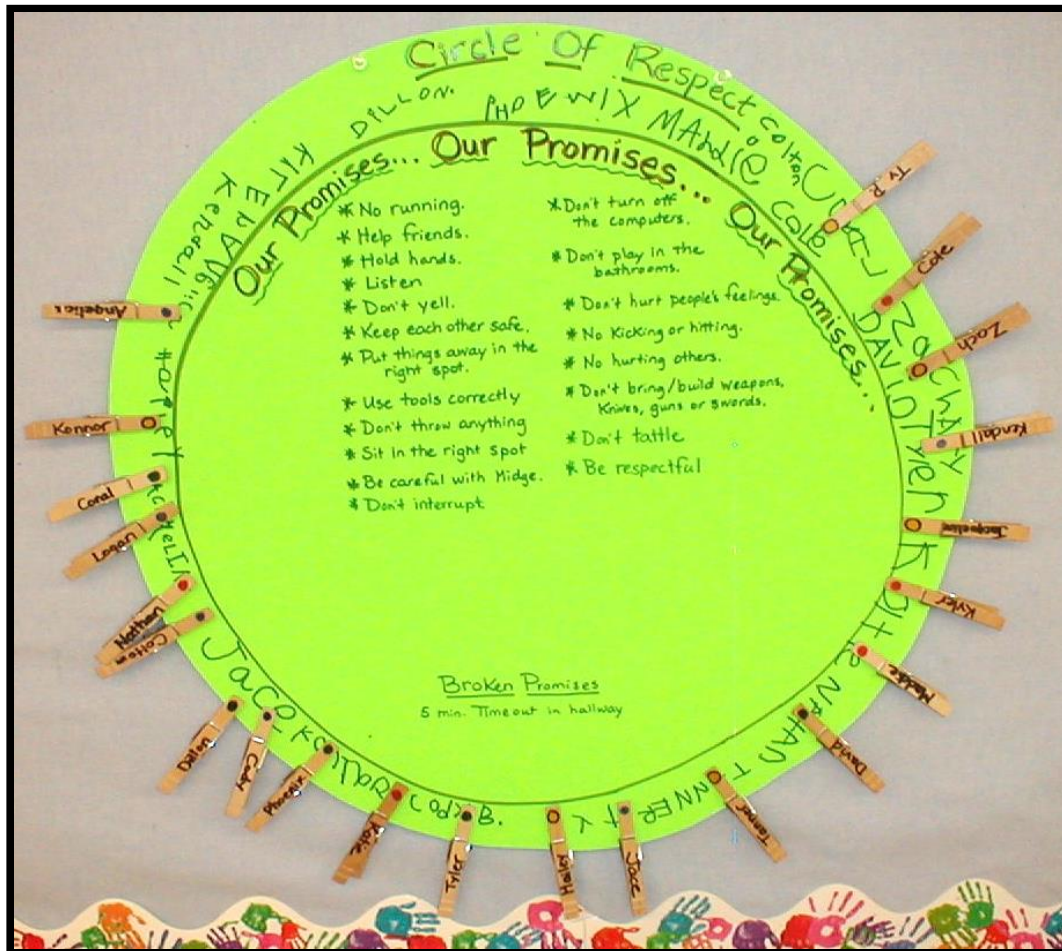
**This process is repeated on Friday just before the children are dismissed.** However, this time the children share a highlight or something they learned at school during the week. After everyone has had a turn, we announce our learning circle is now closed for the week, and one child blows out the candle.

Credit for this original idea is given to Andie Cunningham and Ruth Shagoury in their book, *Starting With Comprehension: Reading Strategies for the Youngest Learners*, Stenhouse, 2005.

From *Writing to Read in Kindergarten: Growing Engaged and Purposeful Writers with Common Core Connections* by Julie Lay and Nellie Edge, updated 2015.

# A Circle of Respect in Kindergarten

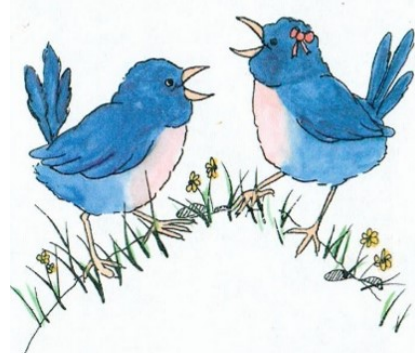
## Our Promises to Each Other from Julie Lay



After the children talked about what makes a good learning community and how to show respect for each other they came up with their class promises which were written on circular paper. I was merely the scribe for the children's ideas. They signed their own name all around the edge of the circle. Each child also has a clip with their name on it. If anyone breaks a promise, the "promise breaker" needs to remove their clip from the circle to the 'yellow' spot. Children earn back their spot within the circle if they demonstrate to their friends that they are able to correct the problem. This places more responsibility on the children, rather than an authoritarian teacher. My afternoon class also added that the promise breaker needs to apologize to the entire class for not keeping a promise. After only 2 weeks of implementing this, I am already finding that the kids are regulating themselves and their peers without having my intervention at all!

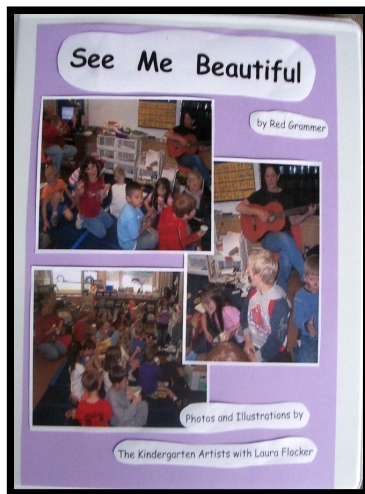
### PROMISES:

- *Hold hands*
- *Help friends*
- *Be careful with Midge*
- *Keep each other safe*





# Class Books Celebrate Children's Lives and the Magic of Signing Songs

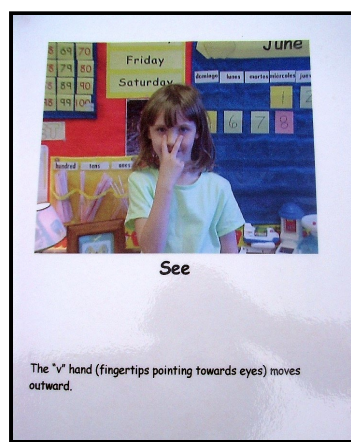
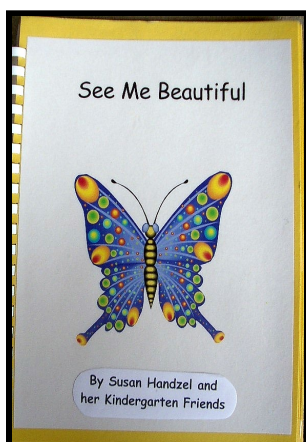
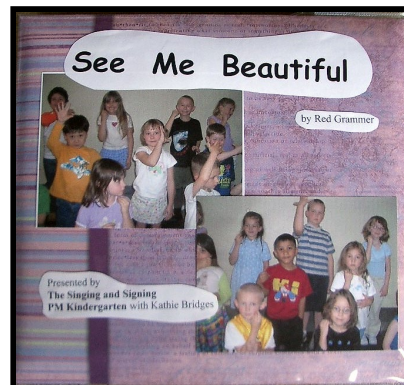


***See Me Beautiful***, by Red Grammer, inspired this class-made book. Laura Flocker's kinders used colored pencils for their self-portraits. Each page is protected by clear plastic sleeves. The important message in the lyrics makes this a powerful performance song - one that has had many moms and dads in tears. (One teacher added a slide show of the children to accompany their memorable year-end performance.)

**Kathie Bridges' version** of *See Me Beautiful* is a photo class book featuring the children as expert signers.

Susan Handzel's version (see below) features a photo/ASL guide of each child signing and enlarged text of the lyrics on a colorful background.

**Children can take these books home and teach their families to sign.**



## Two ways to assemble class books:

- Use white 8 " x 11" notebooks with clear plastic sheet protectors and a front cover pocket for the cover page.
- Use a colorful 8" x 8" size photo album with clear insert pages and a plastic cover. (Tip: Ask a parent to purchase supplies and assemble the book.)

***Once children can sing and sign the language—they can read with comprehension and fluency!***

# We Sing ♪ See Me Beautiful – Look for the Best in Me...\*

*Our children must develop literacy while developing belief systems that affirm,  
"I can read and write. I love school! I belong. I am responsible..."*

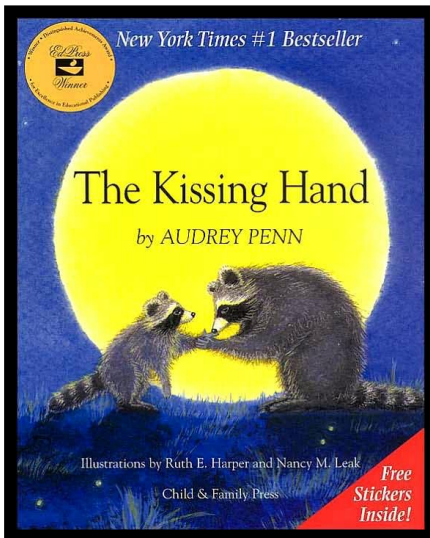
## How Do We Create an Emotionally Healthy Classroom?

- **Bond with your students.**  
*"You must bond with her if she's to learn anything at all... This is not a choice but a duty and responsibility..." – Regie Routman, author of **Reading Essentials***
- **We can create a noncompetitive, emotionally safe, and joyful environment** – where children care and share and work together.  
*"The children have got to trust me – that I will never let them look bad in front of their peers." – Bobbi Fisher, author of **Joyful Learning in Kindergarten***
- **We see each child in the best possible light** and hold that positive expectation before them.  
*"It's hard to misbehave for someone who really likes and believes in you." – Jacque Verrall*
- **Help children know each other** through coactive and cooperative projects.
- **Teach children to respect, affirm, and show kindness** – develop the language of empathy, reflection and appreciation. Model and role-play how that looks in each new classroom scenario.  
*"I want the children to respect communication with one another as much as they respect communication with me." – Janine Chappell Carr, author of **A Child Went Forth: Reflective Teaching with Young Readers and Writers***
- **Help children develop a feeling of belonging and responsibility** for themselves and their classmates.  
*"Belonging is the curriculum in Early Childhood." – Bev Bos*
- **Engage children in "grand conversations"** with quality literature.  
Read *Grand Conversations: Literature Groups in Action* by Ralph Peterson.
- **Have high expectations for children's behavior and encourage group problem solving.**  
*"How can the rest of us help you solve that problem?"*
- **Teach children to write about their thoughts**, complaints, ideas and feelings.  
*"Writing takes fuzzy thinking and makes it clear." – Pat Wolfe*
- **Make your classroom a celebrative place.**  
Read about the basic school model developed by Ernest Boyer in his book *The Basic School – A Community for Learning*.
- **Build meaning-centered curriculum** that connects to the lives of the children.  
*"A good deal of the typical curriculum does not connect – not to practical applications, nor to personal insights, nor to much of anything else." – David Perkins, Harvard*
- **Build learning independence and stamina: Involve children in choice-making, goal-setting, and self-evaluation.**  
Read *The Daily Five: Fostering Literacy Independence in the Elementary Grades* by Gail Boushey and Joan Moser.
- **Support "parents as partners"** in honoring and celebrating childhood and building emotional intelligence and literacy.

*\*See Me Beautiful by Red Grammer is recorded on his CD **Teaching Peace**.*



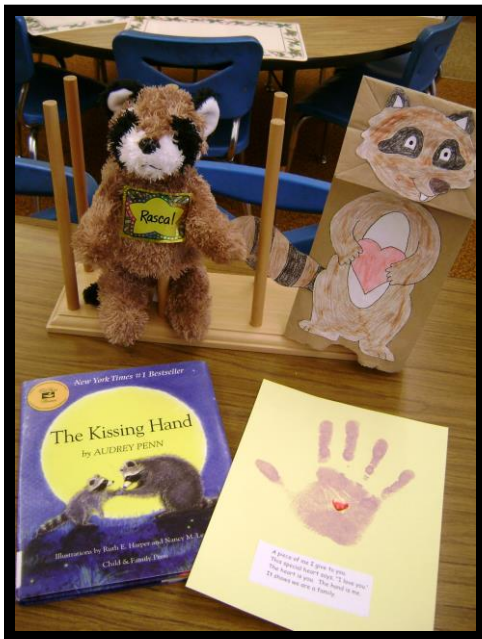
# Begin the Year with *The Kissing Hand*: Teach Comprehension Strategies through Emotional Engagement with Stories Excerpts from *Mosaic of Thought* by Ellin Keen and Susan Zimmermann



*The Kissing Hand*, Audrey Penn, Child and Family Press, Bk & Sticker Ed. 1993

"You know, you guys," she began after reading *The Kissing Hand* for the third time, "**my synthesis for this book is really changing** each time I read it. Remember Monday when I said it was a book about Chester raccoon who was afraid to go to school for the first time and how his mother made him feel better? I still think it's true, but now that I've reread the book, now I think it's also a book about anyone trying anything new and how thinking about people you love, even if they haven't kissed the palm of your hand, can help you feel strong inside. I think it's about how we give each other strength to do things that are new and challenging for us. It reminds me of Tony (one of the second-graders) showing Kenny around our room on this first day with us. It was like Tony was showing Kenny how not to be afraid in a new classroom. Do you remember?"

## Rascal Raccoon from *The Kissing Hand* Inspires a Building Tour



Katie Nelson reflects... After listening to the wonderful read aloud, *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn, we meet Rascal the Raccoon, a puppet friend who will become our class mascot. We make puppets of our own and each put a handprint on a special poem that goes home to our families. This is how we celebrate families and their love for us.

In the very first day of school as we come in from recess, we notice that Rascal is GONE from the classroom. "Where can he be? Let's go find him!" And so begins a tour of the building, starting in the library. Each staff member that we meet greets us with a smile and tells us, "Rascal was JUST HERE" and shows us a heart sticker that was left behind by our missing friend.

*Literature is life and life is literature.* -KKay Goines

# Create in Kindergarten—A Child's Garden of Experts

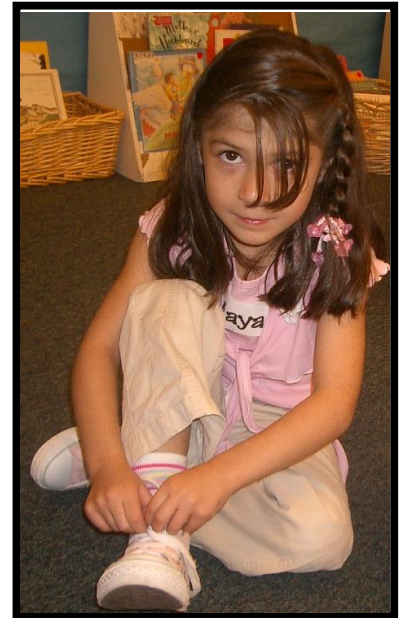
Our kindergarten community is most empowering when children see themselves as teachers and learners, all caring and sharing together. **We consciously and systematically help every child to identify strengths they have that they can use to help others.** These strengths - from shoe-tying to hand-jiving - are frequently acknowledged publicly in the class. The child who can help start a favorite class song on key or keep a steady beat in hand-jiving makes as important of a contribution to the classroom community as the early reader and writer. Children can develop "expertise" in many areas, from knowledge of how to perform routine tasks like feeding the goldfish or knowing how to gently hold the bunny, to specific literacy and math skills. **A classroom that values multiple intelligences or "avenues for learning" will naturally develop more "experts".**

In the book *Kid Writing: A Systematic Approach to Phonics, Journals, and Writing Workshop*, by Eileen Feldgus, Ed.D. and Isabell Cardonick, M.Ed., children's writing and art are honored on the **Kid Writing Wall of Fame** with a caption that identifies each writer's strengths:

- *Joshua is an expert at using lower-case letters.*
- *Marissa is famous for putting periods in all the right places.*

**Developing a classroom of experts who can help each other frees the teacher to meet more individual student needs.**

- When we teach high-frequency ("by heart") words through movement, rhythm, sign language and song, we **develop many "spelling experts"**. Children who do not have strong early visual memory skills can be successful with auditory spelling songs like *L\_O\_V\_E Spells Love* or our rhythmic *t-h-e* spelling chants. Teachers can ask children during interactive writing or journal writing, "Who is already an expert at the word 'the'?" "Who is the 'King of ing'?"
- Sometimes we may not discover a child's unique skills unless we **ask families "What special things does your child do well? What does your child really love to do?"** One child with a deaf parent became the expert at teaching *The ABC Phonics: Sing, Sign, and Read!* by Nellie Edge to others. After reading and discussing the book *Crow Boy* by Taro Hoshima (Chibi could write in Chinese and imitate the voices of crows), children may identify new strengths to value in each other.
- **Invite the children in small groups to share tea** and talk about what they are really good at. Tea parties allow you to introduce chamomile tea (and Peter Rabbit), peppermint tea and real china teacups.
- Make a sign with names and photos: ***Look who is a shoe tying expert!***



***Every child needs to feel valued and to view themselves as an important contributor to the learning community.***



## Welcome to Kindergarten SEL Puppet Magic: Meet Rulee and Archy



Every class deserves to have a wonderful puppet friend who can help them reflect on discipline and management issues. Meet Rulee, Diane Bonica's special helping giraffe, who has a permanent habitat in a tent next to the meeting area in her classroom. Rulee loves to listen to books and his job is to help keep the children safe. [Check out the !\[\]\(919a2cb85b99741a73c0c31a427236a8\_img.jpg\) video clip](#) of Rulee in action and consider how responsive children are to imaginative puppet characters.

- Rulee changes outfits with the themes and seasons.
- Children love to write notes to Rulee: They treat him like an honored kindergarten friend.
- One child each day is responsible for bringing Rulee to the circle area and returning him to his home.

Mr. Kindergarten, California teacher Dan Gurney, also had a magical puppet in his classroom. He shared this about Archy:

*"He has impulse control issues. He blurts, he shouts, he yodels. Yet he is my constant companion in the early weeks of kindergarten because he is remarkably discerning of his emotional life. He can describe his emotions with amazing accuracy."*

*"Archy comes to my rescue every time I need to navigate some treacherous emotional waters: stealing, not sharing, name calling, cutting in line, being afraid of snakes, cats, dogs, or frustration or discouragement."*



*Consider finding an "Archy" or a "Rulee" to help navigate social emotional lessons in your kindergarten.*

# Wrinkled Heart Lesson

Author unknown, revised by Jacque Verrall/2011

This is a great lesson to help get students onboard as a community of learners who care about each other and do their best to keep everyone safe and comfortable.

Materials needed: 9 x 12 piece of red construction paper, scissors. Copy of poem sized to fit on the cut-out heart.

Gather your students on the rug near you. While talking with them, you are going to cut out a simple heart shape from the construction paper. You can fold it in half and cut it that way or any way that appeals to you. Students will be curious, and you can show them that it is a heart shape, telling them that it's a lot like the heart we have inside our bodies. Tell your students that you want to talk to them about how hurtful words can be. Give a few examples of how people have hurt your feelings, and then invite all the students to tell you about one time that someone hurt their feelings. As each child tells you their hurt feeling, put another fold in the heart. It doesn't matter how you fold it; any way will work. After everyone has told his/her hurt feeling with you commenting, "Yes, that would really hurt your feelings," or "Wow, that was really unkind"" etc., tell them that you are going to unfold the heart; and tell them that you put a fold or wrinkle in the heart for every hurt feeling they told you. "When someone hurts our feelings, it leaves a wrinkle in our hearts that never comes out." Take the construction paper heart, unfolded, and show them that no matter how hard you try to straighten all the wrinkles, some always remain. Tell them the poem (see below) that goes with it, and have them recite it several times and plan to return on other days to recite it again and again or as often as necessary. Words can be very hurtful, and we need to be careful of what we say so that we never wrinkle another person's heart. If someone says something mean to you, it's okay to say, "Please don't wrinkle my heart," or to simply say, "Ouch! That wrinkled my heart."

Depending on your class you may not need anything more, or you might need to have some students come up and model how to let someone know that they've wrinkled their hearts.

Glue a copy of the poem onto the heart and hang the Wrinkled Heart up where you can refer to it often. I love how this makes SUCH an impression on them. For the rest of the year, I hear students saying, "\_\_\_ said something that wrinkled my heart" or "Ouch! That wrinkled my heart."

*Before you speak,  
Think and be smart.  
It's hard to fix  
A wrinkled heart!*





# Kindergarten Kindness Campaign: Looking for the Kindness of Others

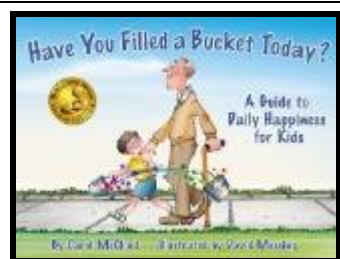
By Katie Nelson



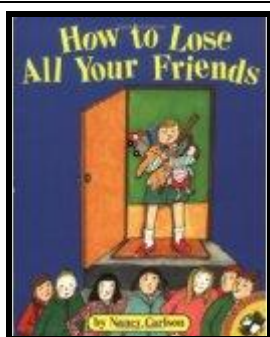
As children become more comfortable with one another, it is at this time the classroom mood of autonomy, sharing, and respect can begin to break down. At this point, we introduce what I refer to as the "Kindergarten Kindness Campaign." While we have been using the phrase "kindergarten kindness" since the beginning of the school year and reading multiple books about friendship and belonging, the "kindness campaign" reinforces this concept, encouraging children to share these positive actions they observe in others, rather than "tattling" on negative behaviors.

**Catching Them Being Kind:** A chart is displayed where stickers are placed next to the children's names as they are "reported on" for being kind (sharing, being helpful, giving a compliment, etc.). This chart is a more extrinsic way to recognize positive behavior, and ultimately we want the reward to be intrinsically motivating.—We are kind to one another because it feels right, not because we want to be recognized by receiving a sticker.

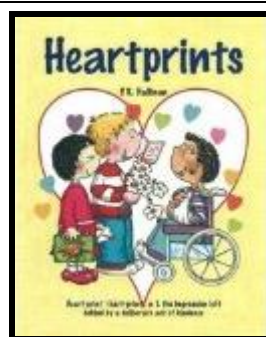
**Engaging Kindness Lessons:** A powerful way to help children visualize how our words and actions could hurt others is to introduce the "Wrinkled Heart" story and lesson (author unknown). The details of this lesson can be found on full-day kindergarten teacher Jacque Verrall's website. Additionally, our school district implements the "Hands Are Not for Hurting Project"<sup>TM</sup> ([handsproject.org](http://handsproject.org)) where the pledge: "I will not use my hands or my words for hurting myself or others" is taught. Usually this is introduced and reinforced school-wide, and both of these lessons help make the concept of being kind more authentic and natural for children.



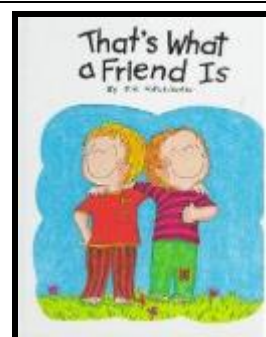
**Have You Filled a Bucket Today? A Guide to Daily Happiness for Kids**  
by Carol McCloud and David Messing



**How to Lose All Your Friends (Picture Puffins)**  
by Nancy Carlson



**Heartprints**  
by P. K. Hallinan



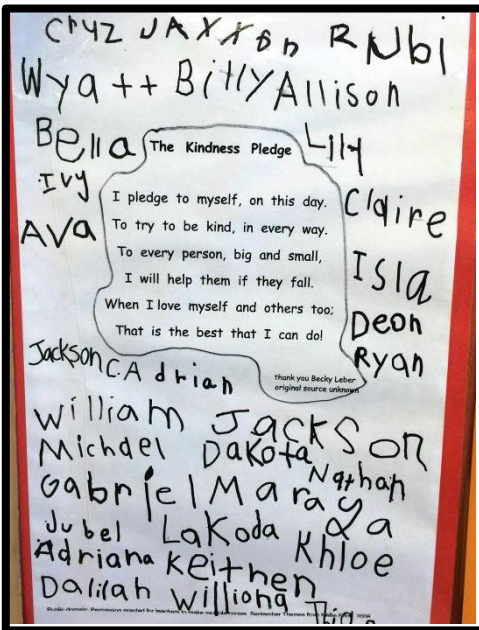
**That's What a Friend Is**  
by P. K. Hallinan and P.K. Hallinan

Literature study throughout the year incorporates themes of friendship, kindness, gratitude, and belonging. Children learn how to be good friends and how to solve problems with words, smiles, and a handshake.



# The Kindness Pledge Is Posted in the "Kindness Corner" in Celeste Starr's Kindergarten:

## Kindergarten Kindness and Writing and Painting Go Together!





# ***Invite Families to Be Partners on Social Emotional Learning: Build Habits of Mind That Will Enrich Children's Lives.***

## **Honoring Martin Luther King Jr. and Noticing Acts of Kindness**

Dear Parents,

We have been reading and learning about Martin Luther King and his contributions to our society. As a black American, Dr. King was eager for his own people to be treated with fairness and kindness. To assist them he followed the example of Gandhi, exhorting his black American friends to peacefully demonstrate for equal rights. Attached is a poem we are learning.

In our kindergarten class, we are seeking ways to solve our little problems peacefully and to show fairness and kindness to our school friends and family. Please help us to encourage these fine traits by noticing your child's acts of peace in the home and recording them on the white link for our classroom chain. Record any act of love and kindness on the red link. We hope, with your efforts and our own, to set these traits as habits that will enrich the life of your child, and through them, to benefit our society.

Warmly,

*Your Child's Teacher*



*The chain honoring Martin Luther King Jr. continues to evolve. This year, green links were added to record acts of "caring for our earth."*

A Joanie Cutler Parent Letter. Used with permission.

From *Parents as Partners in Kindergarten and Early Literacy: Family Connections That Multiply Our Teaching Effectiveness* by Nellie Edge, updated 2023.

[\(Editable Parent Letters available on TPT.\)](#)



See *Social Emotional Learning Supplement*

## Martin Luther King

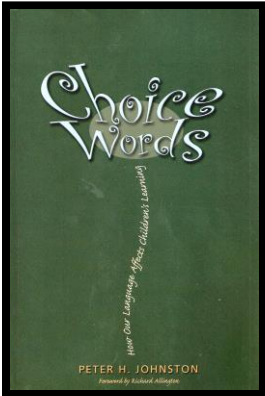
Let us speak and let us sing  
To honor Martin Luther King.  
The gentle wisdom  
That made him strong,  
With acts of peace—  
We'll carry on.

Nellie Edge





## Excerpts from *Choice Words: How Our Language Affects Children's Learning* by Peter H. Johnston



If we have learned anything from Vygotsky (1978), it is that **"children grow into the intellectual life around them"** (p. 88). That intellectual life is fundamentally social, and language has a special place in it. Because the intellectual life is social, it is also relational and emotional. To me, **the most humbling part of observing accomplished teachers is seeing the subtle ways in which they build emotionally and relationally healthy learning communities - intellectual environments that produce not mere technical competence, but caring, secure, actively literate human beings.** Observing these teachers accomplish both goals convinced me that the two achievements are not completely at odds.

**"I like the way you figured that out,"** attributes the accomplishment entirely to the student. This final step offers the student a retrospective narrative about the event in which she stars as the successful protagonist, a collaborative fantasy that makes it possible for the child to become more than herself.

**"This is not like you. What is the problem you have encountered? Okay, how can you solve it?"**

A teacher naming a child **"class poet,"** inviting her to try on that mantle, can also make it so.

Teachers can position children as competitors or collaborators, and themselves as referees, resources, or judges, or in many other arrangements.

The implications of talking about reading as **"work"** are different from referring to it as **"fun."** Similarly, telling children they can have free choice time, **"but first we have to finish our reading,"** positions reading poorly simply by using the words **"have to."**

**"I see you know how to spell the beginning of that word."** The most important piece is to confirm what has been successful (so it will be repeated) and simultaneously assert the learner's competence so she will have the confidence to consider new learning. Marie Clay (1993) refers to this as attending to the **"partially correct."** Its significance cannot be overstated.

**"Remember the first week when we had to really work at walking quietly? Now you guys do it automatically."** Often teachers draw children's attention to their learning histories.

**"How else..."**

It is wonderful when a child solves a problem. We can then ask her to regale us with the story of how she solved it, building her sense of agency. After having done that is the perfect time to ask how else she might have solved it.

**"What if...?"** Thinking flexibly and metaphorically involves expanding the imagination, and what-if questions insist on an imaginative act.

**"(Silence)"** On the face of it, **remaining silent seems quite trivial, but research shows that extending thinking times is positively related to more student talk, more sustained talk, and more "higher order" thinking...** When a teacher waits for a child to figure something out or self-correct, it conveys the message that she expects the child to be able to accomplish it. Failure to wait conveys the opposite message.

**"You guys say such important things, it amazes me you would talk while others are talking."**

**"What are you thinking? Stop and talk to your neighbor about it."**

**"You managed to figure that out with each other's help. How did you do that?"**

# Talking to Kindergartners About Their Writing

*"Have grand expectations and honor children where they are." ~N.E.*

- **Wow! How did you learn** how to make those M's so well?
- **Aren't you amazed** at how much you write in kindergarten?
- I can tell **you sure love being a writer**.
- You wrote a whole sentence with spaces between each word. **I bet you're proud of yourself!**
- **And what are you doing as a writer today?**
- May I tell the class about the **brilliant thing you did** in your writing today?
- **Remember the first week of school** when you used lots of capital letters? Now you are using lowercase...
- Oh, you could make a book about that—**just like Eric Carle does!**
- You just instantly knew how to write the word **love** "by heart." **Wow! You are really growing as a writer.**
- You are becoming a prolific writer. **You worked hard to write that story!**
- **You are doing the work of a writer** who is teaching your readers about rockets.
- When you leave spaces between your words like that, it is so easy to read your writing.
- **Now you get to make a sign.** What do you want us to know about your block building?
- Yes, you did it!! You used lowercase letters.
- **Your pictures and words tell a story.** So many details!
- **I see you know how** to spell the beginning of...
- **Good job listening for sounds!** You knew the first letter/sound in that word.
- Wow! You carefully used five colors. That helps make **a quality illustration!**
- **You remembered the capital letter** at the beginning of the sentence and the period at the end of the sentence—good job remembering those important writing details.
- **Wow! How did you figure out how to spell that word?**
- You'll get to make some more really cool books at the writing center today.
- **Aren't you proud** of your writing progress? Writing is both hard work and so much fun.
- What a descriptive new word! You are such a **voracious vocabulary learner!**
- You remembered how to write another set of "heart words." **Good work learning!**
- You worked on that writing piece over several days; **that's called perseverance.** Good writers keep rereading and adding more detail to their stories.

*"When you think you're done, you've just begun!" Lucy Caulkins*

- Look at what this **prolific writer** did today!!



## Talking to Kindergartners about Their Daily Writing, continued...

- Look! You remembered "-ing" from the King of -ing! Let's highlight that with yellow.
- That reminds me of what author and illustrator Eric Carle does...
- I noticed you used many different colors and you added details...
- You get to read and write every day in kindergarten.
- Wow! You sure love writing secret messages.
- I bet you're the kind of boy who will always love to write.
- What have you learned this week as a writer?
- I noticed you used a new punctuation mark in your writing today.
- I bet you will want to keep writing and drawing over the summer. Here's a summer journal!



What "choice words" and phrases do you use to honor your "Kid Writers"?

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
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- 

To build emotional resilience, research says, "Praise children's efforts, perseverance, and willingness to try new things—not how smart they are." Specific encouragement is much more helpful than generic praise...

Read *Choice Words: How Our Language Affects Children's Learning* by Peter Johnston, Stenhouse, 2004.

Read *Opening Minds: Using Language to Change Lives* by Peter Johnston, Stenhouse, 2012.

Read everything posted by Jacque Verall (NBCT) on the Mentor Kindergarten Chat Board. She has powerful insights into positive discipline and building intrinsic motivation for learning.

### Why is daily authentic writing so important?

- \* Unexpectedly high-achieving schools do two to six times as much authentic reading and writing. The results speak for themselves.
- \* Writing is the place where phonemic awareness is authentically practiced and learned.

From *KKndergarten Writing and the Common Core: Joyful Pathways to Narrative, Opinion, and Information Writing* by Nellie Edge ©2014, updated 2017.

# Do You Want to Have a Happy Classroom?

## Develop an Attitude of Gratitude and Kindness

Provide opportunities for children to practice saying, fingerspelling, signing, and writing "thank you!": It's like giving a gift with eyes and heart smiling.

**Teach the "T-h-a-n-k: I Can Spell Thank You"\* song early in year**

Be generous and sincere when thanking students:

**Thank you for...**

- *Helping pick up the blocks.*
- *Speaking softly.*
- *Lining up right away.*
- *Remembering to bring your Poetry Notebook back.*
- *Practicing your "heart words" so diligently.*
- *Doing such a good job cleaning off the play dough table.*
- *Being the Helper of the Day.*
- *Coming to school on time today.*
- *Holding the door open. That's showing kindergarten kindness!*
- *Listening so quietly. Everyone was able to hear the story.*
- *Practicing so hard: You learned to write "I love you!"*
- *Helping us clean up so quickly. Wow! That's showing kindergarten responsibility.*



### Examples of helpful language for social-emotional growth:

*Josh! Thank you for pushing all the chairs in. No one even had to ask you! You sure know how to take care of our classroom.*

*Thank you for helping Jacob put the blocks away. Good friends help each other—that's kindergarten kindness!*

*I bet many of you will remember to thank Marisa for holding the door open.*

*The positive songs we sing and words we speak and hear influence happy chemicals in the brain!*



\*"T-h-a-n-k: Thank You" song is in ***Social Emotional Learning*** supplement



## Sign Language Teaches Students to Communicate Feelings and Concepts: *Sing and Sign Using American Sign Language Cue Cards*



**Who?** (¿quién?)

**What?** (¿qué?)

**Where?** (¿dónde?)

**When?** (¿cuándo?)

**Why?** (¿por qué?)

**How?** (¿cómo?)

These are the predictable questions that we want children to carry in their mind whenever they write or read. Using writing cue cards, we sing and sign these questions until children have internalized them (use the 🎵 *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star* melody). You can mount, laminate, and bind these together on a ring and keep several sets at the writing centers. We encourage you to add the key question word in Spanish. For teachers like us who are learning ASL and Spanish, these cards provide helpful practice. By repeatedly singing and signing the key question words in English, Spanish and ASL **you are giving your children the gift of many languages while also building a foundation for joyful pathways to Common Core reading and writing proficiency.**

**Common Core Standards require that children learn to ask and answer questions:**



**RL.K.1.** With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.




**L.K.6.** Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts.

**SL.K.2.** Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood.

**SL.K.3.** Ask and answer questions in order to seek help, get information, or clarify something that is not understood.

ASL cue cards are included in ***Social Emotional Learning*** supplemental.

## Teach Writing Cues in English, Spanish and ASL

		
<p><b>Who / Quién</b> Make a circle in front of the lips with the dominant index finger.</p>	<p><b>What / Qué</b> Pass the tip of the dominant index finger down over the non-dominant flat hand from index to little finger.</p>	<p><b>Where / Dónde</b> Hold the dominant index finger up with palm facing forward and shake it rapidly back and forth from left to right.</p>
		
<p><b>When / Cuando</b> Hold the non-dominant index finger upright with the palm facing right. Make a clockwise circle around the non-dominant index finger with the dominant index finger.</p>	<p><b>Why / Por Qué</b> Touch the forehead with the fingers of the dominant hand; then move forward while simultaneously forming the Y hand with the palm facing in.</p>	<p><b>How / Cómo</b> Point the fingers of both bent hands down with hands back to back. Revolve the hands in and upward until the palms are flat and facing up.</p>

Signed by Kimbria Ulshafer.

Adapted from a great resource, *Come Sign With Us: Sign Language Activities for Children*, by Jan C. Hafer and Robert M. Wilson.


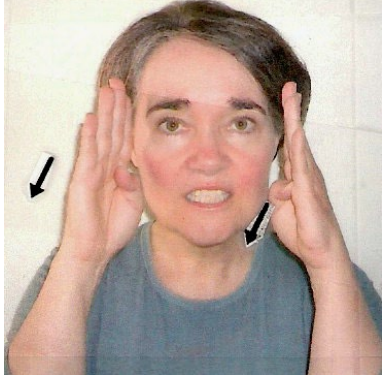



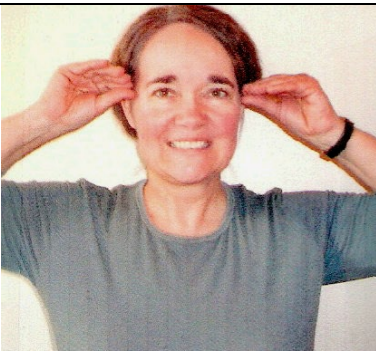




# American Sign Language Honors English Language Learners

 <p><b>Yes (si)</b> The "S" handshape shakes up and down. The "S" handshape represents the head nodding.</p>		
	<p><b>Please (por favor)</b> The open hand circles over the heart to indicate pleasure.</p>	<p><b>Thank you (gracias)</b> The hand moves out and down. This sign is similar to the gesture of kissing one's hand and extending the hand towards someone else in order to show one's gratitude.</p>
		
<p><b>Walk (camina)</b> Hold both flat hands in front with palms down; then imitate walking by moving each hand forward alternately.</p>	<p><b>Don't (no corra)</b> The hands are crossed and then move outward forcefully as if indicating that something should stop.</p>	<p><b>Run (correr)</b> Point both "L" hands forward and hook the right index finger of the dominant hand around the left thumb. Wiggle the thumbs and index fingers as both hands move forward quickly.</p>
		
<p><b>Stop (para)</b> The edge of one hand comes down on the palm to represent something coming to a quick stop. <b>And think:</b> Index finger touches forehead.</p>	<p><b>Toilet / Restroom (baño)</b> The "T" handshape is shook. If that sign is offensive in your community use an "R" handshape.</p>	<p><b>Quiet (silencio) - 2-part sign</b> Touch the lips with the right index finger and move both flat hands down and to the sides with palm facing down in a gesture telling others to be silent (quiet).</p>



# ASL Teaches Students to Be Focused and Develop Visual Literacy

 <p>(Exact Signed English)</p>		
<p><b>Applause (aplauzo)</b> Hands moving excitedly to the side of the forehead is the quietest sign for applause.</p>	<p><b>Careful (con cuidado)</b> Make the sign for "KEEP" ("K" hands) and strike together two times at the wrist.</p>	<p><b>Focus (pay attention) (atención)</b> Two "B" hands at each side of the forehead move forward together.</p>
		
<p><b>Stand (up) (ponte de pie)</b> The "V" handshape represents a person. The location of the "V" handshape shows someone standing on a surface.</p>	<p><b>Sit (down) (sentarse)</b> The upper "U" handshape represents the legs of a person while the other "U" handshape represents a chair. The motion shows a person sitting down. <b>Sit right.</b> Point both index fingers forward. Bring right hand down onto left thumb.</p>	<p><b>Children (niños)</b> With palms facing down, one hand "pats" the head of more than one child.</p>
		
<p><b>Teacher (professor)(2-part sign)</b> The flattened "O" hands move out from the forehead to show that a person is taking what she knows and is passing it on to others. Closed "5" hands move down the sides of the body for "person."</p>	<p><b>Work (trabajar)</b> With the palms facing down, tap the wrist of the right "S" hand on the wrist of the left "S" hand in a hammering motion. <b>Good:</b> The hand moves forth from the mouth to the palm of the other hand.</p>	<p><b>Line up (línea por favor)</b> The "4" hands are often used to represent a line of people. The two "4" hands are pulled apart and fingers spread to show a line of people.</p>



# Research Supports Teaching All Children to Fingerspell and Sign Songs

## *Summary of Benefits:*

- **Engages the child's multiple intelligences** in representing language symbolically.
- Develops phonemic awareness, **the alphabetic principal**, vocabulary, and spelling skills.
- Facilitates a comfort in **understanding and expressing feelings**.
- Fingerspelling **develops the small muscles** necessary for writing.
- Develops **all communication skills**, which provide the window to basic literacy and academic excellence across disciplines.

*"It should be remembered that we speak more than we write. Throughout our lives we judge others, and we ourselves are judged, by what we say and how we speak."*

- Ernest Boyer

- Encourages the child to **share school experiences at home**.
- **Builds community** through shared language experiences.
- Provides a **constructive physical outlet for the kinesthetic learner**.
- Combines "**saying and doing**," which **increases retention of language and concepts by 90%**.
- Provides a **natural bridge for limited English speaking children** in developing a second language.
- Engages the high-risk learners in building confidence and **enthusiasm for learning**.
- **Encourages the whole child to focus attention on learning**.
- Provides an introduction to the **beautiful visual gestural language of ASL**.
- **Accelerates learning in the child's first and second language**, bridging the achievement gap.
- Personalizes language and concepts through "**total emotional body response**."
- Can lead to **memorable performances** for parents.
- **Builds comprehension** by creating **internal images of language**.
- Is **supported by brain research** and language acquisition theory.
- Singing and signing fluently with expression, gesture, and confidence **builds children's speaking skills**.
- **Supports inclusion programs**.
- **Teaches life skills. ASL is the third most common language in the United States.**

*"Our job is not to help kids do well in school. It's to help them do well in life."*

- Elliot Eisner, Speech to the National Staff Development Council, December 1991

- Reading the 3-dimensional language of sign **develops visual skills for reading** printed language.
- **Provides Talented and Gifted (TAG) students a challenge - one that parents love!**

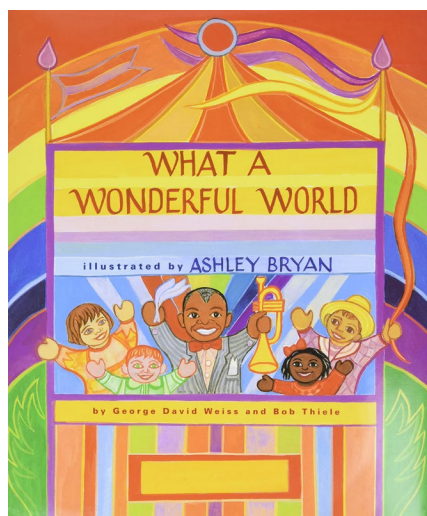
## Think of the Contribution African-Americans Have Made to American Music and the Literary Arts:

### Louis Armstrong

Louis Armstrong was born in one of the poorest sections of New Orleans on August 4, 1901. "He was a prodigy," says art historian and curator Marc Miller, "a hard-working kid who helped support his mother and sister by working every type of job there was, including going out on street corners at night to sing for coins." At age 7, he bought his first real horn - a cornet. From then on, he largely supported himself as a musician, playing with pick-up bands in small clubs with his mentor Joe "King" Oliver. They were creating a distinctive and widely popular new band music out of blues and ragtime. Soon, the term "jazz" would become a household name.



It has been said that Armstrong used his horn like a singer's voice and used his voice like a musical instrument. Many jazz musicians and historians say that Armstrong was the greatest of all jazz musicians, that he defined what it was to play jazz. His amazing technical abilities, the joy and spontaneity, and amazingly quick, inventive musical mind still dominate jazz to this day. By the 1950's, Armstrong was an established international celebrity - an icon to musicians and lovers of jazz - and a genial, infectious optimistic presence wherever he appeared. In 1963, his hit version of *Hello Dolly* even knocked the Beatles off the top of the charts. Armstrong summarized his philosophy in the spoken introduction to his 1970 recording *What a Wonderful World*. "And all I'm saying is, see what a wonderful world it would be if only we would give it a chance. Love, baby, love. That's the secret. Yeah." Said Dizzy Gillespie in 1971, "Louis Armstrong's station in the history of jazz is unimpeachable. If it weren't for him, there wouldn't be any of us." Louis Armstrong died in 1971.



### Teach Students to Sing, Sign, and Perform *What a Wonderful World* by Louis Armstrong

I see trees of green,  
Red roses too,  
I see them bloom for me and you,  
And I think to myself,  
"What a wonderful world!"

By George David Weiss and Bob Thiele, with inspiration from Louis Armstrong, © 1967 Range Road Music, Inc. See the book *What a Wonderful World* (same authors), illustrated by Ashley Bryan, Atheneum Books for Young Readers, © 1995.

See the following websites for photos and additional information on Louis Armstrong:  
[www.npg.si.edu/exh/armstrong](http://www.npg.si.edu/exh/armstrong) and [www.redhotjazz.com/louie.html](http://www.redhotjazz.com/louie.html)

From *The Magic of Signing Songs Volume II* manual, ASL guide, and DVD by Nellie Edge and Diane Larsen.



# We Create a "Wonderful World" by Bringing Children's Lives into the Classroom

Parents love to see the lives of the children adorning the walls of our classrooms - enticing photographs and children's drawings in pleasing displays. **Children and teachers deserve beautiful classrooms full of wonderful books, blocks, art materials, dramatic play props, and natural objects - plants, fall leaves and seashells.** The ideal kindergarten is a homelike atmosphere with **cozy, inviting corners to read in, pillows, couches, and a rocking chair.** Children and teachers work together to create and keep the environment attractive, functional and organized. It is easier for children to develop a sense of personal organization when everything in the kindergarten has a place and everything eventually gets put back in its place. Kindergarten children thrive because we create an environment that looks and feels like a "child's garden." - Nellie Edge

*Jennifer Foster, kindergarten and mentor teacher from Salem, Oregon, reflects on how she invites the children to help her shape the classroom environment:*

**"Kindergarten is a 'child's garden,' it's not *my* garden.** The children need to grow the garden and create the environment. I never know what it will look like. It's like planting wildflower seeds. **The children are actually doing the work and creating the garden.** The joy and pride and success of what blossoms is theirs."

*Shelley Harwayne reflects on beautiful school settings, from her book Lifetime Guarantees:*

**"My colleagues are detail people, and it shows.** They fret over furniture, fabric, folders, and flowers. **They request that their rugs be shampooed and their windows washed.** They back their bulletin boards with fadeless black paper, place interesting centerpieces in the middle of their tables, **and are not afraid to bring their life passions into the classroom.** They love the look and feel of books, and pay careful attention to the arrangement of texts in their classroom libraries. **It's a lot easier to do beautiful work when you have a beautiful setting."**

*Joanie Cutler, gifted kindergarten teacher and author from Eugene, Oregon reflects:*

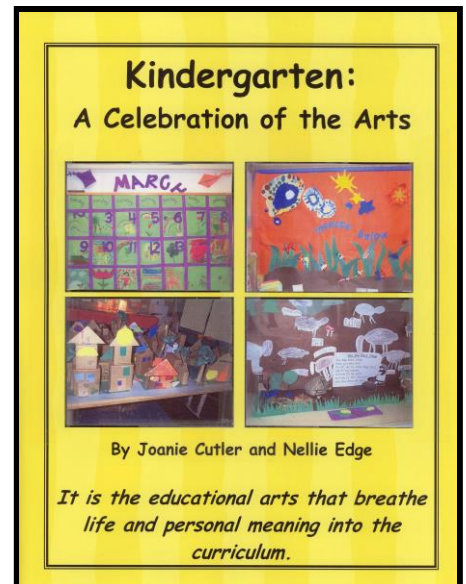
**"I think meticulously about what must be presented in the school curriculum - then I look at literature and the arts. I want to give a child a fuller picture of why we are reading and writing.** Through experiences in nature and the arts I am quietly expanding their lives... **For the teacher, it (the arts) is a direction and a passion to make learning beautiful for the children..."**

*(Parents describe Joanie as "a cross between Mary Poppins and Mother Theresa.")*

Shelley Harwayne. *Lifetime Guarantees.* Heinemann, 2000.

Jennifer Foster, Jeff James and Nellie Edge. *All Kindergarten Children Love to Write* revised. 2005.

Joanie Cutler and Nellie Edge. *Kindergarten: A Celebration of the Arts.* 2005.



# Create a "Wonderful World" in the Classroom:

## Connie Cazort Talks About the Emotional Climate

***"It is the child who is most important in my kindergarten planning and the emotional climate I create..."*** Connie Cazort

**When I look at a room, I think...**

*"Is this an emotionally safe and aesthetically inviting place for children to be?"*

**The Emotional Climate (Includes attitudes about self and about learning)**

*"Is this environment safe enough for children to reach out and learn?"*

**I think about the feeling of the room, does it have:**

- Proper temperature
- Warm colors
- Good smells
- Adequate lighting
- Good air
- A view of nature

**I consciously give children:**

- The language of respect
- Nurturing
- My optimistic expectations for them

*"I can tell you're a person who knows how to make friends."*

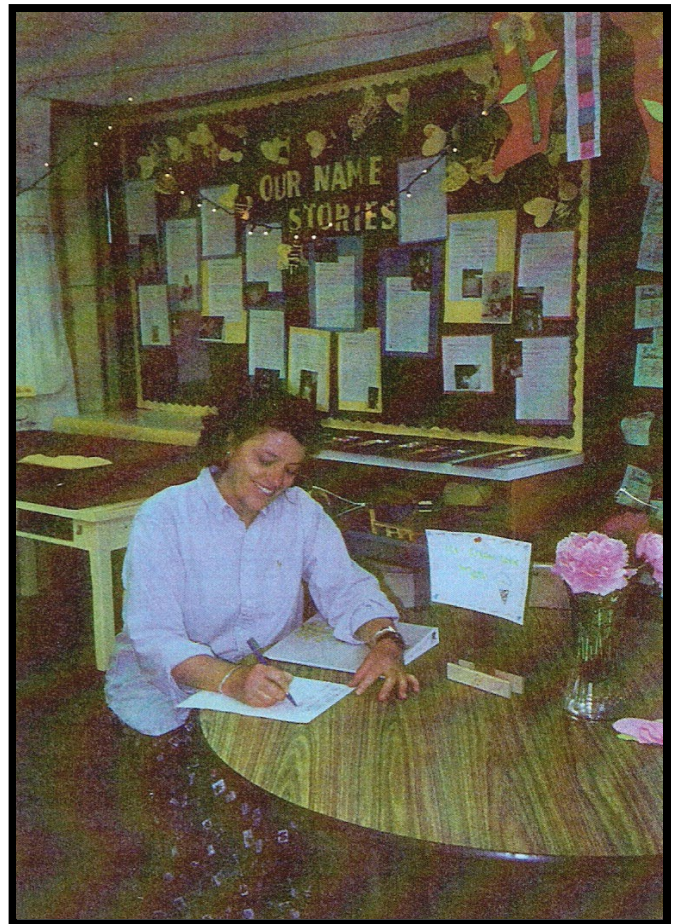
*"I can tell that you're a person who knows how to make people feel good."*

**I look at the big picture, beyond even literacy development:**

- Is this a joyful place?
- What life skills can I give my children?
- What attitudes can I impart about self and learning?
- How does my language respect and nurture?

**I involve parents as "Partners" in providing meaningful literacy experiences:**

The "Our Name Stories" bulletin board (shown behind Connie in picture) displays one of our family literacy projects. Each parent writes about their child's name.



Connie Cazort, seated in her Kindergarten Classroom  
Notice the twinkling lights (which are on year-round) and the inviting displays on the tables.



**How do you create a beautiful environment for learning?**



# **We Build Character and Emotional Intelligence Through the Community We Create: *Choose Words Wisely!***

*You stayed with the job for a long time even when it was hard. That's called perseverance!*

*You worked hard! I bet you're proud of yourself...*

*Remember the beginning of the year - when you used all capital letters in your writing? Now look at how you use lower-case letters. You worked diligently learning to write those letters. You've really grown as a writer!*

*You wanted to shout out your answer when Joshua was talking, but you waited and didn't interrupt. That's called self-discipline!*

*You came right on time today. Thanks for being punctual!*

*Wow! You pushed in all those chairs because you saw it needed to be done. You sure know how to take care of our classroom!*

*I can see you're the kind of boy who knows how to be a good friend.*

*You worked together with Joshua to build that castle. That's cooperation!*

*Thank you for holding the door open for us. That is helpful behavior for all of your kindergarten friends.*

*Kindergarten friends: how can we help Marissa...?*

*If you need help tying your shoe, you can ask one of our kindergarten shoe tying experts!*

*The more you practice—the better you get!*

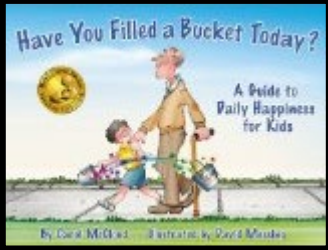
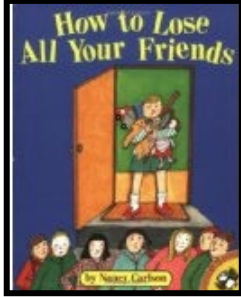
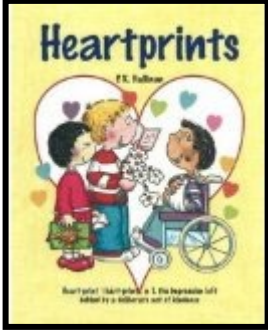
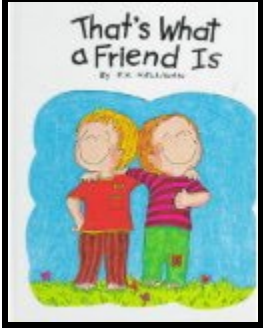

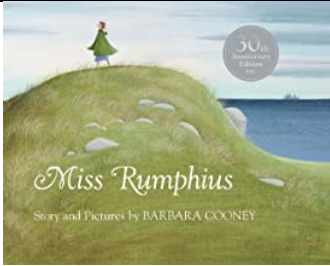
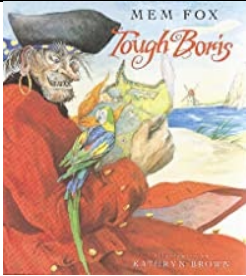
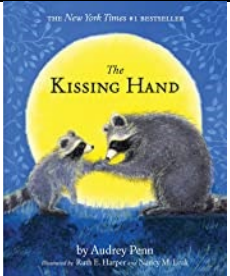
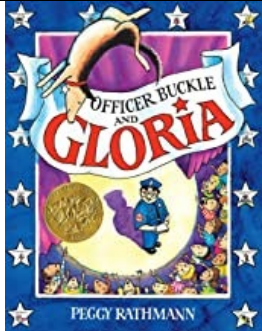
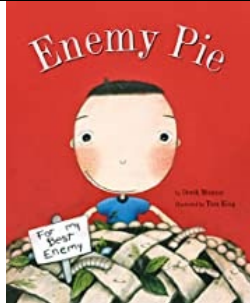
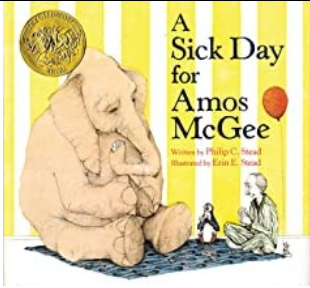
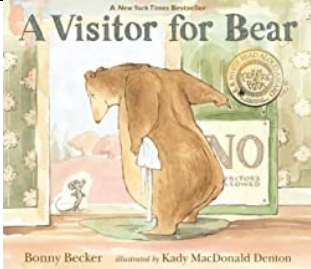

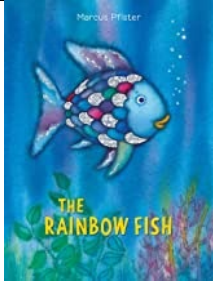

No matter who wins or loses, teach students to **automatically** smile, give each other a high five, and say **with gusto**, "**Good job!** Let's play it again!"



*How do you use validating statements, encouragement, and positive discipline when talking to children? How do your words nurture Emotional Intelligence?*

## Books on Kindness, Gratitude, and Friendship

Incorporate themes of friendship, kindness, gratitude, and belonging in your literature study throughout the year. Young children can learn how to be good friends and how to solve problems with words, hugs, and a handshake. Yes, teaching social-emotional skills will take time and requires intentional focus throughout the day, but the benefits will last a lifetime!

 <p><b>Have You Filled a Bucket Today? A Guide to Daily Happiness for Kids</b> by Carol McCloud and David Messing</p>	 <p><b>How to Lose All Your Friends (Picture Puffins)</b> by Nancy Carlson</p>	 <p><b>Heartprints</b> by P. K. Hallinan</p>	 <p><b>That's What a Friend Is</b> by P.K. Hallinan</p>
 <p><b>Thank You, Omu!</b> by Oge Mora</p>	 <p><b>Miss Rumphius</b> by Barbara Cooney</p>	 <p><b>Tough Boris</b> by Mem Fox</p>	 <p><b>The Kissing Hand</b> by Audrey Penn</p>
 <p><b>Officer Buckle and Gloria</b> by Peggy Rathman</p>	 <p><b>Enemy Pie: Reading Rainbow Book about Kindness</b> By Derek Munson</p>	 <p><b>A Sick Day for Amos McGee</b> by Philip C. Stead</p>	 <p><b>My Friend Is Sad</b> by Mo Willems</p>
 <p><b>A Visitor for Bear</b> by Bonny Becker</p>	 <p><b>Beautiful Hands</b> by Bret Baumgarten and Kathryn Otoshi</p>	 <p><b>The Rainbow Fish</b> by Marcus Pfister</p>	 <p><b>Little Blue and Little Yellow</b> by Leo Lionni</p>



### **Chapter 3**

*Nurturing SEL Through Positive Discipline, Choice Words, ASL, and  
Carefully Chosen Songs and Rhymes*

### **NOTES**

## Chapter 4

# The Heart of Kindergarten: Memorable Rituals, Traditions, and Celebrations



Kindergartners in Eugene, Oregon don their hand-painted wings and fly away from kindergarten on the last day of school - into the arms of their parents.

These "Kinder Stars" in Salem, Oregon are signing *The Pledge of Allegiance* sung by Lee Greenwood on his CD *American Patriot*, for their families.



See the story of Celeste Starr's complete year-end celebration at [www.nellieedge.com](http://www.nellieedge.com) under "Photo Essays."

*"Children deserve to memorize, recite, and perform language."*



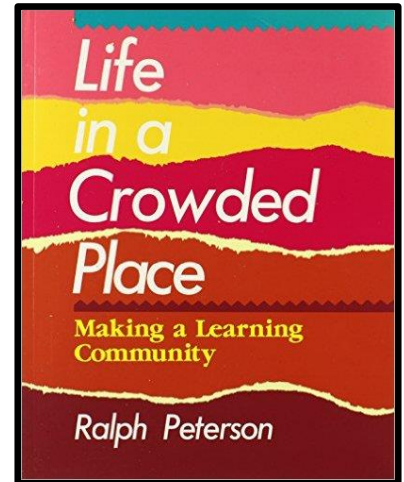
# Excerpts from Ralph Peterson's

## *Life in a Crowded Place: Making a Learning Community*

### Ceremony

*But ceremony becomes very important when students are expected to construct meaning on their own and with others. Assuming responsibility for their own learning and not merely acting out someone else's plan calls upon students to focus their attention.*

*Where study is concerned, ceremony brings about an internal readiness, pushing aside that which might interfere and helping students to participate wholeheartedly by concentrating thought and feeling on the work at hand.*



### Opening the Day

*Ceremony creates an intellectual and emotional order for the schooling activity so that the group is focused upon learning and community life.*

*Properly executed, an opening ceremony will get the group off to a good beginning. Flag salutes and patriotic songs are often incorporated into ceremonies. Too, there are teachers who open with a song and a class meeting to share thoughts and outline a plan for the day.*

*Knowing about the other person is the seed that can blossom into authentic caring. In turn, caring strengthens the pulse of community life. The strength of all social relationships and communities arises out of caring. Caring for another person, in the most significant sense, is to help him or her grow and self-actualize.*

### During the Day

*Once into the school day, teachers use ceremony to create order in much the same way that chapters bring order to the content of a rich and varied narrative. Ceremony can clear the air of ideas, emotion, and work patterns before taking up a new activity. When ceremony is not used, there is a sense of jumping from one activity to the next without a sense of purpose. Good ceremony provides time and a suitable climate for students to come to grips with the forthcoming activity.*

### Ending the Day

*When the day has run its course, ceremony can be used to pull elements together, make them whole. Not all teachers close the day with ceremony. In some classrooms, activity collapses when the bell rings. Students shove books and papers into their desks, grab their coats, and line up while the teacher makes announcement.*

*When teachers use a touch of ceremony to make the day complete, the working rhythms of the day are slowed; loose ends are tied. Students are brought together to end on a harmonious note. Some teachers bring students together and ask them to share something important that has happened during the day. Other teachers recount the day's events with their students, noting achievements, pointing toward tomorrow. Singing together, having the class historian report the day's events, or gathering in groups to converse before leaving are other ways. I heard about a junior high school community that closed its day with a ritual dance movement. Regardless of how ceremony is incorporated, the intent is to establish a feeling of completeness before the students return to the everyday world beyond the classroom walls.*

*Ceremony aids teachers in bringing shape and life to the learning community. It forms attitudes and creates a feeling of group purpose. It can fire emotions, affect a contemplative mood, and foster or bring about a powerful tool to help us center the group and turn attention to the events that are to follow.*

## **Ritual**

*Ritual can express feelings, experience, and dispositions when other forms of expression fail us. That is why we behave in certain ways at funerals, gather in specific ways during holidays, and participate in reunions. Through ritual, we express value, being, and commitment.*

*Ritual appeals to the imagination and the heart. And it is exacting – the "right" way of conducting a ritual has to be learned.*

*(Take note of how, when you are in an unfamiliar situation, you observe others very closely to see the way things are done.) If you doubt that rituals need to be conducted in certain ways, talk to teachers who give ritual treatment of the calendar as part of the opening ceremony. Substitute teachers seldom do it right, and when the "real" teacher returns, students are sure to tell about the sorry way the substitute conducted the opening ceremony.*

**Excerpts printed with permission from Ralph Peterson.**

*Life in a Crowded Place: Making a Learning Community.*  
Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann Educational Books, 1992.



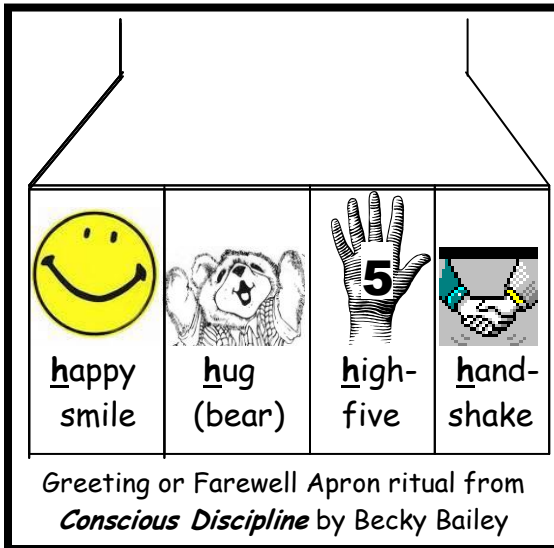
**Julia Barto teaches children to greet each other with a handshake, smile, and "Good morning!"**



**What is your favorite class ritual? Why?**



# How the Day Begins: Bonding, Positive Expectations, Orderliness, Ceremony, and Delight



The moment children step over the threshold into your classroom, they enter a unique environment where **there are specific and orderly ways to do things and where their lives are honored and celebrated.**

- **Teachers have a special way to greet children at the door with a hug, high-five, or handshake.** (Choose an "h.") They create a time for meaningful bonding with each child so children anticipate coming to school. A greeting/farewell apron lets children choose their form of acknowledgement from the teacher.
- **There is a place and a right way to hang up coats**

and children quickly learn the morning routine of where to go and what to do. They internalize their teacher's high expectations through consistent positive management and conscious discipline.

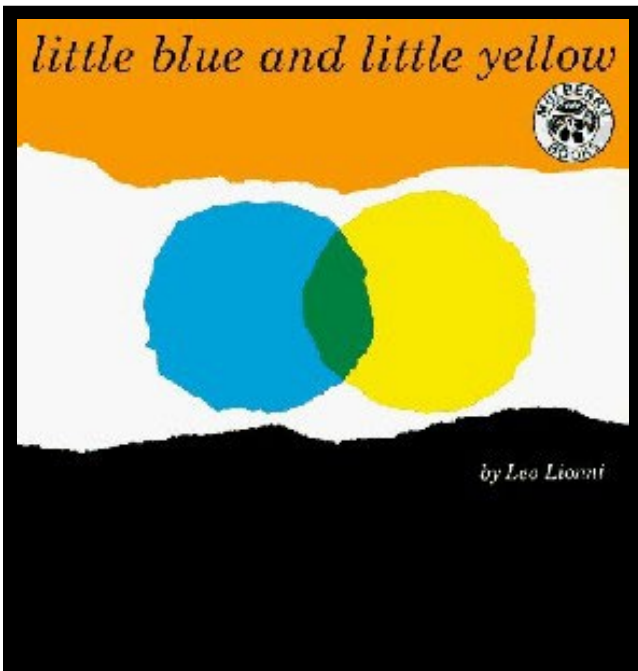
- **Some teachers prefer a soft "settling in time"** where children write their "name ticket", complete morning work jobs, and then choose their learning center activity while browsing the room and quietly chatting with each other as teacher has the opportunity to personally connect with each child and perhaps also some parents.
- **Often a certain signal (a bell chiming or a song) calls children to gather on the floor.** They sing name songs and games that joyfully acknowledge each child and build togetherness and friendship.
- **Teachers choose songs with affirming messages** like ♪ *The More We Get Together the Happier We'll Be* or *Magic Penny...* ♪ *Love is something if you give it away...*
- **Calendar activities** and an overview of the day may follow group songs, dances, and acknowledgements.
- **Teachers affirm positive messages:**  
*You'll be amazed at how quickly we'll learn the whole ABC Phonics song...*  
*You are so good at helping each other: that's what friends do...*  
*This is going to be another happy day!*  
*Okay prolific writers and illustrators:*  
*Today we get to start our science notebooks!*



Joanie Cutler invites the children to wake up rabbit so he can help them read the calendar; this is a daily part of their calendar ritual.

# Begin the Year with This Engaging Literature and Science Adventure

## Little Blue and Little Yellow: Happily They Hugged Each Other...



As an introduction to the story of little blue and little yellow, children discussed their favorite colors and what they like to do with their friends. Mrs. Nelson let the children know, "This is my favorite book about color!"

Later in the playdough center, as a follow-up to the book, children got to take one small yellow playdough ball and one small blue ball and discover what happens: "they hugged each other and hugged each other until they were green..." The children were totally engaged and amazed.

Here is some of the children's language:

- "Just keep them hugging..."
- "That's totally green!"
- "This is science."
- "Cool!"

Experiential learning is alive every day in Katie Nelson's rich kindergarten program. Students love coming to school because kindergarten is meaningful and sparks curiosity, collaboration and joy!



# Celebrate Language and Create Birthday Traditions

## *Social Emotional Learning Happens Every Day Across the Curriculum*

### **Playful Phonemic Awareness with Happy Birthday:**

- Play with the birthday greeting by emphasizing the beginning sound of each word H-H-H-H-Happy B-B-B-Birthday t-t-t-to y-y-y-you. Phonemic Awareness is language play!

### **Respectful Consideration for the Child Who Does Not Celebrate Birthdays**

Before school starts, ask parents if there are any holidays they do not want their child celebrating. Explain to parents that you use a child's birthday to encourage reading, writing, learning about growth, the cycles of nature, and to build Social Emotional Learning. It is the way we show caring and kindness to classmates. Some years it may be more appropriate to celebrate a "child of the week" as a means for students to show appreciation and get to know their classmates and families better.

Can parents help their child choose to create a unique and special day rather than celebrate their birthday? Ideas: "Baby lambs day", or "Falling Leaves day" (Read *I'm In Charge of Celebrations* by Byrd Baylor). Can the class have a "Getting to know Jeremy day?" or a "Things Jeremy loves day?" What do the parents suggest?

### **About the Happy Birthday Song**

The traditional "Happy Birthday" song by Patty S. Hill is copyrighted. We do not have permission to include it here. As a teacher, you may legally make a chart of the words for your classroom. We use the Hawaiian version written and given to us by our friend Uncle Sam Molale.

### **Kathie Bridges' Birthday Ritual**

The birthday child chooses their favorite rhythmic version of the traditional birthday song for the class to sing:

- One with a "cha-cha-cha" after each phrase (This is usually the favorite!)
- Sing and sign the song in slow motion
- Sing rapidly in a silly voice

### **Hawaiian Birthday Love Song**

Happy birthday to you - we love you.  
Happy birthday to you - we love you.  
Happy birthday to you - we love you.  
Oh, Elissa - Happy birthday - we love you.

*Translated from Hawaiian, by Sam Molale*



## Multicultural Extensions

Learn the Spanish birthday love song, *Las Mañanitas* or *De Colores*, both *Nellie Edge Read and Sing Big Books™*.

The class can sing along with the music from Héctor Pichardo's CD: *In Celebration of Spanish Folk Songs*.



## Auditory Spelling

Sing "I am very, very happy: H-a-p-p-y. Sing, Sign, Spell and Read! by Gina Edge. Children sing this with gusto to the tune of "I've Been Working on the Railroad."

## Keep Birthday Rituals or "Child of the Week" Traditions Consistent All Year Long

Establish your birthday or child of the week rituals the first of the year and keep them consistent so children can anticipate the experience. Think about what the child can **give to others** on their special day. They can share a favorite poem or song or donate a book to the class library. If they donate a book, place a photo of the child inside the book with an inscription, Donated by \_\_\_\_\_, and the date.

## The Parents as Partners Connection

Invite parents to bring in pictures of their child from babyhood to the current time and to share some special family stories. These pictures can be attached to a chart of the celebration song or temporarily taped in your Happy Birthday class-book. Consider sending home a form for the parents to complete:

Joshua was born in \_\_\_\_\_ (city & state)

When Joshua was one year old he \_\_\_\_\_...

When Joshua was two years old he \_\_\_\_\_...

### The Earth Revolves Around the Sun (♫ Tune: The Ants Go Marching ♪)

The earth revolves around the sun  
one time, each year.

The earth revolves around the sun  
one time, each year.

The earth revolves around the sun  
one time, each year,  
since before I was one...

And now I'm 6 years old, today!

Nellie Edge

## Nellie Edge Birthday "Earth Science" Ritual

The birthday child holds an inflatable globe while marching around another child holding a flashlight under a yellow scarf as a model of the sun. The birthday child goes one time around the sun for each year of age while the class sings "The Earth Revolves Around the Sun."

## Send Home a Birthday Book Bag

Here are some favorite birthday books:

- *A Birthday for Frances*, Russell Hoban
- *Happy Birthday Moon*, Frank Asch
- *On the Day You Were Born*, Debra Frasier
- *I'm in Charge of Celebrations*, Byrd Baylor
- *Guess How Much I Love You*, Sam McBratney
- *Happy Birth Day!* Robie Harris



# Kindergarten Friends Challenge: "I Can Say Every Name!"



*The Friendly Fox puppet helps children take the Kindergarten Friends Challenge.*

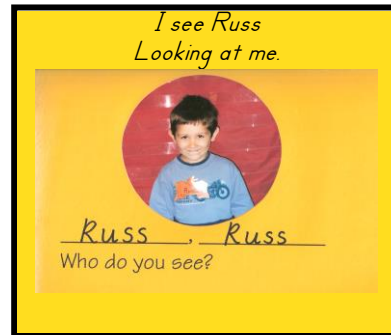
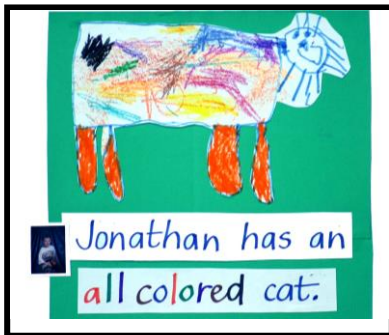


*A Name/Picture Pocket Chart invites children to practice quick recall of names.*

Encouraging children to quickly recall the names of every student in the classroom helps build a friendly classroom environment where every child feels a sense of belonging. It also develops social intelligence and communications skills. You will find that many of your more socially mature students automatically learn names, easily establish eye contact, smile and confidently say, "Good morning, Marissa." These children may become "name experts." Other children will benefit from additional practice.

## How to encourage the less socially confident child?

- Read and reread class-made books featuring the names and lives of your students.



- Send home a Parents as Partners letter with school photos and names attached: encourage parents to review the names with their child nightly.
- Let the child practice one-on-one with a "name expert," using the Name/Picture Chart.

Celeste Starr playfully introduced this activity with her Forgetful Friendly Fox puppet who wanted to learn all of the children's names. First she modeled going around in a circle and quickly naming each child. Then children were invited to help the fox learn the names of each of their classmates. Her students were so confident, the activity moved to another level - saying, "Hi Joshua" or, "Good morning, David." Children were praised for looking at the speaker and smiling. When the child who was least well known to his classmates took a turn, we suggested that each child respond to his greeting with, "Hi, Nathan" to help bring him closer into the circle of friends. Celeste encouraged children to fingerspell the first letter of their name if the person greeting them needed help remembering it.

**With practice, children may enjoy taking "The Kindergarten Friends Challenge" and officially become a "kindergarten name expert."**

*A special thank you to Dan Gurney for the original idea from the CKA newsletter(fall 2006) which we have adapted.*

# Every Learning Community Needs a Soft, Cuddly Mascot

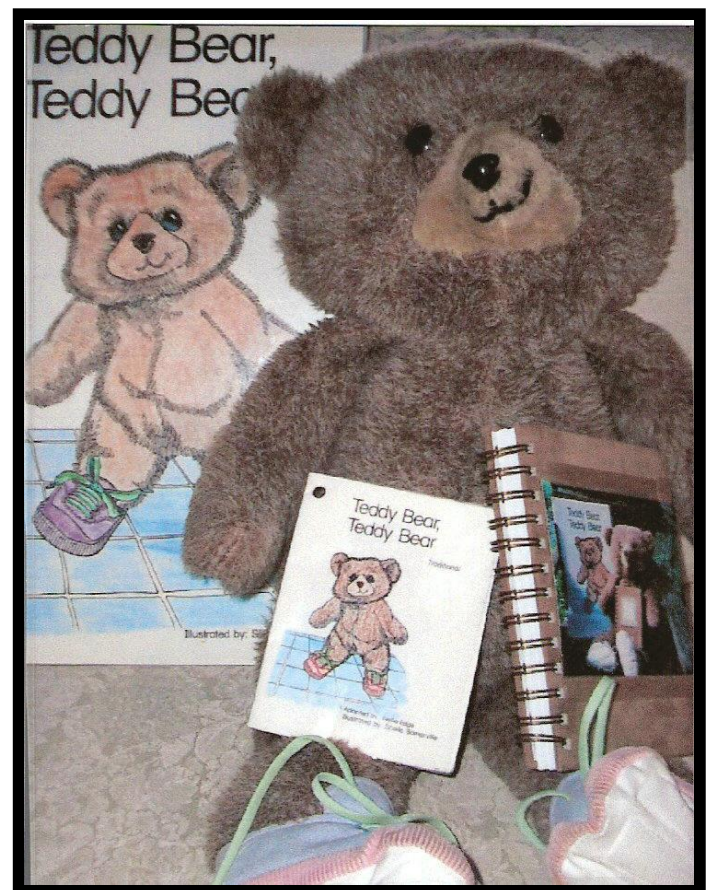
## Meet Teddy Bear: named after Teddy Roosevelt

Building a joyful, supportive community of learners is at the heart of our teaching curriculum. We want children to feel valued, included and eager to come to school. We are conscious of creating a unique community within our classroom with specific ways of doing things that tickle the imagination and touch the heart. Our efforts in creating memorable learning rituals, traditions and celebrations enhance our children's desire to learn. It provides structure and intrinsic motivation for rigorous and joyful learning. We are responsible for the memories of childhood and we're in charge of celebrations!

Schools, sports teams and classrooms need a special mascot to rally around.

My soft, cuddly Teddy Bear with his purple tennis shoes is an example of a favorite class mascot. Teddy Bear, named after Teddy Roosevelt, becomes a special imaginary friend to every child in the class. He especially loves to have children read the *Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear* Big Book to him. He often sits in the book area, on the lap of a kindergarten child. At night he goes home in a Teddy Bear tote bag with his *Teddy Bear Journal* and *The Legend of Teddy Bear* book. Families write about their adventures with Teddy Bear. Some families even send him back with a new hat or a hand-knit vest.

Diane Larson's kindergarten mascot is Casey Bear. He has his own knapsack. Diane takes pictures of each child and the bear and recommends keeping a list of the children's names and checking them off as each child has a turn to take the mascot home.



**Other favorite literary class mascots include:** Floppy Rabbit, Curious George the Monkey, Horton the Elephant, Hedgie Hedgehog, Busy Bees, Geoffrey Giraffe, Rex the Reptile (with non-fiction books about reptiles) and Piglet from *Winnie the Pooh*.



# Establish the Home-to-School Book Buddy Ritual

Send home your class mascot and invite families to write about their adventures in an accompanying journal

Dear Friend,

Hello! My name is Teddy Bear. I am the mascot from "**The Singing and Signing Kindergarten**" with teacher Nellie Edge. I get to spend the week with your family and share your home adventures. I even get to sleep overnight! And Friday morning I'll go back to school with you. There are other friends waiting to take me home so please return me to school on time!

I will tell you a little bit about myself. I am a brown bear and I am named after Teddy Roosevelt. He was a United States president who loved children, nature and animals. Once he saved a bear. Your family can read that story in the enclosed book, ***The Legend of the Teddy Bear***, written by Frank Murphy. Teddy Roosevelt loved to play hide and seek and to read with his six children when he was president and lived in the White House.

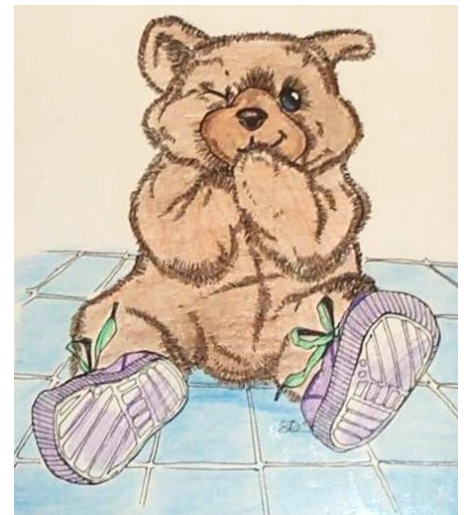
I brought my favorite book, ***Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear***, for you to read to your family. And I also brought my very own Teddy Bear Journal for you and an adult to write about my adventures with your family. You may use one or two pages. It's fine to draw a picture or even include a photo of us together.

I know you will take good care of me during my visit with your family. Share me and my books and journal with any little brothers or sisters, but please keep me out of their mouths. I have visited a lot of friends and I might have germs! Make sure I put my shoes back on and remember to gather all three books and return them with me to school tomorrow in my Teddy Bear Tote Bag.

Thank you for letting me visit your family. I love having good kindergarten friends.

Love,

Teddy Bear

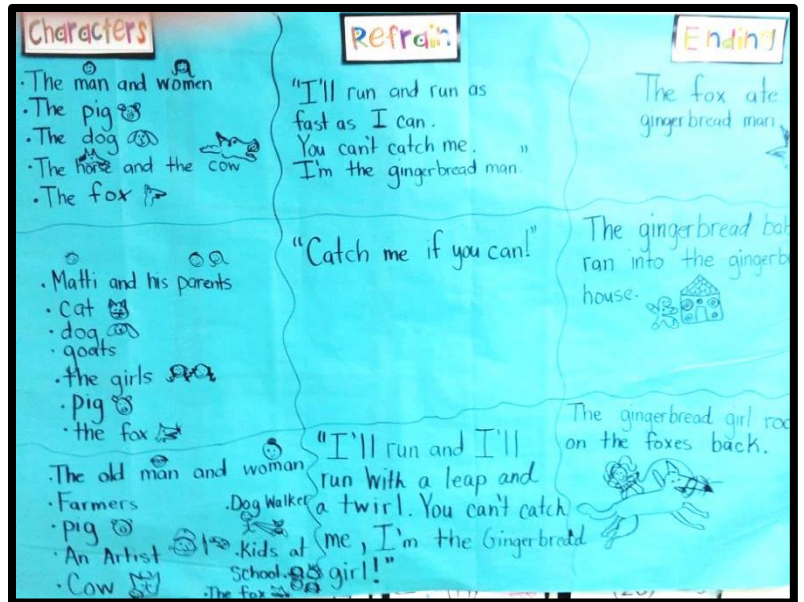


What is the name of your kindergarten class and who is the mascot?

# Family Gingerbread House Parties and Literature Extensions: Beyond "Cutesy" to Quality Kindergarten Experiences with Winter Themes



As a December Family Literacy Connection, Jaime Corliss invites families to decorate a gingerbread man. These are returned to school and displayed for all to see. The children study **variances** of The Gingerbread Man story. They also write about The Gingerbread Man and produce **detailed illustrations**, learning to first draw in pencil, outline in black, and then color the pictures in. The class ends the year with a family gingerbread house making party.

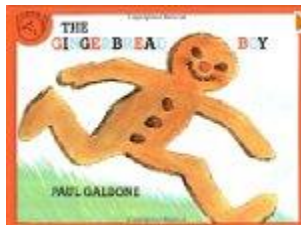


The Gingerbread Man Literature Study: Children develop an understanding of story and memorize a familiar rhyme.



*The Gingerbread Man*  
by Jim Alesworth

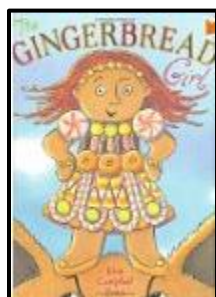
*The Gingerbread Man*  
by Paul Galdone



*The Gingerbread Baby*  
by Jan Brett



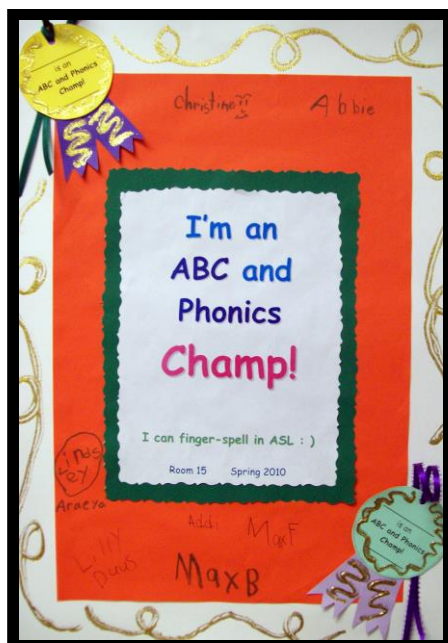
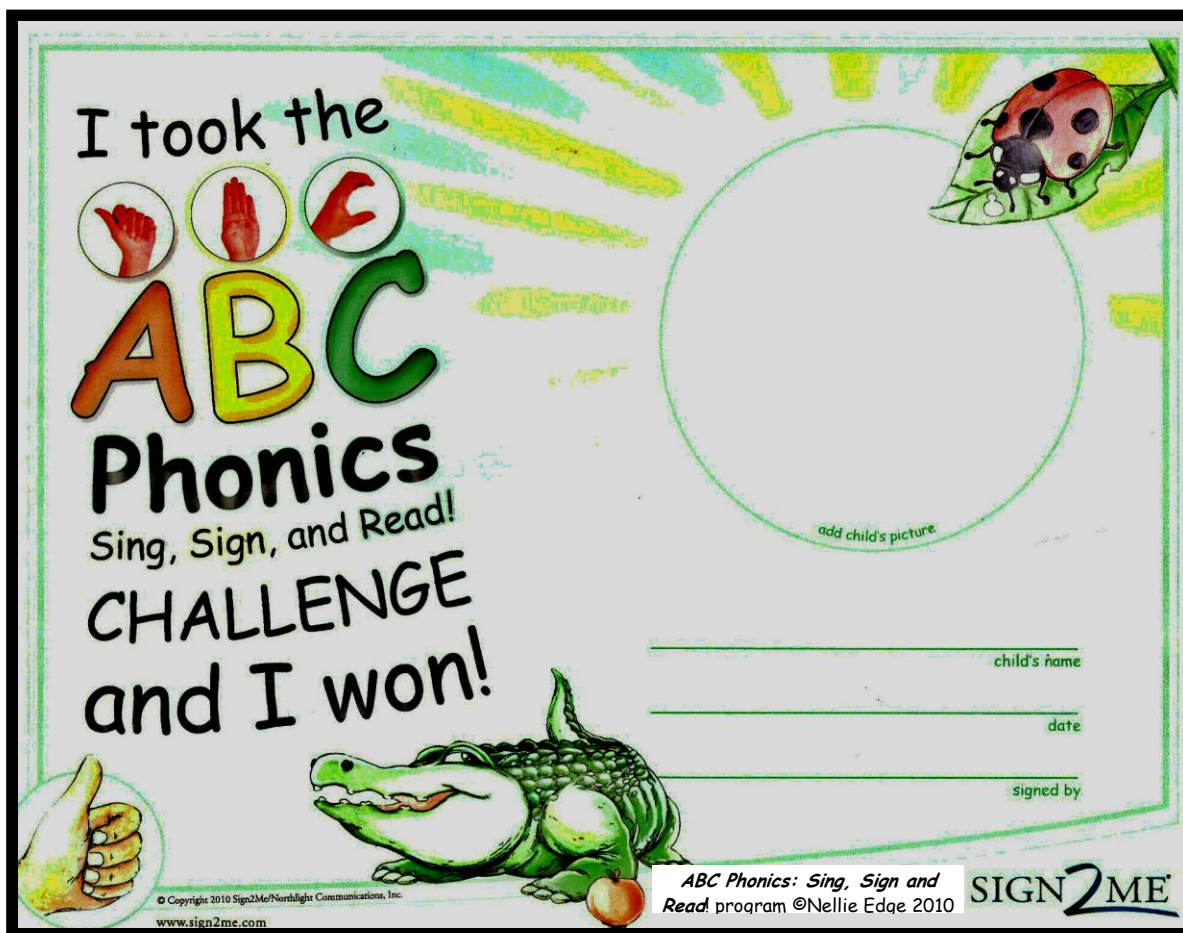
*The Gingerbread Girl*  
by Lisa Campbell Ernst



Families gather before the holiday for a kindergarten gingerbread house making celebration. (Extra houses were provided for younger siblings.)



# Children Love Awards and Badges to Acknowledge their Accomplishments: Take the ABC Phonics Challenge!



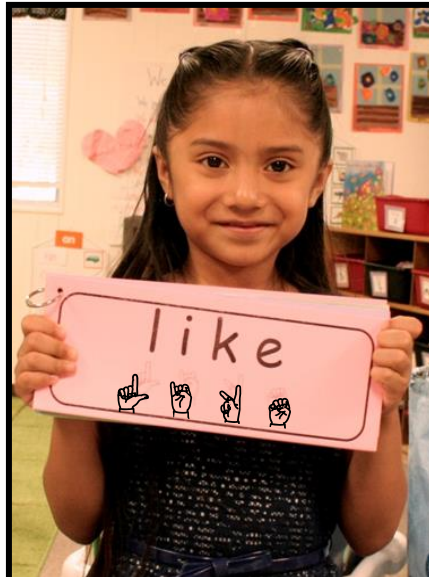
Kindergarten teacher, Laura Flocker made special awards for each child to wear when they had mastered instant recognition of each letter, sound, and accurate fingerspelling for the entire alphabet. Children practiced their **ABC Phonics: Sing, Sign, and Read!** song at home and helped each other at school using the class chart. The earliest ABC Phonics "experts" were often the highly kinesthetic, musical children who are not traditionally the early readers. **Multisensory ABC and phonics immersion honors all learning styles.**

# Celebrate Learning and Acknowledge Children as Experts!

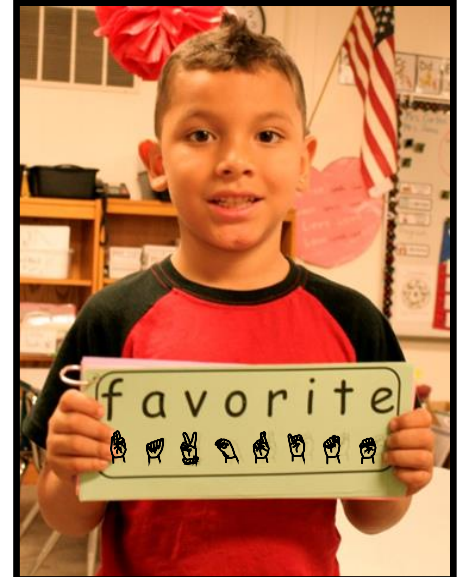
Copies of the *Sing, Sing, Spell, and Read!* CD by Nellie Edge with fingerspelling/word models and anthology pages are given to families for at-home practice. They can be made into a class book: **We Can Read Pink "Heart Words!"**



because



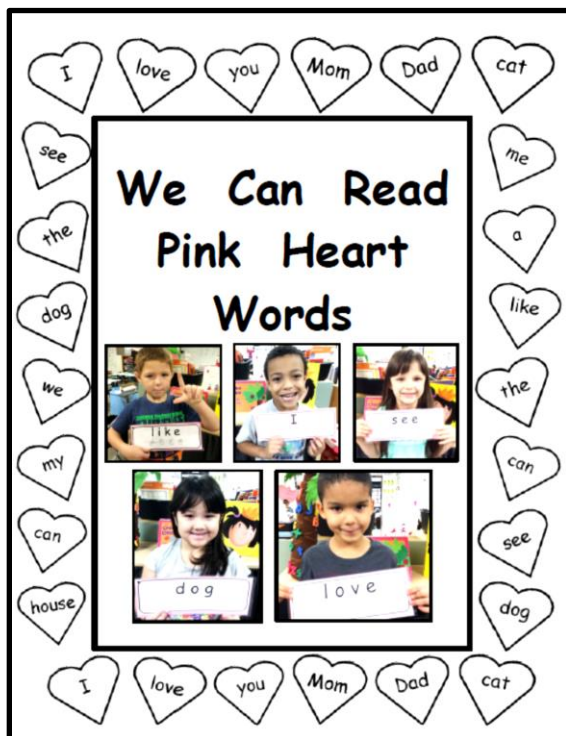
like



favorite



"Because," "like," and "favorite" are Opinion Writing words!



## Make a Class Book:

Children love to be acknowledged as experts. The positive affirmation soon becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy! Reading high-frequency "heart words" in a book with photos of kindergarten friends makes learning personally meaningful.

*Boys and girls, the reason we are learning "heart words" is so we can become better writers and readers, so we want to work on them every day at school and at home.*



## The Read and Sing Tradition Evolves into Our Family Book Club: Develop Oral Language and Reading Fluency Simultaneously



We begin the year sharing several Nellie Edge Read and Sing Big Books™ every morning. *I Can Read Colors, I Have a Cat, I Love the Mountains, Mary Wore Her Red Dress, The More We Get Together, Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, The Opposite Song, and Goodnight Irene* have become favorites. The accompanying "little books" and "guided reading books" are used for large group Shared Reading and are taken home for family literacy as a part of our Read and Sing Book Club. Children are soon able to move from "magical memory reading" with fluency and delight to reading with confidence and word-for-word accuracy. For many children, these song picture Big Books became their touchstone: An affirmation of "I can read!" That was the case with Amada who all year long read and sang ♪ *Irene Goodnight...* Her beautiful singing and love of the book often drew a circle of classmates around to join her.

**CCSS** Song picture books are used for guided reading and they make up our first "Family Reading Book Club." We differentiate early literacy instruction by building oral language and reading fluency simultaneously and coaching families in how to support the learning-to-read process at home.

By November every child is eager to participate in The Read and Sing Book Club, taking a new book home every few days and reading with two different adults who initial the book club envelope cover. When the children return the books, they will choose new ones.























# The Elephant and Piggie Home/School Book Club Certificates: Congratulations for Reading Every Book!

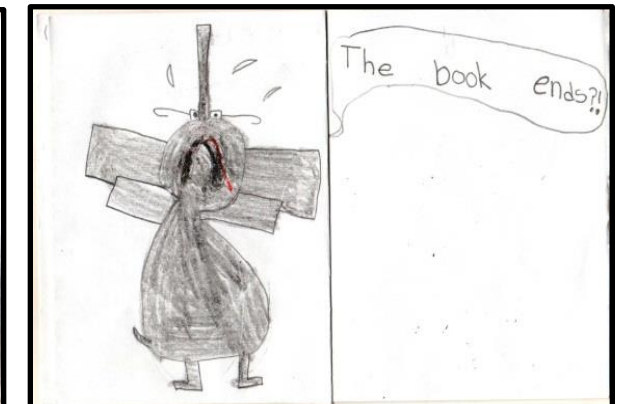
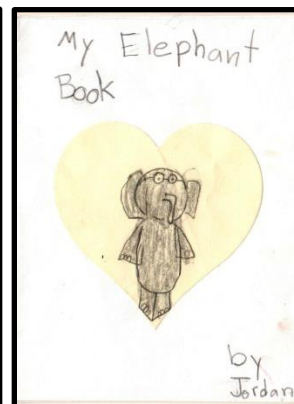
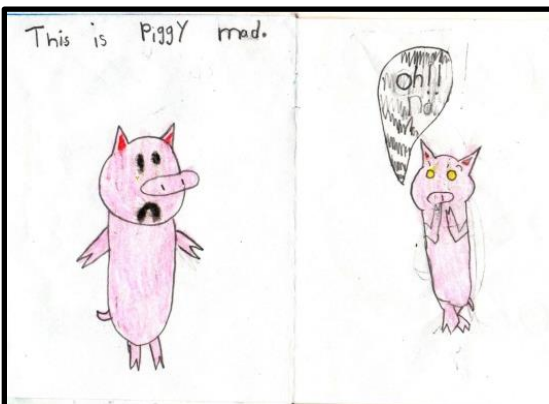
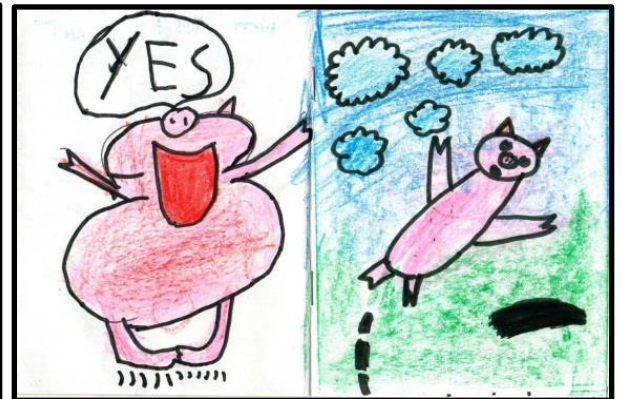
After delighting in all of the Elephant and Piggie stories by Mo Willems, children are ready to think like their favorite author and create their own books, taking on the personas of Elephant and Piggie. They imagine a new adventure, plan what they might say, create the writing and art, and think of a clever ending. Some of these books will later be proofed, edited, and published. Children use the folded "squish book" technique for these new books.



mo willems books		Name _____	
The Elephant and Piggie Book Club			
Please read this book with me!		I can read with fluency!	
	A Big Guy Took My Ball		Are You Ready to Play Outside?
	Elephants Cannot Dance!		Happy Pig Day!
	I Am Invited to a Party!		I Broke My Trunk!
	I Will Surprise My Friend!		Let's Go for a Drive!
	Pigs Make Me Sneezel		Should I Share My Ice Cream?
	Today I Will Fly!		Watch Me Throw My Ball
	Can I Play Too?		I Am Going!
	I Love My New Toy!		My Friend is Sad
	There is a Bird On Your Head!		We Are in a Book!

Please read each book to three different people and ask for their initials under the book title. Then bring it back to school and choose your next book.

**Happy Reading!**



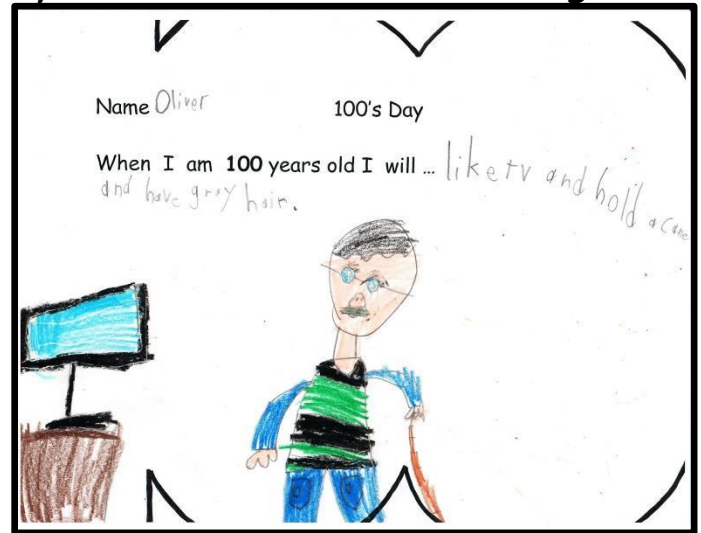
Laura Flocker carefully teaches children how to draw the Elephant and Piggie character, how to use speech bubbles, and how to create facial expressions. Then they are ready to use Mo Willems books as mentor texts to inspire clever new adventures featuring these engaging characters.



# Laura Flocker Turned Students into Writers and Illustrators: She Gave Them Authentic Invitations to Think Creatively *The 100<sup>th</sup> Day of School Is Always a Celebration of Learning*



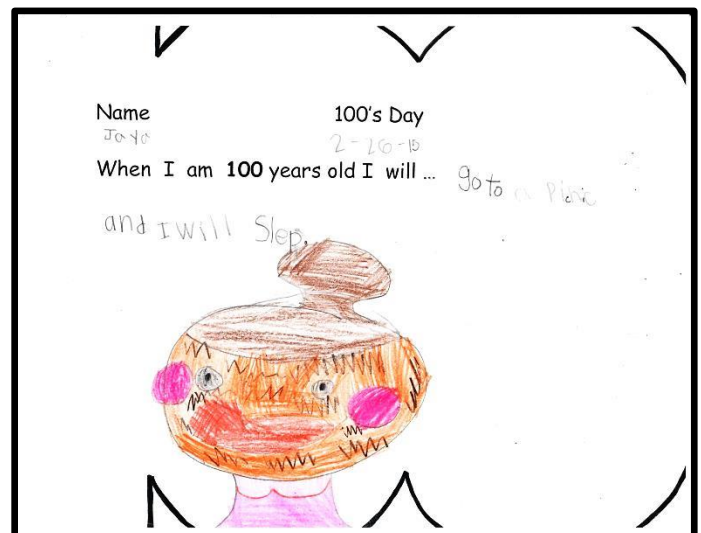
...call Reese. Read a book. I will call "Do you want to come over Reese?"



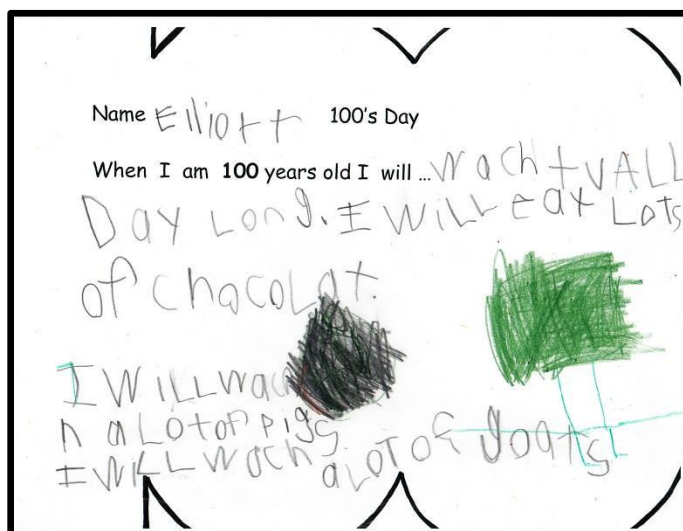
...like TV and hold a cane and have gray hair.



...eat strawberries and I will sleep.



...go to a picnic and I will sleep.



...watch TV all day long. I will eat lots of chocolate.  
I will watch a lot of pigs. I will watch a lot of goats.



...pick flowers and have picnics.



# Prolific Writers Celebration

## Kindergartners Plan Their Lives as Writers Over the Summer



All week the children had been singing our latest song ... ♪ "Prolific writers are we, we write and write you see..." ♪ remembering all the things they have been writing this year: books, messages, heart words, news stories, ABCs, name tickets, the room, math problems, book reports, lists, jokes, science journals, labels, surveys, thank you notes...no wonder they have become such motivated, purposeful writers. As a class they truly have internalized "The more you write, the better you write. So write, write, write!"

It's the end of the year; the room is filled with packing up energy and it feels appropriate to celebrate our writers with one more affirming event. Our "Prolific Writers" ceremony was the culmination of an incredible journey documenting the power of meaning-centered writing-to-read curriculum within a joyful kindergarten community.



One by one our prolific writers walked up to their teachers (with soft music in the background) to receive an "I am a prolific writer" award, handshakes, hugs, words of praise and endearment; they also received three blank books to take home for summer writing. They were applauded by their kindergarten friends and most were already thinking of what they were going to write about this summer: snakes, an everyday journal, sea creatures, my summer activities, the human body study, my spy book... the list goes on.

***We have created a culture of engaged kindergarten writers.***



**How do you celebrate young authors?**



## Come Together at the End of the Day with Warmth, Humor, a Touch of Ceremony – and Memorable Language

- **Briefly review the day's important events and new learnings:** Thinking about and verbalizing "what I learned today" reinforces new learning and provides rehearsal for children when later asked by family, "What did you do at school today?"

**Think-pair-and-share:** Ask children to, "Talk with your neighbor. Sit eye-to-eye and knee-to-knee. Tell them what you learned about turtles today! What did you read, draw and write about?"

**Stand-talk-and-affirm:** "Tell your neighbor something you loved doing today."

- **Invite students to share appreciation and affirm their friendship:**

"I really appreciated the way Hunter helped me..."

Children can sing and sign *Friends* (to the wonderful Mozart melody of *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*):

### Friends

by Nellie Edge

*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.*

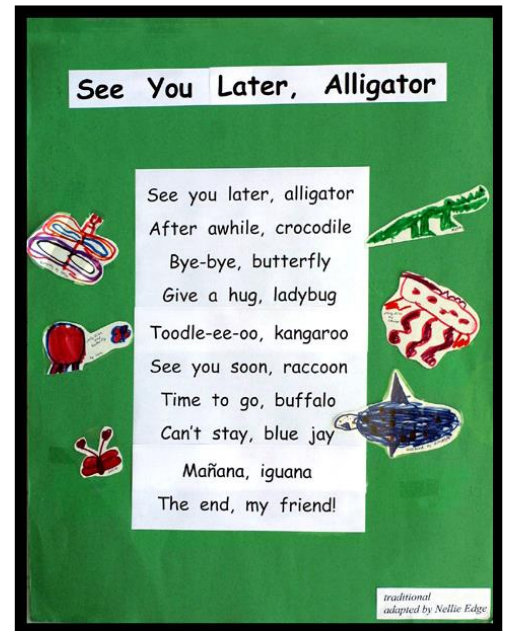


Friends signing "friends."

- **Reaffirm your caring relationship for each child in English and the child's home language:**
  - Teacher can stand by the door and invite each child to **choose a hug, handshake, or high-five!** Mitzi Shirk says, "Choose an 'h'!"
  - Kay Goines, mentor kindergarten teacher from Carmel, had a special farewell salute for each student, "Goodbye – **I love you passionately!**" ("¡Te quiero muchísimo!")
  - Bev Bos, preschool teacher, author, and recording artist, stands by the door and says "**Get a hug if you need one!**"
  - Valerie Welk, mentor kindergarten teacher and national kindergarten trainer, sings and signs an old classic, "♪ **Happy Trails to you...until we meet again...**" before her children leave for the day.
  - While sending children out the door, I love to build anticipation for tomorrow – "**We'll laugh and sing again tomorrow!**"

## See You Later, Alligator (Rhyming Play to End the Day, Nellie Edge's adaptation)

*See you later, alligator (echo after each line)  
After awhile, crocodile  
Bye-bye, butterfly  
Give a hug, ladybug  
Toodl-ee-oo, kangaroo  
See you soon, raccoon  
Time to go, buffalo  
Can't stay, blue jay  
Mañana, iguana  
The end, my friend!*




- **Invite the children to play with alliterations:**
  - Delightful Diane dances during dinner.
  - Brave Brian boldly bounces to the bus.
  - Nimble Nellie notices nearly nothing.
- **Slow down the pace and bring closure to the day's activities in an emotionally satisfying way:** Bring the children together in a circle on the floor for a goodbye song. Relax, smile, sing and sign together. These lovely songs are available on the Magic of Signing Songs videos:

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

*"Goodnight Irene" can be adapted to "Gina Goodbye, Brian Goodbye..."*

*"Sing Your Way Home at the End of the Day..."*

 How do you bring closure to the day and end on a harmonious note?

- 
- 
- 



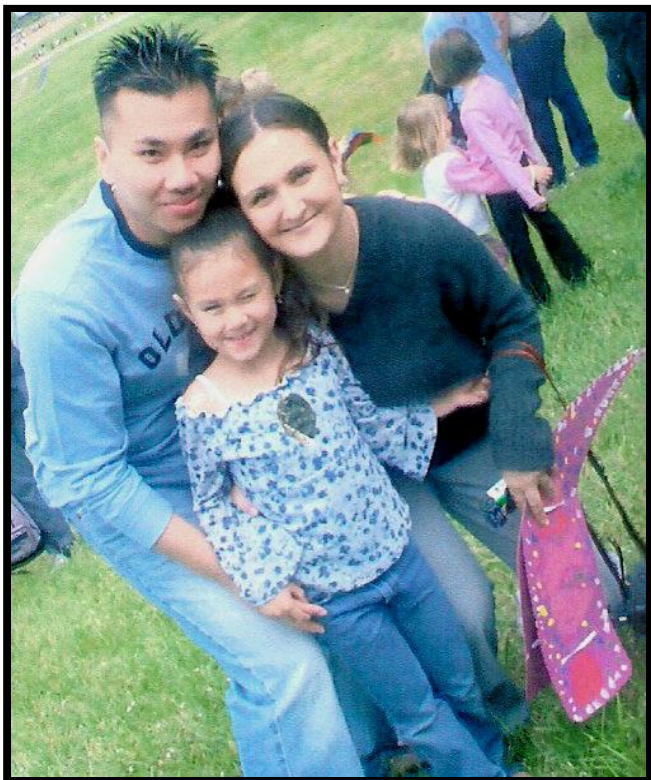
See You Later Alligator is in **Social Emotional Learning Supplement, Part 1.**



## End-of-Year Family Ritual: Kindergartners Paint Wings and Fly Away

Susan Ventura and Mitzi Shirk's kindergartens in Eugene, Oregon are busy hand painting wings in May for the end-of-the-year Kindergarten Fly Away Celebration. Parent volunteers trace and cut out a set of wings from railroad board for each child. **"After the children paint their wings with bright colors and designs (and sometimes feathers and glitter) we attach two elastic straps to hold these on their arms.** On our last day of school families are invited for an informal picnic lunch and popsicle event which concludes with the children donning their wings and "flying away" from kindergarten. **Children love the effect of sailing in their wings down the sloping hills and meadow areas at the edge of the school woods!"** Susan writes.

Families watch and applaud at the bottom of the hill as their joyful child comes floating down to them. **What a lovely, symbolic way to bring closure to a joyful kindergarten year. (With special thanks to Mary Christensen and Connie Cazort for inspiration.)**



**Appropriate music for "The Fly Away:"**

*I Believe I Can Fly* (chorus) by R. Kelly Lyrics from the Soundtrack Space Jam

*See Me Beautiful* by Red Grammer

*What A Wonderful World* by Louis Armstrong



# End-of-Year Family Performance and Picnic at the Park

## with Celeste Starr and her kindergartners

The children sang a joyful medley of heart-connection songs in sign language, gave "love" necklaces away to their families, and were given bubbles and a bug catcher. Families enjoyed visiting and the relaxed camaraderie of a local park. One of the fathers, a former marine, carried the U.S. flag and helped lead the procession to the park for this **celebration of language and community**.



**Parents as Partners.** *In the Basic School, the circle of community extends outward to embrace parents, who are viewed as the child's first and most important teachers. A vital partnership is created between the home and school, one that begins during the preschool years, is strengthened when the child formally enrolls, and continues from kindergarten through grade five.* -Ernest L. Boyer,

From *The Basic School: A Community for Learning*, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1995.

***Islands of excellence*** include parents as partners, authentic curriculum, the centrality of language, and a commitment to social and emotional learning.



# End-of-the-Year Celebrations Bring Closure to the Learning Community and Add Dignity and Delight

- Kindergarten teacher Barbara Sagen gathers the children around her and together they remember many of the magical things they have shared during the year. On the last day of school they remember being the "Three Billy Goats Gruff" and other animals and characters from stories... **"But today," she says, "We're going to do the most magical thing of all—we're going to turn you into first graders! We're going to do it with a hug."** She puts on special music and, one at a time, she calls the children up to her. Barb takes time to share with each child something special that she will always remember about them and then they hug. **The child goes off with a look of wonder and transformation on his or her face, saying, "I'm a first grader now."**
- Children have a picnic and share stories of favorite school year experiences **and sing and sign all of their favorite songs.**
- One teacher ends every Friday with his second-grade **children holding hands in a circle and reciting to each other "I love you little. I love you lots..."** The rhyme had become such a part of their community that on the last day of school they spontaneously chanted it together.<sup>1</sup>
- **Children gather in a circle around a candle.** With the lights off, they share what they loved most during the year.
- The teacher works with students to **create a photo story of the year.** The booklet is copied for each child, leaving blank pages for the children to autograph and write in.
- **Year-end, student-led parent conferences are a powerful culminating celebration of learning.**
- As a final salute to her kindergarten children, **one teacher sent off homing pigeons.** Think of the symbolism—setting them off to fly and knowing they will always return home.
- **Fill the room with flowers and invite each child to make a bouquet to carry home.** Wrap a wet paper towel around their bouquet and put it inside a paper cup.
- **Have the children plant nastertium seeds.** "Take these with you as you go. Remember us as the flowers grow."
- Children can **march to the bus** on the last day of school singing **"I've got that 1<sup>st</sup>-grade feeling up in my head..."** (tune of the traditional fight song.)
- Children reread their Poetry Notebook and sing the "I Love to Read" song together again.

1. From Nellie Edge Poetry Notebook, TPT



*How do you bring closure to the school year?*

## **Chapter 4**

### *The Heart of Kindergarten: Memorable Rituals, Traditions and Celebrations*

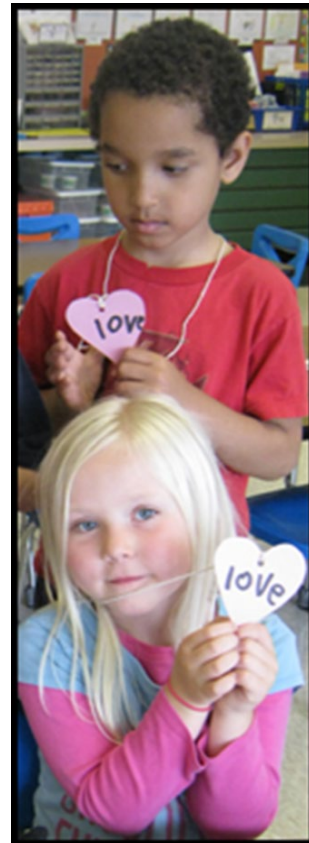
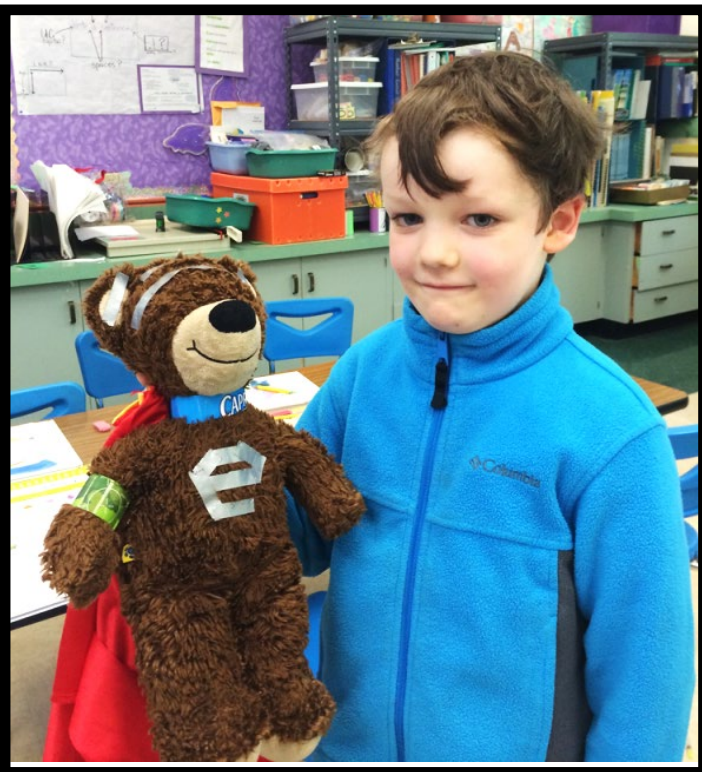
## **NOTES**



## Chapter 5

# Joyful, Engaging Lessons That Accelerate Learning:

*Choose Strategies That Build Literacy, Social-Emotional Skills, and a Love of Learning!*



**Writing-to-Read Strategies Support Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Literacy**

# What Are Nellie Edge Writing-to-Read "Heart Words?": How Does Kindergarten Writing Support Phonics Instruction?



Nellie Edge writing-to-read "heart words" invite kindergartners to write **heart-connecting sentences** such as "I love you..." early in the year to build **circles of writing mastery!** (I see the..., I like my..., I can ..., I have a ...) When several sentence starters are automatic (with good handwriting), **the brain has the memory space to fearlessly encode sounds to print for unknown words.** Building engaged and motivated writers supports phonics proficiency.

- Writing unknown words provides powerful, authentic phonics practice
- The best way to assess phonics knowledge? Look at student writing!

## What Are the Research-Based Principles That Guide Our Teaching of Writing-to-Read Heart Words?

- **Children learn best when you give them a crystal-clear achievable target to work towards and you acknowledge and celebrate their success:** Each new color-coded set has 16 words! Student, parent, and teacher all know what the next learning target is! We teach for mastery. (See Dr. Hattie's research: *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement*, Routledge, 2009.)

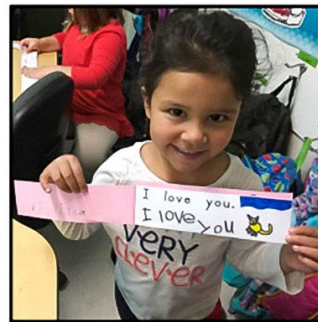
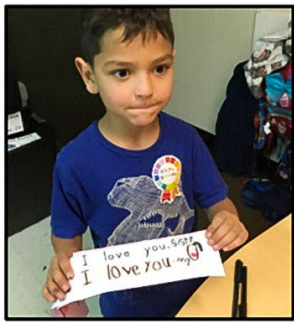
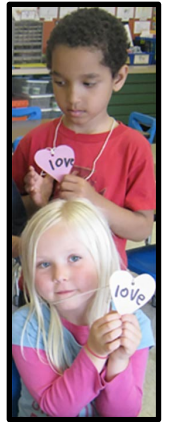


- **The brain is a musical brain:** singing releases happy chemicals. We sing, sign, spell, and write "heart word" sentences for mastery.
- **Multisensory instruction with fingerspelling accelerates learning** of "heart words" and phonics-based words for ALL learners.
- **Emotional engagement is the key to powerful learning:** We make writing real and personally motivating.
- **ABC Phonics Immersion with fingerspelling is part of a comprehensive writing program** that allows us to systematically reinforce phonemic awareness and phonics instruction throughout the day.

## "I love you" Becomes the First Circle of Kindergarten Writing Mastery, followed by "I see, I like, I can, I have..."

Three things young writers know for sure:

1. If I practice writing "heart word" sentences with good handwriting every day, my writing is going to get really good!
2. *The more I practice phonics-based spelling, the better I get!*
3. If I keep listening for sounds and stretching through words, soon I will be able to **fearlessly tackle any unknown word!**



**This Is What Kindergarten Heart Word Sentence "Fluency Practice" Looks Like by the End of the Year**

<p><b>Emily</b> Date: <b>June 2015</b></p> <p>I can write 5 different heart word sentences!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1♥ I love My Panda!</li> <li>2♥ I See a Bee?</li> <li>3♥ I like Bunnies!</li> <li>4♥ I can swim?</li> <li>5♥ I have a Pika Bot!</li> </ol> <p>Why do I practice writing "heart word" sentences?</p> <p>If I practice this every day, my writing is going to get really good!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> heart words spelled correctly</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good handwriting</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> spaces between words</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> a period at the end of each sentence</li> </ul> <p><b>* I am an expert at 5 heart word sentences! *</b></p>	<p><b>Colton Wallace</b> Date: <b>June</b></p> <p>I can write 5 different heart word sentences!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1♥ I like cats.</li> <li>2♥ I love Dogs.</li> <li>3♥ I see a fox.</li> <li>4♥ I can run.</li> <li>5♥ I have a cat.</li> </ol> <p>Why do I practice writing "heart word" sentences?</p> <p>If I practice this every day, my writing is going to get really good!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> heart words spelled correctly</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good handwriting</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> spaces between words</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> a period at the end of each sentence</li> </ul> <p><b>* I am an expert at 5 heart word sentences! *</b></p>
<p><b>Kochell</b> Date: _____</p> <p>I can write 5 different heart word sentences!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1♥ I love you.</li> <li>2♥ I see a cat.</li> <li>3♥ I like my mom.</li> <li>4♥ I can see a dog.</li> <li>5♥ I have a dog.</li> </ol> <p>Why do I practice writing "heart word" sentences?</p> <p>If I practice this every day, my writing is going to get really good!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> heart words spelled correctly</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good handwriting</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> spaces between words</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> a period at the end of each sentence</li> </ul> <p><b>* I am an expert at 5 heart word sentences! *</b></p>	<p><b>Caroline Roth</b> Date: _____</p> <p>I can write 5 different heart word sentences!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1♥ I love art!</li> <li>2♥ I See the Cardinals.</li> <li>3♥ look at the Carus!</li> <li>4♥ I Can See a tree.</li> <li>5♥ I have a house.</li> </ol> <p>Why do I practice writing "heart word" sentences?</p> <p>If I practice this every day, my writing is going to get really good!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> heart words spelled correctly</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good handwriting</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> spaces between words</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> a period at the end of each sentence</li> </ul> <p><b>* I am an expert at 5 heart word sentences! *</b></p>

**Save precious classroom minutes: Implement integrated learning!**

This comprehensive, multisensory approach to writing integrates good handwriting with writing-to-read "heart words," building early writing mastery.

# Begin the Year Expecting Students to Write Their Names and the Word "love" with Good Handwriting

"My Teacher says 'love' is the most important word in the world."  
**Accelerate literacy:** Sing, Sign, Fingerspell, and Practice Writing-to-Read!

## 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"!



**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 and write "I love you" secret messages to take home and hide.

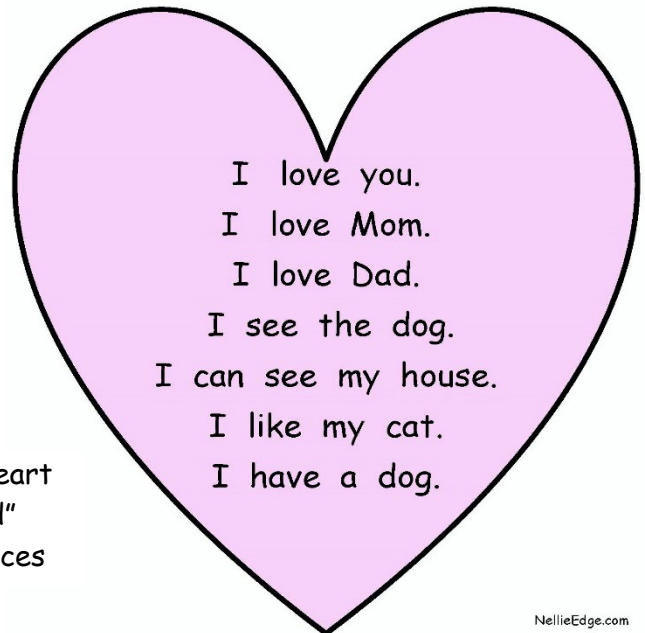
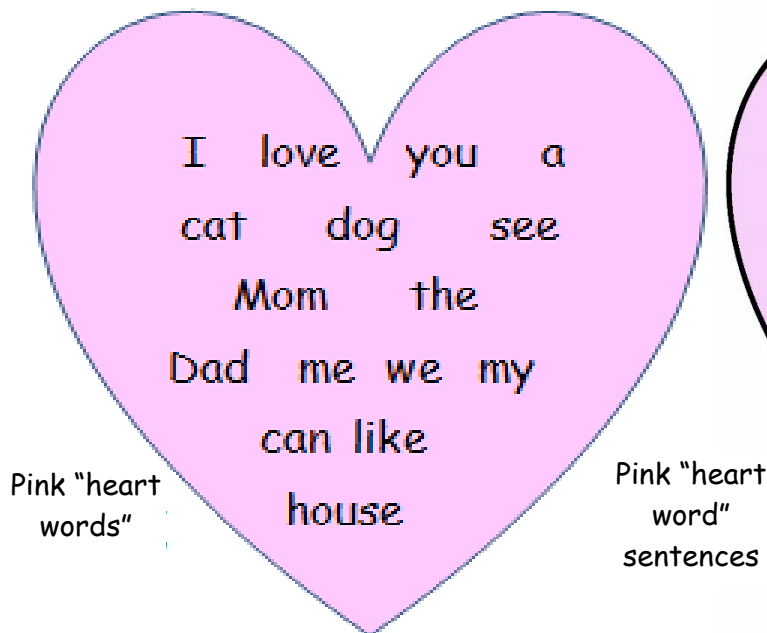
Available on *Music is Magic* CD with Nellie Edge and Tom Hunter.



See L-O-V-E Spells Love ASL video clip at [www.nellieedge.com](http://www.nellieedge.com) from **The Magic of Signing Songs** seminar DVD.



**We Call These Writing-to-Read Words "Heart Words"**  
Because we want to learn them "by heart" for writing fluency and  
because these words let us write heart-connecting sentences



NellieEdge.com

These are the words young children use most in their kindergarten writing:  
**They are different than most traditional basal word lists.**

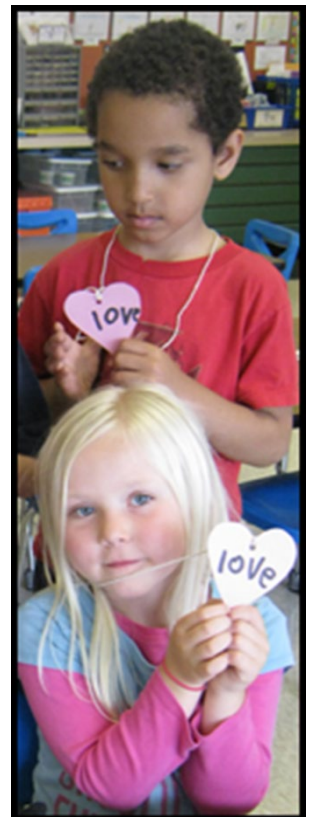
## **What Are The Research-Based Principles That Guide Our Practice?**

- Children learn best when you give them a **crystal clear achievable target** to work towards and you acknowledge their success.
- The brain is a **musical brain**.
- **Emotional engagement** is the key to all powerful learning.
- Beginning **writing instruction teaches reading**.

**Young writers need authentic experiences and:**

1. A repertoire of words they can write "by heart" (**fluently and automatically**).
2. Proficiency with phonics so they can **fearlessly tackle any unknown words**.

We are focusing on how to teach "heart words" through joyful accelerated literacy strategies.



## A September Literacy Ritual: Taking Home Our First Set of Pink Writing-to-Read "Heart Words" in a Sparkly Purple Box



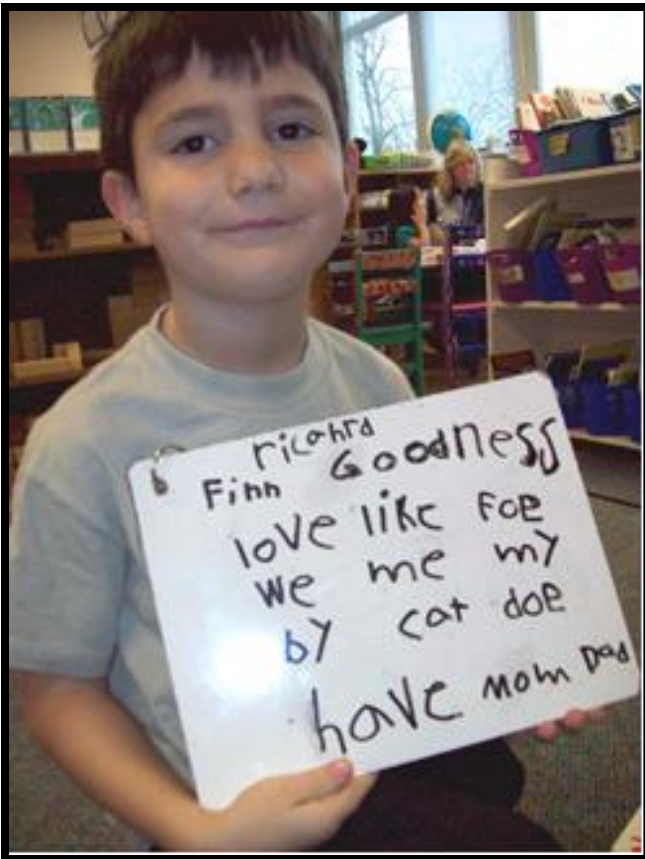
Laura Flocker hand paints the "heart word" (jewelry) boxes with glitter to make them special! Once children have learned several words, the first set of pink "heart words" goes home for nightly practice.



The individual photos of children with their "heart word" boxes will be used in a book, honoring each child's literacy accomplishments. Multisensory *Sing, Sing, Spell, and Read!* strategies with "Parents as Partners" accelerate children's learning. Already (in September) children are starting to master the first 16 pink "heart words" and are proudly asking for the purple "heart word" set to take home! Children with a strong, left-brain, visual learning style often master over 100 words during the kindergarten year. Almost all children master 60.



## Key Principles: How to Systematically Teach "Heart Words"



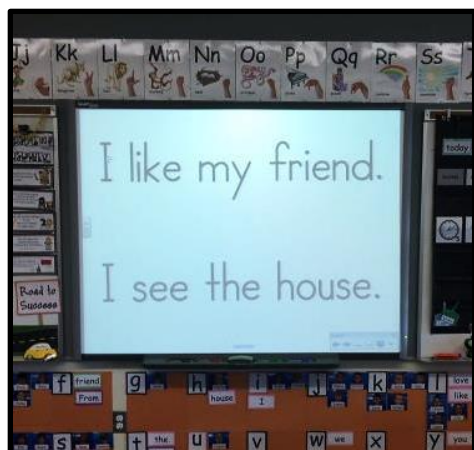
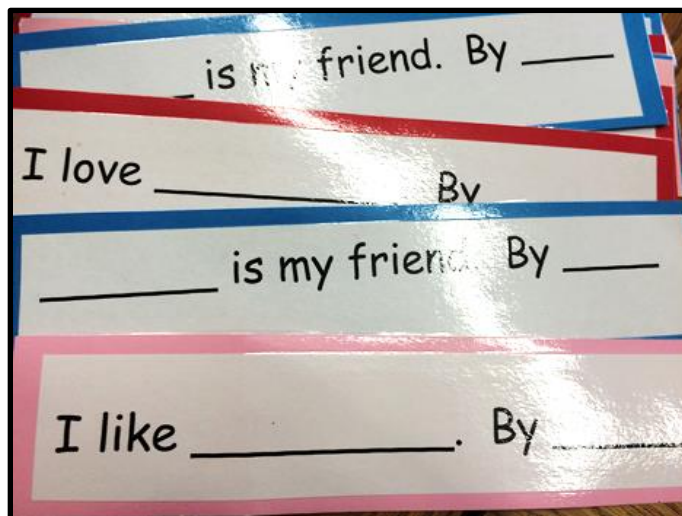
- Start with Kindergarten-Friendly Handwriting
- ***Sing, Sign, Spell, and Read!***
- Define crystal-clear targets: Child, parent, teacher
- Challenge the early readers to set ambitious goals: *"What's the next set of heart words you get to learn?"*
- Give empowering language: *"Wow! How did you remember that word?"*
- Use private or group acknowledgment
- Create a growth mind set: *"You worked hard!"*
- Develop metacognition: *"How did you teach your brain to remember?"*



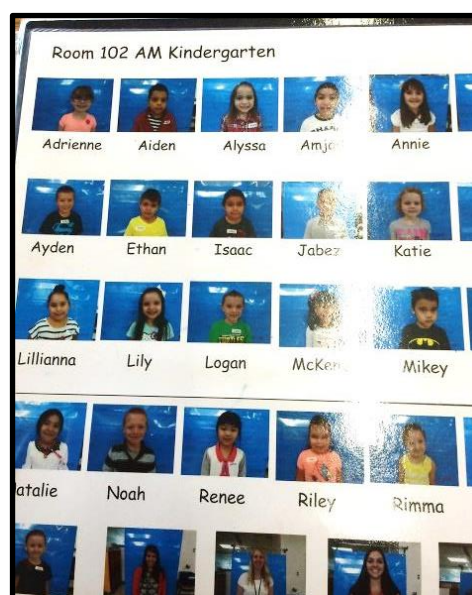
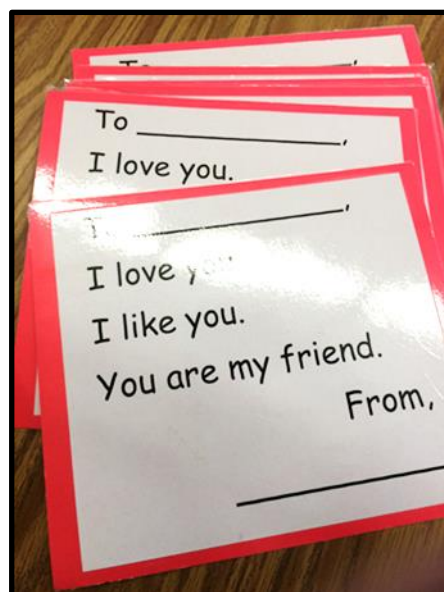
How do you systematically teach children to read, write, and spell high-frequency writing-to-read "heart words"?



# Literacy Traditions Include Writing "Heart Word" Sentences to Friends... and Becoming Word Experts!



Special thanks to Shanda Lung and her beautiful kindergarten





# Hip, Hip, Hooray: I am an Expert at Pink Heart Words!

Children Love This Class Book: They Are So Proud of Their Page



Hip Hip Hooray!



We Know Our Heart Words

Class-Made Book

*Hip, Hip Hooray! Class-Made Book template is on Nellie Edge TPT Store.*

Hip, Hip Hooray!



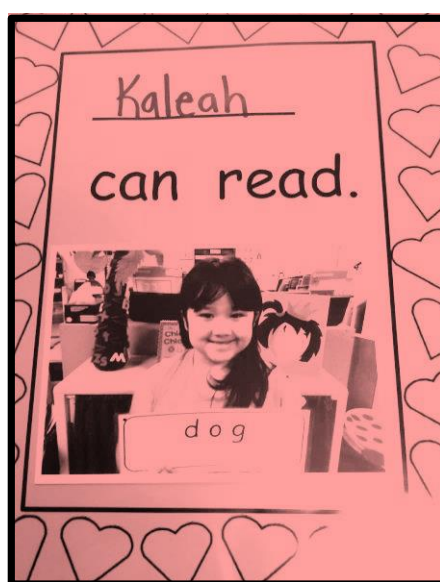
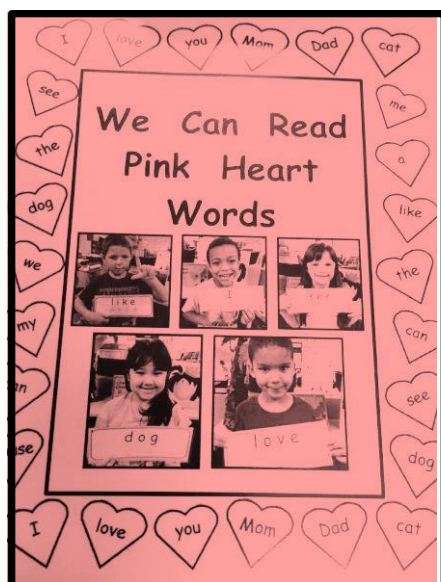
We Know our Heart Words!

Hip Hip Hooray!

Nathan



Knows pink purple yellow green  
Heart words!



**Favorite Class-Made Books Encourage Reading Fluency**

Kindergartners love books featuring their lives and accomplishments.



See Social Emotional Learning Supplement, Part 1

# September Whole Class Writing-to-Read Experience

♪ "This Is My House, H - O - U - S - E"

Using the music from our *Sing, Sign, Spell and Read!* CD, Winter Curry and I presented a short lesson on the word "house." The children were introduced to the sign language for the key concept words "this," "my," and "house." We sang and practiced fingerspelling h-o-u-s-e repeatedly. We looked at many different illustrated houses from favorite picture books, explored rich vocabulary, and gave the students several writing models of "My house" at each table. It takes many short repeated experiences with the song before the spelling—and fingerspelling—are internalized.



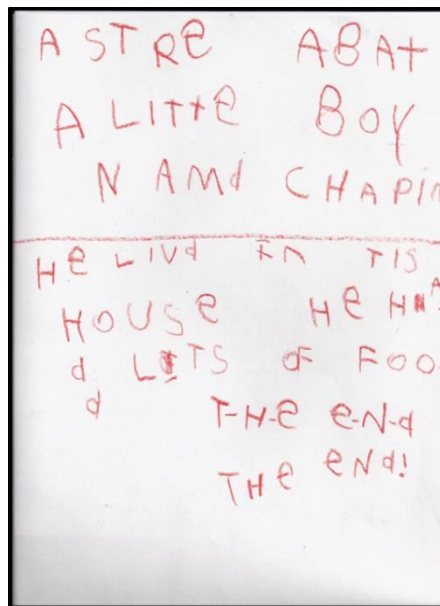
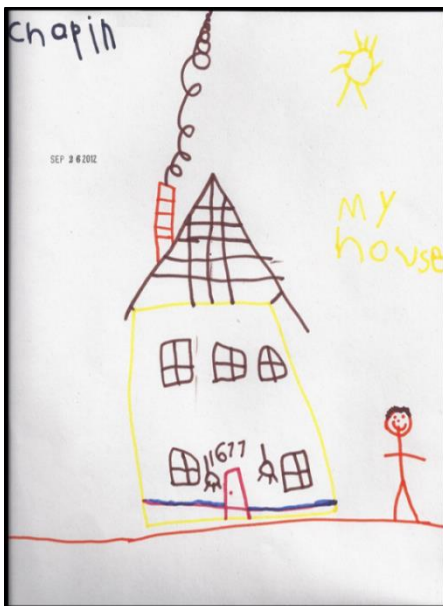
After our lesson combining singing, signing, fingerspelling and illustration study, the children were invited to draw a house and label their pictures.

Multisensory experiences and dialog inspire detailed drawing.

See additional details of this lesson on the Read and Sing tab at [nellieedge.com](http://nellieedge.com).

Read & Sing

One little boy finished his house quickly, so I asked him to tell me about the picture. "Chapin," I said, "I bet you could write a story about that house."



After working with several other children, I returned to Chapin and there was a little story, written on the back of his house picture.

*A story about a little boy named Chapin. He lived in this house. He had lots of food. T-h-e e-n-d The end!*





# Teach an Attitude of Gratitude

And give children practice saying and signing "thank you!"

**Teach the "I Can Spell Thank You" song from early in year**

Be generous and sincere when thanking students:

**Thank you for...**

- *Holding the door open.*
- *Helping pick up the blocks.*
- *Speaking softly.*
- *Lining up right away.*
- *Remembering to bring your Poetry Notebook back*
- *Practicing your "heart words" so diligently*
- *Doing such a good job cleaning off the play dough table*
- *Being the Helper of the Day*
- *Thank you for coming to school on time today?*
- *Holding the door open. That's showing kindergarten kindness!*
- *Listening so quietly. Everyone was able to hear.*
- *Working so hard: You learned to write "I love you!"*
- *Wow! Thank you for helping us clean up so quickly. That's showing kindergarten responsibility.*



## **Examples of language:**

*Josh! Thank you for pushing all the chairs in. No one even had to ask you! You sure know how to take care of our classroom.*

*Thank you for helping Jacob put the blocks away. Good friends help each other—that's kindergarten kindness!*

*I bet many of you will remember to thank Marisa for holding the door open.*

**The happy hormones in our brains are influenced by the words we hear and speak.**



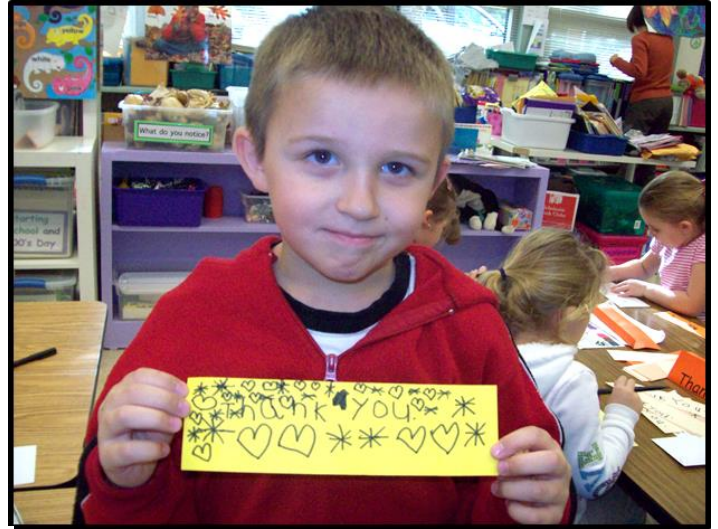
*How do your students practice gratitude?*

# *Sing, Sign, Spell, and Read! ♪ I Can Spell "Thank You" ♪*

Children prepare secret messages to take home



Do your best printing. (Children had practiced handwriting the word "you" earlier.)

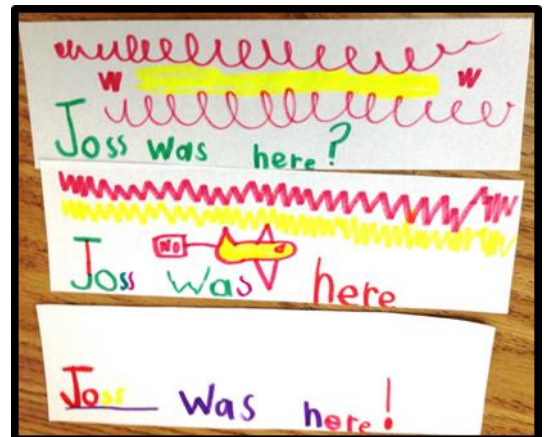


After you have printed several messages using your best handwriting, you may want to create designs to fancy them up.



## **Children sing, sign, fingerspell, and read "Thank you"**

- Share favorite books about Thanksgiving.
- Children talk to their elbow buddies about people, animals, and things in nature that they are thankful for.
- Fingerspelling "th" builds writing muscles and teaches digraphs.
- Explore period and exclamation marks: Read "Thank you" with different tones of voice. We are writing for a reader and punctuation helps us express the writer's ideas.

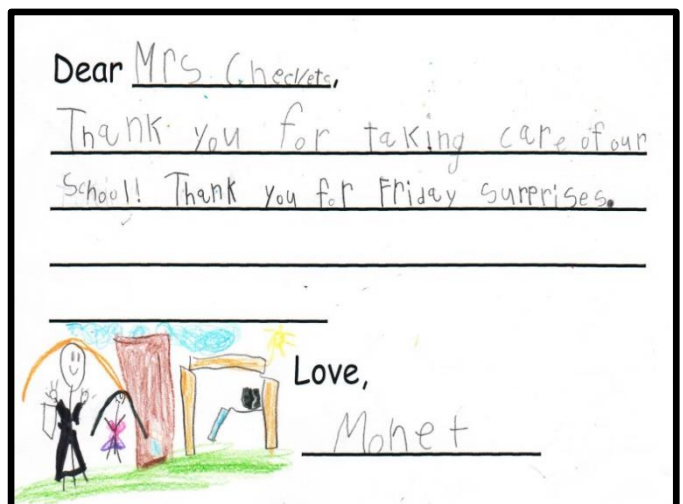
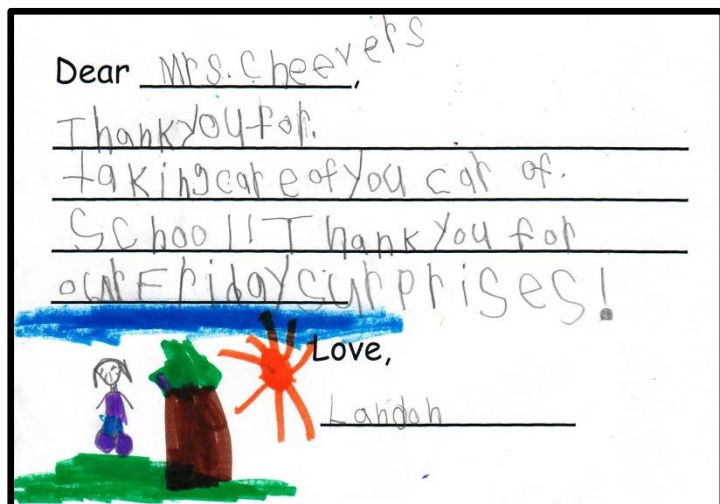
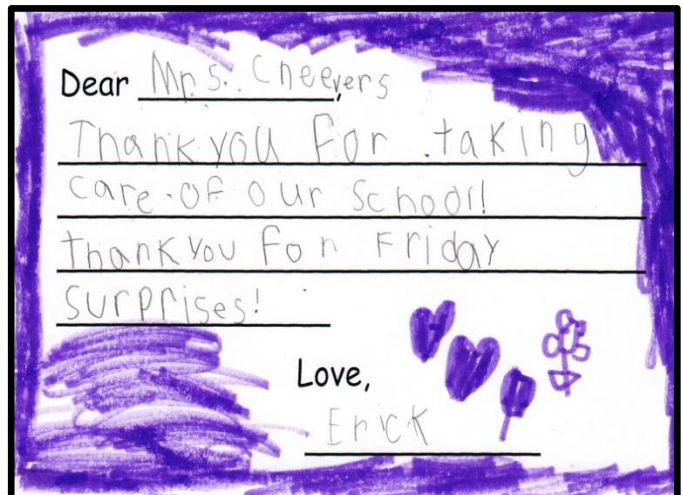
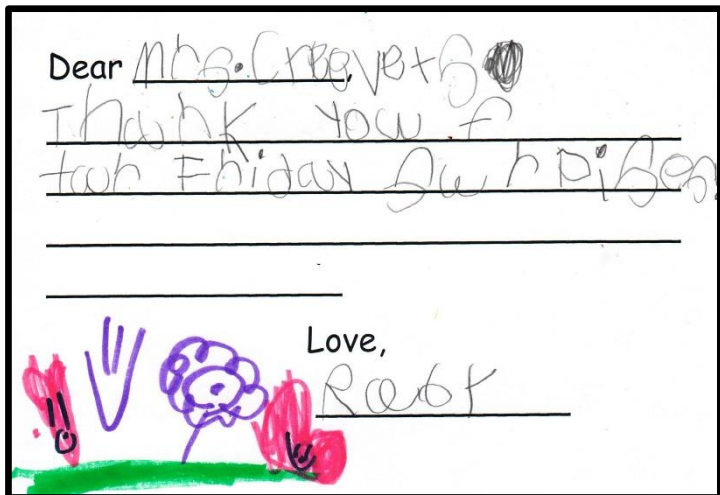
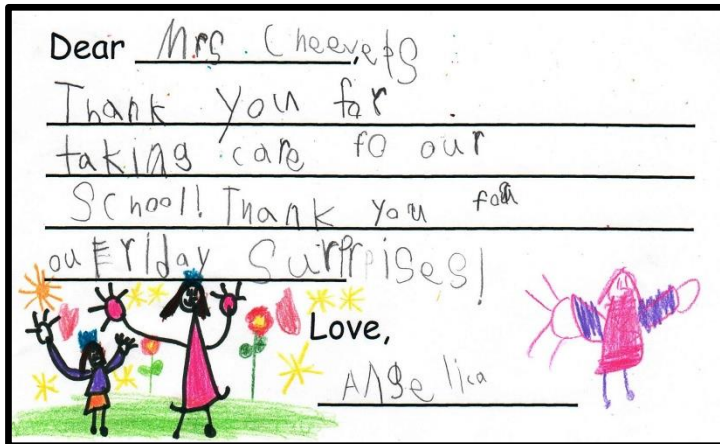


Recorded on *Sing, Sign, Spell, and Read!* CD by Nellie Edge and Gina Edge



## Thank You Letters to Mrs. Cheevers

We teach children to sing and sign the *T-h-a-n-k: Thank You* song from *Sing, Sign, Spell, and Read!* CD and provide authentic reasons for them to write and show appreciation: This is one way we build a caring school community. Kindergarten kindness, showing gratitude, and giving to others is a year-long theme.



**Note:** "Dear," "love," "thank," and "you" are all writing-to-read words that children learn to write "by heart." They love to write thank you notes! Several students used the principal's favorite colors in their illustrations. Mrs. Cheevers establishes a **very** personal relationship with the kindergarten students in this Title I school.

# Routines and Rituals for Building an Attitude of Gratitude

We can teach young children to work hard, be kind, and develop an attitude of gratitude. ***Our intentional focus on social emotional skills will actually rewire our students brains,*** helping them to do well in school—and in life.

**This book contains helpful routines and traditions to build gratitude.**

- Let children hear you express gratitude for the beautiful day and how kind the students are to each other.
- Greet children with a handshake, hug, or high-five, establishing eye contact and sharing an *"I'm so glad you're here!"*
- Invite students to share things they are grateful for as a part of your morning circle.
- Teach children to sing and sign uplifting songs such as *What a Wonderful World* and variations of *You Are My Sunshine*.
- Create a Write-a-Message Center with language models such as *"Thank you for being my friend."*
- Keep an on-going class chart: **We Are Grateful Kids**
  - I'm grateful my mom cooks for me.
  - I am grateful that Jason played with me.
  - I am grateful for the sunny day.
- Sing and sign the "T-h-a-n-k Thank You" song.
- Write Thank You letters to principals, volunteers, or custodians.
- Verbalize often: *"Wow! You are kind and grateful kids!"*
- Teach children to choose partners for class dances by saying *"please"* and *"thank you."*



For over 4 decades the underlying foundation of our work in Joyful Accelerated Kindergarten Literacy has been to nurture values of kindness, gratitude, friendship, and an "I can do it!" growth mindset. **Thoughtful educators will recognize these values** in all the professional development resources on NellieEdge.com, YouTube, Pinterest, and Nellie Edge TPT Store...and it makes me SMILE knowing *our resources support your best teaching practices!*



# "The Peace Table"

by Sally Haughey (Fairy Dust Teaching)

I appreciate reading the wise, heartwarming blogs from [fairydustteaching.com](http://fairydustteaching.com).

Sally explains in her March 14, 2012, blog:

*One of the best gifts from Montessori education has to be the Peace Table. The Peace Table is a conflict resolution tool for the classroom. Traditionally, there is a peace rose that the children can present to a child they have a conflict with and "go" to the table to work it out. I have adapted the process for my classroom and circumstance and am using a little heart stone a friend gave me. My Peace Table is small and easy to sit on the floor with. The child who is upset brings the issue to the Peace Table. Holding the stone, they state the problem. I coach the child to state the problem as "I did not like it when..." Then from that point on, it is a "I feel \_\_\_\_\_ when \_\_\_\_\_" statement. ("I" statements!) The other child has a chance to state what they are feeling as well. The peace stone goes back and forth until the children have expressed all their feelings and the issue is resolved.*

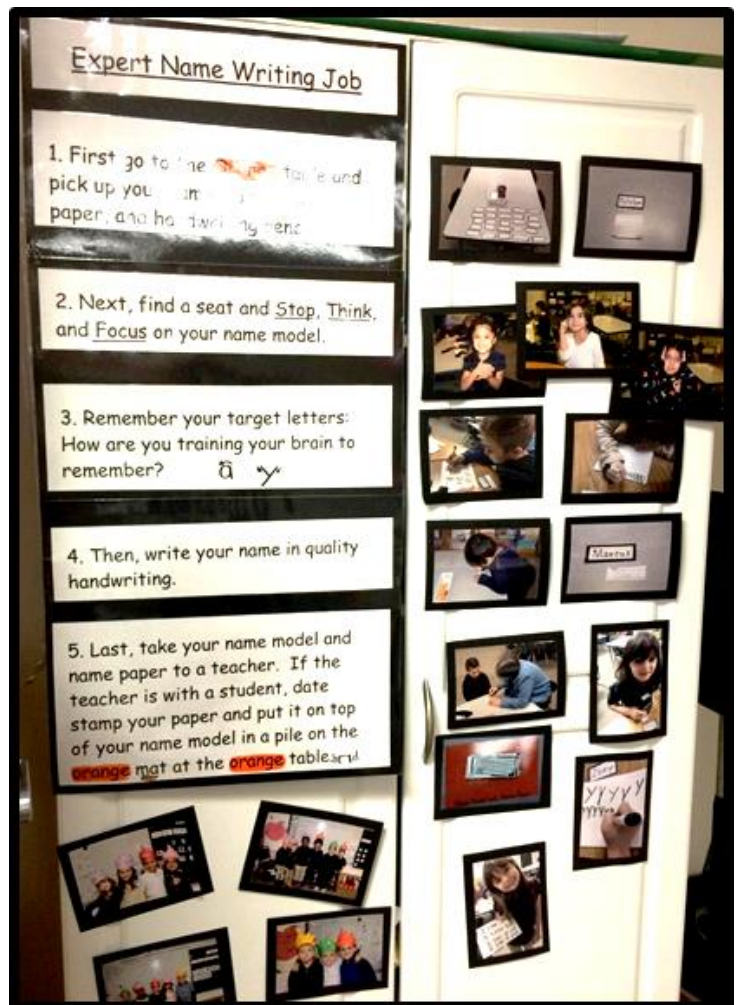
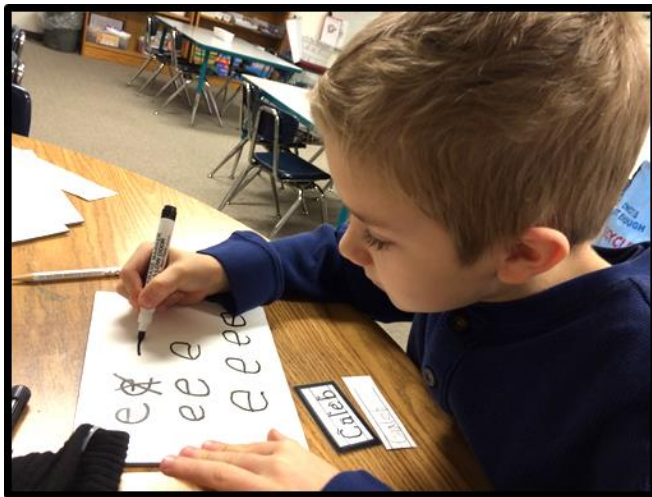
*What is amazing about the process is that the children are given a chance to safely express their feelings to a peer. There is a tool for "talk turns"—the peace rose or stone. It eliminates tattling as I just send them to the Peace Table. Nine times out of ten, the problem is resolved by the very act of communicating their feelings. The children who have trouble with their peers need help with this process—but it is a great forum to do it!*

*Wish we could have a global Peace Tables for big people...and it worked like this does!!!*

Shared with permission



# Kindergarten-Friendly Name Writing Practice Until You Are An Expert: Then Celebrate Reaching Your Handwriting Goal!



Photos from Jaime Corliss





# Emotional Engagement is the Key to All Powerful Learning: Teach "ing"

Invite Children to Create and Make Crowns!

"The King of 'ing'" crown is a playful visual memory aide from the authors of "Kid Writing." I love the memory hook; however, I decided it might be even more powerful if every child could create and wear their own "King of 'ing'" crown.

Mo Willems, author of the our favorite "Elephant and Piggie" books (see *I Love My New Toy!*, *Today I Will Fly!* and *Watch Me Throw the Ball!*) often uses "ing" (doing, going, throwing) words so these books provided a great introduction to "The King of -ing." The children practiced handwriting "ing" on their wipe-off boards. We verbalized, "I am the King who remembers ing"... "I remember 'ing', it starts with 'i.'"  
The children were so delighted with their crowns they creatively added their own personality with playful and fancy design elements. They were so proud of their crowns, they even wanted to wear them outside for recess in the rain!

- We brainstormed words that rhyme with king (sing, wing, ring, bring...).
- We verbalized, "You'll remember how to write words that end in 'ing' because 'I' am the king of 'ing.'" (Use fingerspelling for a powerful memory aide!)
- Throughout the day, I would ask, "How do you spell 'ing'?" and "what rhymes with King?"
- In one class (after taping the crown together), the teacher elegantly bowed to each child and placed the king of "ing" crown regally on his or her head.



One of the girls was insistent that she was not the "King of 'ing.'" She was the Queen! We smiled, saying, "Oh yes! You are the Queen of the King of ing!"  
We immediately see "ing" spelled conventionally in the children's writing pieces.



# There's An "ing" in King: Creating Memorable Literacy Rituals



What a grand time I have sharing multisensory and joyful writing-to-read lessons in local classrooms! An invitation to write a song that teaches "i-n-g" was all I needed for expanding my "King of ing" lesson with a new sing, sign, and fingerspell song: *There s an "ing" in King: i-n-g*. (Melody is similar to Beverly Hillbillies Theme Song.)

One of my favorite writing-to-read lessons is to invite children to learn about the "King of ing" and make a crown as a memorable, visual reminder. Children first brainstorm "i-n-g" words and we make lists. We rehearse fingerspelling and sing "i-n-g" many times over before creating the crowns. This year's King of "ing" crowns were even more detailed and well-loved than last year's. Once again, the children simply do not want to take them off. The reading/writing lesson that wrapped its arm around this time of pure serendipity was memorable and filled with SMILES...

## What did I learn?

- Kindergartners love making crowns!
- Multisensory teaching through music and sign language create powerful memory hooks.
- Writing teaches reading.
- Intentional teaching is often close coaching: "And how do you sign 'ing'?"

Listen to ["There s an 'ing' in King"](#) on Nellie Edge YouTube. See *Sing, Sign, Spell, and Read!* within the [Nellie Edge Sight Word BUNDLE](#) on TpT.

### There's an "ing" in King

by Nellie Edge

There's an "ing" in king: i-n-g  
There's an "ing" in bring: i-n-g  
There's an "ing" in swing: i-n-g  
There's an "ing" in sing: i-n-g

I am going: i-n-g  
I am coming: i-n-g  
I am playing: i-n-g  
I am stopping: i-n-g

by Nellie Edge  
For Laura Flocker and Ann Winkler

i n g

i		n		g	
	insect		nest		goat

Photos from ABC Phonics: Sing, Sign, and Read! by Nellie Edge © 2010 Sign2Me Publishers



See **Social Emotional Learning** Supplement, Part 1



# Kindergarten Provides a Thinking and Caring Curriculum: Friends Develop Speaking Skills and Collaboration

*You're My F - r - i - e - n - d!* (To the tune ♪ *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star* ♪)

A favorite song and engaging literacy activity from our *Sing, Sign, Spell, and Read!* CD and "I Can Read" Anthology is *You're My Friend*. First children sing the entire song. Then they turn to a friend (or elbow buddy), establish eye contact, and say, "You're my friend." The whole class softly sings and signs, "f-r-i-e-n-d, f-r-i-e-n-d." Time permitting, they turn to another friend and perform this friendship, language, and literacy ritual again. The sign for "friend" is hooking index fingers together. We call it "finger hugs."



Under the **Speaking and Listening** strand of CCSS is **Comprehension and Collaboration**:  
SL.K.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about *kindergarten topics and texts* with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

- Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., listening to others and taking turns speaking about the topics and texts under discussion).

**We create an environment that naturally invites children to build friendship, language, and collaboration skills: Friends work and play together. Friends speak and listen to each other. Friends care and share.**

We weave speaking and listening opportunities into literacy learning throughout the day.

- Our language builds community: how can we help our friends?
- Teach children how to politely find a partner, asking "Will you be my partner, please?"
- Teach children to verbalize and sign "thank you" to each other.
- Talk about feelings and how a kind action is like a "Warm Fuzzy..."
- Read *The Wrinkled Heart Story* from Nellie Edge Excellence in Kindergarten Literacy February 2013 newsletter. Scroll down to the link to Jacque Verrell's website.
- Group singing, story drama, and friendship rituals are a vital part of our curriculum.



**Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings and ideas clearly.**



See **Social Emotional Learning Supplement**, Part 1

# Talking Circles: Friends Build Speaking and Listening Skills



## Talking questions:

- What are you learning and **what are you wondering about butterflies?**
- What was your favorite part of the story?
- What's your favorite kindergarten activity and why?
- **Tell about something you're good at.**
- Tell about your current writing piece.

Talking Circles provides a safe environment with maximum opportunity for each child to develop good speaking and listening skills. It's a great way for children to review and cement new science concepts and to have an opportunity to talk to every other child in the classroom.

## Organizational Tips:

Form two straight lines of children. Show the first line how to sit in a circle facing out - they become "the inner circle." Then walk the other children over to form "the outer circle" with each child facing one student on the inner circle. The students on the inner circle get to talk for 30 seconds while the outer circle students listen.



**At the bell, the inner circle rotates (scoots) clockwise one person.** They greet their new listening friend and talk again. Rotate four or five times and then switch roles with the outer circle becoming the talkers and movers.

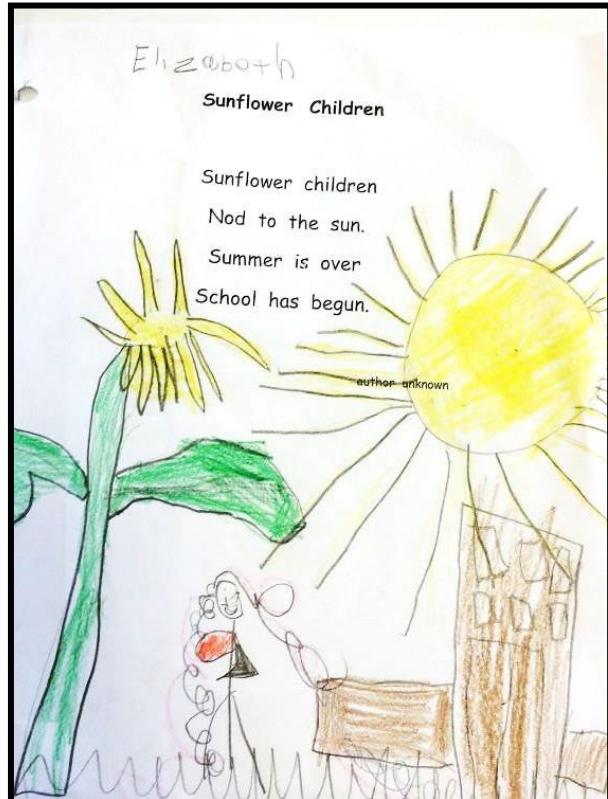
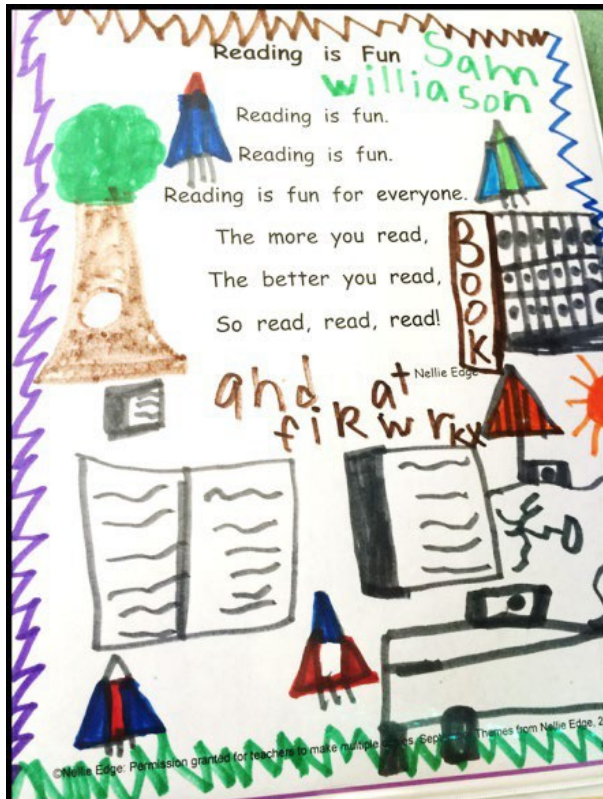


- **Children build friendships** and develop confidence in speaking to each other.
- **Learning increases** when children have a chance to talk about new concepts!
- **It is helpful for the shy child** to be on the listening side first.



# Reading Is Fun Is Often Our First - and Last "I Can Read" Poetry Notebook Page to Reread

Children illustrate our reading chant again the last day of school, tucking it into the back page cover of their Poetry Notebook. This joyful literacy ritual builds an "I can do it!" growth mindset.



Children love to see how much they've grown as illustrators!





# Engage the Imagination with "Vowel Bat" and His Song

What a Memorable Way to Reinforce Sounds, the Concept of Vowels, and Apply Phonics and Fingerspelling Skills



Winter Curry has adapted and slowed down the popular Vowel Bat Song from Diane Bonica and Shari Sloane. Her children perform it with exuberance!

- Speak and sing vowels slowly and distinctly if your **goal is phonics practice**.
- A fast and jivy version of "Vowel Bat" is recorded by Shari Sloane from the album "School is Cool." See Shari Sloane on [www.kidscount123.com](http://www.kidscount123.com)—it is a direct link from our Literacy Award and other Favorite Websites at [www.nellieedge.com](http://www.nellieedge.com).
- The puppet is from Katie & Co. (We made our own lowercase letters for the visual aid rather than use the uppercase letters that came with the puppet. Letters are attached with Velcro.)
- Sing slowly and challenge all learners to sing, sign, and articulate ♪"a-e-i-o-u: Vowel Bat!" **Reinforce the concept of nocturnal animals.**
- See the ASL tutorial browser for visual instruction for bat: [Michigan State University ASL \(American Sign Language\) Browser](http://Michigan State University ASL (American Sign Language) Browser). There is a direct link from our website under Literacy Award tab.

## Slow Vowel Bat Song

ă-ă-ă-ă

ă-ă-ă-ă

A bat

A bat

Vowel Bat

a - e - i - o - u

✋ - ✋ - ✋ - ✋ - ✋

Vowel Bat

Invite the children to fingerspell and sign this playful phonics song. The sign for "bat" is hands crossed over chest to show folded wings, with index finger extended to show hanging upside down.





# What Are the Most Memorable Ways to Reinforce Phonics Skills?

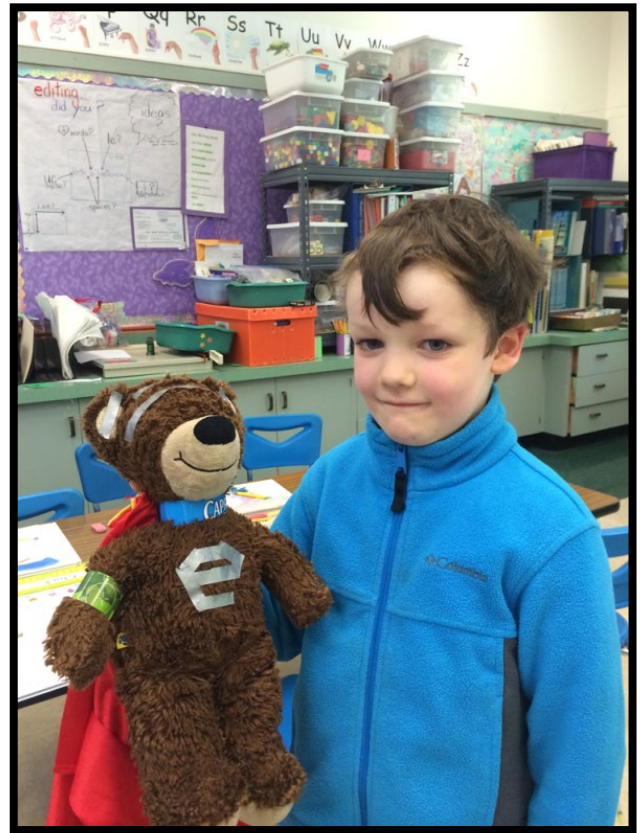
We take advantage of the musical brain and playful puppets:

♪ *Silent E Man is a Phonics Super Hero!*



With special thanks to Diane Bonica for "playing with phonics" and giving us this delightful song and dramatic literacy lesson.

♪ *Who can turn hop into hope?  
Who can turn hop into hope?  
Silent E can!  
Silent E can!  
He's the one.  
Baby! ♪*



Here's Adrian and his Silent E Bear!

Laura Flocker's students were so delighted with Silent E Man, who swooped down into the classroom singing his song, that children soon started arriving with their own "Silent E" characters that they had talked someone into helping them create from home.

## Phonological Awareness:

RF.K.2 Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes).

## Phonics and Word Recognition:

RF.K.3 Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.

Associate the long and short sounds with the common spellings (graphemes) for the five major vowels.



See video at [www.nellieedge.com](http://www.nellieedge.com) under Video Clips tab.

See Literacy Songs and Rhymes in Poetry Notebook Bundle on TPT



See **Social Emotional Learning** Supplement, Part 1

**The Brain Is a Musical Brain: Phonics Lessons Are Made  
Memorable with Action Songs and Puppets**  
Engaging Teaching with Songs and Rhymes Accelerate Learning and Joy!

## ***The "Silent E" Man Song***

by Diane Bonica

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

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!

pop into Pope  
dot into dote  
pet into Pete

Tim into time  
bad into bade  
cop into cope

fad into fade  
tam into tame  
man into man

See song on ***Social Emotional Learning*** supplement



# Make Writing Real: Build a Culture of Engaged and Purposeful Writers

We Study About Class Pets and Read Fascinating Nonfiction

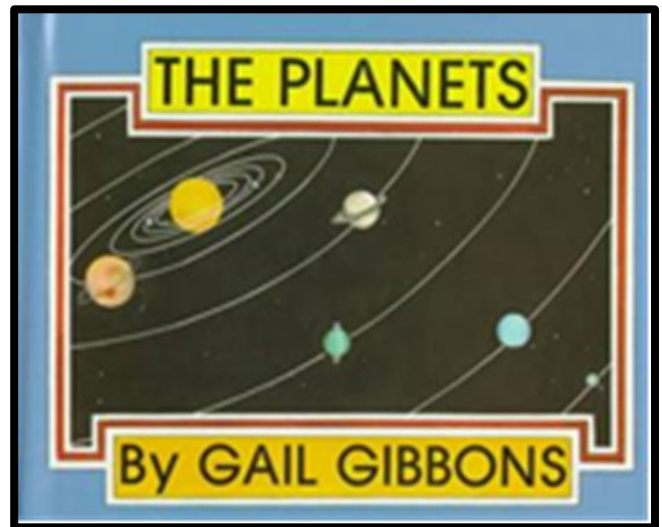


## Charlie the Turtle and his mailbox

When asked what he was doing as a writer this week, Dylan proudly announced he and John were writing a sequel to their book about Charlie, the class turtle. Online research was their tool.



*...They found that Charlie eats worms and he likes scrambled eggs...*



***The Planets by Gail Gibbons, Holiday House, 1993.***

- 50% of the books we read with children are nonfiction.
- Children independently choose to engage in information writing.
- Students are fascinated learning about the real world.



W.K.2., W.K.5. ...Name what they are writing about.

W.K.6. Explore a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing including collaboration with peers...

W.K.7. Participate in shared research and writing projects.



# Charlie and Gizmo Are the Kindergarten Mascot Box Turtles

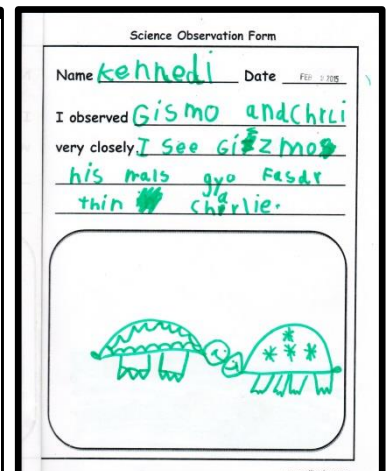
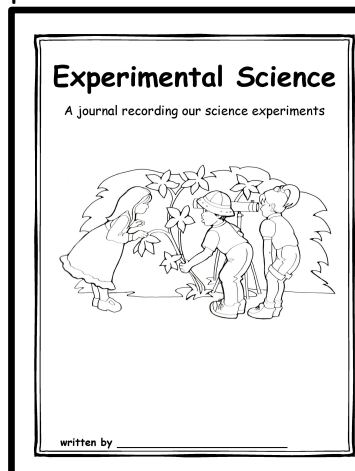
All year long students observe closely and study the life of their class turtles



Children observe the physical characteristics of these reptiles. They learn how turtles move, what they eat, and what their natural and classroom habitat is. Children learn how to draw a turtle and record their observations in the Experimental Science Journal.




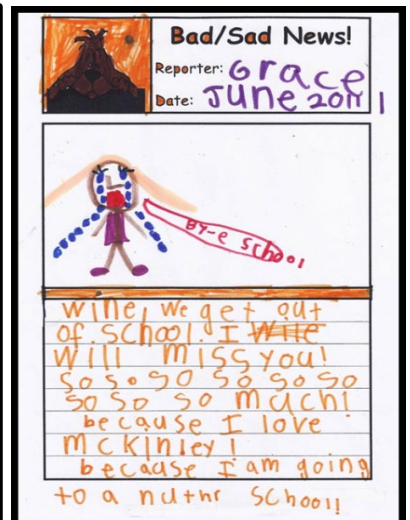
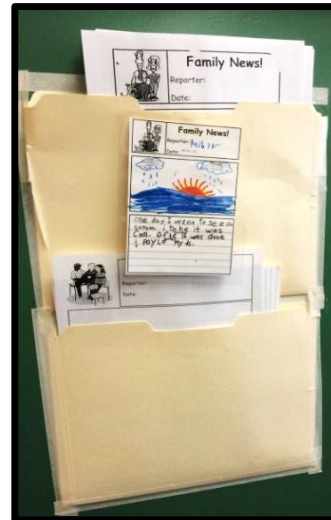
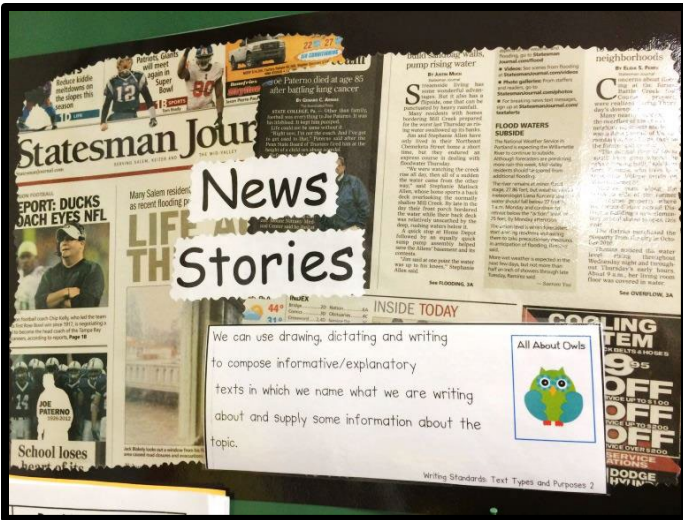
Kindergarten with Katie Nelson





# Building a Community of Engaged and Purposeful Writers

W.K.2. We can use drawing, dictating and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which we name what we are writing about and supply some information about the topic. 



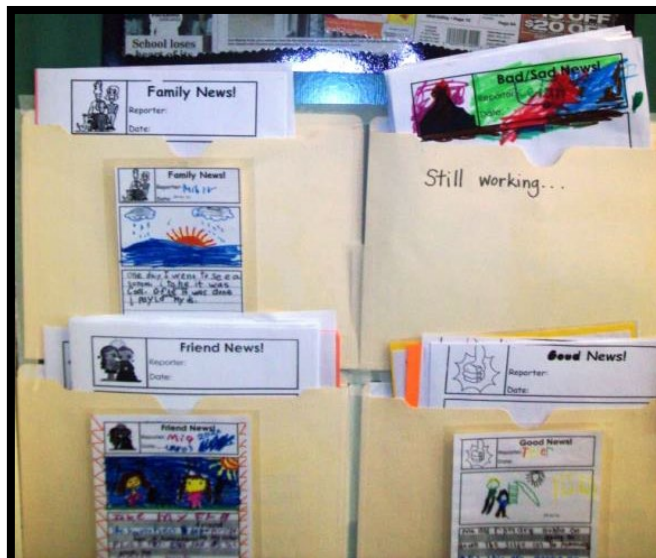
**Children choose a News Story Template** and write about a personally meaningful experience.

**The story is date stamped** and put in the "finished" basket to be shared later.




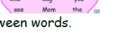
**Adult underwriting is phased out** as soon as it is no longer needed.

**Later in the year, students self-reflect:** What am I doing well?

**Children become self-regulated learners.** News Story File Folders and Templates are attached to the door. Katie Nelson saves and shares exemplars from children's actual independent writing to inform future kid writers.



## What Makes a Good News Story?

1. The news reporter always puts his or her name on the news story. 
2. The illustration shows details and matches the story. 
3. The reporter answers the questions: Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How? 
4. The reporter spells "heart words" conventionally and uses their best kid writing. 
5. The reporter leaves spaces between words.
6. The reporter uses punctuation at the end of every sentence. ( . , ? ! )
7. The reporter always writes in the white space.
8. The reporter reads his or her own news story.
9. The reporter often asks for "adult writing" and editing assistance.
10. The reporter stamps the date on the news story.

A variety of News Story choices are available to the young writers: Good News, Bad/Sad News, Friends News, Family News, Lost Tooth News, Ouch News. See **FREEBIE K-1 News Story Printables** on Nellie Edge TPT Store

# We Teach Children to Be Independent, Self-Regulated Learners


"I" Charts can be mounted on plain or decorated border paper.

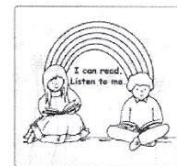
## The Stamp and Read Skinny Book Center: My Job

### "I" Chart

#### I is for Independence!

1. Follow the directions to make a stamp and read book.
2. On the cover, write **My Book**.
3. Also write by     (your name)    .
4. Choose one animal stamp and animal card to start with.  
"Remember: start at the staple."
5. Do one sentence per page.
6. Stamp a sentence with stamps and stamp cards. Leave a space between each word and put a period at the end.  

I	see	the		dog.
---	-----	-----	---	------
7. You can also write the animal name on each page and add your own kid writing ideas.
8. Write **the end** on the last page!
9. Read the book to a teacher. Ask the teacher to stamp: "I Can Read, Listen to Me!"
10. Use the date stamp on the inside cover of the book.
11. Put the book in the "finished basket" or share it at circle time.





# Empowered Writers Conduct End-of-Year Surveys

## We learned we are wonderfully imperfect!

*"Choose a random sample of 10-15 children. Remind everyone to do their very best 'name ticket' writing! Count and analyze the results: What did you learn?"*

### Are you perfect?


### What did you learn?

Kindergarten Survey	
yes	no
Emma Mihir SKYAN	Teacher Nellie CYPUS DANNO hh beetle ssike
by <u>Athan</u> date: _____	
I learned: _____	

Writing to Read: Compliments of [www.writingtoread.com](http://www.writingtoread.com)

NO  
Most of the people  
were honest.

- After noticing the first children surveyed were all answering yes, they were perfect, I said, *I'm going to put my name under the 'no' column. I'm not perfect. I make lots of mistakes. It's how I learn!* From then on, the children felt more comfortable acknowledging that they too were learners and made mistakes.
- Analyzing was the second part of the survey. Athan's evaluation brought him to this conclusion: *Most of the people were honest.*

 Information writing and analyzing research: It was amazing to see by the end of the year how many children were able to write all of the names of their classmates—and they chose to do it! They were thoughtful and engaged as they wrote about what they had observed or learned.

 Survey forms available for in **Social Emotional Learning** supplement

# Ask Families to Make Blank Books for School and Home: How to Make a Stapled Skinny Book for Writing

Dear Parents,

Here's a simple way to **create stapled blank "Skinny Books"** for your young writer and illustrator. The ideal size is about 2" x 8 ". Use colored paper if you have it for a front and back. Staple two or three white blank pages inside.

**We encourage the children to write "My Book by \_\_\_\_\_" and/or to create their own book title.** They can also "fancy up" a page that says "The end."

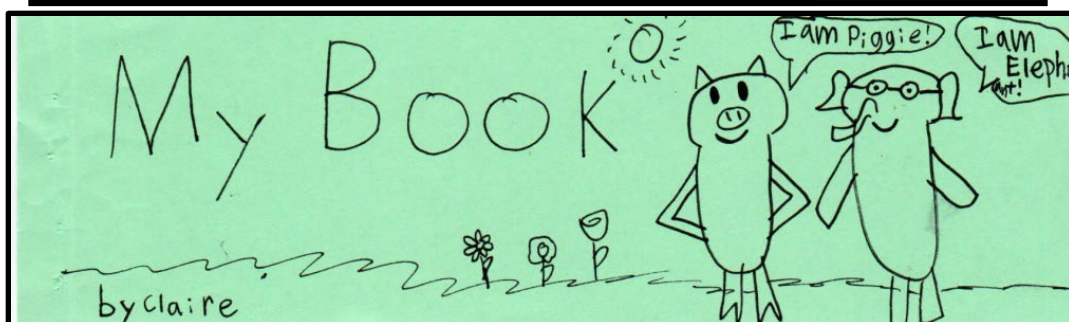
As needed, give your child a model for "My Book" and "The end" as well as a "heart word sentence" to copy such as "I see a..." or "I see the..."

**Your young writer may need lots of practice** before the writing is legible. That's okay! Honor your child's progress: Accept your child's approximation to conventional writing and keep the bookmaking process FUN!

**Consider giving your child stamps or stickers** to complete the sentence or encourage him or her to draw a favorite animal on each page and to start writing each sentence by the staples. (See drawing guides in this collection.)



**Tip: Create more independence:**  
Teach your child **how to use a stapler** and make their own Skinny Book.





## Parents as Partners

### How to Make Rubber Band Books

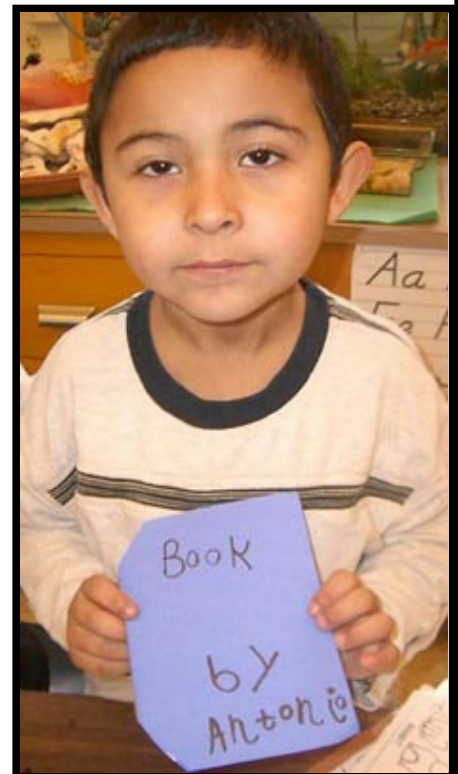
1. Pre-cut 8 x 5 -inch strips of white paper.
2. Fold in half.
3. Cut a "V" from the top and the bottom.
4. Cut 8 x 11-inch colored construction paper in half and fold.
5. Rubber bands 3 " is best size.
6. Children choose from assorted colored covers and assemble the book by laying the smaller white sheet on top of the colored sheet and attaching the rubber band in the V cut out.

One folded paper and one cover makes a 4-page book.

**Tip:** Children love to make their own Rubber Band Books!  
Teach them how step-by-step.



Special thanks to Becky Leber, from whom we first learned about these really cool little books.



# How to Make Folded Blank Books for Writing

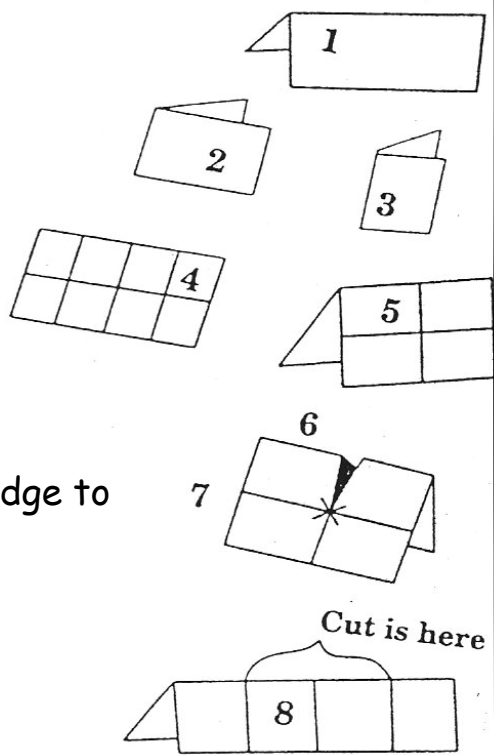
Or empower your child by teaching them to make their own!

Dear Parents,

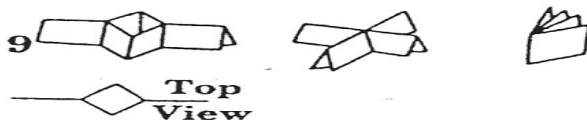
Here's a great technique for creating a folded blank book. Make several! If your child wants to master the fold-a-book technique, work with them. Soon they may create their own blank books for writing and illustrating purposes. Start with an 11" x 17" sheet; later, try using an 8 " x 11" sheet.

## Fold-A-Book Instructions

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** (up 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

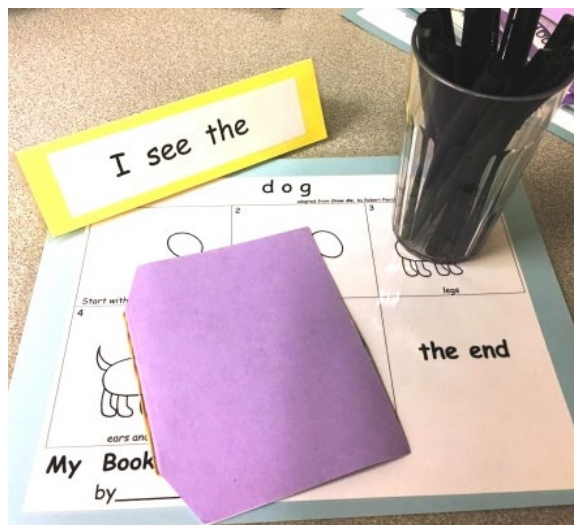
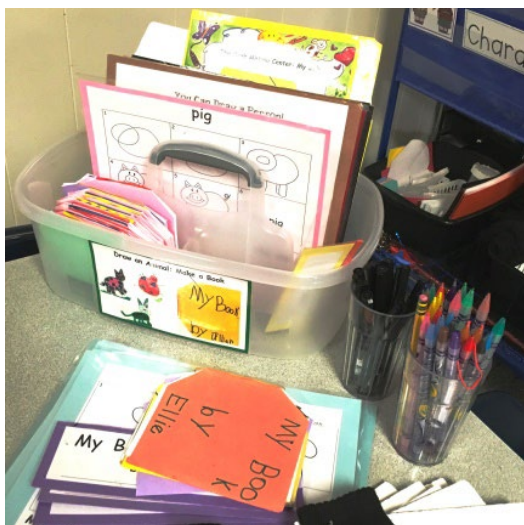
A sheet (or sheets) of paper are cut in half or thirds and stapled to form an 8, 12, or 16-page child-size Little Book.





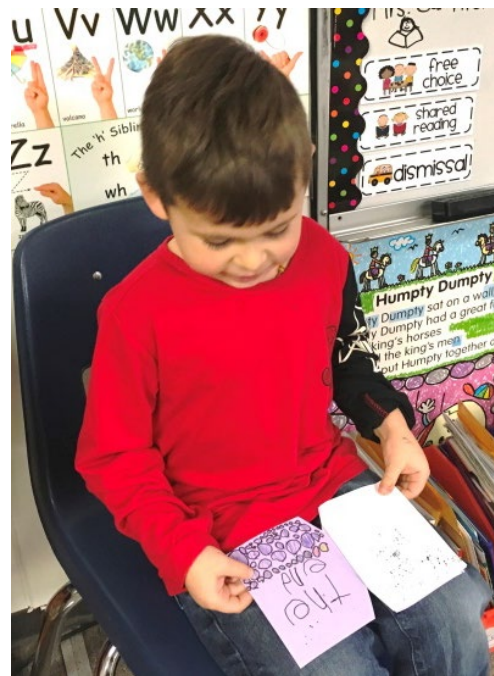
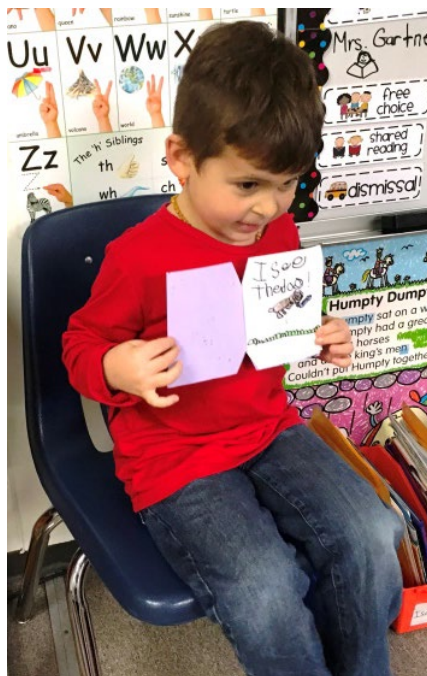
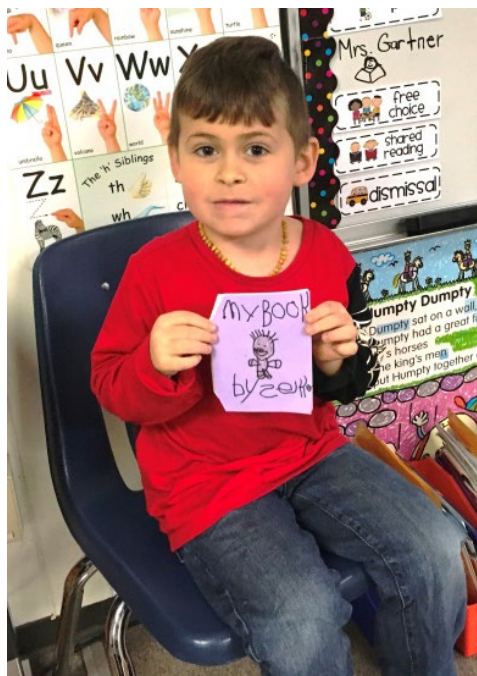
# Young Writers Build "I Can Do It!" Writing Confidence: I Am an Author Now!

A simple "heart word" sentence model supports kindergartners in making their own little book: 'I see the...'



Kindergartners love to draw animals and write their own little books. Meaningful word work activities involve making books using guided animal drawing pages, sentence writing models, pens, and writing materials stored in an Independent Writing Center Tote. In this lesson, students learn to draw a dog. They practice writing "My book," "by," "the end" and a sentence (I see the dog.) about their animal. As children build their writing stamina, additional pages may be added to the "Rubber Band Books." **This Is the Beginning of Bookmaking.** By the end of the year each child will write, edit, illustrate, and publish an 8-page board book.

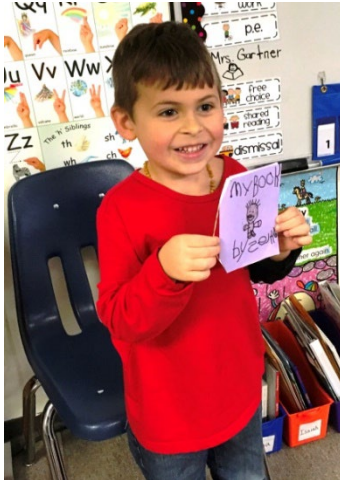
## Students Enjoy Writing When We Give Them Scaffolding to Build on Success



The experience of sitting in the Author's Chair and proudly sharing his work helps this young author see himself as an author and illustrator who does quality work.



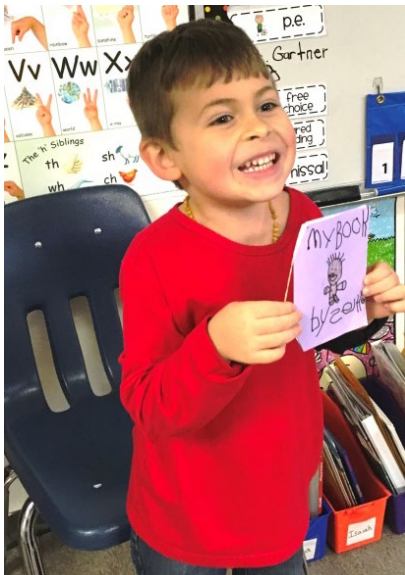
## The Final Piece of the Writing Process Is Sharing Your Writing and Receiving Feedback



While Zeke is reading his book, the children listen attentively. After he shares his last page with "the end," his teacher, Mrs. Corliss, provides feedback to the whole class:

- Notice he wrote "My Book," and "by Zeke," and he left spaces between words.
- Zeke decided to draw a picture of himself on his book cover.
- He wrote "the end" and fancied up the page by drawing—rocks!
- Thank you for sharing your book. We can tell you like to do quality work.
- Who has a compliment or question for Zeke?
- Okay, you can give Zeke applause for his book now.

### What a Sense of Pride and Awe



All smiles, Zeke then turns to teacher and says, "And I'm an author now!"



Authentic word work grows kindergarten writers. Children build fluency for writing workshop by repeatedly writing high-frequency "heart word" sentences (I see the..., I like my..., I can see a...).

We tell students: "Your words and pictures tell a story."



# Sitting in the Author's Chair by Bobbi Fisher

From *Inside the Classroom*, collected articles by Bobbi Fisher, Heinemann, 1996.

Having an author's chair (Hansen and Graves 1983) is one way to encourage the children to share themselves as writers, to listen as readers, and to experience reading like a writer and writing like a reader.

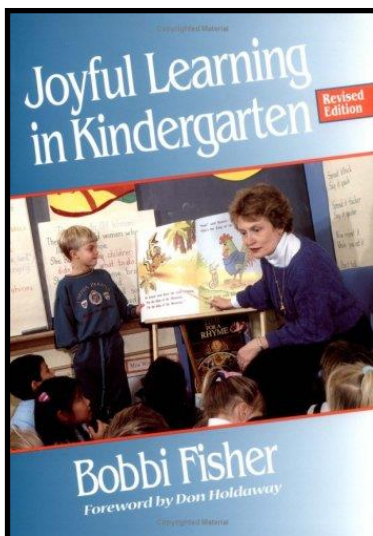
## Supporting the Children

**My role is to support the children in becoming more and more in charge of the author's chair** by helping them develop a procedure for sharing and by modeling what writers (the authors) and readers (the audience) do in the process. At the beginning of the year, although I sit in the group as one of the audience, I am more directive about what goes on. As time passes, I become just another member of the group.

**During the first few days of author's chair, I initiate the introductory reading by the author, the "I notice" questions, and the procedure for calling on people to share**, by sharing a piece I have written. Then, after two children have shared their work, we discuss what went on and begin to write some rules for the audience. We start by focusing on the role of the audience because everyone has participated as a member of that group. The rules usually include, *Don't talk*, *Wait to be called*, and *Say what you notice*.

After a few weeks, when most of the children have sat in the author's chair, we write some rules for the author: *Hold your paper so everyone can see it*, *Don't be silly*, and *Don't call on the same people all of the time*. Throughout the year, we review, edit, and rewrite these rules.

**I continually demonstrate different audience responses.** At first, I mention things I "notice": **"I notice that you have a capital at the beginning of your sentence."** Then, when I feel that enough trust has developed in our classroom community, I model more open-ended comments and questions that go beyond what the author is doing: **"How did you learn to draw roofs on houses?"** "Are you going to draw any more pictures about baseball?"



Throughout the year, during author's chair, we continually focus on both the writer's stance (as an author) and the reader's stance (as an audience member). My goal is for the children to take more and more responsibility in the process and know that they are authors.

-----

*Our collaboration with master kindergarten teacher and best-selling author Bobbi Fisher continues to inspire "best practices" in early literacy. Her understanding of the role of "community," respect for the integrity of childhood, and wisdom in honoring the learning process are all parts of our framework for excellence. N.E.*

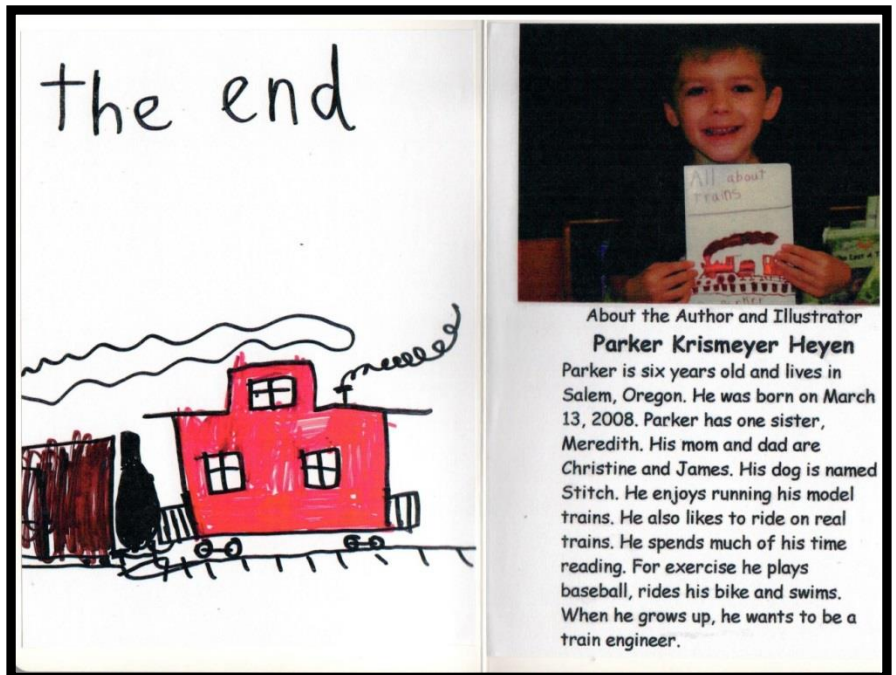
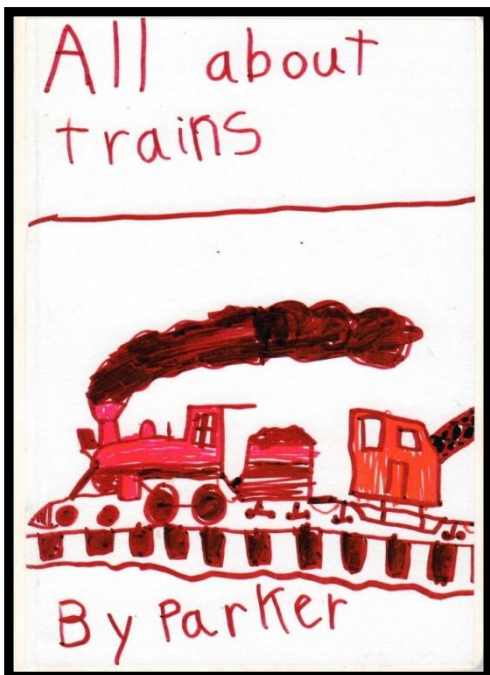
# Allow Your Writing Framework to Nurture Creativity

## Celebrate the Voices of Kindergarten Writers

Not all writing pieces need to fit into one prescriptive category of opinion, narrative, or information writing. Provide children opportunity for the creative process to unfold and they will write about what is most real in their lives. Their hearts and imaginations are reflected through pages of pen and ink. After all, building the disposition of prolific writers is the purpose of deep meaning-centered CCSS writing instruction.



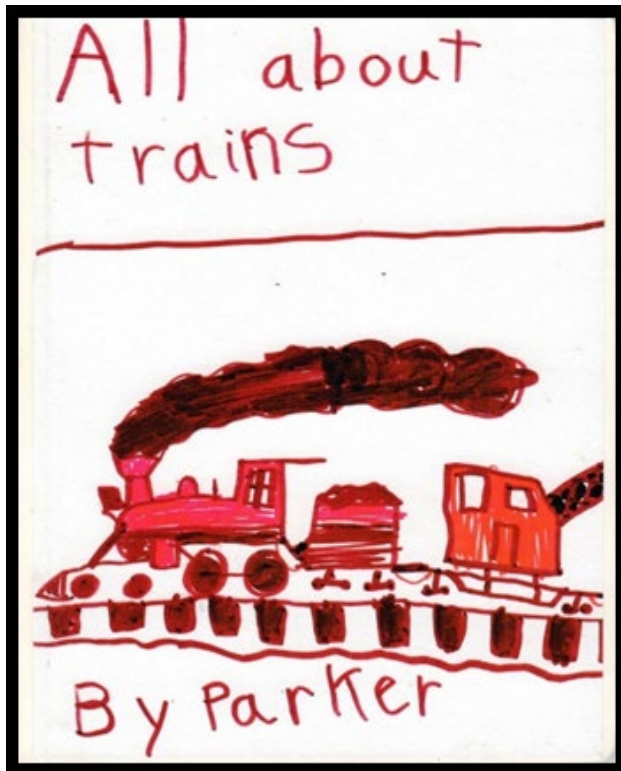
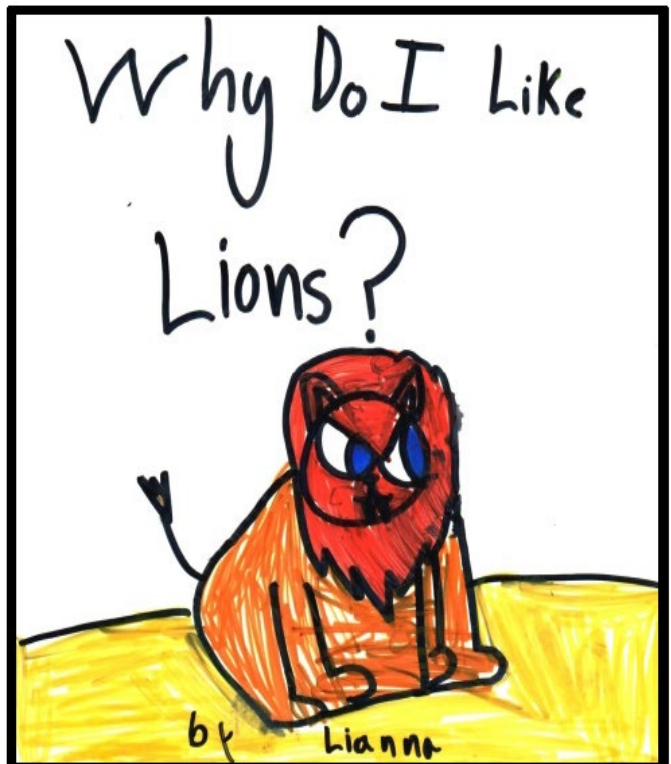
**All year, Parker was the boy who loved trains**



Children write and draw directly onto the blank board book from their edited draft. We make color copies to have as mentor texts for the following year. Parker's information book was rich in detail: A perfect addition to the class library!



**Publish Children's Books and Celebrate Young Authors:**  
*This is one of the best things we can do to build an  
"I can do it" mindset!*

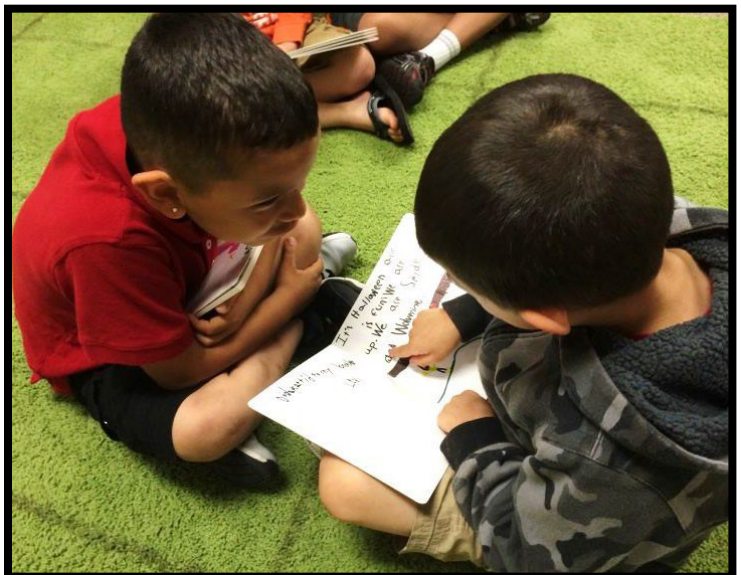
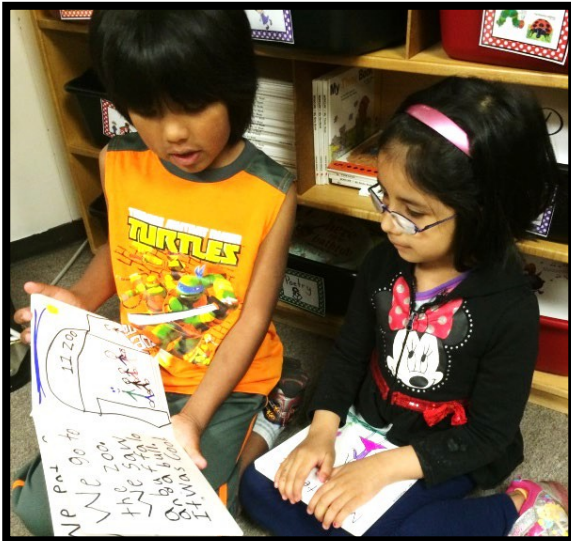


*Grow engaged and purposeful writers and empower them to  
love the writing process!*



## Friends Honor and Listen to Each Other, Ask Questions, and Provide Empowering Feedback About Published Books

**Teachers:** You must save time for students to share and celebrate their new skills as authors and illustrators: What a way to end the year!



***In our comprehensive writing curriculum, writing becomes a vehicle for reading fluency!***

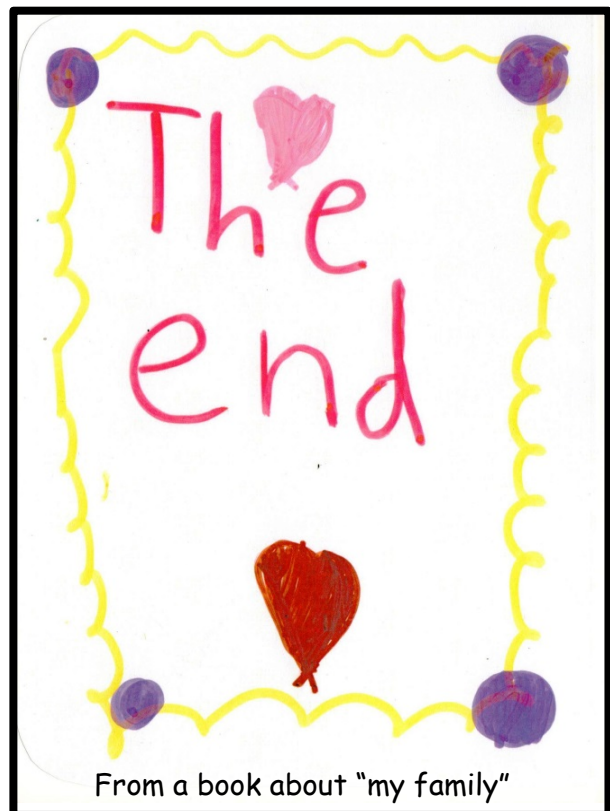
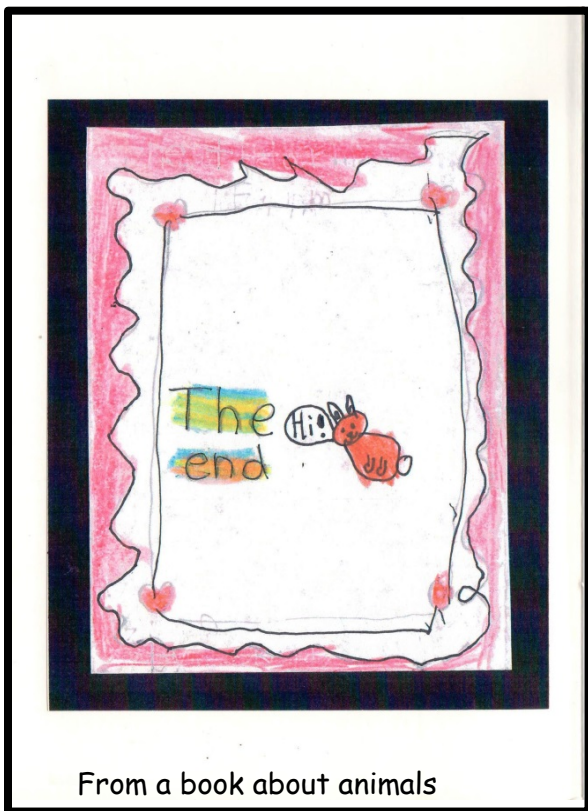
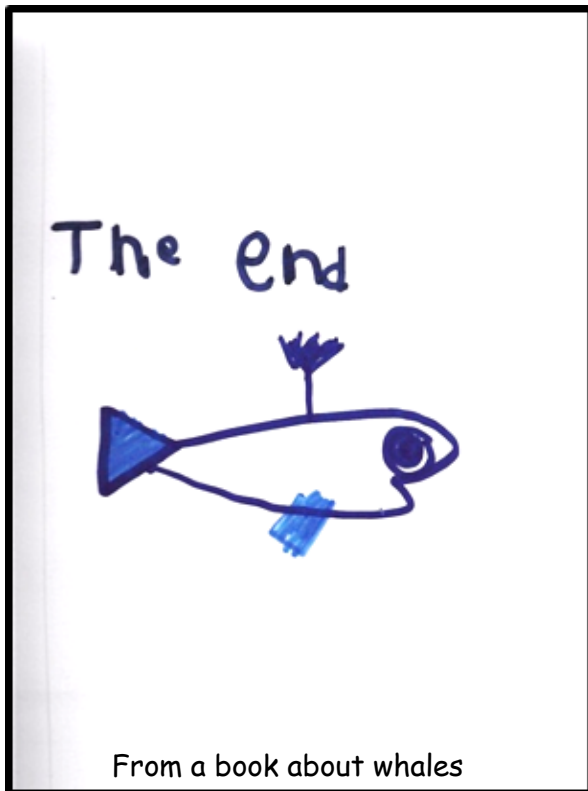
- Students have learned to touch under each word.
- Students have the stamina to write and illustrate 8-page books!
- It is hard to imagine kindergarten writers being more empowered!

***Not only do students learn to write; they love to write...now and forever!***



# Kindergarten Authors and Illustrators Fancy Up Their End Pages

Young writers do quality handwriting, create "the end" pages, and make really cool books!



Consider storing this in the Independent Writing Totes as samples of kindergarten writing.

## How do we talk to young writers?

- "Wow! You did quality handwriting: it sure is easy to read."
- "You put a lot of design work into that page. It is interesting and fun to look at."
- "You must feel proud of your detailed page. You sure have grown as a writer."

From Nellie Edge Online Seminar #3  
[www.nellieedge.com](http://www.nellieedge.com)



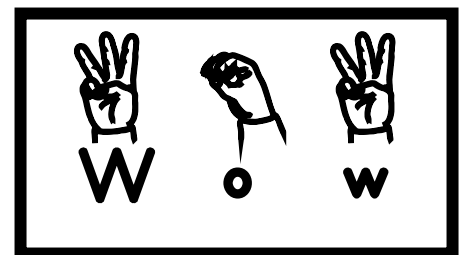
See Social Emotional Learning Supplement, Part 1

# Children Learn Many Playful Ways to Salute Their Friends: "Let's Give Her a WOW!"

This playful WOW Fingerspelling Salute is used to honor children in Katie Nelson's Kindergarten. After sharing a young author's book, she might invite the children, "Let's give him a Wow!"



Let's give him A "WOW"!



Children practice "quick writes." This becomes a playful part of phonics word work: *If you know 'wow'—you also know how, now, cow, bow, and pow!* Children soon create the house of "ow" using whiteboards.



# Social Emotional Learning in Kindergarten: Book 1 Supplement

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WOW!.....	

# Authentic Writing Experiences Empower Learners with an "I can do it!" Attitude

Choose resources that scaffold learning and help students find their own voice to build confidence drawing, writing, thinking, and creating!



## So Many Reasons to Love It!

*"This bundle gave my kinders the scaffolding and confidence to truly become writers. The ideas are simple yet profound; this product should be required in every kinder classroom."* M.R. quote from TPT

*"Just finished one of her workshops and it was amazing! Can't wait to use this in my classroom and see the great works of writing my students will produce. Thank you for this amazing resource."* Nicola L. quote from TPT

*"My first-grade students love learning how to draw and write about the animals. The grocery and friends list was a big hit with my class."* Kristiana P. quote from TPT

*"I attended a Nellie Edge training with my building's kindergarten team and loved the resources! I knew what the kinder team was teaching, and I am able to expand on that in first grade."* Shana M. quote from TPT

*"A super resource! So much packed in one bundle. Thanks!"* Renee B. quote from TPT

*"The kids loved this as an intervention supplement."* Sarah T. quote from TPT

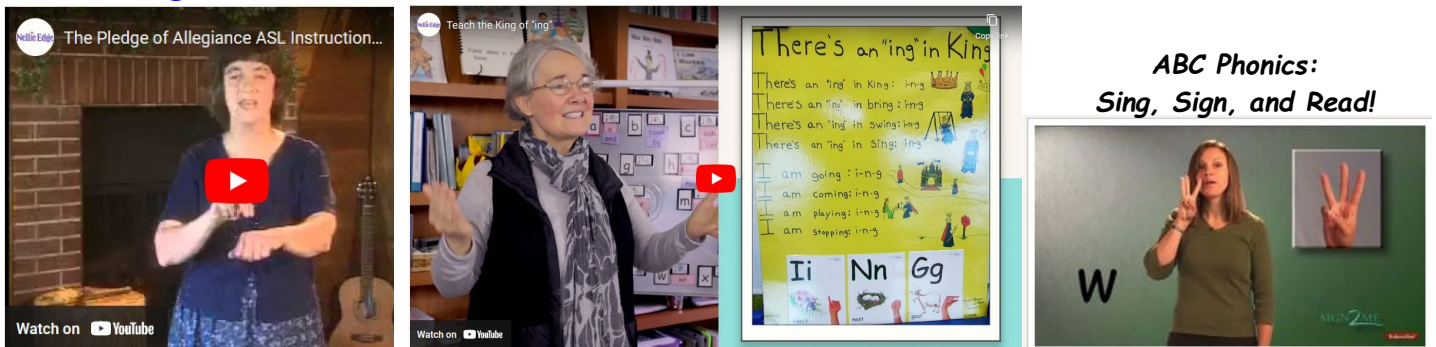


# Use Joyful, Multisensory Strategies Across the Curriculum:

*Build an "I can do it!" Mindset and Love of Learning*

- Honor English Language Learners
- Take advantage of how the brain learns best
- Provide actionable Parents as Partners resources

To learn more, watch joyful, multisensory teaching and learning on [Nellie Edge YouTube channel](#).



**Study Nellie Edge Online Seminars:** Choose strategies to watch again and again. Make best practices come alive in your own classroom! Includes all the resources needed to implement these proven practices. **Have the best year ever!**



- State-of-the-arts MasterClass: More online seminars coming
- Step-by-step video tutorials
- By kindergarten teachers for kindergarten and early literacy educators
- Optional graduate credit available
- Make your PLC time count!

*"All the best things I do come from Nellie Edge Seminars!"*

## Chapter 5

# ***Lessons That Celebrate Excellence and Build a Love of Learning***

*With our hearts we know how to apply best practices —systematically  
and with great intention.*

## **NOTES**



***Reach for the stars with the lives of our children...***

N.E.



# **Social Emotional Learning in Kindergarten:** *Celebrating Islands of Excellence with Joyful Teaching and Learning*

*As a result of studying this book or taking this workshop or online seminar,  
what do you want to be doing in the classroom 1 week, 1 month, and 4  
months from now?*

*What additional joyful and empowering strategies will you weave into your  
curriculum to nurture Social Emotional Learning?*

*Consider these professional development goals as **practicum projects** and as  
**dialog topics** for your Professional Learning Community (PLC).*

- 

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- 

- 

**Give yourself permission to go slowly**

*Remember: The most important ingredient in the classroom is a wise, caring,  
and responsive teacher. So be kind to yourself, walk softly, and enjoy the  
journey...*

**Take Your Teaching to a Higher Level: Earn Graduate Credit!**  
***Social Emotional Learning in Kindergarten: Meaningful Practicum Suggestions***  
*University Credit Option - PEDU 9625: Joyful Accelerated Literacy Practicum*

15 hours practicum project work is required for **each** unit of credit. *Social Emotional Learning in Kindergarten* may be taken for up to 3 units of credits.

**Choose any one suggestion to develop an in-depth practicum or any combination of meaningful projects that would allow you to apply the skills shared in this resource book/online seminar in the most useful and relevant way.** How can you use the content of this Nellie Edge Distance Learning PD to make your teaching more effective and powerful for the lives of your students? What do you want to be doing in your classroom one week, one month, and four months from now as a result of this professional development?

**Dr. Lifson at the University of the Pacific always allows teachers to design their own practicum project** that meets their unique teaching and learning needs. You **DO NOT NEED to write a 3-page paper** unless that is a meaningful project and would be the best way for you to improve your teaching. **Consider the practicum suggestions on the following Sample Time Log:** Which projects will meet your goal of weaving social and emotional learning across the curriculum and including meaningful family involvement?

- Register at <https://teacherfriendly.com/nellie-edge-online-seminars/> using a credit card.
- Each unit of graduate credit costs \$62.00.
- You may take this practicum for up to 3 semester hours of graduate credit.
- You have up to 4 months to complete your practicum from when you submit the official registration form online. You may request an extension.
- **The final projects are submitted online directly to the University.** Nellie Edge does not see them unless you email a copy to [info@NellieEdge.com](mailto:info@NellieEdge.com) or send it to 1580 Rio Vista Way S., Salem, OR 97302. (I DO enjoy seeing practicum projects and sharing them with other teachers.)
- **For support**, you can use the "Contact Support" link found on the registration page, contact [info@teacherfriendly.com](mailto:info@teacherfriendly.com) or call 949-646-9696.

*Dr. Lifson says our teachers turn in the finest projects in the country!*


***What will be the most relevant practicum projects for you?***

(Need ideas? Start with sample projects you'll find on the next page.)



## Sample Time Log for Graduate Credit Suggestions

*Each practicum project may take 2-5 hours (or more) depending on what you include.*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Objective: Weave SEL Strategies Across the Curriculum</b>	<b>Hours</b> (example)
	Printed and bound "Social Emotional Learning in Kindergarten." Studied book and responded to Professional Learning Community (PLC) questions.  Downloaded and organized SEL Book 1 Supplement pages	10
	Made class books: <i>"All About Teacher" in English and Spanish, "I Love The Earth," and "Hip Hip Hooray!"</i> to celebrate student heart word mastery.	6
	Developed resources/props for Back-to-School Family Scavenger Hunt; mounted and laminated 26 <i>ABC Phonics</i> charts with magnets for parents.	4
	Studied ASL video: Learned to sing and sign <i>The More We Get Together</i> . Downloaded connect-to-print resources. Used "I Can Read" page.	
	Made and laminated large "Reading Is Fun!" poster; added photos of students reading, printed sets of "I Can Read" pages, and purchased and prepared 26 Poetry Notebooks for students.	
	Edited 10 "Parents as Partners" letters for my kindergarten SEL program.	
	Taught 6 songs, poems, and rhymes that develop Social and Emotional Learning. Gave students the "I Can Read" page and invited them to illustrate the words.	
	Learned to sing and <b>fingerspell</b> the <i>ABC Phonics: Sing, Sign, and Read!</i> song. Created vertical <i>ABC Phonics</i> chart backed with foam board.	
	Studied Nellie Edge website pages documenting a multisensory, art-rich, comprehensive writing program. Created a list of the SEL best writing practices I want to make routine in my classroom.	
	Designed a Parents as Partners in Kindergarten Success program. Adapted eight SEL parent letters. Created an information booklet to send home.	
	Studied Optimum Learning Model and presented "I love you" circles of writing mastery lessons, integrating handwriting and "heart words."	
	Downloaded and edited Nellie Edge Family-Friendly Learning Calendar. Printed 30 copies	
	Taught the "King of ing" lesson after studying ASL video; created crowns and poster. Printed "I Can Read" pages for Poetry Notebook.	
	Learned an Spanish/English Greeting Song: <i>Hola Mis Amigos/Hello My Friend</i> .	
	Implemented Helper of the Day strategy: Created student name/fingerspelling cards.	
	Organized and copied practicum projects. Took photos. Submitted practicum online.	
	<b>Total hours of involvement: 15 hours per credit (45 hours = 3 credits)</b>	

# How to Bind Your Social Emotional Learning Resource Book

For this product and instructions, we used FedEx for their binding services. You can submit your request two ways. One is more expensive and less work; the other requires more of your time and resources but is less expensive.

**Option 1 (the cheaper way): Print the product yourself and have it bound:**

- This will cost around \$6.00.
  - You may be able to wait at FedEx while they bind the book.
1. Print the first page on heavy paper in full color.
  2. When printing double-sided, use 24# ultra-white paper.
  3. Consider printing pages of beautiful exemplars in full color!
  4. Print the remaining product with these choices on the Print screen:
    - a. Click: Print in grayscale (black and white)
    - b. Double-sided (if this is an option)
    - c. Pages to Print: All
    - d. Orientation: Portrait
  5. Take the printed pages to your local FedEx Print Center and request:
    - a. Coil bound on long edge; clear front cover; black vinyl back cover.

Go to <https://www.fedex.com/en-us/printing.html> and sign up if you wish.

**Option 2: Email your PDF file as a link to a local FedEx Print Center for them to print:**

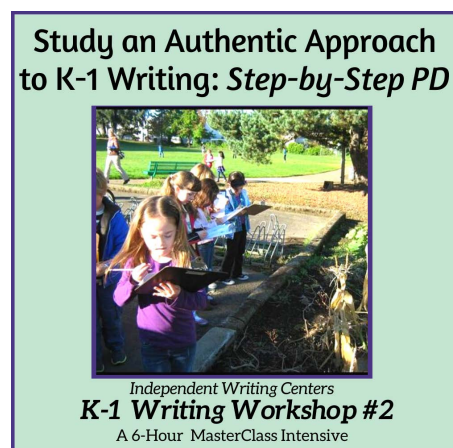
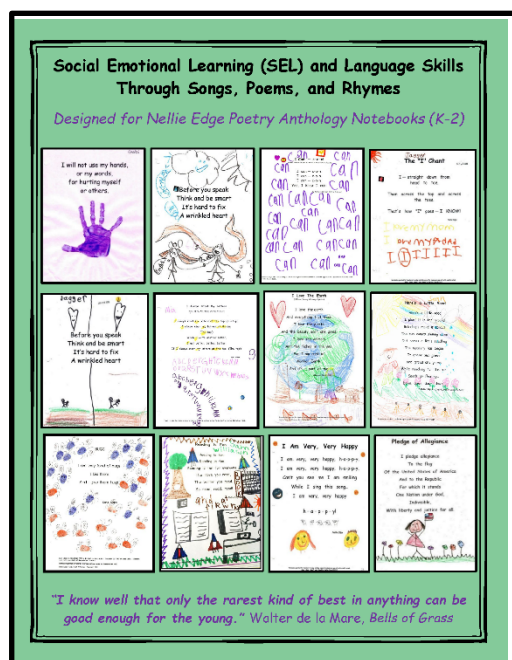
1. This will cost \$30.00 or more.
2. Search online for your local FedEx Print Center (not just shipping center); call and request their email address.





3. If you don't have it, [download Adobe Reader DC](#) and keep the box checked for "Install the Acrobat Reader Chrome Extension."
4. Follow the directions to connect your Google (or Facebook or Apple) account.
5. Open your downloaded product file in Adobe Reader DC and make sure you're signed into Adobe.
6. Click on "Share" in the top right corner.
7. In the pop-up box, click "Get Link" and "Create Link."
8. When it appears, click "Copy Link," and it will be on your clipboard.
9. Compose an email to your local FedEx Print Center and paste the file link into the body of the email.
10. Paste these instructions below:
  - a. Print pages full size portrait
  - b. Print back-to-back on 24# ultra-white paper (except cover), use photo paper for cover
  - c. Print the first page as the cover on heavy paper
  - d. Include the first page (cover) as part of the book
  - e. Coil bound on long edge
  - f. Clear front cover
  - g. Black vinyl cover

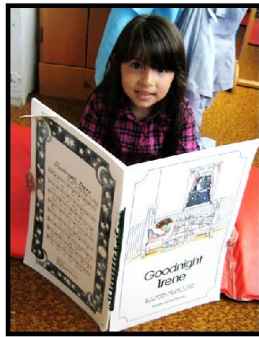
**Other Nellie Edge Resource Books on TPT to consider binding for curriculum planning:**



## Social Emotional Learning in Kindergarten: *What Is coming in Book 2 and Supplement?*

## Chapter 1

## Choose Books Worthy of Our Children for Grand Conversations and Social Emotional Learning

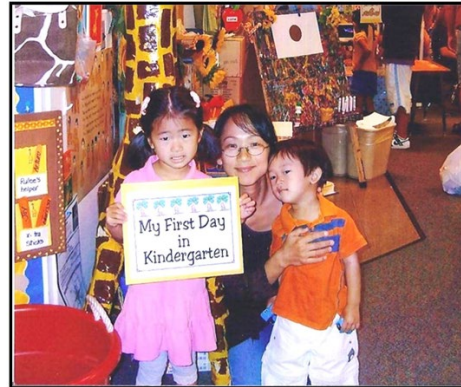


*I know well that only the rarest  
kind of best in anything can be  
good enough for the young.*  
Walter de la Mare, *Bells of Grass*



## Chapter 2

## Parents as Partners in Developing Social Emotional Intelligence and Literacy



*As teachers of the young, we have a "covenant" with parents that says,  
"We jointly share responsibility for teaching your child."*

- Ernest Boyer  
The Carnegie Foundation for the  
Advancement of Teaching

## Chapter 3

### Purposeful Literacy Play:

Develop Self-Regulation, Language, and Social-Emotional Skills



Photos and inspiration from Jacque Verrall



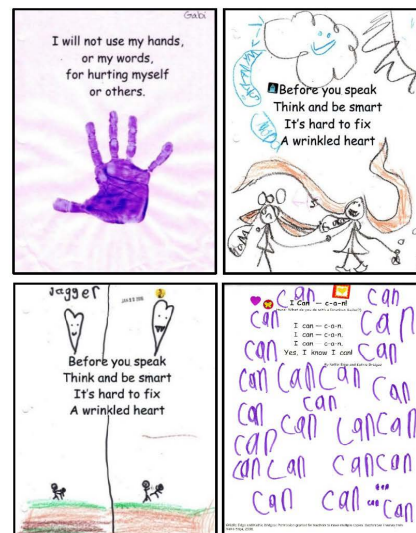
*Make play and games important parts of the curriculum...Instead of getting rid of blocks and dress-up clothes, kindergarten teachers need to primarily focus on improving the quality of make-believe play...*

Excerpts from *Tools of the Mind: A Vygotskian Approach to Early Childhood Education*, by Elena Bodrova and Deborah Leong. 2006.

*I still remember the fun I had in kindergarten!*

## Chapter 4

### Poetry and Songs Build Social Emotional Skills and Language



*Children need to memorize, recite, and perform language, to take pleasure in the sound of language and turn that pleasure over to an audience. -Donald Hall*

## Chapter 5: Resources for Excellence and University Credit Option



Now on [Nellie Edge Kindergarten Store](#) on TPT

## Social Emotional Learning in Kindergarten (BUNDLE)

Social Emotional Learning: Book and Supplement Part 1 and Printables

44 Editable Kindergarten Parent Letters: Actionable Ways

Families Can Support Social Emotional Learning and Literacy at Home

Sight Word Songs (a.k.a. Writing-to-Read Heart Words) Pages with MP3

Write-a-Message Center (Friendship Messages)

Poetry Notebook Bonus 2: 55 Songs, Poems, Rhymes and Lessons for Social Emotional Learning

Class-Made Book: I Pledge Allegiance

## Social Emotional Learning in Kindergarten Growing BUNDLE



Celebrating Islands of Excellence with Joyful Teaching and Learning

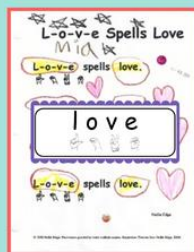
### Social Emotional Learning in Kindergarten Book and Printables Part 1



Celebrating Islands of Excellence with Joyful Teaching and Learning

### Sight Word Songs

MP3 and "I Can Read" Program



Sing, Sign, Spell, and Read!  
by Nellie Edge

### Write-a-Message Kit

A Favorite Independent Writing Center!



Authentic preK-1 word work

www.NellieEdge.com

### 44 Editable Kindergarten Parent Letters



Actionable Ways to Involve Families in School Success

NellieEdge.com

### I Pledge Allegiance

with American Sign Language



Class-Made Book

### Poetry Notebook

Social Emotional Learning and Language Skills



### Bonus #2

Songs, Poems & Rhymes with QR Codes & Lessons

"I Can Read"



NellieEdge.com

## Still coming in this growing BUNDLE:

- Social Emotional Learning (SEL): Book and Supplement Part 2 and Printables
- Discover Best SEL Practices from Real Kindergartens: Spark Joy All Year Long!
- A Family Guide to Social Emotional Learning in the Early Years



# Best Practices in Early Literacy and Social Emotional Learning:

*Joyful, Authentic Lessons that Students Love!*

**Engage Parents as Partners • Celebrate Language • Accelerate Literacy**

## Kindergarten Writing Bundle



### Authentic K-1 Writing Resources include:

- Independent Writing Center Kits
- Writing Across the Curriculum
- Publishing Kindergarten Books
- Writing Workshop & Authentic Assessment

[www.NellieEdge.com](http://www.NellieEdge.com)

## Kindergarten Handwriting Program

*Kindergarten-Friendly Handwriting, Phonics, and Word Work*



### Bundle Includes:

- Teacher's Guide
- 30 Essential Handwriting Lessons
- A-Z Student Practice Book
- Master Class Intensive

[www.NellieEdge.com](http://www.NellieEdge.com)

## Kindergarten Sight Words

*a.k.a. Nellie Edge Heart Word Program*



### Bundle includes:

- Master Class Intensive Power Guide
- Sight Word Songs: MP3s and 1 Can Read! program
- Heart Word templates, posters, and activities

[www.NellieEdge.com](http://www.NellieEdge.com)

## Poetry Notebook Bundle



"I Can Read!"

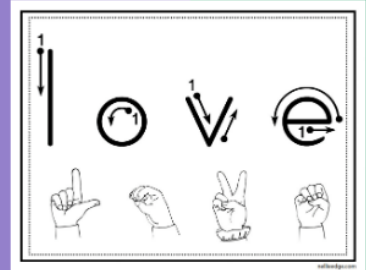
## Kindergarten Writing PD BUNDLE

**Writing Workshops #1 & #2**



**Earn 6 Graduate Credits:** Make Best Practices Routine in Your Classroom!

## Sight Word Play Dough Mats



**The BUNDLE**  
Multisensory Word Work

## K-1 Family Guide to Literacy



Engaging Distance Learning PDFs  
**BUNDLE**

## Parents as Partners in Kindergarten Success



[www.NellieEdge.com](http://www.NellieEdge.com)

5 traditional Spanish folk songs



Little Book Bundle

[NellieEdge.com](http://NellieEdge.com)

## Class-Made Books Kindergarten Bundle



[NellieEdge.com](http://NellieEdge.com)

**Bundle and Save!**  
Sets 1 & 2



Read and Sing Little Book Masters

## Kindergarten Parents as Partners



**SUPER BUNDLE!**

[NellieEdge.com](http://NellieEdge.com)



## Thank You for Downloading this Nellie Edge Social Emotional Learning Resource



If you have any comments or questions please email me at [info@nellieedge.com](mailto:info@nellieedge.com). We appreciate your feedback on our store!

**Follow my store** to be notified of new Nellie Edge Resources. All new items are listed at 50% off for the first 48 hours after posting.

**All photos and children's art are used with parental and teacher permission and copyrighted to Nellie Edge, 2023.**

This resource is a digital download and available for teachers who have purchased our Poetry Notebook Bundle from my TPT store.

As such, it is for use in one classroom only. This item is bound by copyright laws and redistributing, editing, selling or posting this item (or any part thereof) on the internet are all strictly prohibited without first gaining permission from the author. Violations are subject to the penalties of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act. Review this item for the purpose of recommending it to others as long as there is a direct link for it to be purchased from Nellie Edge Resources. Please contact me if you wish to request special permissions!

Clip art from

**Nellie Edge Read and Sing Big Books™**



Again, thank you for your interest in Social Emotional Learning. If you like this product, be sure to check out our early literacy resource BUNDLES:

<b>Kindergarten Writing Bundle</b>  <b>Authentic K-1 Writing Resources include:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Independent Writing Center Kits</li><li>• Writing Across the Curriculum</li><li>• Publishing Kindergarten Books</li><li>• Writing Workshop &amp; Authentic Assessment</li></ul> <small>www.NellieEdge.com</small>	<b>Kindergarten Handwriting Program</b> <i>Kindergarten-Friendly Handwriting, Phonics, and Word Work</i>  <b>Bundle includes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teacher's Guide</li><li>• 30 Essential Handwriting Lessons</li><li>• A-Z Student Practice Book</li><li>• MasterClass Intensive</li></ul> <small>www.NellieEdge.com</small>	<b>Kindergarten Sight Words</b> <i>a.k.a. Nellie Edge Heart Word Program</i>  <b>Bundle includes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• MasterClass Intensive Power Guide</li><li>• Sight Word Songs: MP3 and 1 Can Read program</li><li>• Heart Word templates, posters, and activities</li></ul> <small>www.NellieEdge.com</small>	<b>Sight Word Play Dough Mats</b>  <b>The BUNDLE</b> <i>Multisensory Word Work</i>
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Follow my **BLOG** for more ideas and resources!  
SMILES and Happy Teaching! **Nellie Edge**



Follow my  
YouTube channel

# **Social Emotional Learning in Kindergarten: *Celebrating Islands of Excellence with Joyful Teaching and Learning***

*Featuring Nellie Edge and Colleagues*

***Welcome to our kindergarten community:***

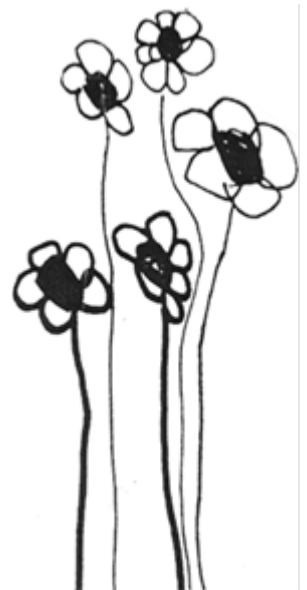
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Thank you for respecting copyright laws.

***I dedicate this book to the kindergarten teachers whose  
beautiful, nurturing, and joyful classrooms inspire my work:  
Shanda Lung, Celeste Starr, Katie Nelson, Laura Flocker, Jaime  
Corliss, Kathie Bridges, Jennifer Foster, Jacque Verrall, Diane  
Bonica, Winter Curry, Diane Larson, Sally Rudnick, Becky Leber,  
Joanie Cutler, and Bobbi Fisher.***

***A special thank you to my Kindergarten Cadre  
Study Group for their generous sharing and their  
passion for authentic, art-rich communities that  
honor diverse learners.***



**All art and photos are used with permission.**

**Nellie Edge Resources, Inc.**

1580 Rio Vista Way S.

Salem, OR 97309-0399

[NellieEdge.com](http://NellieEdge.com)



# Social Emotional Learning in Kindergarten: Celebrating Islands of Excellence with Joyful Teaching Learning



Nellie Edge Professional Development Workshops and Online Seminars are committed to helping all children including English Language Learners (ELLs) achieve the rigor of the English Language Arts State Standards through joyful pathways to learning. Our workshops, presented by outstanding teacher-researchers, are designed to integrate current research and state-of-the-art literacy practices that are meaning-centered and in harmony with how the young child's brain learns best.

Our action-research has documented that joyful writing-to-read strategies within a comprehensive literacy framework accelerate literacy and produce unexpectedly high outcomes. Our purpose is to share "best practices" in Social Emotional Learning and literacy; to inspire reflection, collaboration, and intentional teaching. *How can I do an even better job reaching every child? and How do I create a classroom community that recognizes the social nature of learning, the importance of the mentor-apprentice relationship, and the vital role of the educational arts?* When teachers truly understand the writing and reading process and the power of multisensory teaching, they can more easily and effectively create responsive environments that embrace the diverse learning styles and gifts that our children bring to school. **Rigorous standards are reached when children are deeply engaged in authentic literacy experiences and challenged to become ambitious readers, writers, and thinkers.**

Bruno Bettelheim's research reminds us that how children perceive themselves in the act of learning to read generalizes to their whole self-concept. With this in mind, we are committed, through our professional development programs and literacy resources, to assist teachers in creating engaging and caring learning environments that will provide all children with the foundations they need to build on success. **We believe learning to read and write must be a systematic, meaning-centered process.** Our expectation is that every child can and will develop high levels of literacy skills while building belief systems of competence, belonging, and an "I can do it" growth mindset.

Our workshops and resources support our commitment to excellence in literacy, the honoring of childhood, and our belief that educators can and must positively influence the lives of children and the future of our democratic society.

**Our vision is... creating schools worthy of our children:**  
joyful and rigorous learning communities with strong family connections

## Study Questions for Professional Learning Communities



You will see this symbol in our resource materials. This symbol is for reflection: With our hearts, we know how to apply "best practices" research while we reach for the stars with the lives of our children. Social Emotional Learning underlies everything we do.

# Social Emotional Learning in Kindergarten:

*Celebrating Islands of Excellence with Joyful Teaching and Learning (Part 1)*

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## Chapter 1

# Research and Beliefs about Teaching and Learning



*Becky Leber's kindergarten friends*

*Becky often asks: How can we help our friends?*

*We create **beautiful, organized, language-intensive environments** that are **emotionally safe** and noncompetitive. We have **high expectations!** We **weave Social Emotional Learning (SEL)** and the educational arts into all areas of curriculum. Our children develop friendships: They learn to work hard and be kind. Children are given opportunities to make choices and be involved in **meaningful projects**.*

— Nellie Edge,  
*S.M.I.L.E Approach to Joyful Accelerated Literacy*



## ***We Use Memorable Rituals, Traditions and Celebrations of Learning to Build Emotional Intelligence in Kindergarten***

Over the years, my colleagues and I at Nellie Edge Seminars, have shared many vignettes of memorable classroom rituals, traditions and celebrations. For us, **school has always been a “celebrative place.”** We delight in making each child's learning experience more memorable and meaningful through thoughtful attention to classroom rituals, traditions and celebrations. These symbolic acts help us build a thriving community of learners. Children come to school with diverse background experiences. **It is the stories we tell, the songs we sing and traditions we build that bind the children together emotionally and intellectually, creating an optimal climate for learning.**

Teachers across the country have added layers to our collective stories of building a joyful learning community. These stories and “best teaching practices” have touched our hearts and stirred our imaginations. They deserve to be shared with a wider audience, and thus comes my motivation to begin this manuscript. At the center of many of the following vignettes is the need to symbolically transform experiences and to communicate thoughts and feelings. At the core of these powerful teaching strategies is our proven belief that **music is magic in creating the optimum climate for bonding and learning.**

We believe that in order for all children to reach high academic levels, we must create a classroom community that reinforces the belief that **I can learn**; that provides personally meaningful experiences so each child feels **I care** about learning; and that gives the child the security and confidence of knowing that **I belong**. Becoming an ambitious reader, writer, and self-directed student is supported by such a rich social context for learning.

We have been instructed and inspired by the gentle wisdom of Ralph Peterson and his important book, ***Life in a Crowded Place - Building Holistic Learning Communities***. His voice reminds us, *Once you get the community right, the levels of learning soar.* Excerpts from his book are included in this manuscript. Those of you who have studied with us over the years will recognize the influence of our colleague's, Pat Wolf, work on brain research. Her writing and brain-friendly teaching reminds us to design emotionally engaging learning experiences. You will also feel the influence of Regie Routman, Bobbi Fisher, Jacque Verrall, Bev Bos, Diane Larson, Tom Hunter, Janine Chappel Carr, and Kay Goines on the following pages. Their teaching integrity and respect for childhood supports our vision of “creating schools worthy of our children.”

We often echo these words from Tom Hunter's song,  
***♫ May the work we do make the world we live in a little more  
worthy of our children. ♫—Tom Hunter***

A heartfelt thank you to these colleagues and to the many unnamed teachers who have shared this teaching journey with us and have touched and instructed us with their stories and their passionate commitment to our children. Let us always remember that as teachers of the young, we are responsible for the memories of childhood and we're in charge of celebrations.

I sincerely hope that these excerpts from earlier manuscripts, though still in draft form, will be a helpful guide and springboard for you as you **develop rituals, traditions and celebrations that will bring dignity and delight to your children and their families**. These bonding times form the foundation for building Emotional Intelligence and making all learning meaningful and memorable.

When the children step into your unique community of learning and you become their teacher, mentor, and friend, remember you're also in charge of celebrations! Greet the children individually and start the year with bonding rituals and joyful learning experiences so the children will love coming to school. **Bring the pieces of the day and year together and end on a happy, harmonious note so the child's memories of your time together will be satisfying.** You probably have vivid memories of beginning and ending the year celebrations from your own early years in school to reflect back on.

At the end of the year, your **children will need to express the joy of being a part of something bigger than themselves, but they also will experience the sadness and loss at separation.** These feelings need to be given symbolic order for the teacher and the children so that the day and the year feels complete.

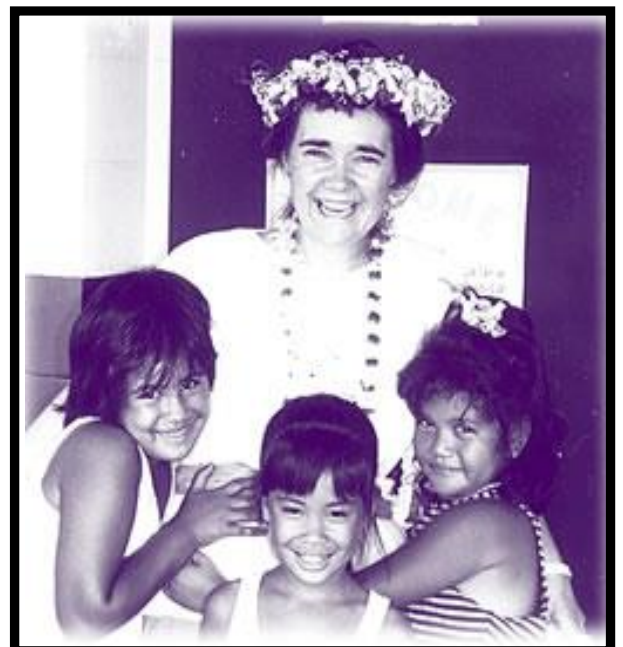
As you plan now for the beginning and/or end-of-year activities, I encourage you to keep **them simple and keep them meaningful!** Many of the most meaningful rituals and traditions will evolve naturally as the children are working and learning together. Other symbolic gestures will involve more thought, parent help and planning.

I often think of a quote from Mother Teresa, **"There are no great things, only small things done with great love."** Perhaps that is the emotional key to "good first teaching" and to creating "just right" celebrations.

**May you reach for the stars with the lives of the children that you touch. Do it simply—and with great love.**

Wishing you memorable rituals, traditions and celebrations,

Nellie Edge





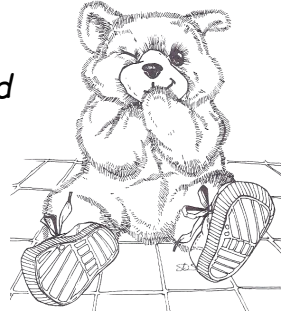
# It is “Developmentally Appropriate” to Have High Expectations for Our Kindergartners: First Create an Emotionally Safe Learning Community

We always ask:

*How am I developing attitudes, behaviors and the habits of mind needed for children to do well in school—and in life?*

*Is this activity meaningful, multisensory and memorable?*

*How am I developing a love of learning and positive social-emotional skills?*



*We need to grapple long and hard with the concept of 'development,' and consider how learning (and teaching) may enhance and encourage development. We need to recognize that active teaching and active learning go hand in hand. - Donald Graves*

- **“Developmentally appropriate” practices somehow have been misinterpreted to mean we just wait for a child to develop skills, interests and abilities.** For some of our hardest-to-reach children, this is a great disservice. I wonder how our limiting beliefs might limit the richness of what we offer children? We know how to skillfully scaffold learning so all children can build on success. We understand the power of building a joyful learning community, the social nature of learning and the roles that motivation and parent involvement play in learning. kindergartners love to learn! They love to draw and write—and sing and sign. Workbook sheets and one-size-fits-all curriculum are not **“developmentally appropriate” experiences for young children—active, meaningful engagement in science, literacy and the arts is!**
- Some of us were taught that we would squelch the child's creativity if we provided guidance in teaching them to draw. Yet **experiences learned from the Reggio Emilia's Preschools of Italy have vastly expanded our vision of how the capable young child is to think, plan, draw and create through the many languages of childhood. We can—and must—reach for the stars with our children's minds and skillfully scaffold higher-level learning experiences.**
- I am continually amazed and delighted by the **incredible vocabulary children are capable of developing** if they are around adults who have a passion for playing with wonderful words and rich language patterns. Children in such environments have verbalized that they want to be **paleontologists or entomologists** when they grow up!

**Children deserve our highest expectations.** Becky Leber, a mentor kindergarten teacher who celebrates childhood, explained, ***I raised my expectations and my students far surpassed them.***

*As we raise the English language arts and literacy standards, we must do it in such a way that we are also raising our expectations for children's social-emotional development and love of learning.*

***Children deserve to develop attitudes and habits of mind that will support them in being successful in school—and in life.***



## The SMILE Approach to Accelerated Literacy: Take Advantage of How the Brain Learns Best

The SMILE approach to literacy is systematic, multisensory and engaging for young learners. It embraces and supports diverse learning styles and the wide range of language and literacy needs seen in most early childhood classrooms. This accelerated learning model is especially powerful for our high-needs children. In Katie Nelson's classroom, which incorporates SMILE principles, **the entire class enjoys literacy experiences with quality literature, songs, poems, rhymes and dances.** This invites the children to relax, have fun and feel a sense of belonging while enhancing oral language skills and physical coordination. **Then we build on success through differentiated instruction that is active, motivating and appropriate for individual learners while fostering a love of language.** Our comprehensive instructional model acknowledges the social-emotional aspects of learning and children's inherent love of nature. Katie and I celebrate the power of music, movement, sign language and the educational arts as translators of meaning. Our teaching makes us smile and it makes children smile. It also delights the hearts of parents as they see their children's enthusiasm for learning. **Brain-friendly literacy™ always evokes a SMILE and thus our acronym:**

Systematic, scaffolded.

Meaningful, multisensory, memorable, motivating.

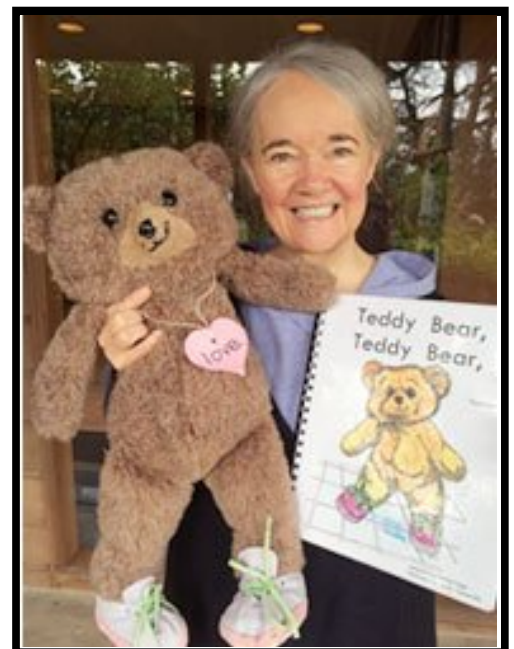
Integrated (with the arts, science and children's lives), intentional.

Literacy (literature and language with love).

Experiences. Engaging ones!

The SMILE instructional model assumes that **teachers' first concern is in creating a joyful community of learners and bonding with each child and their families.** We recognize the vital role of the emotions and parent collaboration in learning. Our teaching colleagues have proved that once we create a caring community and an engaging curriculum with parents as partners, the levels of learning soar for all children. The intrinsic reward of this type of meaning-centered learning is high motivation for children—and their teachers.

I was honored when the **term SMILE was first used to describe our Nellie Edge Seminars approach to language and literacy instruction by the Kapa'a Elementary School** primary teachers (on Kauai). After receiving professional development, they used our accelerated literacy model to create a K-2 "school within a school" in 1995, which they called SMILE (**S**chool for **M**eaningful **I**ntegrated **L**anguage **E**xperiences). Our expanded acronym is still true to the heart of that original title. Remembering my visit to these engaging Kauai classrooms where children sang, signed, and performed language still brings a SMILE and warm "aloha."





# The SMILE Approach to Joyful and Accelerated Literacy:

*Principles and Practices That Celebrate Language, Honor Childhood, and Enhance Social Emotional Skills*

*We know how to reach high ELA standards in kindergarten—a CHILD'S GARDEN!*



We create **beautiful, organized, language-intensive environments** that are **emotionally safe** and noncompetitive. We have **high expectations**. We **weave the educational arts** into all areas of curriculum. Our children develop friendships. They learn to make choices and are involved in **meaningful projects**. As educators we are reflective, continuously learning how to provide the scaffolding needed for every child to build on success, every day. We teach systematically and intuitively. **We take advantage of how the brain learns best**—and we save time for serendipity.

**These 14 principles, within a loving, disciplined and joyful atmosphere, provide a foundation and framework for excellence:**

- **Bond with students and create a joyful community** where children care and share and learn together. Our carefully chosen language builds trust, nurtures self-esteem, and develops responsibility.
- **Kindergarten is for language:** Phonemic awareness is "language play—every day, books and songs -all day long." The biggest single kindergarten predictors of phonemic awareness and later reading success are still oral language development. We can be systematic in our teaching—and playful! We know that the body needs to move, the human heart needs to sing, and the brain was created to learn through music.
- **Engage "the heart of kindergarten":** Create memorable rituals, traditions, and learning celebrations that accelerate literacy. Weaving joy, personal meaning, and depth into the learning community creates a love of learning.
- **Use Multisensory ABC and Phonics Immersion strategies:** Children deserve emotionally engaging instruction that is also explicit, systematic and differentiated for their needs. Accelerate mastery of the alphabetic principal through singing, fingerspelling, signing, and reading one consistent ABC/phonics song several times a day with parent collaboration. Our action-research team demonstrated phenomenal results with these practices.



See **ABC Phonics: Sing, Sign, and Read!** by Nellie Edge and Sign2Me, 2010.

For teacher support, see **ABC Phonics** tab at [NellieEdge.com](http://NellieEdge.com).



- **Involve parents as partners:** Multiply your teaching effectiveness. This is not an option. All parents want their children to be successful in school. Parents and teachers jointly share responsibility for educating their children. There will be intergenerational benefits.
- **Teach concepts about print, handwriting, high-frequency words, and build reading stamina—their way:** Use auditory spelling strategies, name tickets, word matching, sentence building, singing, signing, "stamp and read books," daily "kid writing," and independent reading time. Create literacy work centers where children use reading and writing for real purposes. Skillfully transition from "magical memory reading" to guided reading. Use the Neurological Impress Method (NIM) to build fluent independent reading. Differentiate instruction through individual reading conferences and teach children to choose "just right" books.

- **Build a systematic and engaging "writing to read" and reading is fun culture.** All kindergartners love to draw, write, and make books. Daily "kid writing" teaches reading. It allows children to practice phonics in action. Drawing and writing are reciprocal thinking and symbol systems that honor the child's voice and vision.
- **Develop comprehension strategies and thinking skills** with quality fiction and nonfiction and meaning-centered activities throughout the curriculum. Engage children in dialog and develop metacognition (thinking about our thinking).
- **Awaken children's love of nature:** Connect children with the natural world outside the classroom. Create a classroom of bird watchers, stargazers, rock collectors, tree experts, and animal and plant enthusiasts. Use children's fascination with nature and their social connections to create a compelling reason to read and write. (And always there is poetry and song!)



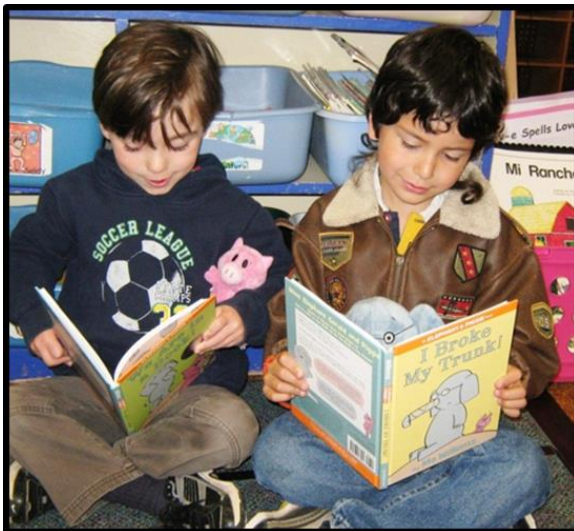
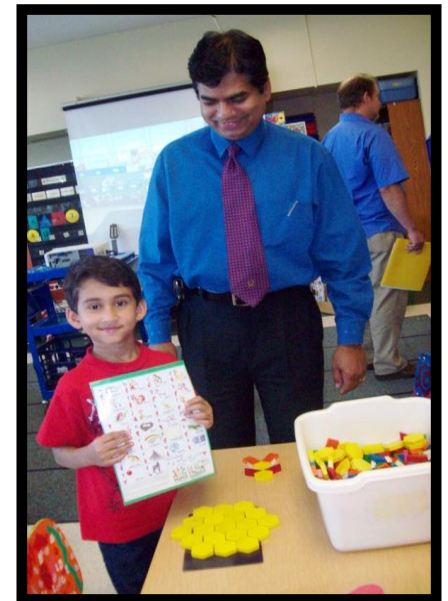
- **Honor the vital role of play in children's cognitive and social-emotional development.** Put learning in the children's hands. Give children ownership, responsibility and choices in their learning. Make cooperative learning come alive through dramatic play, block building, group field trips and hands-on experiences. Challenge children to set high personal goals, empower them with "I can's." We are developing literacy—and life skills.
- **Build voracious vocabulary learning habits** explicitly, systematically, mindfully and playfully throughout the curriculum. **Create a talking classroom.** Reinforce basic language concepts and expand children's responses to who, what, where, when, how and why questions. Introduce powerful vocabulary through rich project learning and poetry. Watch children become collectors of wonderful new words.





- **Teach in an emotionally engaging way and celebrate the educational arts as translators of meaning:** Integrate music, drama, art, movement, dance and sign language (and love, joy, laughter, and enthusiasm) throughout the curriculum in everything you do. Bring your passions into the classroom. **Love books, love learning, and love the children.** They remember what we love. Children see a reflection of who they are and who they can become through our eyes.

- **Authentic assessment empowers children to take responsibility for their learning and pride in their accomplishments.** Student-led parent conferences help children set personal goals, evaluate progress and celebrate their accomplishments. We build intrinsic motivation for children to do their best.
- **Create a beautiful learning environment:** Involve the children in creating an environment that is warm, comfortable and home-like. Create order and harmony and give children responsibilities for maintaining the environment. Classrooms need live plants, flowers, good lighting, art prints and photos of the children engaged in meaningful studies and playful explorations. Let the walls of your classroom reflect the lives of the children. Celebrate childhood and celebrate learning.



**The S.M.I.L.E. approach to accelerated literacy is developmentally appropriate and takes advantage of how the brain learns best. (Systematic [scaffolded], Meaningful [multisensory], and Integrated Literacy Experiences)**



**Think back to your earliest experiences in school. How were you taught in the best of your memories?**



# Children Deserve a Beautiful, Organized Kindergarten to Work and Play and Grow In



Silent fingerspelling helps children visually focus: "If your name begins with 'R' you may be excused." Shanda Lung uses the multisensory *ABC Phonics: Sing, Sign, and Read!* program by Nellie Edge.



Outside the door of Room 102 is a sign that reflects a deep commitment to the whole child: *Kindergarten is you know a garden where the children grow...*



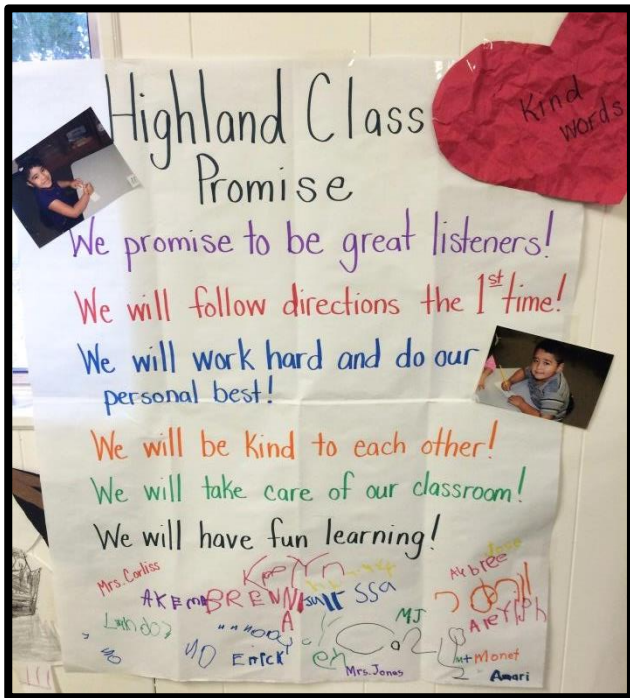
The lives of the children adorn the classroom walls in this beautiful kindergarten.



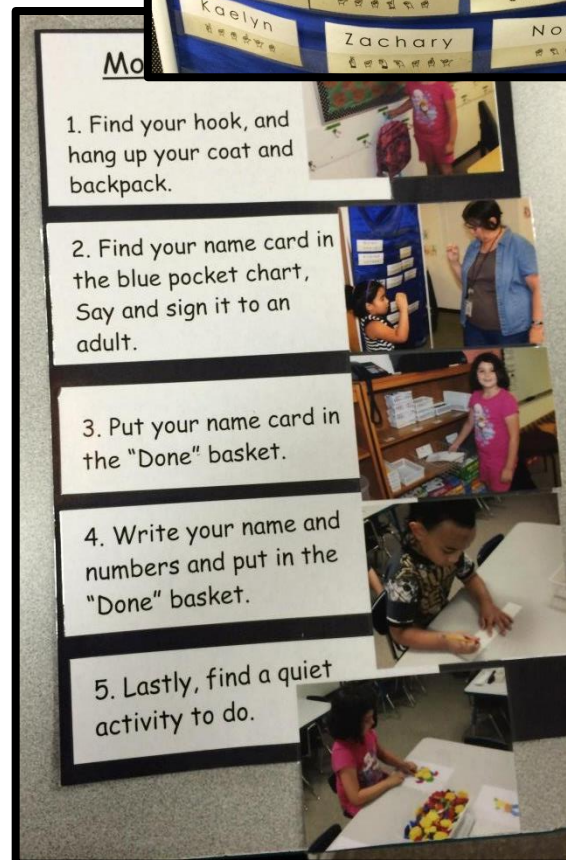
Name/photo word wall helps children make personal connections with letters and the beginning sounds of their classmate's names. The prepared environment is always our first teacher!



# The Walls of the Classroom Honor Our Learning Process

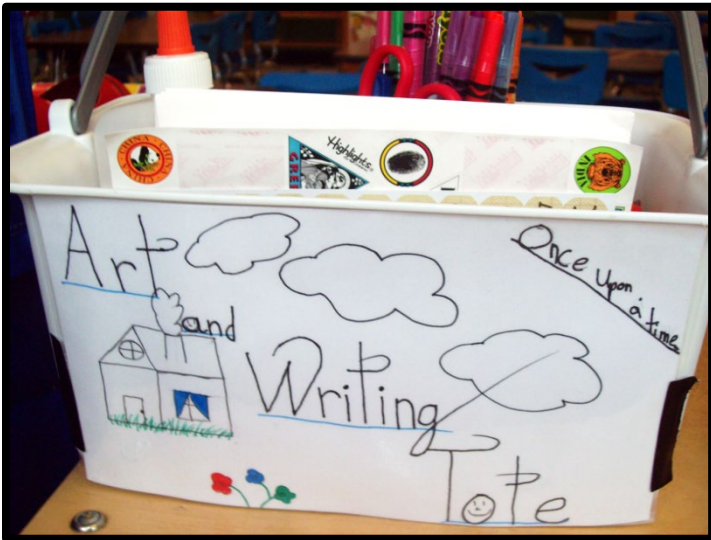


- The classroom door features children's home family and school family through photos.
- Notice a focus on names: There is nothing so precious to a child as the sound of their own name.
- Jaime Corliss uses anchor charts to make learning real!





# Organized Writing Totes Allow Children to Be Self-Directed Learners

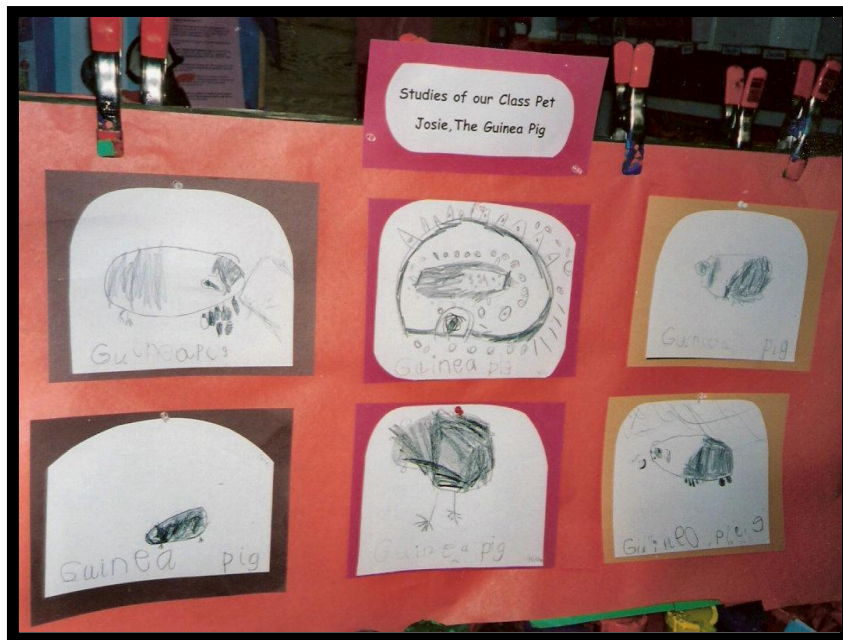


- Each tote contains all of the materials 5-6 children need to write and draw and create their own books and lists.
- They also contain **volunteer information** for differentiated learning: an "I" chart for independent work, and expectations and guidelines for how to complete a project.
- This helps volunteers feel secure and work wisely, encouraging children to be self-regulated learners.

From *Kindergarten Writing and the Common Core: Joyful Pathways to Accelerated Literacy* by Nellie Edge.  
See ["Independent Writing Centers"](#) on Nellie Edge TPT



## Class Pets Build Community and Provide Another Reason to Read, Write, and Draw: Studies of Josie the Guinea Pig



- Children read books about guinea pigs.

*I Love Guinea Pigs*, by Dick King-Smith, Candlewick Press, 1994.

*Pet Care Guides For Kids: Guinea Pigs*, by Mark Evans, ASPCA

- They observe and discuss the guinea pig's needs: water, clean cage, and good food (children love to pick clover for her to eat.)

- After studying about guinea pigs, children do sketches of Josie, the Guinea Pig. They carefully learn to print "Guinea Pig" in Joanie Cutler's kindergarten.



During choice time children love to hold and pet the guinea pig they put it in a little basket with paper and they run out to get grass. Usually an adult is standing close by.

- Some families take the guinea pig home over the weekend or for a

holiday. This can provide another experience to draw and write about in the child's journal.

# **We Have Decades of Best Practice Research:**

*Take Advantage of How the Brain Learns Best and Watch Social-Emotional Development and Literacy Soar!*

***The Basic School: A Community for Learning***, by Ernest L. Boyer. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1995.

***Becoming Literate: The Construction of Inner Control***, by Marie M. Clay. Pearson Education, 2015.

***Brain Matters: Translating the Research to Classroom Practice***, by Pat Wolfe, 2nd ed. ASCD, 2010.

***Brain Words: How the Science of Reading Informs Teaching***, by Richard J. Gentry and Gene P. Ouellette. Stenhouse, 2019.

***Building the Reading Brain***, by Pat Wolfe and Pam Nevills. ASCD, 2009.

***Celebrate Language and Accelerate Literacy: High Expectations • Joyful Learning • Proven Strategies***, by Nellie Edge, 2nd ed. Nellie Edge Resources, 2015.

***Choice Words: How Our Language Affects Children's Learning***, by Peter H. Johnston. Stenhouse, 2004.

***Conscious Discipline: Building Resilient Classrooms***, by Dr. Becky Bailey. Loving Guidance, 2018.

***Creating the School Family: Bully-Proofing Classrooms Through Emotional Intelligence***, by Becky Bailey. Conscious Discipline, 2011.

***The Daily 5: Fostering Literacy Independence in the Elementary Grades***, by Gail Boushey and Joan Moser. revised ed. Stenhouse, 2014.

***Dancing with Words: Signing for Hearing Children's Literacy***, by Marilyn Daniels. Greenwood Publishing, 2001.

***Engaging Children's Minds: The Project Approach***, by Lillian G. Katz and Sylvia C. Chard. Greenwood Publishing, 2000.

***Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ***, by Daniel Goleman, 10th anniversary ed. Bantam House, 2006.

***Excellence in Kindergarten Literacy: High Expectations and Proven Strategies that Honor Childhood!***, by Katie Nelson and Nellie Edge. Nellie Edge Resources, 2015.

***The First Six Weeks of School***, by Mike Anderson. Center for Responsive Schools, 2015.

***A Framework for Understanding Poverty***, Ruby K. Payne, Ph.D., 5th ed. Aha! Process, 2015.

***The Hundred Languages of Childhood: The Reggio Emilia Approach to Early Childhood Education***, by Carolyn Edwards. Ablex Publishing, 1998.

***Joyful Learning in Kindergarten***, by Bobbi Fisher. Revised ed. Heinemann, 1998



## **We Have Decades of Best Practice Research, cont'd.**

***Kindergarten Writing and the Common Core: Joyful Pathways to Accelerated Literacy***, by Nellie Edge, 2nd ed. Nellie Edge Resources, 2017.

***Layers of Learning: Using Read-Alouds to Connect Literacy and Caring Conversation***, by JoEllen McCarthy. Stenhouse, 2020.

***Life in a Crowded Place: Building the Learning Community***, by Ralph Peterson. Heinemann, 1992.

***The Magic of Signing Songs: Enhancing All Children's Language and Literacy***, (Workshop Manual and DVD) by Nellie Edge. Nellie Edge Resources, 2011.

***Mind, Brain, and Education: Neuroscience Implications for the Classroom***, David Sousa, editor. Solution Tree Press, 2012.

***Mindset: Changing the Way You Think to Fulfill Your Potential***, by Carol Dweck, updated ed. Little, Brown Book Group, 2017.

***The Morning Meeting Book*** by Roxann Kriete & Carol Davis, 3rd ed. Center for Responsive Schools, Inc., 2016.

***Music Is Magic for Your Child and You!***, by Nellie Edge. Nellie Edge Resources, 1988.

***Parents as Partners in Kindergarten and Early Literacy: Family Connections That Multiply Our Teaching Effectiveness***, by Nellie Edge, updated ed. Nellie Edge Resources, 2023.

***Purposeful Play: A Teachers Guide to Igniting Deep and Joyful Learning Across the Day***, by Kristin Mraz, Alison Porcelli, and Cheryl Tyler. Heinemann, 2016.

***Shifting the Balance: 6 Ways to Bring the Science of Reading into the Balanced Literacy Classroom***, by Jan Burkins and Kari Yates. Stenhouse, 2021.

***Social Emotional Learning in Kindergarten: Celebrating Islands of Excellence with Joyful, Authentic Teaching and Learning***, by Nellie Edge. Nellie Edge Resources, 2023.

***Starting with Comprehension: Reading Strategies for the Youngest Learners***, by Andie Cunningham and Ruth Shagoury. Stenhouse, 2005.

***Teaching Struggling Readers: How to Use Brain-Based Research to Maximize Learning***, by C.A. Lyons. Pearson, 2003.

***Time to Teach: Encouragement, Empowerment, and Excellence in Every Classroom***, by Rick Dahlgren, Brett Malas, Joanna Faulk, and Melanie Lattimer. CTE, 2008.

***Tools of the Mind: The Vygotskian Approach to Early Childhood Education***, by Elena Bodrova and Deborah Leong. Pearson/ Merrill Prentice Hall, 2006.

***What Really Matters for Struggling Readers: Designing Research-Based Programs*** by R.L. Allington, 3rd ed. Pearson, 2012.

***Writing to Read in Kindergarten: Growing Engaged and Purposeful Writers with Common Core Connections***, by Julie Lay and Nellie Edge, updated ed. Nellie Edge Resources, 2015.

# ***Shifting the Balance: 6 Ways to Bring the Science of Reading into the Balanced Literacy Classroom***

by Jan Burkins and Kari Yates, Stenhouse, 2021

*Here is my choice for Kindergarten Cadre book study! This comprehensive and practical book helps educators understand the science of reading and provides lessons in responsive reading instruction. I especially appreciate the research on intentionally building oral language which is often the missing component in Science of Reading programs. Burkins and Yates are gifted writers, and researchers. They understand authentic teaching and learning. -Nellie Edge*

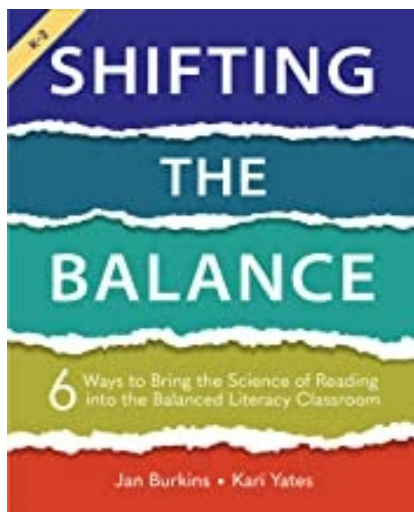
## **Excerpts from Chapter 1: Rethinking How Reading Comprehension Begins**

***...Listening comprehension—which is built through language interaction—is, after all, an essential precondition of reading comprehension.***

***...This means that opportunities to grow oral language—including vocabulary, background knowledge, sentence structure, and more—actually develop the comprehension mechanisms of reading*** (Quinn et al. 2015; Lervig, Hulme, and Melby-Lervig 2017...

***...No amount of word recognition skill will compensate for the limitations a child's listening comprehension puts on reading comprehension*** (Cervetti et. Al 2020...)

***Strong oral language can reduce the need for comprehension strategy instruction... Given how important listening comprehension is for later reading comprehension, it is imperative that we intentionally support oral language development in the classroom...***



*Burkins and Yates are intent on building a bridge in Shifting the Balance by finding compelling opportunities in K-2 classrooms to align research and instructional practice. One of the several issues they discuss is intentionally supporting oral language development in the classroom, a key aspect of literacy instruction that is missing or misunderstood regardless of approach. They find common ground and build a broader understanding that leads to a strong comprehensive literacy design. -Adria Klein, Professor Emeritus, CSU San Bernadino*



# Share Your Teaching Philosophy with Parents: *Social Emotional Learning Underlies Everything We Do*

by Nellie Edge



**I believe that respectful, caring bonds with children and their families are the vital foundation for an engaging kindergarten experience.** As educators of the young, we share with parents the responsibility for teaching their child.

**I believe that each child comes with unique strengths,** varied prior language learning experiences, and social-emotional skills. Our instruction must provide enough challenge and enough support for each child to build on success and develop positive attitudes about learning.

**I believe that emotional engagement is the key to all powerful learning** and creates joyful pathways to accelerated literacy. That is why we bring love, laughter, passion, and meaningful project work into kindergarten. We look for ways to personalize learning and engage the child's imagination.

**I believe kindergarten is for language. Immersing children in the English language underlies excellent English language arts instruction.** This familiarity allows the child's decoding to be error-free and reading to be fluent. While systematically "playing" with language, children begin mastering phonics skills, building oral language fluency, and reading with comprehension.

**I believe that children deserve to memorize, recite, and perform many wonderful pieces of language** in kindergarten to turn print into sound and then turn the pleasures of sound over to an appreciative audience. Our curriculum invites children to talk, sing, dramatize, and perform language. Developing the child's capacity for language and thought underlies everything we do.

**I believe that rich experiences in the many expressions of art, music, drama, dance, and storytelling help children find personal meaning in school learning.** Intentionally encouraging multiple "ways of knowing" promotes creative and higher-order thinking.

**I believe we must choose only the finest literature, nonfiction, songs, poems, and rhymes to give our children.** These language models are the seeds that grow powerful writers and thinkers. We want imaginative language, poetic phrases, and metaphors to become a part of our students' thinking, speaking, and writing. Quality literature informs, delights, and motivates young readers.

**We have proved that writing is a key to unlocking higher literacy standards** in kindergarten, and young children love to write. ALL children deserve our best strategies as they learn to write and draw and illustrate from the very first days of kindergarten. Within the context of writing, students systematically encode sounds to print, giving phonics meaning. A comprehensive writing curriculum helps children understand how the reading process works.

**I believe that joyful, multisensory ABC and phonics immersion strategies (singing and signing and fingerspelling accelerate phonics awareness and phonics skills.** These instructional practices are consistent with how the young child's brain learns best. Active and engaging strategies build motivation and enthusiasm for learning.

**Building social emotional skills and an "I can do it" growth mindset underlies everything we do** in kindergarten.

**I believe that all young children deserve to learn memorable songs in American Sign Language.** Children fortunate enough to learn ASL and experience performing lovely songs for appreciative audiences have a lifelong advantage of developing dynamic communication skills.

**I believe that we need to support and honor "magical memory reading" and "reading the pictures" as essential language experiences for young bilingual children who may have limited English language and print experience.** Memory reading and reading the pictures with nursery rhymes and song picture books represent "other-ways-to-read." These strategies intentionally build oral language fluency and supports reading comprehension. Opportunities to role-play themselves as successful readers while learning concepts about print accompanies traditional shared and guided reading instruction, especially for children who have not had years of repeated "magical memory reading" experiences at home. Teachers can also use nursery rhymes and read and sing books as phonics readers (aka "read-every-word" books).

**I believe that parents must be partners in nightly reading aloud: Engaging with real books grows readers and book lovers and loving family memories.** Research shows that being read to and reading books of one's own choosing every day is a proven way to become a better reader.

**I believe that by awakening children's love of nature and sense of wonder, we create compelling reasons for kids to want to read, write, and learn about the world.** Children are fascinated with books about the real world. As we bring our connections with nature back into the classroom, we create a more engaging and alive learning environment. Children who learn to observe closely and respect the natural world will make wiser ecological choices now ... and in the future. They may become our future STEM leaders.

**I believe that kindergarten is a time to nurture social emotional learning (SEL) in each child and create school memories** of belonging, joy, and success. Our memorable rituals, traditions, and celebrations are rich in language and SEL lessons. When we value dramatic play, block building, dance, movement, exploration, and the many forms of literacy play, we encourage active learning and disciplined, creative thinking. Our students learn to make good choices and cooperate; to work hard and to be kind. We want children to love coming to school each day.

**I believe that young children deserve a multisensory, comprehensive, and differentiated literacy program** within a joyful, caring community of learners--a *child's garden*. Their lives must be valued, celebrated, and incorporated into the literacy curriculum so they care about school and develop a love of learning. Authentic, meaningful learning always elicits a SMILE.





## **Chapter 1**

*Research and Beliefs about Teaching and Learning*

## **NOTES**

## Chapter 2

# Oral Language Traditions: Building a Joyful Community of Learners

*Our songs, dances, musical dramas, and stories 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.*

— Nellie Edge,  
from *Celebrate Language and Accelerate Literacy:  
High Expectations • Joyful Learning • Proven Strategies*



# Share Greetings in Spanish, English, 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](http://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?*

*Shared by an awesome Arizona  
bilingual kindergarten teacher*

## 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

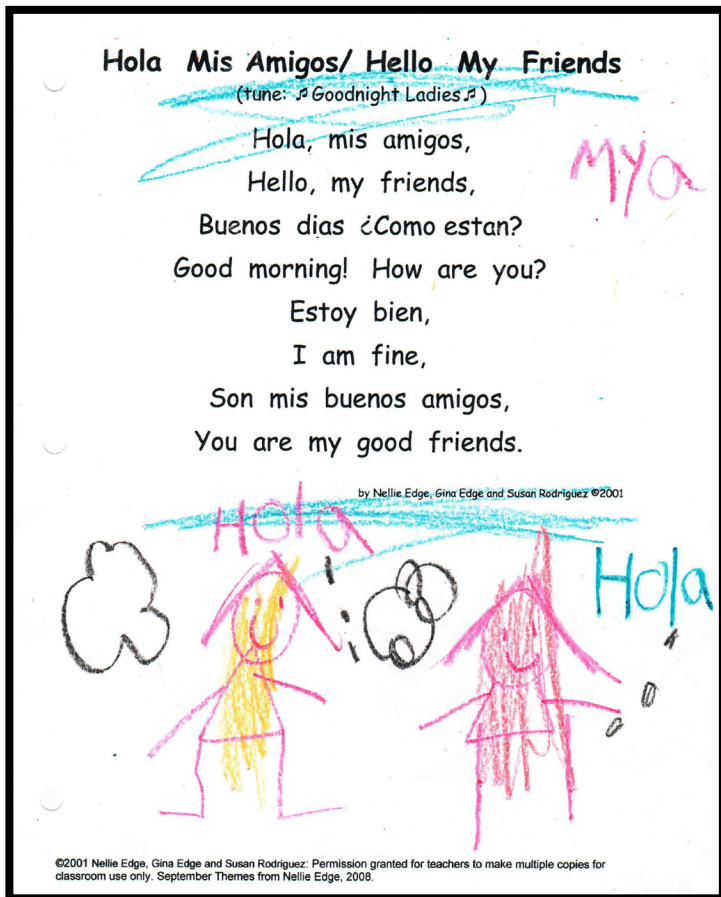
*Adios amigos,*

*Goodbye my friends,*

*Hasta la vista,*

*Until we meet again.*

*Shared by an awesome Arizona  
bilingual kindergarten teacher*



See "Articles and Resources" for curriculum connections (Find songs and articles at [NellieEdge.com](http://NellieEdge.com) under Videos/ Favorite ASL Songs)

- 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 "I Can Read" page for children to illustrate



See Social Emotional Learning Supplement for song pages.

The Songs We Sing Together Help Build Our  
Community of Learners  
*Begin and End the Day with Songs of Friendship*

## 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,  
Son mis buenos amigos,  
You are my good friends.

*by Nellie Edge, Gina Edge, and Susan Rodriguez*



♪ (Sung to the tune of Goodnight Ladies)

Permission granted for teachers to make multiple copies. Poetry Notebook: September, Nellie Edge. ©2008, updated 2020.





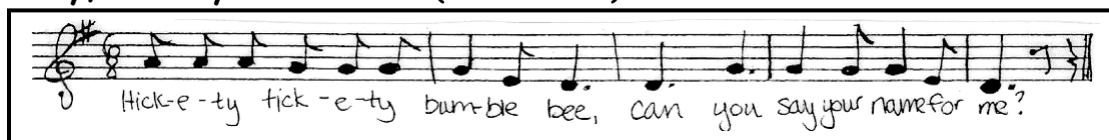
# Opening the Day Ceremonies: Playfully Focus on the Sounds of Each Child's Name

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...(Forte!)", "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" 

*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.**

# Knowing the Names of Our Classmates Is a Seed that May Grow into Genuine Friendship



*My name  
Is  
Most especially  
The thing  
They use  
For calling  
Me*



**To “speak” another child's name is to acknowledge their presence!**  
(And for each child it is to have identity.)

## **Names in Rhythm:**

Find the beat in your name. Clap out each name in your group.

\_\_\_\_\_ ♪  
“Her name is Ky-lie.”

\_\_\_\_\_ ♪    ♪    ♪  
“His name is Jer-a-mi-ah.”

As you clap out each name, the group can do it, too. Then choose one name and let the children walk it, which means stepping the rhythm with their feet, first in place and then around the room.

Once again, we are training the ears to hear the rhythms of language. We are developing syllabification, which is a part of phonemic awareness.

**Add the rhythm of the last name** in another complete line and you will have a longer sequence to experiment with:

\_\_\_\_\_ ♪  
“My name is Han-nah.”

\_\_\_\_\_ ♪    ♪  
Han-nah El-der-ber-ry.”

## **Let Drums Speak the Names in Rhythm: Listen to Drum Conversations**

Native Americans and African drummers have been speaking with drums for ages.

*Adapted from Kay Goines seminar notes.*

***“A child's name is an island of certainty in a sea of unfamiliar print.” ~ Marie Clay***

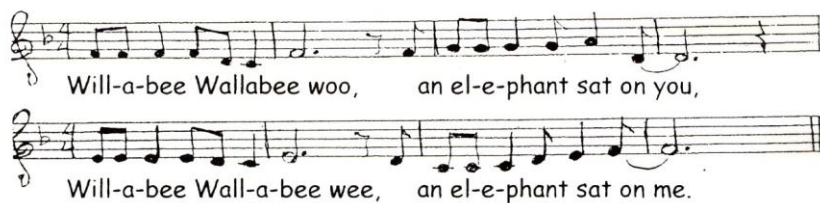




# Oral Language Is Still the Foundation for Literacy

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.

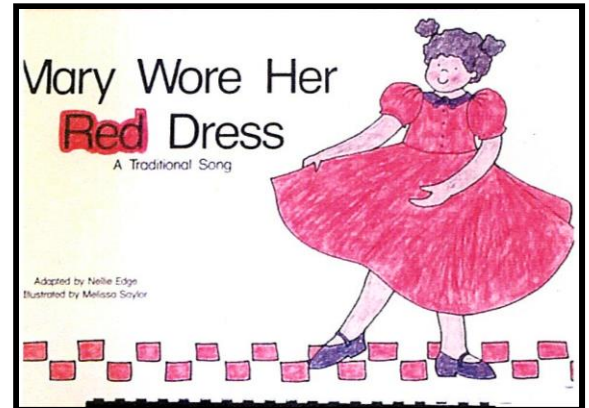
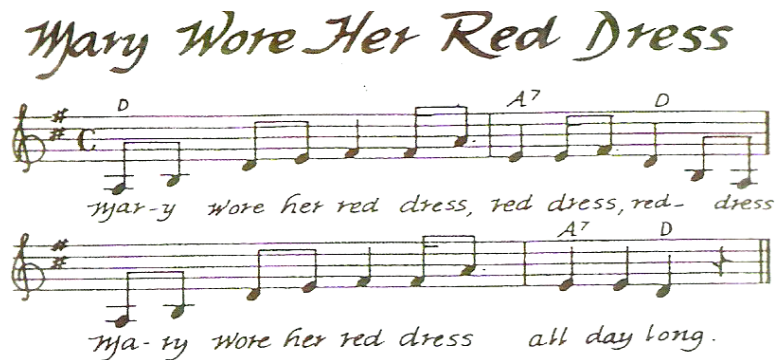
Give children daily experiences singing rhyming words in an engaging, playful way. Then help them see how clever they are to know how to "rhyme words" and make "letter/sound substitutions." Build on success. **We teach phonemic awareness and phonics skills explicitly and implicitly throughout the day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

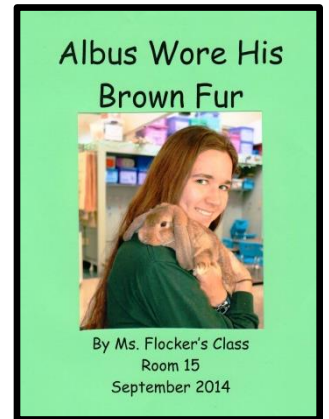
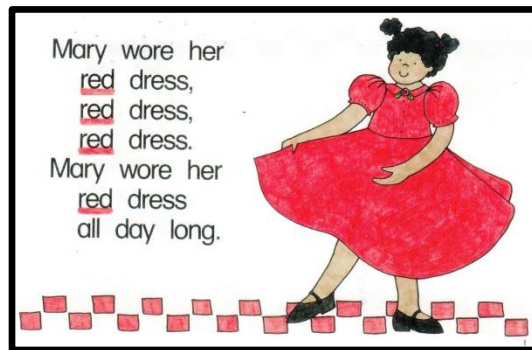
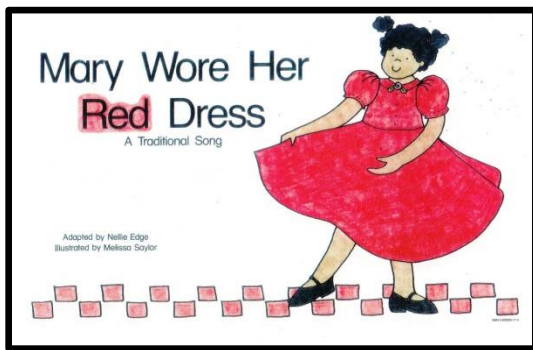


*Through giving dictation, children learn that talk can be written down; they begin to develop the concept of a word. By incorporating children's lives into songs and class books, they learn that their lives are worth singing and reading about.*

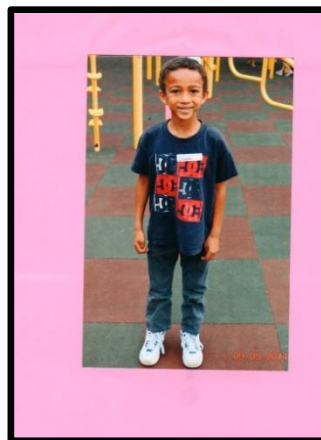


# Laura Flocker's Class Book Engages the Children's Curiosity

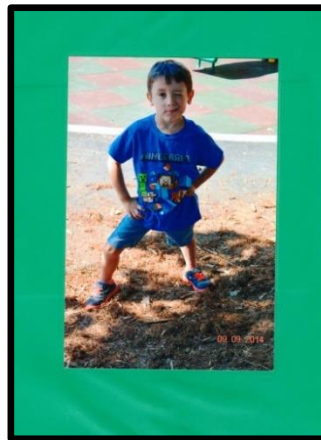
## A New Twist on ♪ *Mary Wore Her Dress*



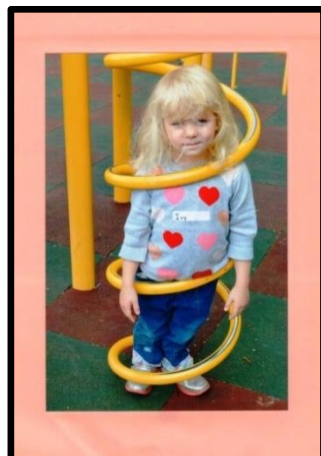
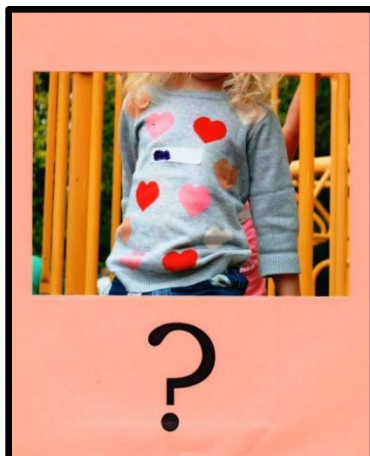
Notice we highlight color words as a reading scaffold.



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



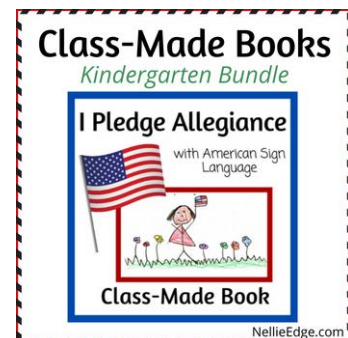
Canon wore his  
Minecraft shirt,  
Minecraft shirt,  
Minecraft shirt.  
Canon wore his  
Minecraft shirt  
All day long!



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!

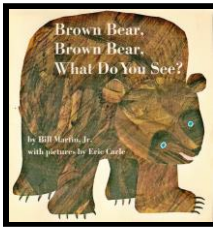
See **Class-Made** book resources on **Nellie Edge Kindergarten TPT**.



# We Build on Familiar and Memorable Language Patterns

## Adaptations of Brown Bear

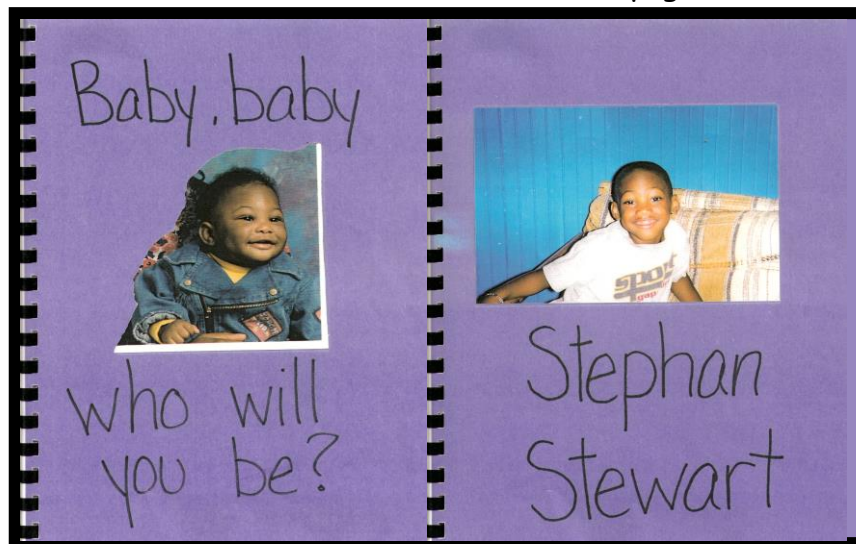
The original book *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Bill Martin, Jr. uses the *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star* rhythm and melody to create this repetitive and memorable rhyme:



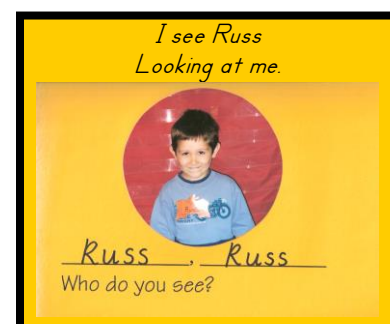
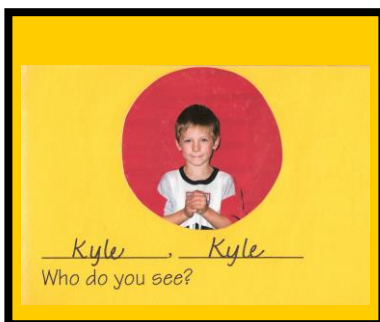
Brown Bear, Brown Bear  
What do you see?  
I see a red bird  
Looking at me.

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.)

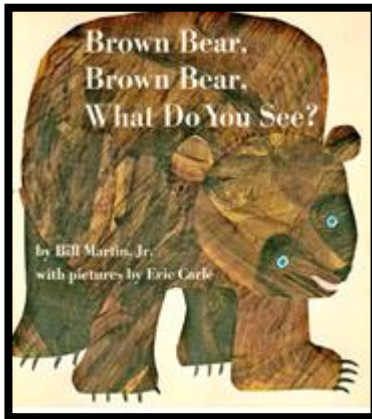
*Brown Bear, Brown Bear* is linguistically perfect because Bill Martin, Jr. patterned it on the rhythmically perfect melody *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*.



# 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?

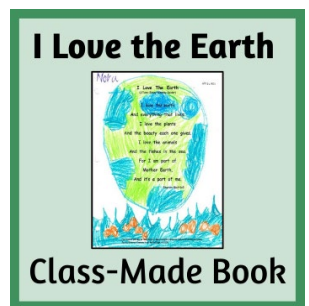
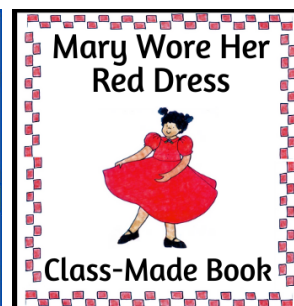
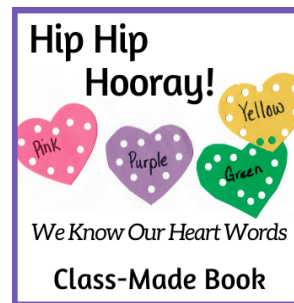
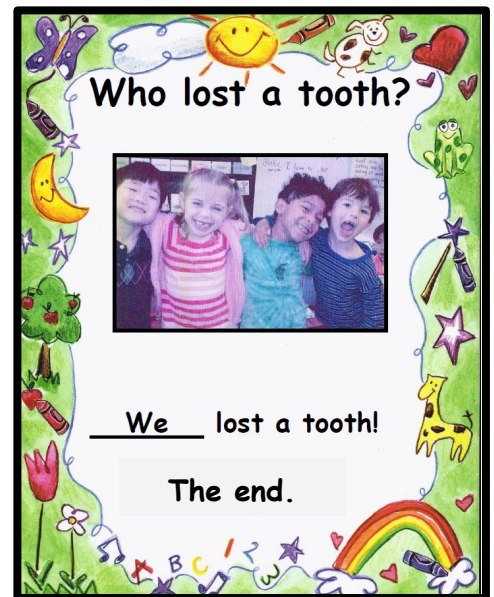
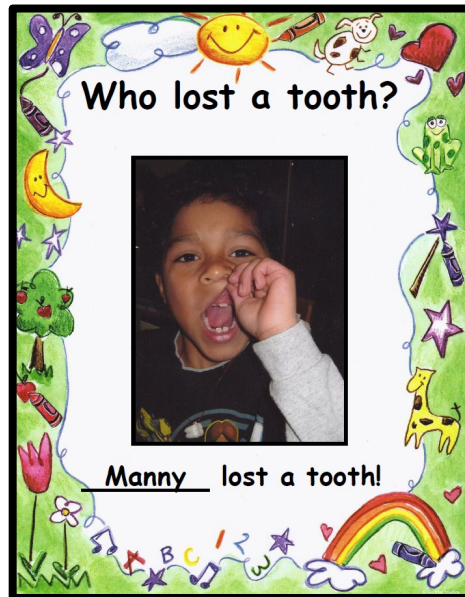
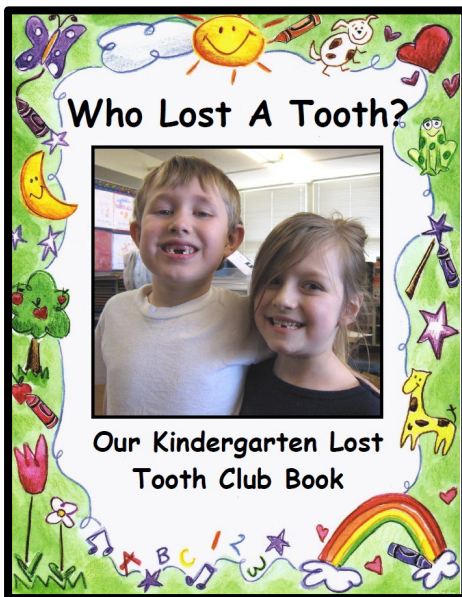
***Belonging, friendship and "kindergarten kindness" are themes that we carry through the whole year.***

# Sing Songs and Create Class Books about the Lives of Kindergarten Kids: Who Lost a Tooth?

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

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.

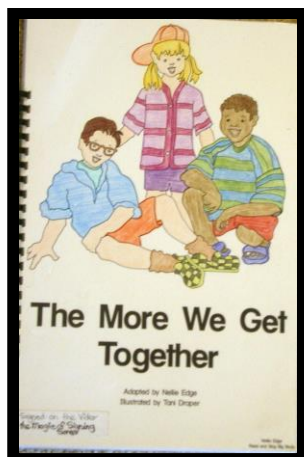
Each lost tooth is also an opportunity to use the thinking and questioning pattern of "Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How? from the Common Core State Standards. 



See [Who Lost a Tooth? FREEBIE](#) and [Class-Made Books BUNDLE](#) by Nellie Edge on TPT.



# Sing Songs That Build Friendships, Language Fluency and Literacy



## Entre Más Nos Reunimos

Entre más nos reunimos,  
reunimos, reunimos,  
Entre más nos reunimos,  
Más felices tú y yo.  
Mi amigo es el tuyo,  
y el tuyo es el mío,  
Entre más nos reunimos,  
Más felices tú y yo.

El fin

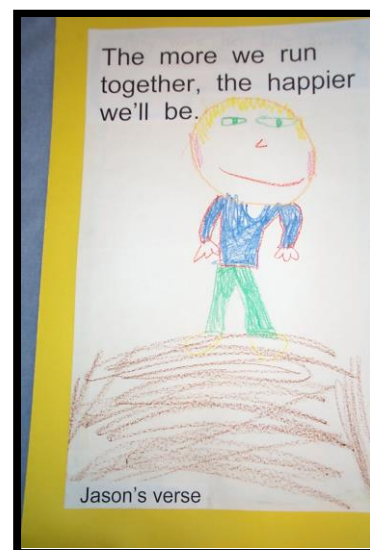
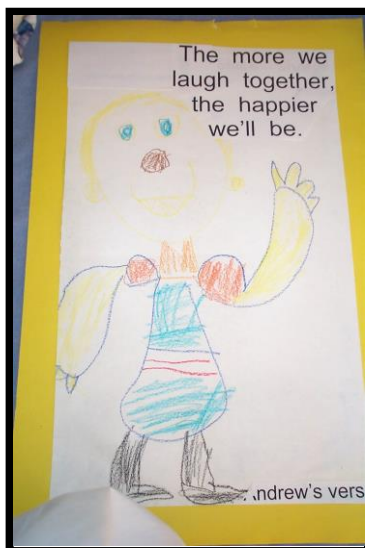
## The More We Get Together


The more we get together,  
together, together,  
The more we get together,  
The happier we'll be.  
For your friends are my friends,  
And my friends are your friends.  
The more we get together,  
The happier we'll be.

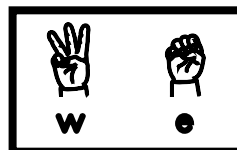
The end

## The Spelling Chant

You can say th  
and  
You can say thē  
But it's always spelled  
t-h-e



- Study and fingerspell the high-frequency word **we**, "w-e spells we".
- Invite the children to look for "the" as they do a shared reading of the Big Book. Highlight "**the**" with yellow tape.
- Sing and learn to sign the language. (See  ASL Instructional Video)
- Do a jazzy "**t-h-e e-n-d, the end!**" chant with cha-cha-cha body movements when the children stand and read "The end.""
- Invite the children to sing and sign this song and create new verses. Their ideas can be illustrated for a class book.



See ASL Instructional  Video Clip featuring Diane Larson at [www.nellieedge.com](http://www.nellieedge.com)

## Visual Images for Key Signs - American Sign Language

Happier: - Happiness flows upward from your heart.

Friends: - This is a linking together of fingers or "finger hugs."

***The More We Get Together/Entre Mas Nos Reunimos*** A Nellie Edge Read and Sing Big Book™, 1996. Recorded in English on *Music is Magic* CD and in Spanish on *Music is Magic in Teaching Spanish* CD. Also featured on *The Magic of Signing Songs* Seminar DVD Volume II and ASL guide.



See **Social Emotional Learning** supplement for Songs and Rhymes

# 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](http://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"!

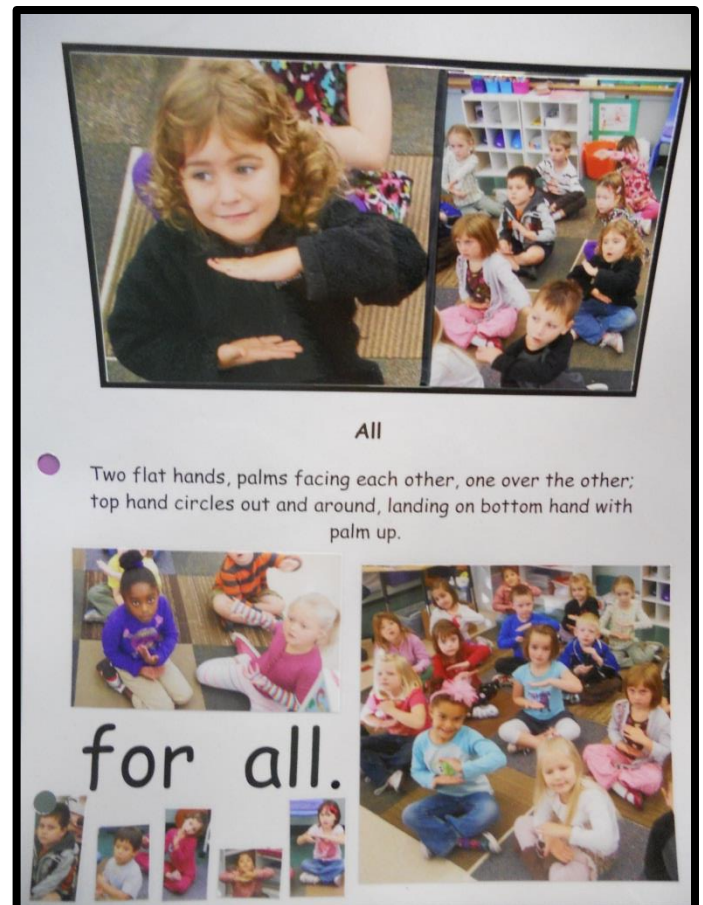
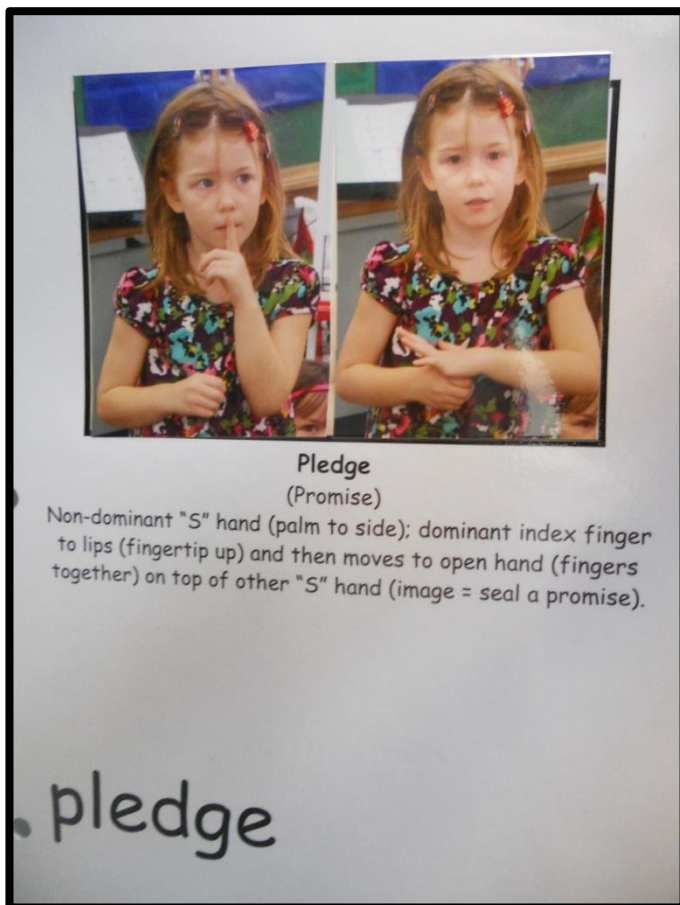
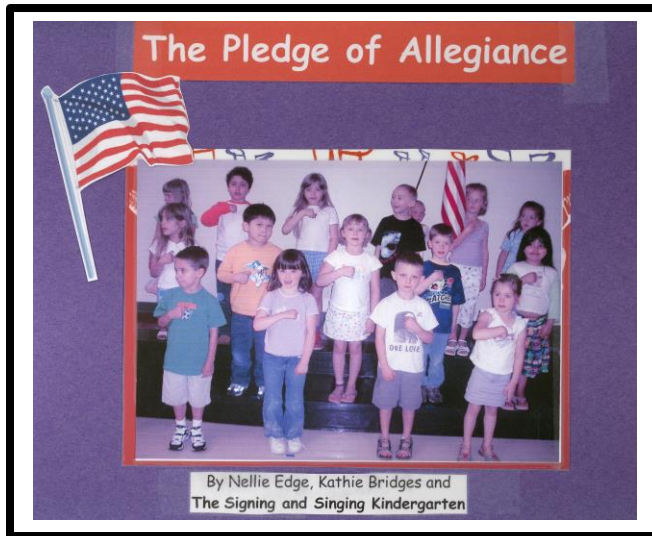
What's it spell? (class) LUCAS!




From **Poetry Notebook Bundle: Literacy** on Nellie Edge Kindergarten TPT  
See **Social Emotional Learning** supplement for Songs and Rhymes




# We Sing, Sign, and Read *The Pledge of Allegiance*: Two Different Class Books Feature Kindergarten Experts!



 Give Children Authentic and Powerful Language to **Memorize, Recite, and Perform**: Build Comprehension, Vocabulary, and Deep Learning Connections with Symbols of our Country

Singing and Signing the musical version of *The Pledge of Allegiance* by Lee Greenwood (American Patriot CD) becomes an emotional powerful parent performance.

 See instructional video clip of *The Pledge of Allegiance* at [www.nellieedge.com](http://www.nellieedge.com) and download the template for this book.

 See Social Emotional Learning Supplement, Part 1

# All Children Deserve to Know This Beautiful Spanish Song: De Colores (The Colors)

This is one of the most beautiful and, perhaps, the best-loved song in the Spanish-speaking world. People often hold hands and sway as they sing it. The lovely melody and the beautiful lyrics make memorable this anthem of the United Farm Workers of America, founded by Cesar Chavez.

## De Colores

Traditional

De colores,  
De colores se visten  
Los campos en la primavera.

De colores,  
De colores son los pajaritos  
Que vienen de afuera.

De colores,  
De colores es el arcoiris  
Que vemos lucir.

Y por eso los grandes  
Amores de muchos  
Colores me gustan a mi.  
(cantar do veces)

Canta el gallo,  
Canta el gallo con  
El kiri, kiri, kiri, kiri, kiri.

La gallina,  
La gallina con el cara,  
Cara, cara, cara, cara.

Los polluelos,  
Los polluelos con el  
Pio, pio, pio, pio, pi.

Y por eso los grandes  
Amores de muchos  
Colores me gustan a mi.

El Fin



*You can  
sing and  
sign the  
English  
translation!*



## De Colores

Translation by Hector Pichardo

De colores,  
Bright with colors the mountains and valleys  
Dress up in the springtime.

De colores,  
Bright with colors all the little birds  
Fill the skies in the daytime.

De colores,  
Bright with colors the rainbow brings joy  
With the glory of spring.

And a bright love with colors has found us  
With peace all around us  
That makes our hearts sing.  
(sing twice)

Hear the rooster,  
Hear rooster singing  
Kiri, kiri, kiri, kiri.

In the morning,  
In the morning the hen sings her  
Cara, cara, cara, cara.

All day singing,  
Baby chicks, all day sing  
Pio, pio, pio, pio, pi.

And a bright love with colors has found us  
With peace all around us  
That makes our hearts sing.

The End

Recorded by Hector Pichardo on *In Celebration of Spanish Folk Songs* CD and on *De Colores* individual teaching cassette to accompany Nellie Edge Read and Sing Big Book™ of same title. **These songs are now available as digital downloads.**

**Hector Pichardo is uniquely qualified as the translator, consultant, and musician for our Spanish Big Books and audio cassettes. A certified court interpreter and native Spanish speaker, he enjoys translating and recording popular music for Spanish listeners. While pursuing degrees in education and linguistics, Hector used his musical talents as a California Head Start aide. He fondly remembers singing with his Mexican godfather and continues to pass on this rich musical heritage. His translations work aesthetically and musically.**



# We Celebrate the Changing Seasons and Weather Patterns with Observation Songs and "Writerly/Scientific Walks"

(Lucy Calkins phrase)

With clipboards and pens in hand, children gather information.

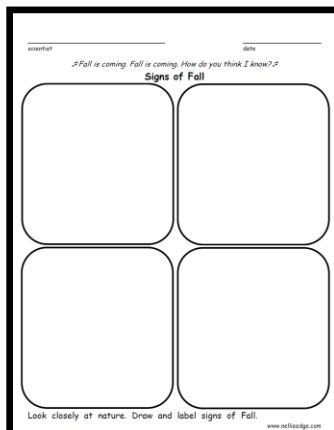
*♪ Fall is coming. Fall is coming. How do you think I know? ♪*



*Leaves are falling, I know it must be so. ♪*



Anchor chart from Jaime Corliss



**Information writing:**  
Children label signs of fall.



Observing and drawing small details from nature and noticing living things:  
The beginning of Information Writing (CCSS) and Next Generation  
Science Standards (NGSS).





# Together We Celebrate Fall and Our Connection to Nature Through The Drama of Falling Leaves: *Confidence and Friendships Grow*

Children explore the school grounds, gather leaves, and look for signs of the season. Returning to the classroom, they are immersed in literature, poems, and songs. With leaves in hand, the children experience the cycle of nature again through drama. **Meaningful "parents as partners" connections encourage families to take walks with their child and collect leaves.** The leaves are pressed, returned to school for science, drama, and art explorations. When the child brings home their Poetry ("I Can Read") Notebooks featuring poems about leaves, the parent and child can celebrate the language of fall together.

Children sing and dramatize the poetry of *Falling Leaves*:  
*♪Leaves are falling; Falling to the ground.♪*



*See them gently twirl around; Dancing 'til they touch the ground.*



*Leaves are falling; Falling to the ground.*

## **Favorite information picture books:**

*Leaf Man*, Lois Ehlert  
*Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf*, Lois Ehlert  
*Look What I Did With A Leaf!*  
Morten E. Sohi

## **Songs and rhymes to memorize:**

*Leaves Are Falling*, Nellie Edge  
*Like a Leaf or a Feather*, anonymous  
*One By One*, Margaret Wise Brown  
*Who Has Seen The Wind?*,  
Christina Rosetti



- Nonfiction
- Conventions of Standard English
- Vocabulary Acquisition and Use
- Speaking and Listening

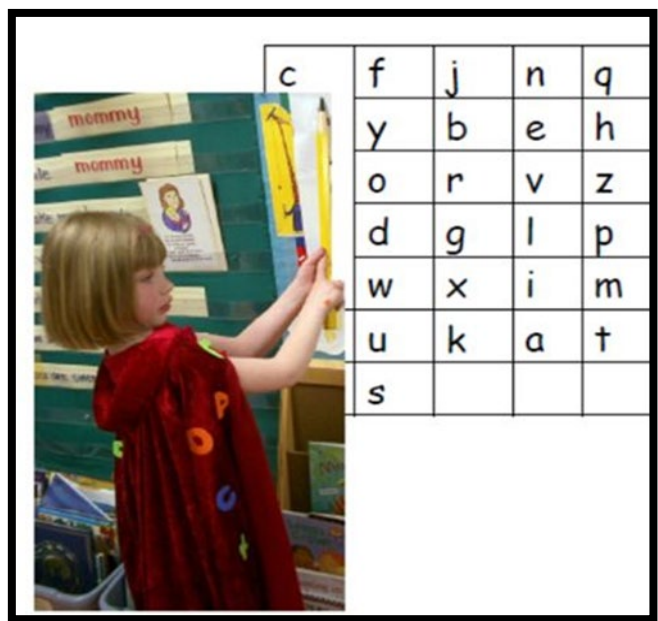


# Children Sing and Sign for Multisensory ABC and Phonics

## Immersion: Taking Advantage of How the Brain Learns Best!

*Use Total Emotional Body Response to Language: Simultaneously engage visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modalities to create optimal learning.*

*♪a/"a"/alligator, b/"b"/bear, c/"c"/cat, d/"d"/dog...♪*



Special thank you to Diane Bonica for her playful approach to assessing for mastery.

**Engage Parents as Partners • Teach for Mastery • Build the Reading Brain for Rapid Recall**

See ABC Phonics tab at [NellieEdge.com](http://NellieEdge.com) for instructional videos and detailed teacher and family support resources.

ABC Phonics: Sing, Sign, and Read! by Nellie Edge and Sign2Me. Free ASL videos at [NellieEdge.com](http://NellieEdge.com).

# Even Our Kindergarten-Friendly Approach to Handwriting Begins With Affirmation Songs and Chants!

## I Always Start My Letters

(adapted by Nellie Edge)

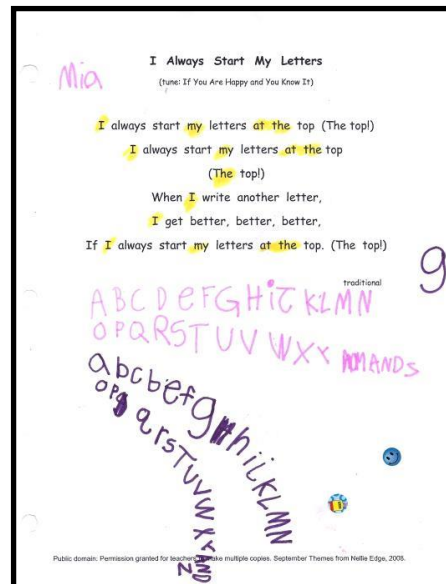
I always start my letters at the top (the top!)

I always start my letters at the top (the top!)

When I write another letter,

I get better, better, better

If I always start my letters at the top (the top!)



## Top to Bottom, Left to Right

Tune: Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes  
(author unknown—shared at National ITeachK Conference)

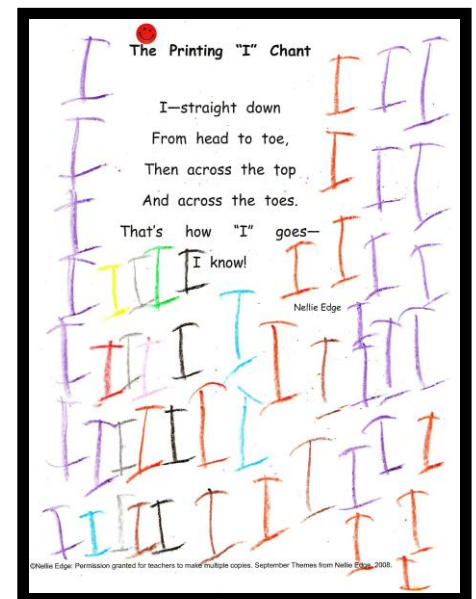
Top to bottom, left to right,  
left to right

Top to bottom, left to right,  
left to right

That's how we read and  
how we write

Top to bottom, left to right,  
left to right!

*After children can verbalize the "I" Chant, they illustrate the chant for their Poetry and Song "I Can Read" notebook.*



## 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, L-O-V-E,

L-O-V-E spells love.

## M-O-M Spells Mom

(by Nellie Edge)

M-o-m spells mom.

D-a-d spells dad.

Y-o-u spells you.

And m-e spells me.

## The Printing "I" Chant

(by Nellie Edge)

I—straight down from head to toe.

Then across the top and across the toes.

That's how "I" goes—I KNOW!

## We Can Write Nonsense Words

(by Diane Bonica)

(to the tune . . . "Here We Go Looby Loo")

We can write nonsense words,

They are so easy to do.

We can write nonsense words.

They're silly and mean nothing too!

## We Can Spell

### "Because"

(Tune . . . "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star")

B-E-C-A-U-S-E

B-E-C-A-U-S-E

## T-H-E Chant

(traditional)

You can say "the"

And you can say "thee"

But it's always spelled, T-H-E!

## We Can Write By "Heart Words"

(our adaptation) Tune: Here We Go Looby Loo

We can write "by heart" words,

They are so easy to do.

We can write "by heart" words.

We'll write them, and read them to you!





# Children Delight in a Musical Drama of Starting from Something Small and Growing into Something Big!

*We integrate Social Emotional Learning, (SEL) through the lens of State ELA Standards, Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), and the arts.*



Musically children experience signing and moving up and down the scale from middle C. (All teachers need is a xylophone.)

Repetition helps children internalize the language of this song so they are eager to illustrate it for the "I Can Read" Anthology Notebook.



**RI.K.10.** Actively engages in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.

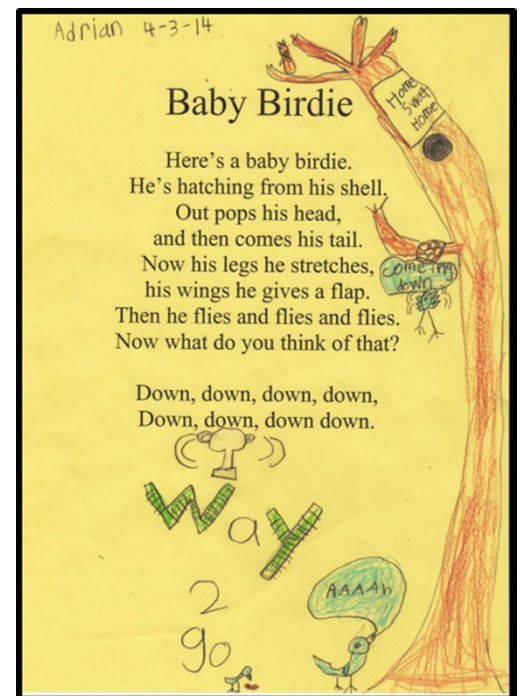
**L.K.1.** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

**SL.K.6.** Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly..

## Baby Birdie

Here's a baby birdie,  
He's hatching from his shell.  
Out comes his head,  
And then comes his tail.  
Now his legs he stretches,  
His wings he gives a flap.  
Then he flies and flies,  
Now what do you think of that?  
Down, down, down, down, down,  
Down, down, PLOP!!

Poetry Notebook Bundle: Sciencing on TPT



Connection to living things. Observation and study of birds.

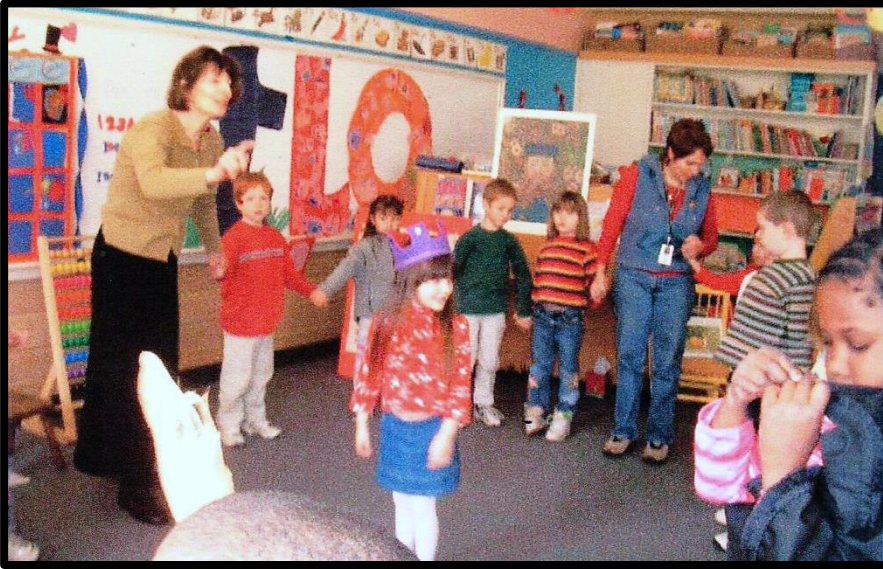
**K-ES3-1** I can use a model to represent the relationship between the needs of different plants or animals (including humans) and the places they live.



See Social Emotional Learning Supplement, Part 1



# Comprehension, Social Emotional Learning, and the Language Patterns of Folk Tales Come Alive Through Song and Dance



## *Sleeping Beauty*

♪ *There was a princess long ago...*

♪ *She lived in a great high tower....*



♪ *A handsome prince came riding by...*

It is the songs, dances and stories we experience together that build memories and bonds of belonging.



What songs and dances are a part of your classroom community?

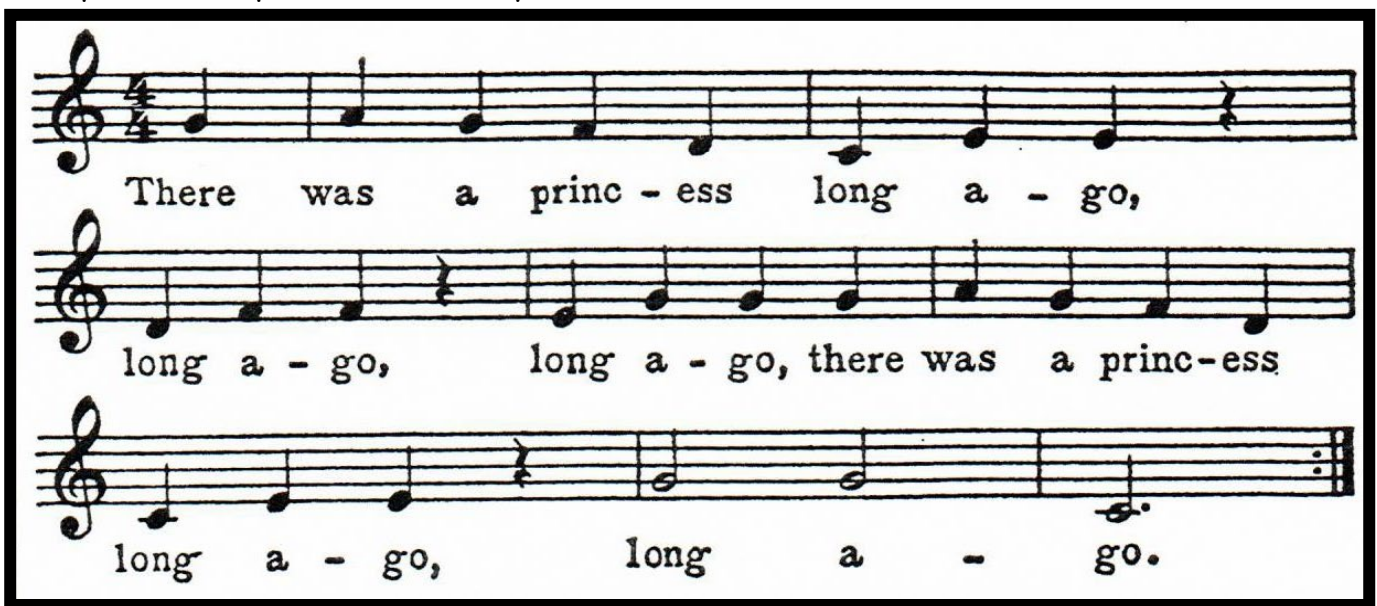


# With Happy Hearts We Dance and Sing and Nurture Social Emotional Skills

## An Old German Princess Song

from Joanie Cutler

There was a princess long ago,	A great big forest grew around, etc.
Long ago, long ago,	A gallant prince came riding by, etc.
There was a princess long ago, Long ago.	He took his sword and cut it down, etc.
And she lived in a big high tower, etc.	He took her hand to wake her up, etc.
One day a fairy waved her wand, etc.	So everybody's happy now, etc.
The princess slept for a hundred years, etc.	



Invite the children to dance, dramatize the action, and create new verses:  
"They danced and ate to celebrate, etc."

- The 'princess' stands in the centre of the ring of children.
- The children sing and circle around the princess, or the children raise their joined hands to make the tower.
- One child chosen as the fairy waves her arm over the princess.
- The princess lies down and closes her eyes.
- The children wave their arms as trees.
- One child chosen as the prince gallops 'round the outside of the ring.
- He pretends to cut down the trees with an imaginary sword.
- He wakes up the princess.
- Children side-step 'round clapping their hands.

- Traditional



# Children Sing and Sign This Well-Loved Song for Parent Performances and Mother's Day



## You Are My Sunshine

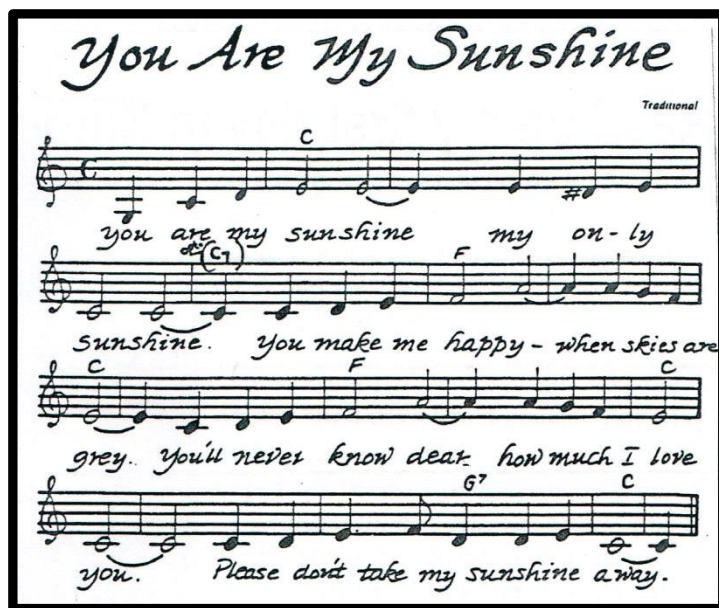
You are my sunshine,  
My only sunshine.  
You make me happy  
When skies are gray.  
You'll always know, dear  
How much I love you,  
For I'll tell you  
Every day.

Adapt this well-loved song by changing "sunshine" to a child's name, mommy, daddy, grandpa, etc. One mother sang "You'll always know dear, how much I love you. For I'll tell you everyday." This endearing song belongs in every child's "I Can Read" Anthology Notebook.

We are told that variations of this song are used during **Conscious Discipline** teacher training with Dr. Becky Bailey. Here is one version:

### You Are My Friends

You are my friends.  
My school friends.  
You make me happy  
When skies are gray.  
You'll always know, friends  
How much I love you.  
For I'll tell you every day.



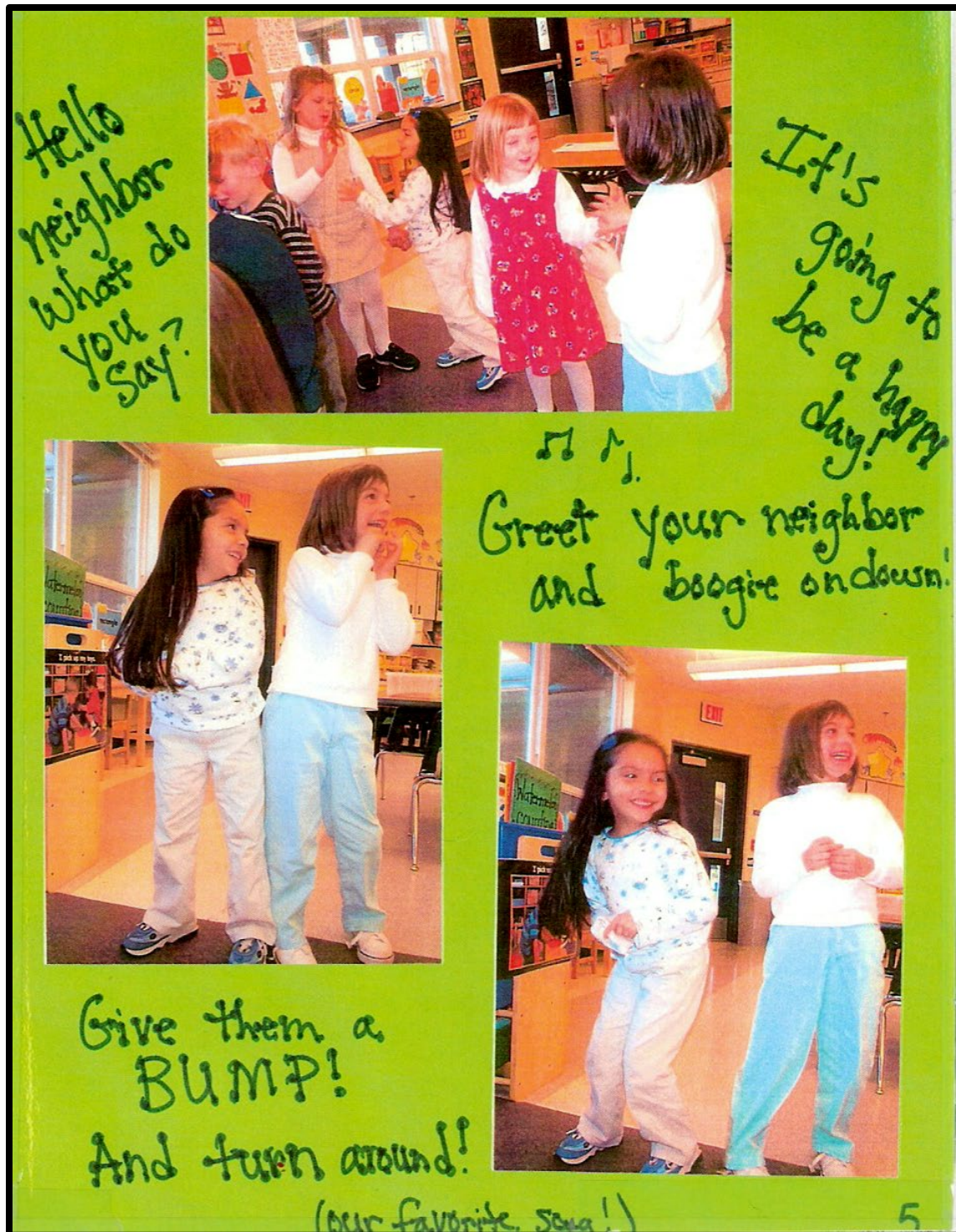
The sign for **friends** is "finger hugs."

**Happy** is to move hands upwards from the heart with a happy face.



# Oral Language is the First Curriculum Priority, So Bring Back the Out-Loud Culture:

With Happy Hearts We Dance and Sing and Develop Social-Emotional Skills



Children in Celeste Starr's kindergarten sing and dance to "Hello Neighbor."  
"Once you get the community right, the levels of learning soar."

— Ralph Peterson

# 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. Your 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.

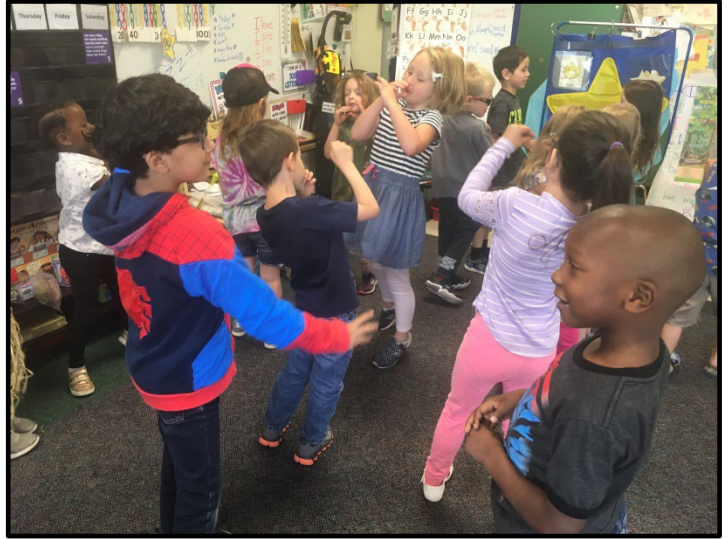
# The Mirror Dance:

## Social Emotional Learning (SEL) at its best!

Music by Rosalie Karalekas, photos used with permission from families

This dance teaches students to choose a partner, follow and change leaders, adapt to different music, and mimic creative movement patterns.

This is the kindergartners' all-time favorite dance in Celeste Starr's class!



- Teach children to establish eye contact, choose a partner, and say, "Will you be my partner please?" The other child might say, "Yes, I'll be your partner" or "I already have a partner, but I'll be your partner tomorrow."
- If one child remains, children learn to say, "You can be our partner too."
- The teacher may choose the partners randomly using name sticks.

Email Rosalie at [Salemperformingarts@msn.com](mailto:Salemperformingarts@msn.com) for a digital MP3 of her music. Pay using PayPal.



# 10 Tips to Make Dancing Fun for Everyone

by Kathie Bridges, Celeste Starr, and Nellie Edge

1. **Set the parameters** for behavior expectations before you even turn on the music. (**Make an anchor chart** of essential expectations. If you can, use photos of students actually dancing.)
2. **Practice the moves and actions** you will be teaching your students on your own before presenting it to them. Choose dances they know and enjoy!
3. **Walk through some of the tricky moves** before you start the music.
4. **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. **Intentionally plan and make a list of the key vocabulary** and language concepts that will be part of the children's movement experience.
7. **EVERYONE participates!** At the beginning of the year, there are often a few reluctant dancers, but with some encouragement they are soon actively involved also. This provides rich social emotional skills for diverse learners!
8. **Be exaggerated in your movements** so students can follow the strong motions.
9. If a movement goes side-to-side, make sure everyone is following along going the same way. **Stop and restart as needed.**
10. **Dance** with the students, especially in the beginning. **Be animated and have fun!** If you're having fun, they will too!

## **Celeste's Tips for Mirror Dancing:**

- Model how to choose—and NOT choose—a partner (*Will you be my partner please?*)
- "Helper of the Day" student partners with teacher to demonstrate ways children can choose which partner goes first
- With music, demonstrate how—and how NOT—to be the dance leader.
- During **Mirror Dancing**, demonstrate the types of movement and how children will start, stop, and switch partners at each BING in the music.



Celeste Starr's kindergarten

# Make Friends with Mother Goose:

*Develop the Sounds of English and Build a  
Community of Friends*

## Make Friends with Mother Goose

*Immerse young children in the wonderful language of nursery rhymes. Recite them with different voices, sing the melodies, march to their rhythms, and dramatize the actions. Research shows that sharing nursery rhymes with young children is highly related to reading success in the early years. Introduce nursery rhymes through the age-old tradition of the rhythmic chant, carefully articulating and modeling the sounds of the language. Make Friends with Mother Goose! It's an acquaintance your children will enjoy for years to come.*

*Invite groups of children to take turns dramatizing and reciting the rhymes while the remaining kids practice being good listeners. Children delight in the shared literacy experience of acting out rhymes with their friends. Social-emotional learning grows in a community of friends.*

*Childhood is for language.*

*-Lewis Thomas*



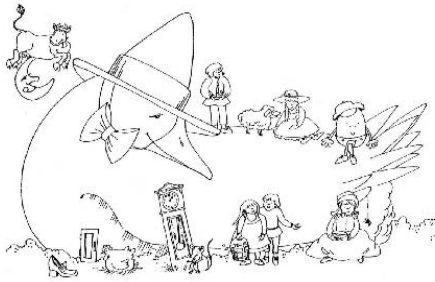


# Our Gift to Families: Make Friends with Mother Goose!

## Give Every Family a Collection of Your Favorite Rhymes

### Make Friends with Mother Goose

16 Favorite Nursery Rhymes to Memorize,  
Recite and Read



















Compiled by Nellie Edge

Illustrated by Melissa Saylor

**Note for Parents and Classroom Teachers:** Consider binding or stapling this collection of rhymes into a book so families can enjoy reciting them together. See *Parents as Partners in Kindergarten and Early Literacy* by Nellie Edge, for literacy connections, research and the benefits of memorizing nursery rhymes.

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### 1, 2, Buckle My Shoe



1, 2, Buckle my shoe;

3, 4, Shut the door;



5, 6, Pick up sticks;

7, 8, Lay them straight;



9, 10, A big fat hen.



### Humpty Dumpty

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,

Humpty Dumpty had a great fall;

All the King's horses



and all the King's men



couldn't put Humpty

together again.

[Download](#) and bind or staple the pages of this Mother Goose book.  
Give one to each child's family.

## Memorize, Recite and Perform Language: Turn Print into Sound

*The performers develop speaking skills and oral language fluency as they dramatize and articulate Hey, Diddle, Diddle. As kids connect language to print, they become motivated readers!*



**The audience practices good listening and giving feedback.**  
Soon it will be their turn to perform. Thus, the language of favorite nursery rhymes is rehearsed over and over again, supporting phonemic awareness.



Becky Leber's Kindergarten

**The science of reading supports a comprehensive approach to kindergarten literacy:**  
*Vocabulary, comprehension, a love of words, and oral language fluency develop simultaneously with a systematic approach to phonics instruction.*



# Use *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star* Rituals to Develop the Sounds of the English Language

## Make Friends with Mother Goose!



The beautiful melody of *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star* makes it a perfect song for children of all ages. **I wonder if there will be stars out tonight?** To capture children's imaginations, sometimes I provide props and tell little stories as introductions to songs.

One night when I was walking home, I saw a star twinkling so brightly that I just stopped and looked at it. And then I noticed fairies dancing around the star, and I heard a melody. (Hum *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*) Do you know what they were singing? They were singing, *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*. And as I started singing, they came right down beside me and floated around. (I bring out a silky fairy puppet with a tinkly bell and let it float from child to child.) **Can you help the fairy sing?**

**Make a simple fairy puppet by laying two square scarves over several balls of cotton that have been scented with lavender oil. Tie a ribbon under the cotton balls to form a head and secure the scarves. You may want to add a little jingle bell on the ribbon.**

Enjoy the poem *Fairies* by Sir James M. Barrie, *When the first baby laughed, the very first laugh...*

**The delicate sound of finger cymbals might also suggest the twinkling of stars.** Children can pretend to be stars, moving lightly and spreading a sparkling glow about the room.

*Baa, Baa, Black Sheep, Humpty Dumpty, and The ABC Song* all use this favorite melody composed by Mozart in 1778.

Have you ever made a wish on a star? Here's a favorite wishing chant:

Star-light, star-bright, first star I see tonight,  
Wish I may, wish I might, have the wish I wish tonight.



From *Music is Magic for Your Child and You!* Book and CD by Nellie Edge, Nellie Edge Resources, Inc. ©1988

*Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star* is featured on the DVD, *The Magic of Signing Songs, Volume I.*

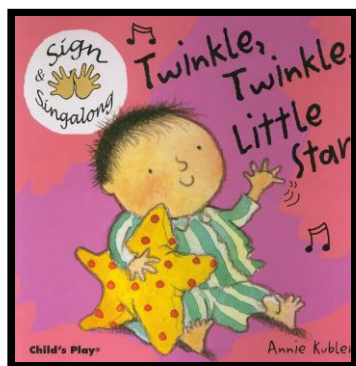
See free  ASL instructional video of *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star* at [www.nellieedge.com](http://www.nellieedge.com).

# Children and Their Families Learn About the Stars

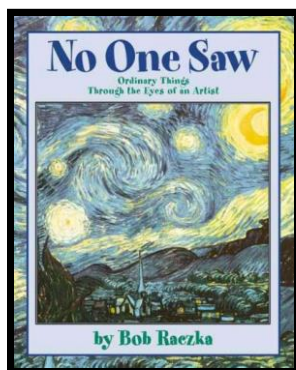


Awaken the child's love of nature and sense of wonder. "Learning About Our Earth and Solar System" is part of a year-long study in Joanie Cutler's kindergarten in Eugene, Oregon. The children even learn Greek myths about the stars and learn to locate familiar constellations. Throughout the year, families are encouraged to take night walks and observe the changing stars. Children draw

their pictures of stars spinning in space, creating a star mural in the style of van Gogh, and developing what may become a lifelong interest in astronomy. **Teach for deep learning.**



After children have learned to sign the song, they enjoy reading the *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*, sign and sing-along board book, by Annie Kubler, Child's Play, 2004.



We love the beautiful book *No One Saw: Ordinary Things Through the Eyes of an Artist*, by Bob Raezka, Millbrook Press, 2002.



Find Mother Goose Photo Essays and resources [www.nellieedge.com](http://www.nellieedge.com), YouTube, and Nellie Edge TPT Store Little Books and "I Can Read" pages

## Celeste Starr Teaches Children How to Draw a Star: Body Movement and Language Builds Brain Connections

1 & 2 = Make an "A" (A= ) (with body also)



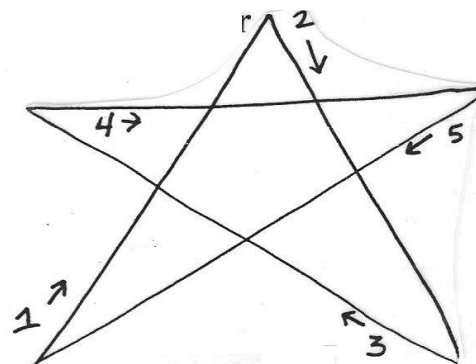
3 = Kick up your foot



4 = Cross your heart



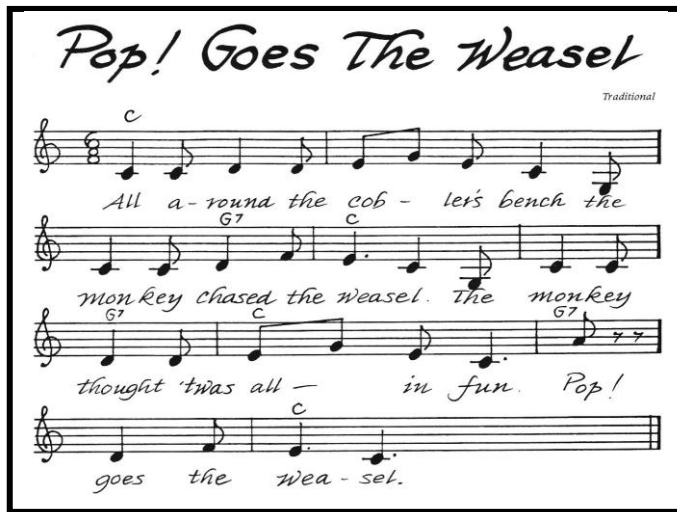
5 = Touch your toe



Children also learn to draw spiral and twinkling stars. One child exclaimed to Dad, "This is my van Gogh-like star." ( See ASL video clip, ASL guide, and curriculum connections at [www.nellieedge.com](http://www.nellieedge.com))



# Pop! Goes the Weasel



Bring a jack-in-the-box into the classroom and sing along with this jingling melody. Children love to anticipate the popping up of a jack-in-the-box. And it's even more fun for them to actually become a jack-in-the-box. Believe in magic and your children will enter into the fantasy. "I'm going to turn you all into jacks-in-a-box." Touch each child's head or back as you gently push her or him down in the imaginary box. Use the winding circular motion of your hand on the child's back as you sing the rhyme. Watch the excited children pop up at the end of the song. Children will want to be pushed down repeatedly to prolong this little drama... "Let's do it again!"

- Letter the rhyme on a language chart and highlight all the high-frequency ("star" or "by heart") words.
- Find "the" five times and recite a catchy *T-h-e Spelling Chant* to reinforce "the" as a word children can instantly read, write and spell.
- Explore the word "pop" and the (exclamation) "excitement mark!" Grab the word p-o-p. Stretch it out and make a fist at the end. Pull the excitement mark out of the sky "whee pppt!"
- Read and re-read the language from the language chart or pocket chart, and the "I Can Read" Anthology Notebook or folder.



# Learning to Be Good Speakers and Good Listeners are Important Life Skills: *Give Children Specific Positive Feedback*

Children develop better listening skills when instructed on how to practice being good listeners. Consider making a good listener chart. Add photos of your children listening attentively. **Specifically and frequently acknowledge them for looking at the speaker, staying in one place, and making thoughtful comments.**

**I am a good speaker.**

**I remembered to:**

- Look at the class and smile.
- Speak clearly and keep the rhythm.
- Use a strong, dramatic voice and arm gestures.
- Speak slowly.
- Thank the audience for their applause.

**I am a good listener.**

**I remembered to:**

- Look at the person speaking.
- Stay in my place.
- Listen carefully.
- Think of comments to make or questions to ask.



**SL.K.2.** Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood.

**SL.K.3.** Ask and answer questions in order to seek help, get information, or clarify something that is not understood.

**SL.K.6.** Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.



See *Social Emotional Learning* supplement



# Use Co-Active Finger Plays and Action Rhymes: Develop Language, Literacy, and Social Skills



Children stand and perform this rhyme on their partner's back:

*Crisscross.  
Applesauce.  
Spider climbing up my spine.  
Tight squeeze.  
Cool breeze.  
Makes me get the  
Giggles!*

**Crisscross Applesauce** and **One Potato** are included in the Anthology Collection: *Child Lore*, by Nellie Edge.

Children make two fists and alternately build on their partner's fists:

*One potato,  
Two potato,  
Three potato,  
Four.  
Five potato,  
Six potato,  
Seven potato,  
More.*



**Row, Row, Row Your Boat** gives children a creative problem to solve co-actively. "How can you connect up with a partner and share a rowing movement?"

- The rhythms of sound have a powerful effect on cognition.
- Social interaction enhances language and literacy.
- Let's help all children be "language smart" and "people smart." We can do it through the delightful language of co-active songs and rhymes.

# Pease Porridge Hot: Teach Children to Hand Jive and Feel the Rhythms of Sound!

Katie invites the entire class to "be my partner" in a hand jive. This allows her to model the clapping pattern and teach children to feel the rhythm of this traditional rhyme. Then they politely learn to choose a partner. They establish eye contact, use a pleasant voice, and say, "Will you be my partner, please?" Children always enjoy connecting with a friend and performing language, hand jiving with rhythm.

Nursery rhymes develop phonemic awareness.  
Marie Clay's research shows that **"rhymers are readers."**

Pease Porridge Hot

Pease porridge hot,  
Pease porridge cold,  
Pease porridge in the pot,  
Nine days old.

Some like it hot,  
Some like it cold,  
Some like it in the pot,  
Nine days old.



After children have internalized the language of each new song and rhyme, they illustrate another page for their "I Can Read" poetry notebook. Children reread the pages and take them home for family sharing.



What songs and rhymes do you use for hand jiving?



# Handjive and Move to the Rhythms of Language

*The rhythms of sound have a powerful effect on cognition. Children who cannot keep a steady beat and respond to the rhythms of language have a hard time reading fluently. So—handjives, dances and jump rope chants are a necessary part of a comprehensive and multisensory literacy program.*

**Miss Mary Mack** – A Nellie Edge Read and Sing Big Book™, recorded on *Music is Magic* CD

Simple clap/cross slap pattern

Miss Ma-ry Mack, Mack, Mack

Clap slap clap slap clap slap

All dressed in black, black, black

With silver buttons,

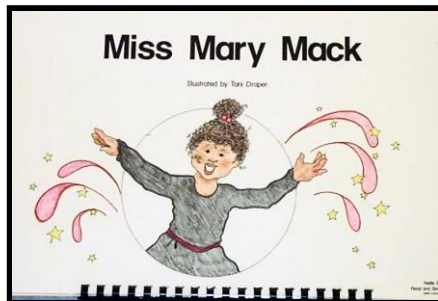
buttons, buttons

All down her back,

back, back.

She asked her mother,

mother, mother



For fifteen cents, cents, cents

To see the elephants, elephants, elephants

Jump the fence, fence, fence.

They jumped so high, high, high

They touched the sky, sky, sky

And they never came back, back, back

Til the fourth of July, ly, ly.

No they never came back, back, back

Til the fourth of July, ly, ly.

**Playmate** – A Nellie Edge Read and Sing Big Book™, recorded on *Music is Magic* CD

(Pattern starts after 2 sways) Sway sway clap/slap clap/slap clap/clap 2 hands back slap 2 hands front slap (repeat)

Sway sway clap/slap clap/slap clap/clap

Say, say, oh playmate,

2 hands back slap 2 hands front slap clap/slap clap/slap clap/clap

Come out and play with me.

2 hands back slap 2 hands front slap clap/slap clap/slap clap/clap

And bring your dollies three.

Climb up my apple tree.

Call down my rain barrel.

Slide down my cellar door.

And we'll be jolly friends forever more.



**Consider Core Standards: Handjive!**



**RF.K.2** Recognize and produce rhyming words.

**RF.K.4.** Reading: Literature

**L.K.5.** With guidance and support from adults, explore word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

**L.K.6.** Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts.

**SL.K.6.** Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings and ideas clearly

**RI.K.7.** With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the text in which they appear (e.g., what person, place, thing, or idea in the text an illustration depicts)

**RI.K.10.** Actively engages in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.

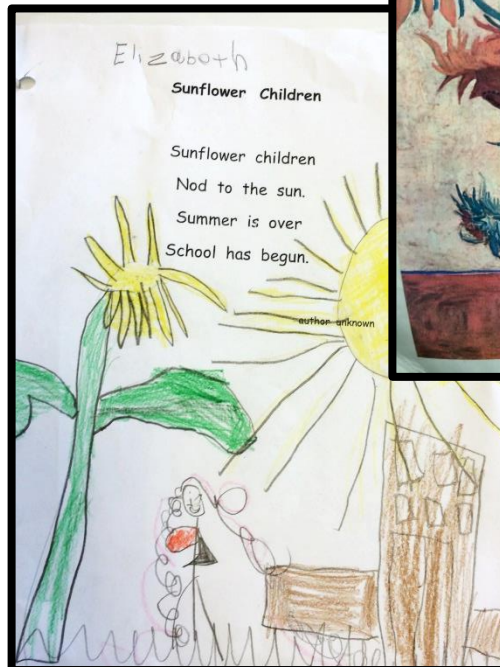
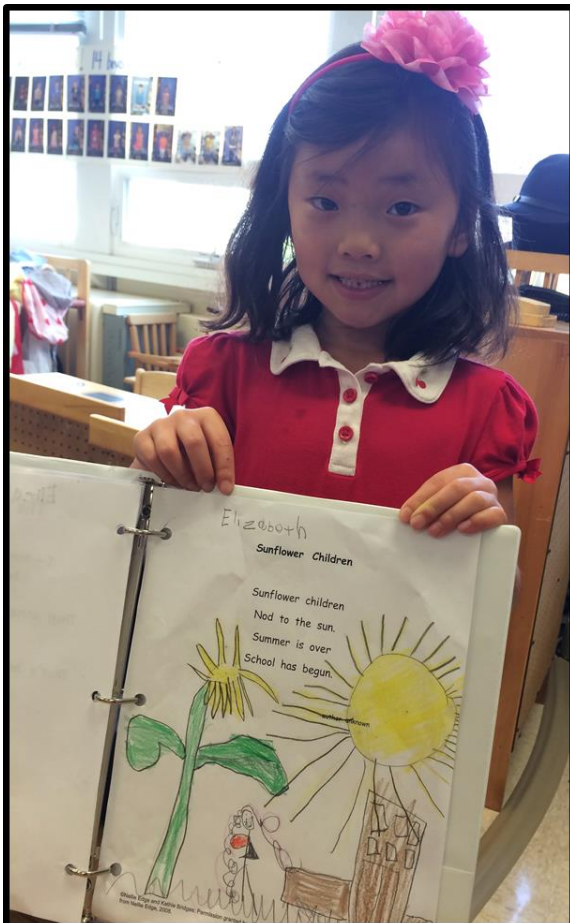


**See Social Emotional Learning Supplement, Part 1**

# Sunflower Children in September: Combining Experiences in Poetry, Art, and Connections to Nature



**Sunflowers**  
by van Gogh



What's the **most important thing** you notice about this painting?

What is the **title** of this poem?

Students memorize, recite, and illustrate poetry to build language skills and confidence drawing.



# Fill the Days With Memorable Songs, Poems and Rhymes: Build Community, Language Comprehension, Fluency, and Joy!

We share language that we love, knowing these songs and poems may be forever on the walls of the children's minds. Children take to heart what we love, and that adds an emotional dimension, fortifying the memory of language.

*"I know well that only the rarest kind of best in anything can be good enough for the young."*

-Walter de la Mare, Bells of Grass

## Songs That Build Community and Establish Routines

*De Colores, Las Mañanitas* (In Celebration of Spanish Folk Songs CD)

**\*\*Hola, Mis Amigos** (Nellie Edge, Magic of Signing Songs Volume 2, DVD.

Complimentary online video at [nellieedge.com](http://nellieedge.com))

*Good Morning* (Greg and Steve)

*I Think You're Wonderful* (Red Grammer)

**\*The More We Get Together/ Entre Más Nos Reunimos** (Nellie Edge - Music is Magic CD and complimentary online video)

*We All Live Together* Volume 1 (Greg and Steve)

**\*Quiet Time** is the last song on the CD

*Days of the Week* (Adams' Family tune)

*Hello, Neighbor* (Ralph Peterson)

*Number Rock/ABC Rock* (Greg and Steve)

**\*Playmate** (Nellie Edge - Music is Magic CD)

*Helper of the Day/Star of the Week* (♫Skip to My Lou tune)

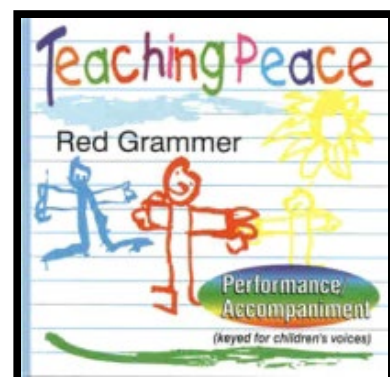
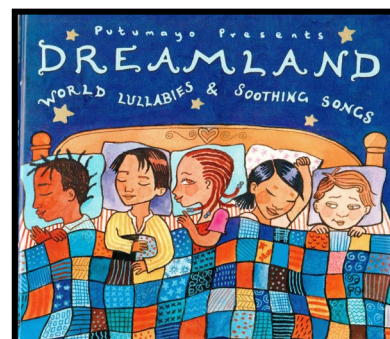
**\*Willoughby Wallaby Woo** (Raffi)

**\*\*See You Later, Alligator**

*You Are My Sunshine* (Nellie Edge , Music is Magic CD)

*Dreamland: A Collection of World Lullabies and Soothing Songs* (Putumayo Kids)

*Workout to the Letter Sounds* (Hip-Hop AlphaBop 2)



## Movement, Handjives, Spelling, and Jump Rope Songs!

**\*\*Pease Porridge Hot**

**\*\*Head, Shoulder, Baby**

**\*Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear** (Nellie Edge, Music is Magic CD)

**\*My Aunt Came Back** (Nellie Edge, Music is Magic CD)

*Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes* (traditional)

*Looby Loo* (traditional)

*Hokey Pokey* (traditional)

*Tooty Ta* (Jack Hartman)

*Che Che Kola* (Nancy Raven)

*Sing, Sign, Spell, and Read!* (Gina Edge and Nellie Edge) **L-O-V-E Spells Love** and 32 other spelling songs



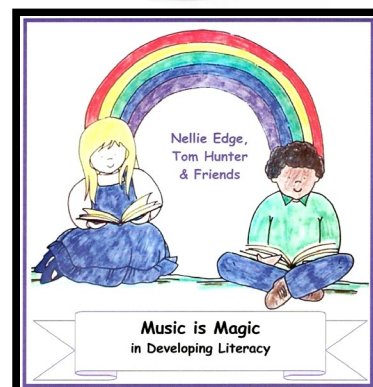
## Nellie Edge Read and Sing Big Books™: Bridge Oral Language Into Print!

*I Love the Mountains/Amo Los Montes*

*I Have A Cat/Yo Tengo Un Gato*

*Magic Penny*

*Down By The Bay*



## Seasonal Songs with Science Connections

- \*\*Leaves Are Falling (Nellie Edge)
- \*Sing a Rainbow (Arthur Hamilton from Nellie Edge, CD)
- Seed In The Ground (Tom Hunter)
- The Garden Song (Rise Up Singing)
- The Tree Song (Dr. Randy Hitz)
- Snowflake Song (Dr. Randy Hitz)
- I'm A Little Snowman (source unknown)
- 5 Little Speckled Frogs (Nellie Edge Read and Sing Big Book)

## Call Response/Echo

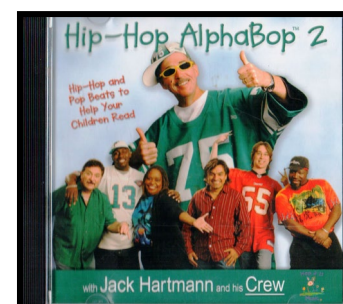
- Little Sir Echo (Greg and Steve)
- \*Miss Mary Mack (Nellie Edge, Music is Magic CD)
- Did You Feed My Cow? (Ella Jenkins)
- Sing a Song of Sunshine (Dr. Randy Hitz)

## Songs That Children Request All Year Long!

- Baby Birdie (traditional)
- Mr. Sun (Raffi)
- Robin in the Rain (Raffi)
- Baby Beluga (Raffi)
- Brush Your Teeth (Raffi)
- \*I Can Read Colors/Se Leer Colores (Nellie Edge, Music is Magic CD)
- \*Goodnight, Irene/Buenas Noches Irene (adaptation on Nellie Edge CD)
- This Land is Your Land (Rise Up Singing)
- Keep on the Sunny Side (Rise Up Singing)
- Take Me Out to the Ballgame (Rise Up Singing)

## Resources

- \*Nellie Edge Read and Sing Big Book™
- \*\*Nellie Edge Poetry Anthologies
- Nellie Edge, *Magic of Signing Songs DVD: Volume I and Volume II*
- Greg and Steve, *We All Live Together, Volume I*
- Red Grammer, *Teaching Peace CD*
- Dr. Jean, *Dr. Jean and Friends CD*, *Kiss Your Brain CD*
- Raffi, *Singable Songbook* and *Rise and Shine CD*
- Tom Hunter, *Come on Over, I'll Sing for You, Handed Down, Together and Hand in Hand CD's*
- Ella Jenkins, *You'll Sing a Song CD* and *I'll Sing a Song CD*
- Rise Up Singing, *The Group Singing Songbook*
- Dr. Randy Hitz, *Sing a Song of Sunshine: Original Songs and Games for Young Children*
- Jack Hartmann, *Hip- Hop AlphaBop 2*



## Sources for Children's CDs:

Nellie Edge Resources, Inc.  
[www.nellieedge.com](http://www.nellieedge.com)

Crystal Springs Books  
[www.crystalspringsbooks.com](http://www.crystalspringsbooks.com)

Amazon Books  
[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

Dr. Jean and Friends  
[www.drjean.org](http://www.drjean.org)

Red Note Records  
[www.redgrammer.com](http://www.redgrammer.com)

Charlotte Diamond  
[www.charlottediamond.com](http://www.charlottediamond.com)

Raffi  
[www.raffinews.com](http://www.raffinews.com)

Jack Hartmann  
[www.jackhartmann.com](http://www.jackhartmann.com)



## **Chapter 2**

*Oral Language Traditions: Building a Joyful Community of Learners*

### **NOTES**

## Chapter 3

### **Nurture Social-Emotional Skills Within a Joyful Classroom:** *Give Students Engaging Curriculum, Positive Discipline, and Carefully Chosen Songs, Poems, and Literature*

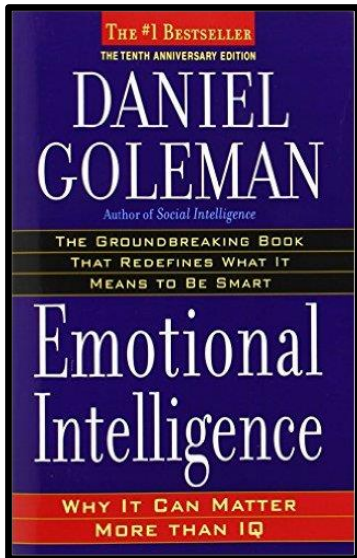


*"Kindergarten is for sharing kindness, building friendships, and nurturing the imagination." -Nellie Edge*



# Daniel Goldman's Groundbreaking Book Supported our Commitment to Joyful, Social Emotional Learning in Kindergarten

Emotional intelligence is more important than I.Q.  
for success in school—and in life.



*"Emotional intelligence ...includes self-control, zeal and persistence, and the ability to motivate oneself. And these skills, as we shall see, can be taught to children, giving them a better chance to use whatever intellectual potential the genetic lottery may have given them."*

*"The question is, how can we bring intelligence to our emotions - and civility to our streets and caring to our communal life?"*

Quotes from *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*, by Daniel Goleman. Bantam Doubleday & Dell, 1995.

## Create a lending library for families: Share Social Emotional Learning resources!

Bailey, Rebecca Anne. *Easy to Love, Difficult to Discipline: The 7 Basic Skills for Turning Conflict into Cooperation*. Loving Guidance, 2002

Campbell, Don. *The Mozart Effect for Children*. Harper Collins, 2000.

Daniels, Marilyn. *Dancing with Words: Signing for Hearing Children's Literacy*. Bergin & Garvey, 2001.

Edwards, Carolyn. *The Hundred Language of Childhood: The Reggio Emilia Approach to Early Childhood Education*. Prentice Hall, 1997.

Faber, Adele and Mazlish, Elaine. *How to Talk so Kids Can Learn - At Home and in School*. Scribner, 1995.

Fay, Jim and Cline, Foster W. *Discipline With Love and Logic Resource Guide*. Love & Logic Press, 2001.

Hart, Betty and Risley, Todd R. *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children*. Paul H. Brooks Publishing, 1995.

Healy, Jane. *Your Child's Growing Mind: A Guide to Learning and Brain Development from Birth to Adolescence*, 3rd ed. Harmony, 2004.

Kohn, Alfie. *Punished by Rewards: The Trouble with Gold Stars, Incentive Plans, As, Praise, and Other Bribes*. Houghton Mifflin, 1993.

Lickona, Thomas. *How to Raise Kind Kids: And Get Respect, Gratitude, and Happier Family in the Bargain*. Penguin Books, 2018

Nelsen, Jane. *Positive Discipline*. Random House, 1996.

Paley, Vivian Gussin. *You Can't Say You Can't Play*. Harvard University Press, 1992.

Ripley, Amanda. *The Smartest Kids in the World*. Simon and Schuster, 2013.

Sokol, Bryan, Muller, Ulrich, Carpendale, Jeremy, Carpendale, Young, Arlene, and Iarocci, Grace. *Self- and Social-Regulation: The Development of Social Interaction, Social Understanding, and Executive Functions*. Oxford University Press, 2010.

Wojcicki, Esther. *How to Raise Successful People: Simple Lessons to Help Your Child Become Self-Driven, Respectful, and Resilient*. Mariner Books, 2020.

# Discipline Is the Absolute Hardest Part of Teaching: Thoughts on Why I Use Positive Classroom Discipline

Excerpts from postings by Jacque Verrall, National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) of kindergarten from Edmonds, Washington on teachers.net Kindergarten Chatboard

...Stickers and other extrinsic rewards are short-term solutions that seem to work quickly, but offer no long-term learning... when the sticker is removed there is no motivation to continue the desired behavior. **What we want is to create long-term solutions, motivating students to do their best, because it's the right thing to do, not because they will get something for it...**

It takes longer to use intrinsic motivation, but it is what offers long-term results with students striving to do and be their best because it is the right thing to do:

**Intrinsically motivating children begins by us looking for ways to individualize positive praise** (no more "good job"). ...recognizing the power our positive words have on children (or adults). **It requires forming solid, powerful relationships with children/parents** and really using observational skills to hone in on what they do.

- "Wow, how did you learn to make those "B's" so well?"
- "Your picture reminds me of a storm, look how wonderful those two colors blend together making it look like a dark, storm cloud."
- "Brady, thank you for picking up that trash, it wasn't even yours, but you saw it and picked it up—you really know how to take good care of our room."

**It's really difficult for a child to misbehave for someone that he/she really feels loves or appreciates him/her. Many misbehaviors are simply because a child has not been taught appropriate ways to get their needs met.**

**Single out children doing the right thing.** - "Everyone, put your eyes on John, I know he's ready to go to Library because he has his eyes on me, his hands are down at his side and most importantly, his mouth is quiet." Choose a few others who are modeling what you want to see too. **Do not go anywhere until they are all perfectly quiet.**

**Be calm no matter what. Be matter-of-fact.** Be consistent. Don't give too many chances. I give one warning, they don't need more than that. Try to make consequences be logical ones...

**Be understanding and convey that you really are on their side.** You understand how they might want to \_\_\_\_\_, but it wouldn't be safe, kind, honest, (whatever) and at school this is inappropriate. **Love and logic works very well... especially being empathetic while still enforcing rules.**

*"...Where did we ever get the crazy idea that in order to make children do better, first we have to make them feel worse? Think of the last time you felt humiliated or treated unfairly. Did you feel like cooperating or doing better?"*

Excerpt from *Positive Discipline*, by Jane Nelsen.

See also *Teaching with Love and Logic*, by Jim Fay and David Funk.

Jacquie Verrall is featured on the literacy award site tab on nellieedge.com. We read everything she writes!



## Rituals That Build Our Learning Community... "The Lighting Circle"



**"The Lighting Circle" is a much-anticipated ritual conducted twice a week.** On Monday, children enter the room with the main lights turned off. As they quickly put backpacks and coats away, they are already thinking about what they will share about their weekend. After everyone is seated quietly in a circle, the candle is lit. I focus them further by saying, "Think about what you did, places you went, or people you saw this weekend...when you have your idea in your head, put your thumb up to let us know you're ready." Red, our class-sharing hedgehog, is passed from child to child as they share a highlight or thought from their weekend. After sharing, we announce our learning circle is open for the upcoming week, and one child blows out the candle. This process allows me to peek inside their heads and get a sense of what I can draw on for their writing, especially if they encounter "writer's block."

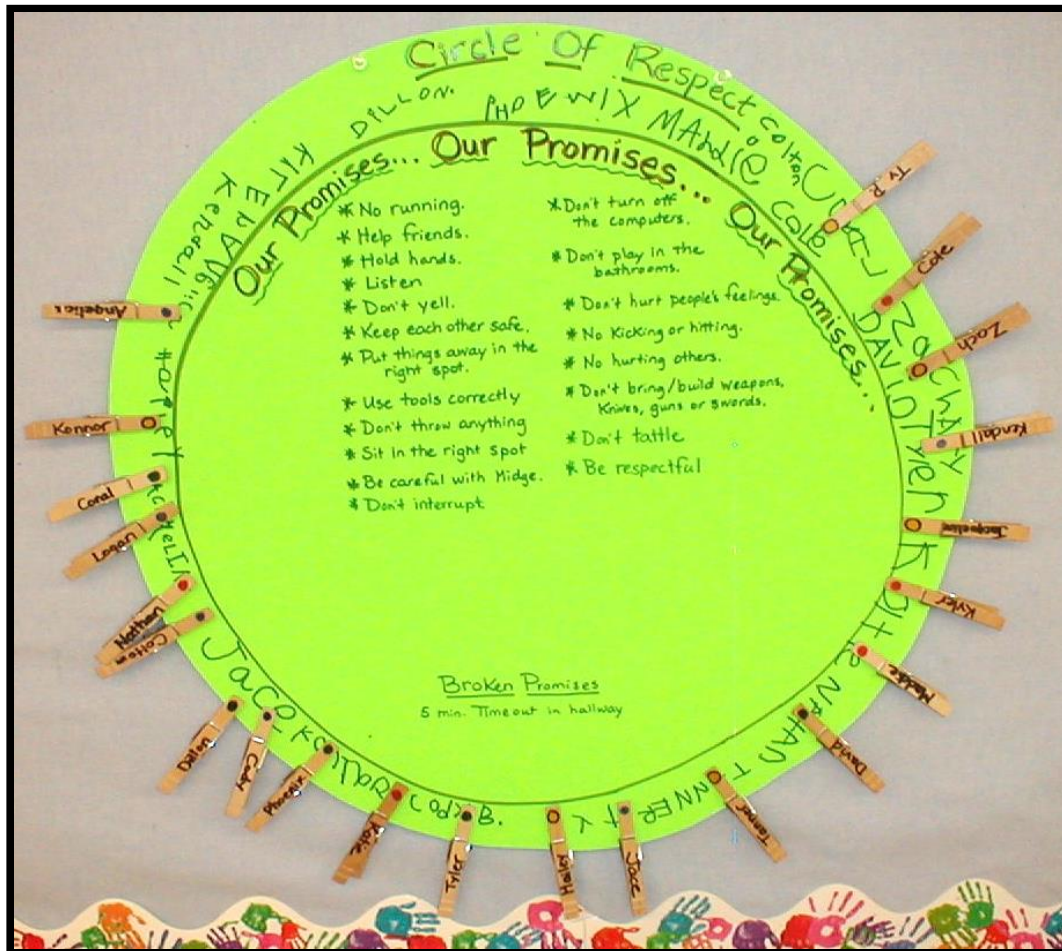
**This process is repeated on Friday just before the children are dismissed.** However, this time the children share a highlight or something they learned at school during the week. After everyone has had a turn, we announce our learning circle is now closed for the week, and one child blows out the candle.

Credit for this original idea is given to Andie Cunningham and Ruth Shagoury in their book, *Starting With Comprehension: Reading Strategies for the Youngest Learners*, Stenhouse, 2005.

From *Writing to Read in Kindergarten: Growing Engaged and Purposeful Writers with Common Core Connections* by Julie Lay and Nellie Edge, updated 2015.

# A Circle of Respect in Kindergarten

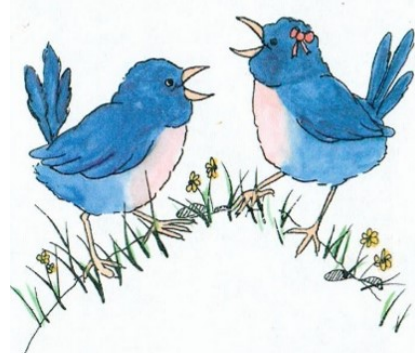
## Our Promises to Each Other from Julie Lay



After the children talked about what makes a good learning community and how to show respect for each other they came up with their class promises which were written on circular paper. I was merely the scribe for the children's ideas. They signed their own name all around the edge of the circle. Each child also has a clip with their name on it. If anyone breaks a promise, the "promise breaker" needs to remove their clip from the circle to the 'yellow' spot. Children earn back their spot within the circle if they demonstrate to their friends that they are able to correct the problem. This places more responsibility on the children, rather than an authoritarian teacher. My afternoon class also added that the promise breaker needs to apologize to the entire class for not keeping a promise. After only 2 weeks of implementing this, I am already finding that the kids are regulating themselves and their peers without having my intervention at all!

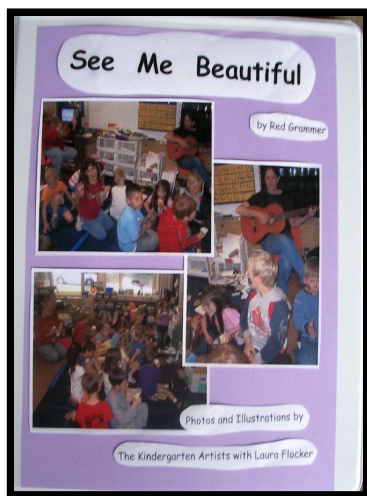
### PROMISES:

- *Hold hands*
- *Help friends*
- *Be careful with Midge*
- *Keep each other safe*





# Class Books Celebrate Children's Lives and the Magic of Signing Songs

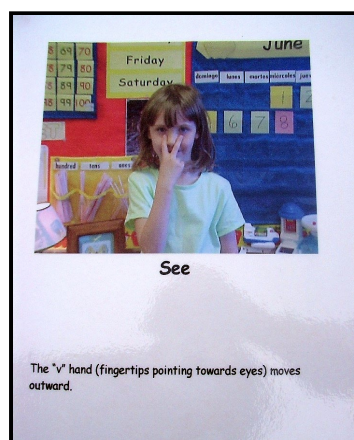
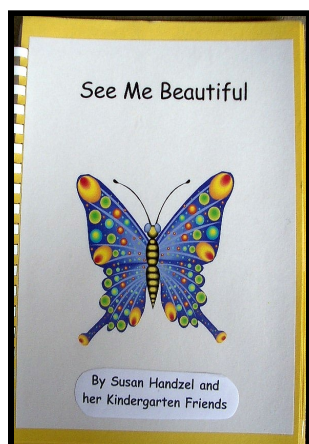
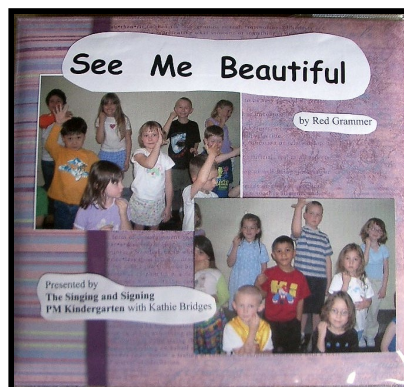


***See Me Beautiful***, by Red Grammer, inspired this class-made book. Laura Flocker's kinders used colored pencils for their self-portraits. Each page is protected by clear plastic sleeves. The important message in the lyrics makes this a powerful performance song - one that has had many moms and dads in tears. (One teacher added a slide show of the children to accompany their memorable year-end performance.)

**Kathie Bridges' version** of *See Me Beautiful* is a photo class book featuring the children as expert signers.

Susan Handzel's version (see below) features a photo/ASL guide of each child signing and enlarged text of the lyrics on a colorful background.

**Children can take these books home and teach their families to sign.**



## Two ways to assemble class books:

- Use white 8.5" x 11" notebooks with clear plastic sheet protectors and a front cover pocket for the cover page.
- Use a colorful 8.5" x 8" size photo album with clear insert pages and a plastic cover. (Tip: Ask a parent to purchase supplies and assemble the book.)

***Once children can sing and sign the language—they can read with comprehension and fluency!***

# We Sing ♪ See Me Beautiful – Look for the Best in Me...\*

*Our children must develop literacy while developing belief systems that affirm,  
"I can read and write. I love school! I belong. I am responsible..."*

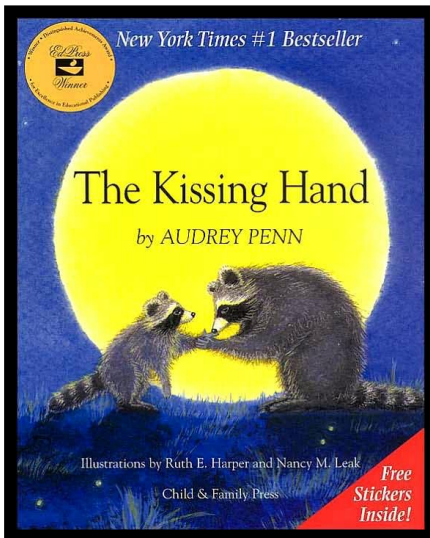
## How Do We Create an Emotionally Healthy Classroom?

- **Bond with your students.**  
*"You must bond with her if she's to learn anything at all... This is not a choice but a duty and responsibility..." – Regie Routman, author of **Reading Essentials***
- **We can create a noncompetitive, emotionally safe, and joyful environment**—where children care and share and work together.  
*"The children have got to trust me—that I will never let them look bad in front of their peers."  
– Bobbi Fisher, author of **Joyful Learning in Kindergarten***
- **We see each child in the best possible light** and hold that positive expectation before them.  
*"It's hard to misbehave for someone who really likes and believes in you." – Jacque Verrall*
- **Help children know each other** through coactive and cooperative projects.
- **Teach children to respect, affirm, and show kindness**—develop the language of empathy, reflection and appreciation. Model and role-play how that looks in each new classroom scenario.  
*"I want the children to respect communication with one another as much as they respect communication with me." – Janine Chappell Carr, author of **A Child Went Forth: Reflective Teaching with Young Readers and Writers***
- **Help children develop a feeling of belonging and responsibility** for themselves and their classmates.  
*"Belonging is the curriculum in Early Childhood" – Bev Bos*
- **Engage children in "grand conversations"** with quality literature.  
Read *Grand Conversations: Literature Groups in Action* by Ralph Peterson.
- **Have high expectations for children's behavior and encourage group problem solving.**  
*"How can the rest of us help you solve that problem"*
- **Teach children to write about their thoughts**, complaints, ideas and feelings.  
*"Writing takes fuzzy thinking and makes it clear." – Pat Wolfe*
- **Make your classroom a celebrative place.**  
Read about the basic school model developed by Ernest Boyer in his book *The Basic School – A Community for Learning*.
- **Build meaning-centered curriculum** that connects to the lives of the children.  
*"A good deal of the typical curriculum does not connect -not to practical applications, nor to personal insights, nor to much of anything else." – David Perkins, Harvard*
- **Build learning independence and stamina: Involve children in choice-making, goal-setting, and self-evaluation.**  
Read *The Daily Five: Fostering Literacy Independence in the Elementary Grades* by Gail Boushey and Joan Moser.
- **Support "parents as partners"** in honoring and celebrating childhood and building emotional intelligence and literacy.

*\*See Me Beautiful by Red Grammer is recorded on his CD **Teaching Peace**.*



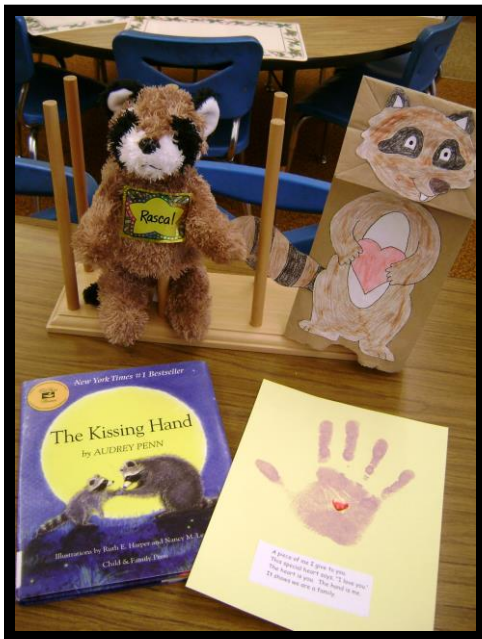
# Begin the Year with *The Kissing Hand*: Teach Comprehension Strategies through Emotional Engagement with Stories Excerpts from *Mosaic of Thought* by Ellin Keen and Susan Zimmermann



*The Kissing Hand*, Audrey Penn, Child and Family Press, Bk & Sticker Ed. 1993

"You know, you guys," she began after reading *The Kissing Hand* for the third time, "**my synthesis for this book is really changing** each time I read it. Remember Monday when I said it was a book about Chester raccoon who was afraid to go to school for the first time and how his mother made him feel better? I still think it's true, but now that I've reread the book, now I think it's also a book about anyone trying anything new and how thinking about people you love, even if they haven't kissed the palm of your hand, can help you feel strong inside. I think it's about how we give each other strength to do things that are new and challenging for us. It reminds me of Tony (one of the second-graders) showing Kenny around our room on this first day with us. It was like Tony was showing Kenny how not to be afraid in a new classroom. Do you remember?"

## Rascal Raccoon from *The Kissing Hand* Inspires a Building Tour



Katie Nelson reflects... After listening to the wonderful read aloud, *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn, we meet Rascal the Raccoon, a puppet friend who will become our class mascot. We make puppets of our own and each put a handprint on a special poem that goes home to our families. This is how we celebrate families and their love for us.

In the very first day of school as we come in from recess, we notice that Rascal is GONE from the classroom. "Where can he be? Let's go find him!" And so begins a tour of the building, starting in the library. Each staff member that we meet greets us with a smile and tells us, "Rascal was JUST HERE" and shows us a heart sticker that was left behind by our missing friend.

*Literature is life and life is literature.* -Kay Goines

## Create in Kindergarten—A Child's Garden of Experts

Our kindergarten community is most empowering when children see themselves as teachers and learners, all caring and sharing together. **We consciously and systematically help every child to identify strengths they have that they can use to help others.** These strengths—from shoe-tying to hand-jiving—are frequently acknowledged publicly in the class. The child who can help start a favorite class song on key or keep a steady beat in hand-jiving makes as important of a contribution to the classroom community as the early reader and writer. Children can develop "expertise" in many areas, from knowledge of how to perform routine tasks like feeding the goldfish or knowing how to gently hold the bunny, to specific literacy and math skills. **A classroom that values multiple intelligences or "avenues for learning" will naturally develop more "experts".**

In the book *Kid Writing: A Systematic Approach to Phonics, Journals, and Writing Workshop*, by Eileen Feldgus, Ed.D. and Isabell Cardonick, M.Ed., children's writing and art are honored on the **Kid Writing Wall of Fame** with a caption that identifies each writer's strengths:

- *Joshua is an expert at using lower-case letters.*
- *Marissa is famous for putting periods in all the right places.*

**Developing a classroom of experts who can help each other frees the teacher to meet more individual student needs.**

- When we teach high-frequency ("by heart") words through movement, rhythm, sign language and song, we **develop many "spelling experts"**. Children who do not have strong early visual memory skills can be successful with auditory spelling songs like *L-O-V-E Spells Love*, or our rhythmic "t-h-e" spelling chants. Teachers can ask children during interactive writing or journal writing, "Who is already an expert at the word 'the'?" "Who is the 'King of ing'?"
- Sometimes we may not discover a child's unique skills unless we **ask families "What special things does your child do well? What does your child really love to do?"** One child with a deaf parent became the expert at teaching *The ABC Phonics: Sing, Sign, and Read!* by Nellie Edge to others. After reading and discussing the book *Crow Boy* by Taro Hoshima (Chibi could write in Chinese and imitate the voices of crows), children may identify new strengths to value in each other.
- **Invite the children in small groups to share tea** and talk about what they are really good at. Tea parties allow you to introduce chamomile tea (and Peter Rabbit), peppermint tea and real china teacups.
- Make a sign with names and photos: ***Look who is a shoe tying expert!***



***Every child needs to feel valued and to view themselves as an important contributor to the learning community.***



## Welcome to Kindergarten SEL Puppet Magic: Meet Rulee and Archy



Every class deserves to have a wonderful puppet friend who can help them reflect on discipline and management issues. Meet Rulee, Diane Bonica's special helping giraffe, who has a permanent habitat in a tent next to the meeting area in her classroom. Rulee loves to listen to books and his job is to help keep the children safe. [Check out the !\[\]\(919a2cb85b99741a73c0c31a427236a8\_img.jpg\) video clip](#) of Rulee in action and consider how responsive children are to imaginative puppet characters.

- Rulee changes outfits with the themes and seasons.
- Children love to write notes to Rulee: They treat him like an honored kindergarten friend.
- One child each day is responsible for bringing Rulee to the circle area and returning him to his home.

Mr. Kindergarten, California teacher Dan Gurney, also had a magical puppet in his classroom. He shared this about Archy:

*"He has impulse control issues. He blurts, he shouts, he yodels. Yet he is my constant companion in the early weeks of kindergarten because he is remarkably discerning of his emotional life. He can describe his emotions with amazing accuracy."*

*"Archy comes to my rescue every time I need to navigate some treacherous emotional waters: stealing, not sharing, name calling, cutting in line, being afraid of snakes, cats, dogs, or frustration or discouragement."*



*Consider finding an "Archy" or a "Rulee" to help navigate social emotional lessons in your kindergarten.*

# Wrinkled Heart Lesson

Author unknown, revised by Jacque Verrall/2011

This is a great lesson to help get students onboard as a community of learners who care about each other and do their best to keep everyone safe and comfortable.

Materials needed: 9" x 12" piece of red construction paper, scissors. Copy of poem sized to fit on the cut-out heart.

Gather your students on the rug near you. While talking with them, you are going to cut out a simple heart shape from the construction paper. You can fold it in half and cut it that way or any way that appeals to you. Students will be curious, and you can show them that it is a heart shape, telling them that it's a lot like the heart we have inside our bodies. Tell your students that you want to talk to them about how hurtful words can be. Give a few examples of how people have hurt your feelings, and then invite all the students to tell you about one time that someone hurt their feelings. As each child tells you their hurt feeling, put another fold in the heart. It doesn't matter how you fold it; any way will work. After everyone has told his/her hurt feeling with you commenting, "Yes, that would really hurt your feelings," or "Wow, that was really unkind" etc., tell them that you are going to unfold the heart; and tell them that you put a fold or wrinkle in the heart for every hurt feeling they told you. "When someone hurts our feelings, it leaves a wrinkle in our hearts that never comes out." Take the construction paper heart, unfolded, and show them that no matter how hard you try to straighten all the wrinkles, some always remain. Tell them the poem (see below that goes with it, and have them recite it several times and plan to return on other days to recite it again and again or as often as necessary. Words can be very hurtful, and we need to be careful of what we say so that we never wrinkle another person's heart. If someone says something mean to you, it's okay to say, "Please don't wrinkle my heart," or to simply say, "Ouch! That wrinkled my heart."

Depending on your class you may not need anything more, or you might need to have some students come up and model how to let someone know that they've wrinkled their hearts.

Glue a copy of the poem onto the heart and hang the Wrinkled Heart up where you can refer to it often. I love how this makes SUCH an impression on them. For the rest of the year, I hear students saying, "\_\_\_ said something that wrinkled my heart" or "Ouch! That wrinkled my heart."

*Before you speak,  
Think and be smart.  
It's hard to fix  
A wrinkled heart!*



See *Social Emotional Learning* supplement



# Kindergarten Kindness Campaign: Looking for the Kindness of Others

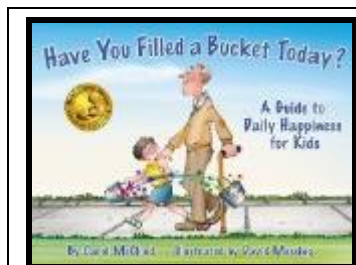
By Katie Nelson



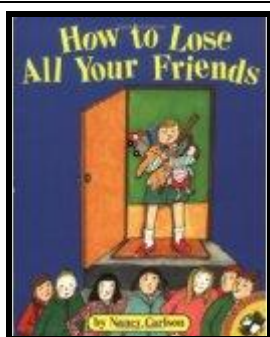
As children become more comfortable with one another, it is at this time the classroom mood of autonomy, sharing, and respect can begin to break down. At this point, we introduce what I refer to as the "Kindergarten Kindness Campaign." While we have been using the phrase "kindergarten kindness" since the beginning of the school year and reading multiple books about friendship and belonging, the "kindness campaign" reinforces this concept, encouraging children to share these positive actions they observe in others, rather than "tattling" on negative behaviors.

**Catching Them Being Kind:** A chart is displayed where stickers are placed next to the children's names as they are "reported on" for being kind (sharing, being helpful, giving a compliment, etc.). This chart is a more extrinsic way to recognize positive behavior, and ultimately we want the reward to be intrinsically motivating.—We are kind to one another because it feels right, not because we want to be recognized by receiving a sticker.

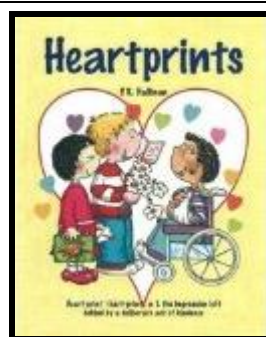
**Engaging Kindness Lessons:** A powerful way to help children visualize how our words and actions could hurt others is to introduce the "Wrinkled Heart" story and lesson (author unknown). The details of this lesson can be found on full-day kindergarten teacher Jacque Verrall's website. Additionally, our school district implements the "Hands Are Not for Hurting Project"<sup>TM</sup> ([handsproject.org](http://handsproject.org)) where the pledge: "I will not use my hands or my words for hurting myself or others" is taught. Usually this is introduced and reinforced school-wide, and both of these lessons help make the concept of being kind more authentic and natural for children.



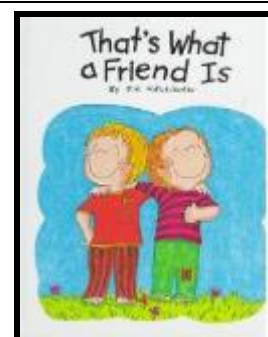
**Have You Filled a Bucket Today? A Guide to Daily Happiness for Kids**  
by Carol McCloud and David Messing



**How to Lose All Your Friends (Picture Puffins)**  
by Nancy Carlson



**Heartprints**  
by P. K. Hallinan



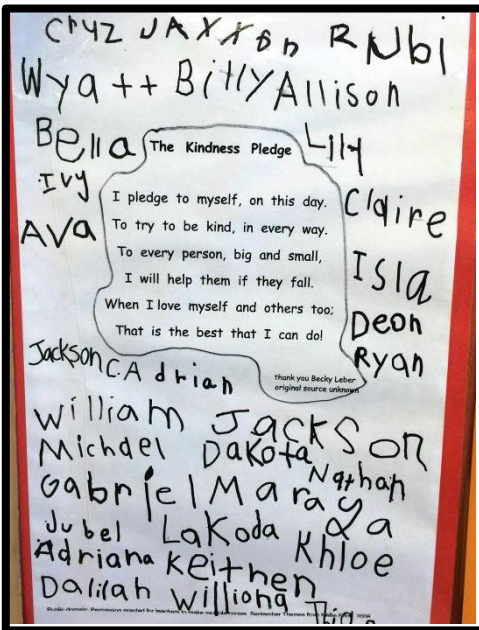
**That's What a Friend Is**  
by P. K. Hallinan and P.K. Hallinan

Literature study throughout the year incorporates themes of friendship, kindness, gratitude, and belonging. Children learn how to be good friends and how to solve problems with words, smiles, and a handshake.



# The Kindness Pledge Is Posted in the "Kindness Corner" in Celeste Starr's Kindergarten:

## Kindergarten Kindness and Writing and Painting Go Together!





# ***Invite Families to Be Partners on Social Emotional Learning: Build Habits of Mind That Will Enrich Children's Lives.***

## **Honoring Martin Luther King Jr. and Noticing Acts of Kindness**

Dear Parents,

We have been reading and learning about Martin Luther King and his contributions to our society. As a black American, Dr. King was eager for his own people to be treated with fairness and kindness. To assist them he followed the example of Gandhi, exhorting his black American friends to peacefully demonstrate for equal rights. Attached is a poem we are learning.

In our kindergarten class, we are seeking ways to solve our little problems peacefully and to show fairness and kindness to our school friends and family. Please help us to encourage these fine traits by noticing your child's acts of peace in the home and recording them on the white link for our classroom chain. Record any act of love and kindness on the red link. We hope, with your efforts and our own, to set these traits as habits that will enrich the life of your child, and through them, to benefit our society.

Warmly,

*Your Child's Teacher*



*The chain honoring Martin Luther King Jr. continues to evolve. This year, green links were added to record acts of "caring for our earth."*

A Joanie Cutler Parent Letter. Used with permission.

From *Parents as Partners in Kindergarten and Early Literacy: Family Connections That Multiply Our Teaching Effectiveness* by Nellie Edge, updated 2023.

[\(Editable Parent Letters available on TPT.\)](#)



**See Social Emotional Learning Supplement**

## Martin Luther King

Let us speak and let us sing  
To honor Martin Luther King.  
The gentle wisdom  
That made him strong,  
With acts of peace—  
We'll carry on.

Nellie Edge

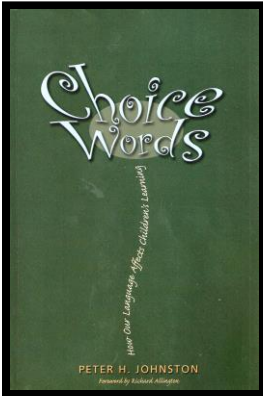


Permission granted for teachers to make multiple copies. Poetry Notebook: January, Nellie Edge, ©2008, updated 2020.





## Excerpts from *Choice Words: How Our Language Affects Children's Learning* by Peter H. Johnston



If we have learned anything from Vygotsky (1978), it is that **"children grow into the intellectual life around them"** (p. 88). That intellectual life is fundamentally social, and language has a special place in it. Because the intellectual life is social, it is also relational and emotional. To me, **the most humbling part of observing accomplished teachers is seeing the subtle ways in which they build emotionally and relationally healthy learning communities—intellectual environments that produce not mere technical competence, but caring, secure, actively literate human beings.** Observing these teachers accomplish both goals convinced me that the two achievements are not completely at odds.

**"I like the way you figured that out,"** attributes the accomplishment entirely to the student. This final step offers the student a retrospective narrative about the event in which she stars as the successful protagonist, a collaborative fantasy that makes it possible for the child to become more than herself.

**"This is not like you. What is the problem you have encountered? Okay, how can you solve it?"**

A teacher naming a child **"class poet,"** inviting her to try on that mantle, can also make it so.

Teachers can position children as competitors or collaborators, and themselves as referees, resources, or judges, or in many other arrangements.

The implications of talking about reading as **"work"** are different from referring to it as **"fun."** Similarly, telling children they can have free choice time, **"but first we have to finish our reading,"** positions reading poorly simply by using the words **"have to."**

**"I see you know how to spell the beginning of that word."** The most important piece is to confirm what has been successful (so it will be repeated) and simultaneously assert the learner's competence so she will have the confidence to consider new learning. Marie Clay (1993) refers to this as attending to the **"partially correct."** Its significance cannot be overstated.

**"Remember the first week when we had to really work at walking quietly? Now you guys do it automatically."** Often teachers draw children's attention to their learning histories.

**"How else..."**

It is wonderful when a child solves a problem. We can then ask her to regale us with the story of how she solved it, building her sense of agency. After having done that is the perfect time to ask how else she might have solved it.

**"What if...?"** Thinking flexibly and metaphorically involves expanding the imagination, and what-if questions insist on an imaginative act.

**"(Silence)"** On the face of it, **remaining silent seems quite trivial, but research shows that extending thinking times is positively related to more student talk, more sustained talk, and more "higher order" thinking...** When a teacher waits for a child to figure something out or self-correct, it conveys the message that she expects the child to be able to accomplish it. Failure to wait conveys the opposite message.

**"You guys say such important things, it amazes me you would talk while others are talking."**

**"What are you thinking? Stop and talk to your neighbor about it."**

**"You managed to figure that out with each other's help. How did you do that?"**

Excerpts from *Choice Words*, by Peter H. Johnston. Stenhouse, 2004.

# Talking to Kindergartners About Their Writing

*"Have grand expectations and honor children where they are." ~N.E.*

- **Wow! How did you learn** how to make those M's so well?
- **Aren't you amazed** at how much you write in kindergarten?
- I can tell **you sure love being a writer**.
- You wrote a whole sentence with spaces between each word. **I bet you're proud of yourself!**
- **And what are you doing as a writer today?**
- May I tell the class about the **brilliant thing you did** in your writing today?
- **Remember the first week of school** when you used lots of capital letters? Now you are using lowercase...
- Oh, you could make a book about that—**just like Eric Carle does!**
- You just instantly knew how to write the word **love** "by heart." **Wow! You are really growing as a writer.**
- You are becoming a prolific writer. **You worked hard to write that story!**
- **You are doing the work of a writer** who is teaching your readers about rockets.
- When you leave spaces between your words like that, it is so easy to read your writing.
- **Now you get to make a sign.** What do you want us to know about your block building?
- Yes, you did it!! You used lowercase letters.
- **Your pictures and words tell a story.** So many details!
- **I see you know how** to spell the beginning of...
- **Good job listening for sounds!** You knew the first letter/sound in that word.
- Wow! You carefully used five colors. That helps make **a quality illustration!**
- **You remembered the capital letter** at the beginning of the sentence and the period at the end of the sentence—good job remembering those important writing details.
- **Wow! How did you figure out how to spell that word?**
- You'll get to make some more really cool books at the writing center today.
- **Aren't you proud** of your writing progress? Writing is both hard work and so much fun.
- What a descriptive new word! You are such a **voracious vocabulary learner!**
- You remembered how to write another set of "heart words." **Good work learning!**
- You worked on that writing piece over several days; **that's called perseverance.** Good writers keep rereading and adding more detail to their stories.

*"When you think you're done, you've just begun!" Lucy Caulkins*

- Look at what this **prolific writer** did today!!



## Talking to Kindergartners about Their Daily Writing, continued...

- Look! You remembered "-ing" from the King of -ing! Let's highlight that with yellow.
- That reminds me of what author and illustrator Eric Carle does...
- I noticed you used many different colors and you added details...
- You get to read and write every day in kindergarten.
- Wow! You sure love writing secret messages.
- I bet you're the kind of boy who will always love to write.
- What have you learned this week as a writer?
- I noticed you used a new punctuation mark in your writing today.
- I bet you will want to keep writing and drawing over the summer. Here's a summer journal!



What "choice words" and phrases do you use to honor your "Kid Writers"?

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
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- 

To build emotional resilience, research says, "Praise children's efforts, perseverance, and willingness to try new things—not how smart they are." Specific encouragement is much more helpful than generic praise...

Read *Choice Words: How Our Language Affects Children's Learning* by Peter Johnston, Stenhouse, 2004.

Read *Opening Minds: Using Language to Change Lives* by Peter Johnston, Stenhouse, 2012.

Read everything posted by Jacque Verall (NBCT) on the Mentor Kindergarten Chat Board. She has powerful insights into positive discipline and building intrinsic motivation for learning.

### Why is daily authentic writing so important?

- \* Unexpectedly high-achieving schools do two to six times as much authentic reading and writing. The results speak for themselves.
- \* Writing is the place where phonemic awareness is authentically practiced and learned.

From *KKndergarten Writing and the Common Core: Joyful Pathways to Narrative, Opinion, and Information Writing* by Nellie Edge ©2014, updated 2017.

# Do You Want to Have a Happy Classroom?

## Develop an Attitude of Gratitude and Kindness

Provide opportunities for children to practice saying, fingerspelling, signing, and writing "thank you!": It's like giving a gift with eyes and heart smiling.

### Teach the "T-h-a-n-k: I Can Spell Thank You"\* song early in year

Be generous and sincere when thanking students:

**Thank you for...**

- *Helping pick up the blocks.*
- *Speaking softly.*
- *Lining up right away.*
- *Remembering to bring your Poetry Notebook back.*
- *Practicing your "heart words" so diligently.*
- *Doing such a good job cleaning off the play dough table.*
- *Being the Helper of the Day.*
- *Coming to school on time today.*
- *Holding the door open. That's showing kindergarten kindness!*
- *Listening so quietly. Everyone was able to hear the story.*
- *Practicing so hard: You learned to write "I love you!"*
- *Helping us clean up so quickly. Wow! That's showing kindergarten responsibility.*



### Examples of helpful language for social-emotional growth:

*Josh! Thank you for pushing all the chairs in. No one even had to ask you! You sure know how to take care of our classroom.*

*Thank you for helping Jacob put the blocks away. Good friends help each other—that's kindergarten kindness!*

*I bet many of you will remember to thank Marisa for holding the door open.*

*The positive songs we sing and words we speak and hear influence happy chemicals in the brain!*



\*"T-h-a-n-k: Thank You" song is in ***Social Emotional Learning*** supplement



## Sign Language Teaches Students to Communicate Feelings and Concepts: *Sing and Sign Using American Sign Language Cue Cards*



### Question Word Song

**Who?** (¿quién?)

**What?** (¿qué?)

**Where?** (¿dónde?)

**When?** (¿cuándo?)

**Why?** (¿por qué?)

and

**How?** (¿cómo?)



These are the predictable questions that we want children to carry in their mind whenever they write or read. Using writing cue cards, we sing and sign these questions until children have internalized them (use the 🎵 *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star* melody). You can mount, laminate, and bind these together on a ring and keep several sets at the writing centers. We encourage you to add the key question word in Spanish. For teachers like us who are learning ASL and Spanish, these cards provide helpful practice. By repeatedly singing and signing the key question words in English, Spanish and ASL **you are giving your children the gift of many languages while also building a foundation for joyful pathways to Common Core reading and writing proficiency.**

**Common Core Standards require that children learn to ask and answer questions:**



**RL.K.1.** With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

**L.K.6.** Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts.




**SL.K.2.** Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood.

**SL.K.3.** Ask and answer questions in order to seek help, get information, or clarify something that is not understood.

**"Question Word Song"** by Nellie Edge, ©2020.

ASL cue cards are included in ***Social Emotional Learning*** printables.

## Teach Writing Cues in English, Spanish and ASL






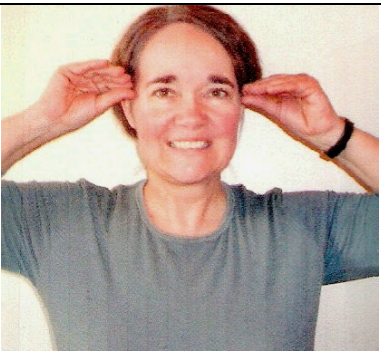


		
<p><b>Who / Quién</b> Make a circle in front of the lips with the dominant index finger.</p>	<p><b>What / Qué</b> Pass the tip of the dominant index finger down over the non-dominant flat hand from index to little finger.</p>	<p><b>Where / Dónde</b> Hold the dominant index finger up with palm facing forward and shake it rapidly back and forth from left to right.</p>
		
<p><b>When / Cuándo</b> Hold the non-dominant index finger upright with the palm facing right. Make a clockwise circle around the non-dominant index finger with the dominant index finger.</p>	<p><b>Why / Por Qué</b> Touch the forehead with the fingers of the dominant hand; then move forward while simultaneously forming the Y hand with the palm facing in.</p>	<p><b>How / Cómo</b> Point the fingers of both bent hands down with hands back to back. Revolve the hands in and upward until the palms are flat and facing up.</p>

Signed by Kimbria Ulshafer.

Adapted from a great resource, *Come Sign With Us: Sign Language Activities for Children*, by Jan C. Hafer and Robert M. Wilson.



 <p><b>Yes (si)</b> The "S" handshape shakes up and down. The "S" handshape represents the head nodding.</p>		
		
<p><b>No</b> The pointer finger and middle finger shape close on the thumb. This is similar to the fingerspelling of n-o.</p>	<p><b>Please (por favor)</b> The open hand circles over the heart to indicate pleasure.</p>	<p><b>Thank you (gracias)</b> The hand moves out and down. This sign is similar to the gesture of kissing one's hand and extending the hand towards someone else in order to show one's gratitude.</p>
		
<p><b>Walk (camina)</b> Hold both flat hands in front with palms down; then imitate walking by moving each hand forward alternately.</p>	<p><b>Don't (no corra)</b> The hands are crossed and then move outward forcefully as if indicating that something should stop.</p>	<p><b>Run (correr)</b> Point both "L" hands forward and hook the right index finger of the dominant hand around the left thumb. Wiggle the thumbs and index fingers as both hands move forward quickly.</p>
		
<p><b>Stop (para)</b> The edge of one hand comes down on the palm to represent something coming to a quick stop. <b>And think:</b> Index finger touches forehead.</p>	<p><b>Toilet / Restroom (baño)</b> The "T" handshape is shook. If that sign is offensive in your community use an "R" handshape.</p>	<p><b>Quiet (silencio) - 2-part sign</b> Touch the lips with the right index finger and move both flat hands down and to the sides with palm facing down in a gesture telling others to be silent (quiet).</p>

 <p>(Exact Signed English)</p>		
<p><b>Applause (aplauzo)</b> Hands moving excitedly to the side of the forehead is the quietest sign for applause.</p>	<p><b>Careful (con cuidado)</b> Make the sign for "KEEP" ("K" hands) and strike together two times at the wrist.</p>	<p><b>Focus (pay attention) (atención)</b> Two "B" hands at each side of the forehead move forward together.</p>
		
<p><b>Stand (up) (ponte de pie)</b> The "V" handshape represents a person. The location of the "V" handshape shows someone standing on a surface.</p>	<p><b>Sit (down) (sentarse)</b> The upper "U" handshape represents the legs of a person while the other "U" handshape represents a chair. The motion shows a person sitting down. <b>Sit right.</b> Point both index fingers forward. Bring right hand down onto left thumb.</p>	<p><b>Children (niños)</b> With palms facing down, one hand "pats" the head of more than one child.</p>
		
<p><b>Teacher (professor)(2-part sign)</b> The flattened "O" hands move out from the forehead to show that a person is taking what she knows and is passing it on to others. Closed "5" hands move down the sides of the body for "person."</p>	<p><b>Work (trabajar)</b> With the palms facing down, tap the wrist of the right "S" hand on the wrist of the left "S" hand in a hammering motion. <b>Good:</b> The hand moves forth from the mouth to the palm of the other hand.</p>	<p><b>Line up (línea por favor)</b> The "4" hands are often used to represent a line of people. The two "4" hands are pulled apart and fingers spread to show a line of people.</p>



# Research Supports Teaching All Children to Fingerspell and Sign Songs

## *Summary of Benefits:*

- **Engages the child's multiple intelligences** in representing language symbolically.
- Develops phonemic awareness, **the alphabetic principal**, vocabulary, and spelling skills.
- Facilitates a comfort in **understanding and expressing feelings**.
- Fingerspelling **develops the small muscles** necessary for writing.
- Develops **all communication skills**, which provide the window to basic literacy and academic excellence across disciplines.

*"It should be remembered that we speak more than we write. Throughout our lives we judge others, and we ourselves are judged, by what we say and how we speak."*

- Ernest Boyer

- Encourages the child to **share school experiences at home**.
- **Builds community** through shared language experiences.
- Provides a **constructive physical outlet for the kinesthetic learner**.
- Combines "**saying and doing**," which **increases retention of language and concepts by 90%**.
- Provides a **natural bridge for limited English speaking children** in developing a second language.
- Engages the high-risk learners in building confidence and **enthusiasm for learning**.
- **Encourages the whole child to focus attention on learning**.
- Provides an introduction to the **beautiful visual gestural language of ASL**.
- **Accelerates learning in the child's first and second language**, bridging the achievement gap.
- Personalizes language and concepts through "**total emotional body response**."
- Can lead to **memorable performances** for parents.
- **Builds comprehension** by creating **internal images of language**.
- Is **supported by brain research** and language acquisition theory.
- Singing and signing fluently with expression, gesture, and confidence **builds children's speaking skills**.
- **Supports inclusion programs**.
- **Teaches life skills. ASL is the third most common language in the United States.**

*"Our job is not to help kids do well in school. It's to help them do well in life."*

- Elliot Eisner, Speech to the National Staff Development Council, December 1991

- Reading the 3-dimensional language of sign **develops visual skills for reading** printed language.
- **Provides Talented and Gifted (TAG) students a challenge - one that parents love!**

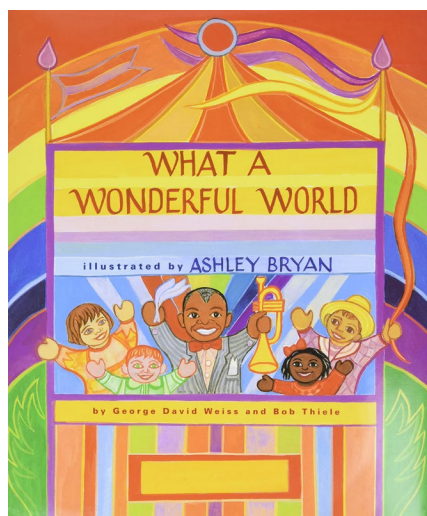
## Think of the Contribution African-Americans Have Made to American Music and the Literary Arts:

### Louis Armstrong

Louis Armstrong was born in one of the poorest sections of New Orleans on August 4, 1901. "He was a prodigy," says art historian and curator Marc Miller, "a hard-working kid who helped support his mother and sister by working every type of job there was, including going out on street corners at night to sing for coins." At age 7, he bought his first real horn—a cornet. From then on, he largely supported himself as a musician, playing with pick-up bands in small clubs with his mentor Joe "King" Oliver. They were creating a distinctive and widely popular new band music out of blues and ragtime. Soon, the term "jazz" would become a household name.



It has been said that Armstrong used his horn like a singer's voice and used his voice like a musical instrument. Many jazz musicians and historians say that Armstrong was the greatest of all jazz musicians, that he defined what it was to play jazz. His amazing technical abilities, the joy and spontaneity, and amazingly quick, inventive musical mind still dominate jazz to this day. By the 1950's, Armstrong was an established international celebrity - an icon to musicians and lovers of jazz - and a genial, infectious optimistic presence wherever he appeared. In 1963, his hit version of *Hello Dolly* even knocked the Beatles off the top of the charts. Armstrong summarized his philosophy in the spoken introduction to his 1970 recording *What a Wonderful World*. "And all I'm saying is, see what a wonderful world it would be if only we would give it a chance. Love, baby, love. That's the secret. Yeah." Said Dizzy Gillespie in 1971, "Louis Armstrong's station in the history of jazz is unimpeachable. If it weren't for him, there wouldn't be any of us." Louis Armstrong died in 1971.



### Teach Students to Sing, Sign, and Perform *What a Wonderful World* by Louis Armstrong

I see trees of green,  
Red roses too,  
I see them bloom for me and you,  
And I think to myself,  
"What a wonderful world!"

By George David Weiss and Bob Thiele, with inspiration from Louis Armstrong, © 1967 Range Road Music, Inc. See the book *What a Wonderful World* (same authors), illustrated by Ashley Bryan, Atheneum Books for Young Readers, © 1995.

See the following websites for photos and additional information on Louis Armstrong:  
[www.npg.si.edu/exh/armstrong](http://www.npg.si.edu/exh/armstrong) and [www.redhotjazz.com/louie.html](http://www.redhotjazz.com/louie.html)

From *The Magic of Signing Songs Volume II* manual, ASL guide, and DVD by Nellie Edge and Diane Larsen.



# We Create a "Wonderful World" by Bringing Children's Lives into the Classroom

Parents love to see the lives of the children adorning the walls of our classrooms - enticing photographs and children's drawings in pleasing displays. **Children and teachers deserve beautiful classrooms full of wonderful books, blocks, art materials, dramatic play props, and natural objects—plants, fall leaves and seashells.** The ideal kindergarten is a homelike atmosphere with **cozy, inviting corners to read in, pillows, couches, and a rocking chair.** Children and teachers work together to create and keep the environment attractive, functional and organized. It is easier for children to develop a sense of personal organization when everything in the kindergarten has a place and everything eventually gets put back in its place. Kindergarten children thrive because we create an environment that looks and feels like a "child's garden." - Nellie Edge

*Jennifer Foster, kindergarten and mentor teacher from Salem, Oregon, reflects on how she invites the children to help her shape the classroom environment :*

**"Kindergarten is a 'child's garden,' it's not *my* garden.** The children need to grow the garden and create the environment. I never know what it will look like. It's like planting wildflower seeds. **The children are actually doing the work and creating the garden.** The joy and pride and success of what blossoms is theirs."

*Shelley Harwayne reflects on beautiful school settings, from her book Lifetime Guarantees:*

**"My colleagues are detail people, and it shows.** They fret over furniture, fabric, folders, and flowers. **They request that their rugs be shampooed and their windows washed.** They back their bulletin boards with fadeless black paper, place interesting centerpieces in the middle of their tables, **and are not afraid to bring their life passions into the classroom.** They love the look and feel of books, and pay careful attention to the arrangement of texts in their classroom libraries. **It's a lot easier to do beautiful work when you have a beautiful setting."**

*Joanie Cutler, gifted kindergarten teacher and author from Eugene, Oregon reflects:*

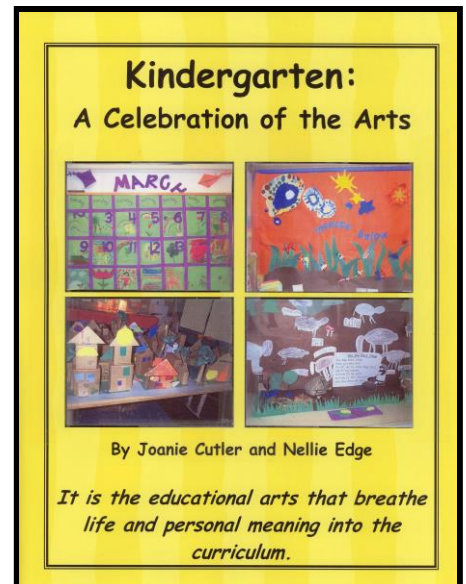
**"I think meticulously about what must be presented in the school curriculum - then I look at literature and the arts. I want to give a child a fuller picture of why we are reading and writing.** Through experiences in nature and the arts I am quietly expanding their lives... **For the teacher, it (the arts) is a direction and a passion to make learning beautiful for the children..."**

*(Parents describe Joanie as "a cross between Mary Poppins and Mother Theresa.")*

Shelley Harwayne. *Lifetime Guarantees.* Heinemann, 2000.

Jennifer Foster, Jeff James and Nellie Edge. *All Kindergarten Children Love to Write* revised. 2005.

Joanie Cutler and Nellie Edge. *Kindergarten: A Celebration of the Arts.* 2005.



# Create a "Wonderful World" in the Classroom:

## Connie Cazort Talks About the Emotional Climate

***"It is the child who is most important in my kindergarten planning and the emotional climate I create..." Connie Cazort***

**When I look at a room, I think...**

*"Is this an emotionally safe and aesthetically inviting place for children to be?"*

**The Emotional Climate (Includes attitudes about self and about learning)**

*"Is this environment safe enough for children to reach out and learn?"*

**I think about the feeling of the room, does it have:**

- Proper temperature
- Warm colors
- Good smells
- Adequate lighting
- Good air
- A view of nature

**I consciously give children:**

- The language of respect
- Nurturing
- My optimistic expectations for them

*"I can tell you're a person who knows how to make friends."*

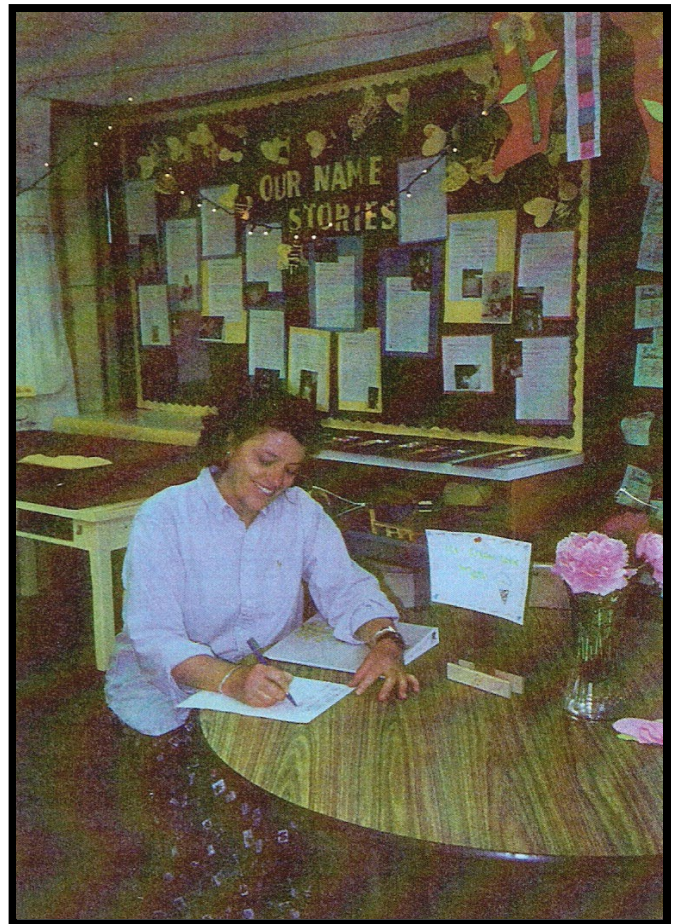
*"I can tell that you're a person who knows how to make people feel good."*

**I look at the big picture, beyond even literacy development:**

- Is this a joyful place?
- What life skills can I give my children?
- What attitudes can I impart about self and learning?
- How does my language respect and nurture?

**I involve parents as "Partners" in providing meaningful literacy experiences:**

The "Our Name Stories" bulletin board (shown behind Connie in picture) displays one of our family literacy projects. Each parent writes about their child's name.



Connie Cazort, seated in her Kindergarten Classroom  
Notice the twinkling lights (which are on year-round) and the inviting displays on the tables.



**How do you create a beautiful environment for learning?**



# **We Build Character and Emotional Intelligence Through the Community We Create: Choose Words Wisely!**

*You stayed with the job for a long time even when it was hard. That's called perseverance!*

*You worked hard! I bet you're proud of yourself...*

*Remember the beginning of the year—when you used all capital letters in your writing? Now look at how you use lower-case letters. You worked diligently learning to write those letters. You've really grown as a writer!*

*You wanted to shout out your answer when Joshua was talking, but you waited and didn't interrupt. That's called self-discipline!*

*You came right on time today. Thanks for being punctual!*

*Wow! You pushed in all those chairs because you saw it needed to be done. You sure know how to take care of our classroom!*

*I can see you're the kind of boy who knows how to be a good friend.*

*You worked together with Joshua to build that castle. That's cooperation!*

*Thank you for holding the door open for us. That is helpful behavior for all of your kindergarten friends.*

*Kindergarten friends: how can we help Marissa...?*

*If you need help tying your shoe, you can ask one of our kindergarten shoe tying experts!*

*The more you practice—the better you get!*

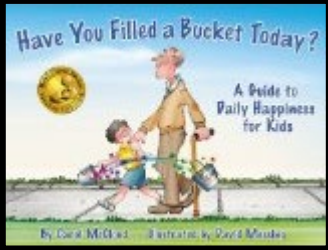
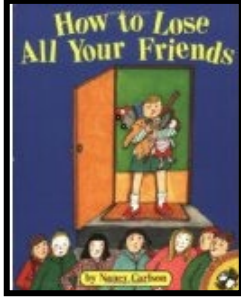
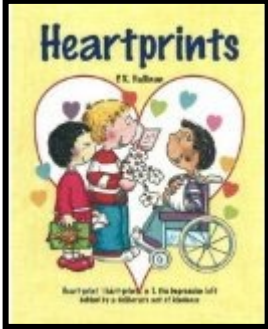
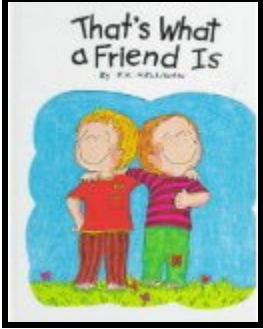

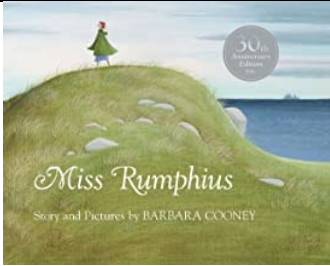
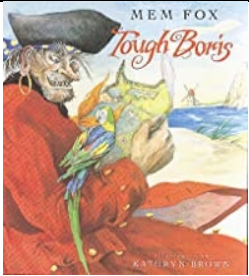
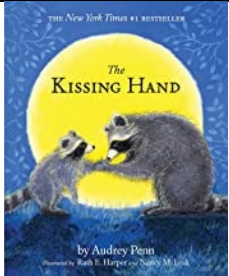
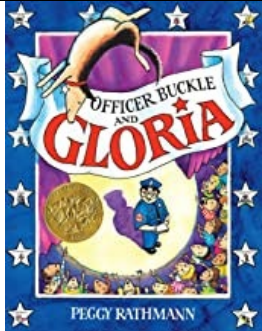
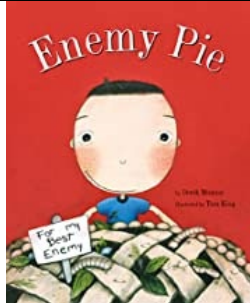
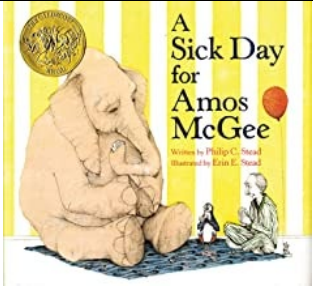
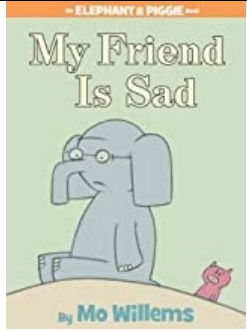
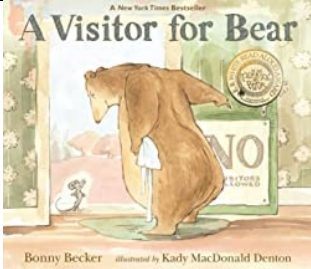

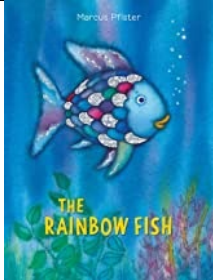

No matter who wins or loses, teach students to **automatically** smile, give each other a high five, and say **with gusto**, "**Good job!** Let's play it again!"



*How do you use validating statements, encouragement, and positive discipline when talking to children? How do your words nurture Emotional Intelligence?*

## Books on Kindness, Gratitude, and Friendship

Incorporate themes of friendship, kindness, gratitude, and belonging in your literature study throughout the year. Young children can learn how to be good friends and how to solve problems with words, hugs, and a handshake. Yes, teaching social-emotional skills will take time and requires intentional focus throughout the day, but the benefits will last a lifetime!

 <p><b>Have You Filled a Bucket Today? A Guide to Daily Happiness for Kids</b> by Carol McCloud and David Messing</p>	 <p><b>How to Lose All Your Friends (Picture Puffins)</b> by Nancy Carlson</p>	 <p><b>Heartprints</b> by P. K. Hallinan</p>	 <p><b>That's What a Friend Is</b> by P.K. Hallinan</p>
 <p><b>Thank You, Omul!</b> by Oge Mora</p>	 <p><b>Miss Rumphius</b> by Barbara Cooney</p>	 <p><b>Tough Boris</b> by Mem Fox</p>	 <p><b>The Kissing Hand</b> by Audrey Penn</p>
 <p><b>Officer Buckle and Gloria</b> by Peggy Rathman</p>	 <p><b>Enemy Pie: Reading Rainbow Book about Kindness</b> By Derek Munson</p>	 <p><b>A Sick Day for Amos McGee</b> by Philip C. Stead</p>	 <p><b>My Friend Is Sad</b> by Mo Willems</p>
 <p><b>A Visitor for Bear</b> by Bonny Becker</p>	 <p><b>Beautiful Hands</b> by Bret Baumgarten and Kathryn Otoshi</p>	 <p><b>The Rainbow Fish</b> by Marcus Pfister</p>	 <p><b>Little Blue and Little Yellow</b> by Leo Lionni</p>



### **Chapter 3**

*Nurturing SEL Through Positive Discipline, Choice Words, ASL, and  
Carefully Chosen Songs and Rhymes*

### **NOTES**

## Chapter 4

# The Heart of Kindergarten: Memorable Rituals, Traditions, and Celebrations



Kindergartners in Eugene, Oregon don their hand-painted wings and fly away from kindergarten on the last day of school—into the arms of their parents.

These "Kinder Stars" in Salem, Oregon are signing *The Pledge of Allegiance* sung by Lee Greenwood on his CD *American Patriot*, for their families.



*"Children deserve to memorize, recite, and perform language."*



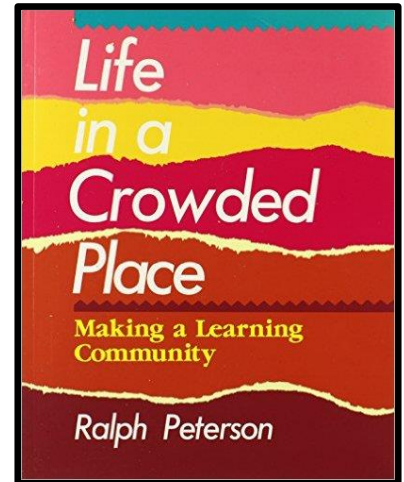
# Excerpts from Ralph Peterson's

## *Life in a Crowded Place: Making a Learning Community*

### Ceremony

*But ceremony becomes very important when students are expected to construct meaning on their own and with others. Assuming responsibility for their own learning and not merely acting out someone else's plan calls upon students to focus their attention.*

*Where study is concerned, ceremony brings about an internal readiness, pushing aside that which might interfere and helping students to participate wholeheartedly by concentrating thought and feeling on the work at hand.*



### Opening the Day

*Ceremony creates an intellectual and emotional order for the schooling activity so that the group is focused upon learning and community life.*

*Properly executed, an opening ceremony will get the group off to a good beginning. Flag salutes and patriotic songs are often incorporated into ceremonies. Too, there are teachers who open with a song and a class meeting to share thoughts and outline a plan for the day.*

*Knowing about the other person is the seed that can blossom into authentic caring. In turn, caring strengthens the pulse of community life. The strength of all social relationships and communities arises out of caring. Caring for another person, in the most significant sense, is to help him or her grow and self-actualize.*

### During the Day

*Once into the school day, teachers use ceremony to create order in much the same way that chapters bring order to the content of a rich and varied narrative. Ceremony can clear the air of ideas, emotion, and work patterns before taking up a new activity. When ceremony is not used, there is a sense of jumping from one activity to the next without a sense of purpose. Good ceremony provides time and a suitable climate for students to come to grips with the forthcoming activity.*

### Ending the Day

*When the day has run its course, ceremony can be used to pull elements together, make them whole. Not all teachers close the day with ceremony. In some classrooms, activity collapses when the bell rings. Students shove books and papers into their desks, grab their coats, and line up while the teacher makes announcement.*

*When teachers use a touch of ceremony to make the day complete, the working rhythms of the day are slowed; loose ends are tied. Students are brought together to end on a harmonious note. Some teachers bring students together and ask them to share something important that has happened during the day. Other teachers recount the day's events with their students, noting achievements, pointing toward tomorrow. Singing together, having the class historian report the day's events, or gathering in groups to converse before leaving are other ways. I heard about a junior high school community that closed its day with a ritual dance movement. Regardless of how ceremony is incorporated, the intent is to establish a feeling of completeness before the students return to the everyday world beyond the classroom walls.*

*Ceremony aids teachers in bringing shape and life to the learning community. It forms attitudes and creates a feeling of group purpose. It can fire emotions, affect a contemplative mood, and foster or bring about a powerful tool to help us center the group and turn attention to the events that are to follow.*

## **Ritual**

***Ritual can express feelings, experience, and dispositions when other forms of expression fail us. That is why we behave in certain ways at funerals, gather in specific ways during holidays, and participate in reunions. Through ritual, we express value, being, and commitment.***

***Ritual appeals to the imagination and the heart. And it is exacting—the "right" way of conducting a ritual has to be learned.***

*(Take note of how, when you are in an unfamiliar situation, you observe others very closely to see the way things are done.) If you doubt that rituals need to be conducted in certain ways, talk to teachers who give ritual treatment of the calendar as part of the opening ceremony. Substitute teachers seldom do it right, and when the "real" teacher returns, students are sure to tell about the sorry way the substitute conducted the opening ceremony.*

**Excerpts printed with permission from Ralph Peterson.**

*Life in a Crowded Place: Making a Learning Community.*  
Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann Educational Books, 1992.



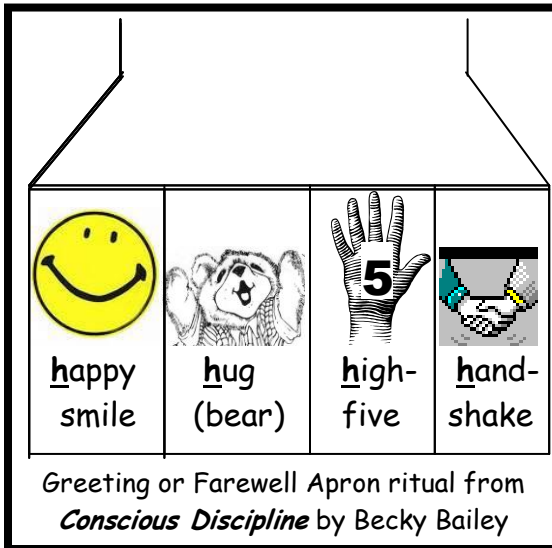
**Julia Barto teaches children to greet each other with a handshake, smile, and "Good morning!"**



**What is your favorite class ritual? Why?**



# How the Day Begins: Bonding, Positive Expectations, Orderliness, Ceremony, and Delight



The moment children step over the threshold into your classroom, they enter a unique environment where **there are specific and orderly ways to do things and where their lives are honored and celebrated.**

- Teachers have a special way to greet children at the door with a hug, high-five, or handshake. (Choose an "h.") They create a time for meaningful bonding with each child so children anticipate coming to school. A greeting/farewell apron lets children choose their form of acknowledgment from the teacher.
- There is a place and a right way to hang up coats

and children quickly learn the morning routine of where to go and what to do. They internalize their teacher's high expectations through consistent positive management and conscious discipline.

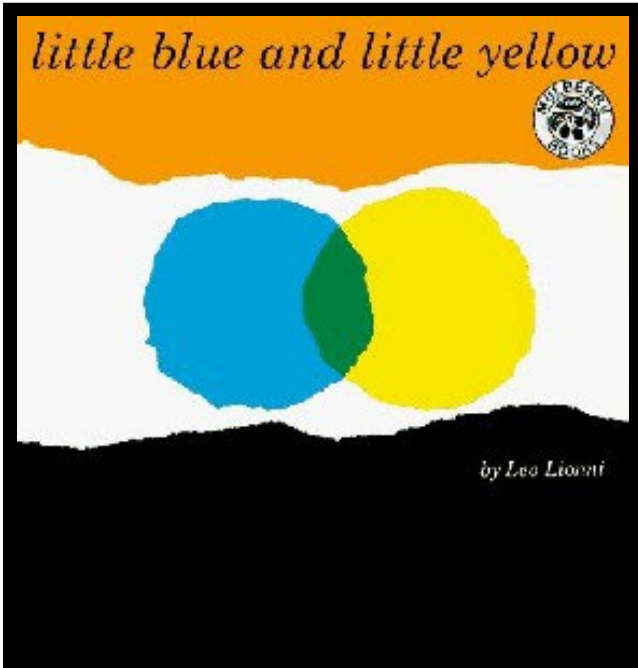
- Some teachers prefer a soft "settling in time" where children write their "name ticket", complete morning work jobs, and then choose their learning center activity while browsing the room and quietly chatting with each other as teacher has the opportunity to personally connect with each child and perhaps also some parents.
- Often a certain signal (a bell chiming or a song) calls children to gather on the floor. They sing name songs and games that joyfully acknowledge each child and build togetherness and friendship.
- Teachers choose songs with affirming messages like ♪ *The More We Get Together the Happier We'll Be* or *Magic Penny...* ♪ *Love is something if you give it away...*
- Calendar activities and an overview of the day may follow group songs, dances, and acknowledgments.
- Teachers affirm positive messages:  
*You'll be amazed at how quickly we'll learn the whole ABC Phonics song...*  
*You are so good at helping each other: that's what friends do...*  
*This is going to be another happy day!*  
*Okay prolific writers and illustrators:*  
*Today we get to start our science notebooks!*



Joanie Cutler invites the children to wake up rabbit so he can help them read the calendar; this is a daily part of their calendar ritual.

## Begin the Year with This Engaging Literature and Science Adventure

### Little Blue and Little Yellow: Happily They Hugged Each Other...



As an introduction to the story of little blue and little yellow, children discussed their favorite colors and what they like to do with their friends. Mrs. Nelson let the children know, "This is my favorite book about color!"

Later in the playdough center, as a follow-up to the book, children got to take one small yellow playdough ball and one small blue ball and discover what happens: "they hugged each other and hugged each other until they were green..." The children were totally engaged and amazed.

Here is some of the children's language:

- "Just keep them hugging..."
- "That's totally green!"
- "This is science."
- "Cool!"

Experiential learning is alive every day in Katie Nelson's rich kindergarten program. Students love coming to school because kindergarten is meaningful and sparks curiosity, collaboration and joy!



# Celebrate Language and Create Birthday Traditions

## *Social Emotional Learning Happens Every Day Across the Curriculum*

### **Playful Phonemic Awareness with Happy Birthday:**

- Play with the birthday greeting by emphasizing the beginning sound of each word H-H-H-H-Happy B-B-B-Birthday t-t-t-to y-y-y-you. Phonemic Awareness is language play!

### **Respectful Consideration for the Child Who Does Not Celebrate Birthdays**

Before school starts, ask parents if there are any holidays they do not want their child celebrating. Explain to parents that you use a child's birthday to encourage reading, writing, learning about growth, the cycles of nature, and to build Social Emotional Learning. It is the way we show caring and kindness to classmates. Some years it may be more appropriate to celebrate a "child of the week" as a means for students to show appreciation and get to know their classmates and families better.

Can parents help their child choose to create a unique and special day rather than celebrate their birthday? Ideas: "Baby lambs day", or "Falling Leaves day" (Read *I'm In Charge of Celebrations* by Byrd Baylor). Can the class have a "Getting to know Jeremy day?" or a "Things Jeremy loves day?" What do the parents suggest?

### **About the Happy Birthday Song**

The traditional "Happy Birthday" song by Patty S. Hill is copyrighted. We do not have permission to include it here. As a teacher, you may legally make a chart of the words for your classroom. We use the Hawaiian version written and given to us by our friend Uncle Sam Molale.

### **Kathie Bridges' Birthday Ritual**

The birthday child chooses their favorite rhythmic version of the traditional birthday song for the class to sing:

- One with a "cha-cha-cha" after each phrase (This is usually the favorite!)
- Sing and sign the song in slow motion
- Sing rapidly in a silly voice

### **Hawaiian Birthday Love Song**

Happy birthday to you - we love you.  
Happy birthday to you - we love you.  
Happy birthday to you - we love you.  
Oh, Elissa - Happy birthday - we love you.

*Translated from Hawaiian, by Sam Molale*



## Multicultural Extensions

Learn the Spanish birthday love song, *Las Mañanitas* or *De Colores*, both *Nellie Edge Read and Sing Big Books™*.

The class can sing along with the music from Héctor Pichardo's CD: *In Celebration of Spanish Folk Songs*.



## Auditory Spelling

Sing "I am very, very happy: H-a-p-p-y." Sing, Sign, Spell and Read! by Gina Edge. Children sing this with gusto to the tune of "I've Been Working on the Railroad."

## Keep Birthday Rituals or "Child of the Week" Traditions Consistent All Year Long

Establish your birthday or child of the week rituals the first of the year and keep them consistent so children can anticipate the experience. Think about what the child can **give to others** on their special day. They can share a favorite poem or song or donate a book to the class library. If they donate a book, place a photo of the child inside the book with an inscription, Donated by \_\_\_\_\_, and the date.

## The Parents as Partners Connection

Invite parents to bring in pictures of their child from babyhood to the current time and to share some special family stories. These pictures can be attached to a chart of the celebration song or temporarily taped in your Happy Birthday class-book. Consider sending home a form for the parents to complete:

Joshua was born in \_\_\_\_\_ (city & state)

When Joshua was one year old he \_\_\_\_\_...

When Joshua was two years old he \_\_\_\_\_...

### The Earth Revolves Around the Sun (♫ Tune: The Ants Go Marching ♪)

The earth revolves around the sun  
one time, each year.

The earth revolves around the sun  
one time, each year.

The earth revolves around the sun  
one time, each year,  
since before I was one...

And now I'm 6 years old, today!

Nellie Edge

## Nellie Edge Birthday "Earth Science" Ritual

The birthday child holds an inflatable globe while marching around another child holding a flashlight under a yellow scarf as a model of the sun. The birthday child goes one time around the sun for each year of age while the class sings "The Earth Revolves Around the Sun."

## Send Home a Birthday Book Bag

Here are some favorite birthday books:

- *A Birthday for Frances*, Russell Hoban
- *Happy Birthday Moon*, Frank Asch
- *On the Day You Were Born*, Debra Frasier
- *I'm in Charge of Celebrations*, Byrd Baylor
- *Guess How Much I Love You*, Sam McBratney
- *Happy Birth Day!* Robie Harris



# Kindergarten Friends Challenge: "I Can Say Every Name!"



*The Friendly Fox puppet helps children take the Kindergarten Friends Challenge.*

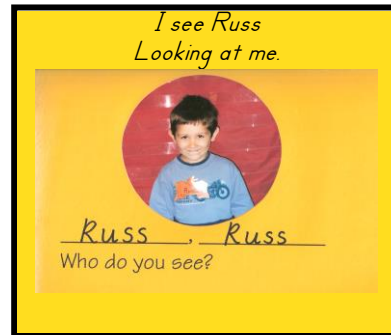
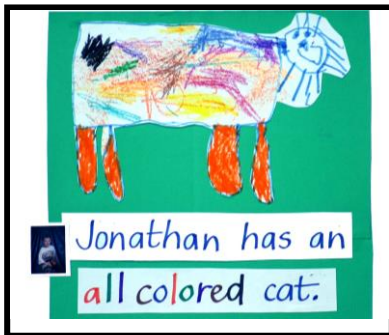


*A Name/Picture Pocket Chart invites children to practice quick recall of names.*

Encouraging children to quickly recall the names of every student in the classroom helps build a friendly classroom environment where every child feels a sense of belonging. It also develops social intelligence and communications skills. You will find that many of your more socially mature students automatically learn names, easily establish eye contact, smile and confidently say, "Good morning, Marissa." These children may become "name experts." Other children will benefit from additional practice.

## How to encourage the less socially confident child?

- Read and reread class-made books featuring the names and lives of your students.



- Send home a Parents as Partners letter with school photos and names attached: encourage parents to review the names with their child nightly.
- Let the child practice one-on-one with a "name expert," using the Name/Picture Chart.

Celeste Starr playfully introduced this activity with her Forgetful Friendly Fox puppet who wanted to learn all of the children's names. First she modeled going around in a circle and quickly naming each child. Then children were invited to help the fox learn the names of each of their classmates. Her students were so confident, the activity moved to another level - saying, "Hi Joshua" or, "Good morning, David." Children were praised for looking at the speaker and smiling. When the child who was least well known to his classmates took a turn, we suggested that each child respond to his greeting with, "Hi, Nathan" to help bring him closer into the circle of friends. Celeste encouraged children to fingerspell the first letter of their name if the person greeting them needed help remembering it.

**With practice, children may enjoy taking "The Kindergarten Friends Challenge" and officially become a "kindergarten name expert."**

*A special thank you to Dan Gurney for the original idea from the CKA newsletter(fall 2006) which we have adapted.*

# Every Learning Community Needs a Soft, Cuddly Mascot

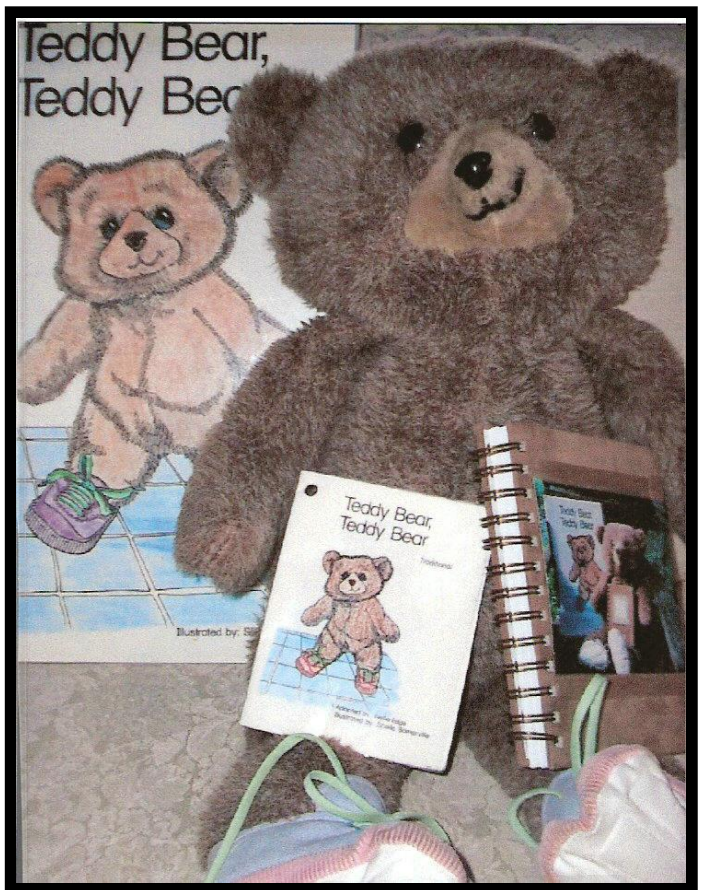
## Meet Teddy Bear: named after Teddy Roosevelt

Building a joyful, supportive community of learners is at the heart of our teaching curriculum. We want children to feel valued, included and eager to come to school. We are conscious of creating a unique community within our classroom with specific ways of doing things that tickle the imagination and touch the heart. Our efforts in creating memorable learning rituals, traditions and celebrations enhance our children's desire to learn. It provides structure and intrinsic motivation for rigorous and joyful learning. We are responsible for the memories of childhood and we're in charge of celebrations!

Schools, sports teams and classrooms need a special mascot to rally around.

My soft, cuddly Teddy Bear with his purple tennis shoes is an example of a favorite class mascot. Teddy Bear, named after Teddy Roosevelt, becomes a special imaginary friend to every child in the class. He especially loves to have children read the *Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear* Big Book to him. He often sits in the book area, on the lap of a kindergarten child. At night he goes home in a Teddy Bear tote bag with his *Teddy Bear Journal* and *The Legend of Teddy Bear* book. Families write about their adventures with Teddy Bear. Some families even send him back with a new hat or a hand-knit vest.

Diane Larson's kindergarten mascot is Casey Bear. He has his own knapsack. Diane takes pictures of each child and the bear and recommends keeping a list of the children's names and checking them off as each child has a turn to take the mascot home.



**Other favorite literary class mascots include:** Floppy Rabbit, Curious George the Monkey, Horton the Elephant, Hedgie Hedgehog, Busy Bees, Geoffrey Giraffe, Rex the Reptile (with non-fiction books about reptiles) and Piglet from *Winnie the Pooh*.



# Establish the Home-to-School Book Buddy Ritual

Send home your class mascot and invite families to write about their adventures in an accompanying journal

Dear Friend,

Hello! My name is Teddy Bear. I am the mascot from "**The Singing and Signing Kindergarten**" with teacher Nellie Edge. I get to spend the week with your family and share your home adventures. I even get to sleep overnight! And Friday morning I'll go back to school with you. There are other friends waiting to take me home so please return me to school on time!

I will tell you a little bit about myself. I am a brown bear and I am named after Teddy Roosevelt. He was a United States president who loved children, nature and animals. Once he saved a bear. Your family can read that story in the enclosed book, ***The Legend of the Teddy Bear***, written by Frank Murphy. Teddy Roosevelt loved to play hide and seek and to read with his six children when he was president and lived in the White House.

I brought my favorite book, ***Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear***, for you to read to your family. And I also brought my very own Teddy Bear Journal for you and an adult to write about my adventures with your family. You may use one or two pages. It's fine to draw a picture or even include a photo of us together.

I know you will take good care of me during my visit with your family. Share me and my books and journal with any little brothers or sisters, but please keep me out of their mouths. I have visited a lot of friends and I might have germs! Make sure I put my shoes back on and remember to gather all three books and return them with me to school tomorrow in my Teddy Bear Tote Bag.

Thank you for letting me visit your family. I love having good kindergarten friends.

Love,

Teddy Bear

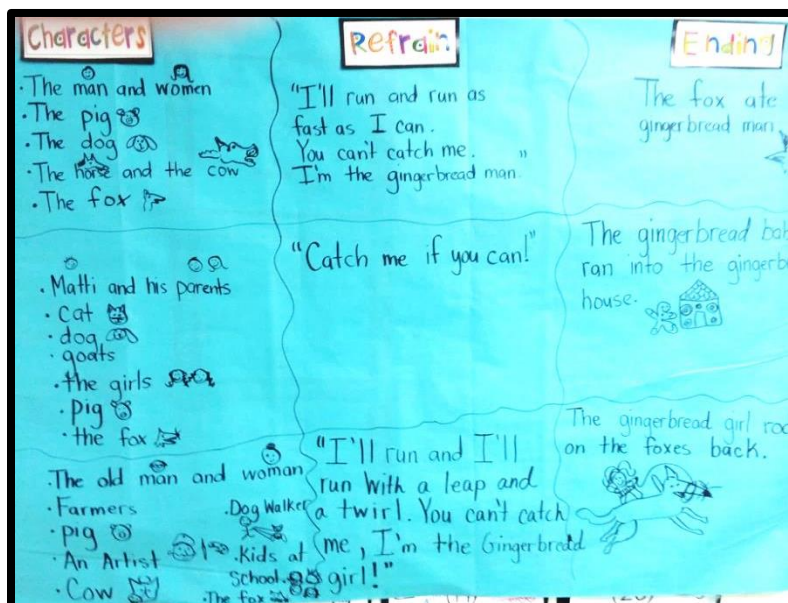


What is the name of your kindergarten class and who is the mascot?

# Family Gingerbread House Parties and Literature Extensions: Beyond "Cutesy" to Quality Kindergarten Experiences with Winter Themes



As a December Family Literacy Connection, Jaime Corliss invites families to decorate a gingerbread man. These are returned to school and displayed for all to see. The children study **variances** of The Gingerbread Man story. They also write about The Gingerbread Man and produce **detailed illustrations**, learning to first draw in pencil, outline in black, and then color the pictures in. The class ends the year with a family gingerbread house making party.

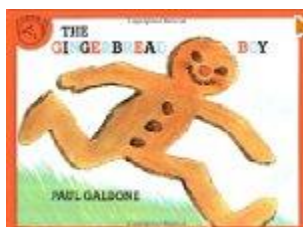


The Gingerbread Man Literature Study: Children develop an understanding of story and memorize a familiar rhyme.



*The Gingerbread Man*  
by Jim Alesworth

*The Gingerbread Man*  
by Paul Galdone



*The Gingerbread Baby*  
by Jan Brett

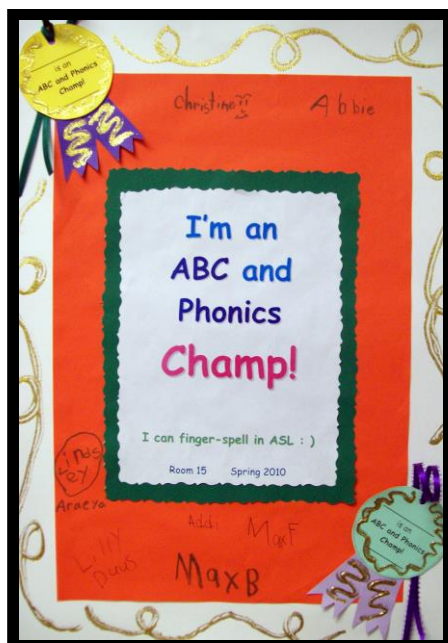
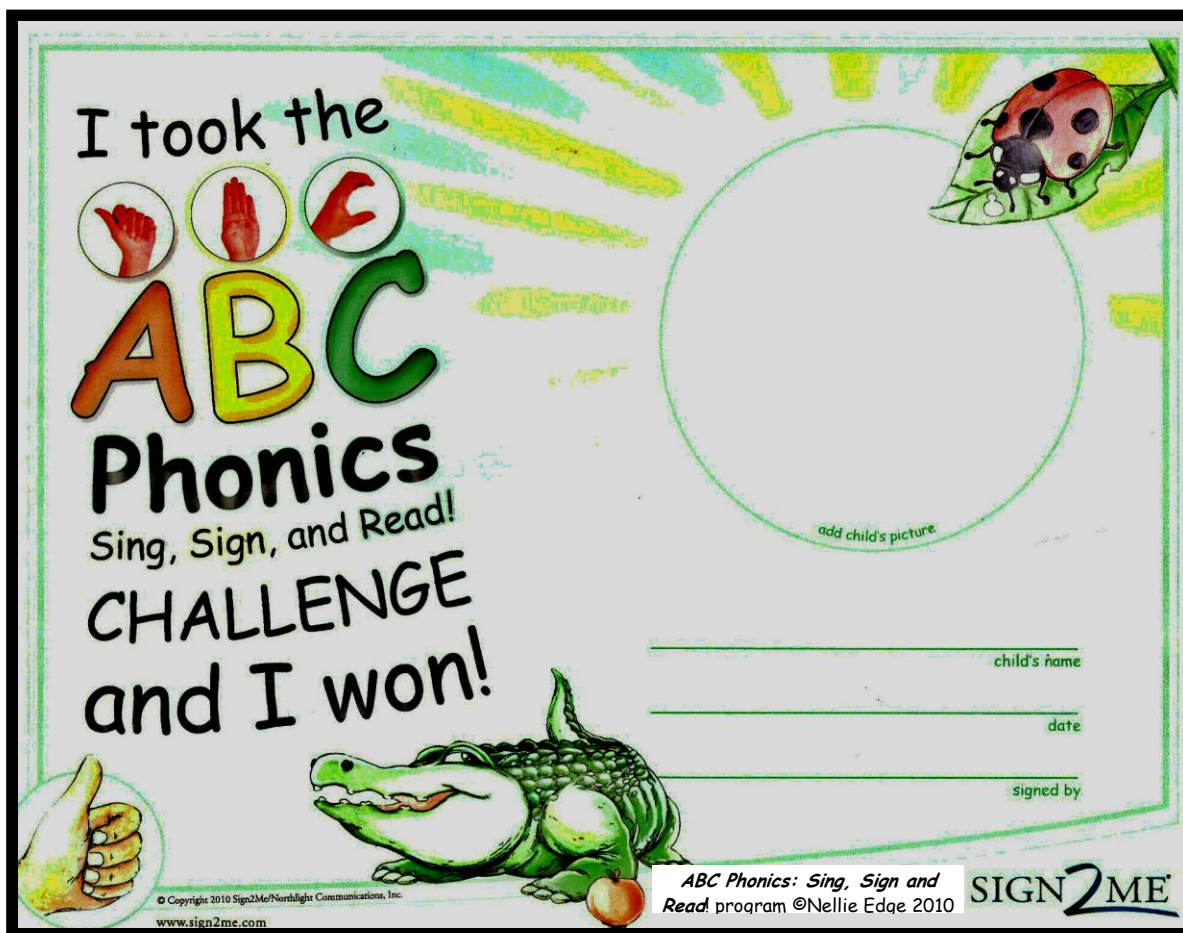
*The Gingerbread Girl*  
by Lisa Campbell Ernst



Families gather before the holiday for a kindergarten gingerbread house making celebration. (Extra houses were provided for younger siblings.)



# Children Love Awards and Badges to Acknowledge their Accomplishments: Take the ABC Phonics Challenge!



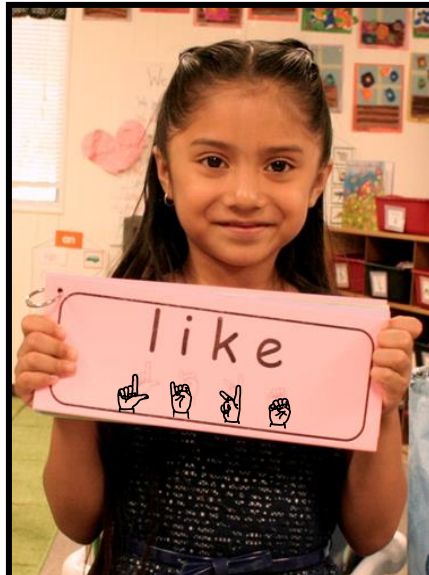
Kindergarten teacher, Laura Flocker made special awards for each child to wear when they had mastered instant recognition of each letter, sound, and accurate fingerspelling for the entire alphabet. Children practiced their **ABC Phonics: Sing, Sign, and Read!** song at home and helped each other at school using the class chart. The earliest ABC Phonics "experts" were often the highly kinesthetic, musical children who are not traditionally the early readers. **Multisensory ABC and phonics immersion honors all learning styles.**

# Celebrate Learning and Acknowledge Children as Experts!

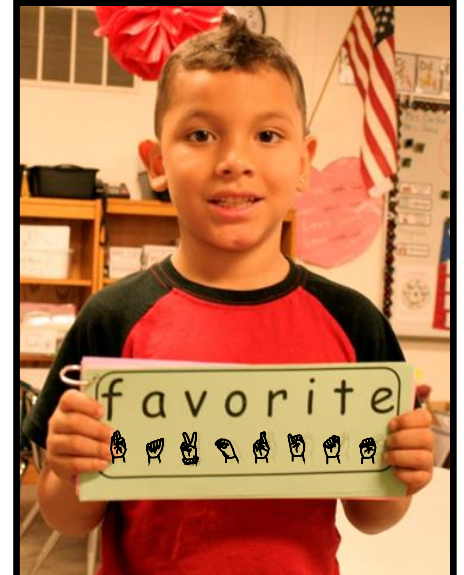
Copies of the *Sing, Sing, Spell, and Read!* CD by Nellie Edge with fingerspelling/word models and anthology pages are given to families for at-home practice. They can be made into a class book: **We Can Read Pink "Heart Words!"**



because



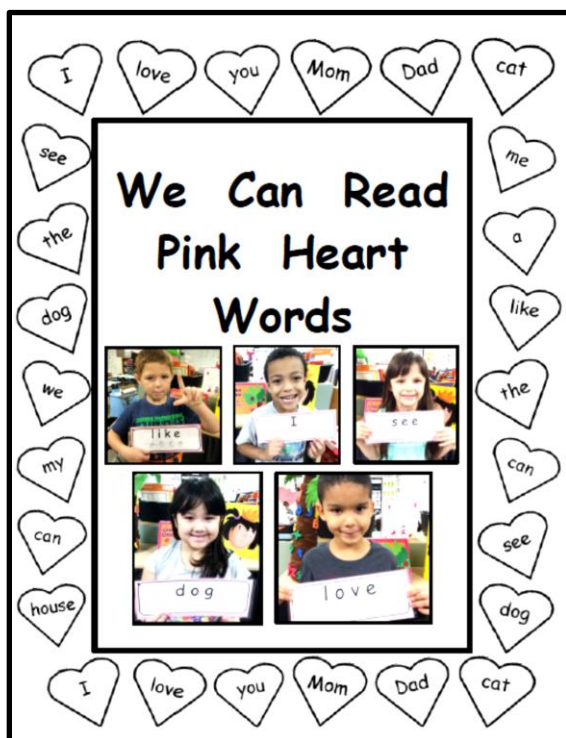
like



favorite



"Because," "like," and "favorite" are Opinion Writing words!



## Make a Class Book:

Children love to be acknowledged as experts. The positive affirmation soon becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy! Reading high-frequency "heart words" in a book with photos of kindergarten friends makes learning personally meaningful.

*Boys and girls, the reason we are learning "heart words" is so we can become better writers and readers, so we want to work on them every day at school and at home.*



## The Read and Sing Tradition Evolves into Our Family Book Club: Develop Oral Language and Reading Fluency Simultaneously



We begin the year sharing several Nellie Edge Read and Sing Big Books™ every morning. *I Can Read Colors, I Have a Cat, I Love the Mountains, Mary Wore Her Red Dress, The More We Get Together, Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, The Opposite Song, and Goodnight Irene* have become favorites. The accompanying "little books" and "guided reading books" are used for large group Shared Reading and are taken home for family literacy as a part of our Read and Sing Book Club. Children are soon able to move from "magical memory reading" with fluency and delight to reading with confidence and word-for-word accuracy. For many children, these song picture Big Books became their touchstone: An affirmation of "I can read!" That was the case with Amada who all year long read and sang ♪ *Irene Goodnight...* Her beautiful singing and love of the book often drew a circle of classmates around to join her.

**CCSS** Song picture books are used for guided reading and they make up our first "Family Reading Book Club." We differentiate early literacy instruction by building oral language and reading fluency simultaneously and coaching families in how to support the learning-to-read process at home.

By November every child is eager to participate in The Read and Sing Book Club, taking a new book home every few days and reading with two different adults who initial the book club envelope cover. When the children return the books, they will choose new ones.





# The Elephant and Piggie Home/School Book Club Certificates: Congratulations for Reading Every Book!

After delighting in all of the Elephant and Piggie stories by Mo Willems, children are ready to think like their favorite author and create their own books, taking on the personas of Elephant and Piggie. They imagine a new adventure, plan what they might say, create the writing and art, and think of a clever ending. Some of these books will later be proofed, edited, and published. Children use the folded "squish book" technique for these new books.



**mo willems books**

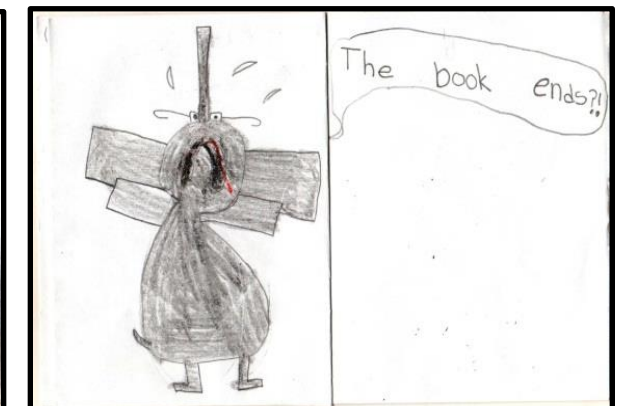
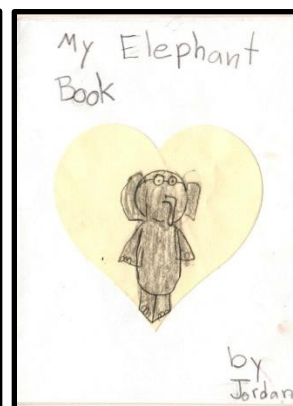
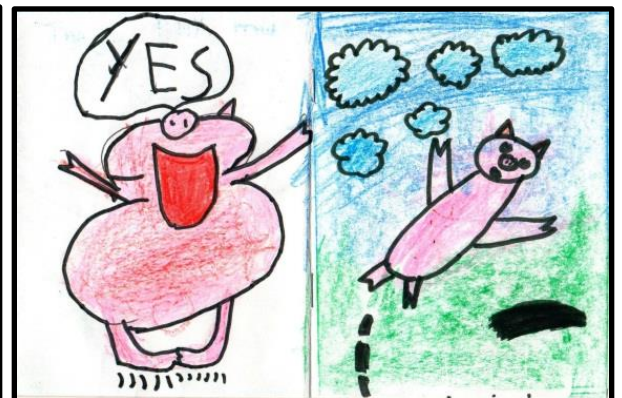
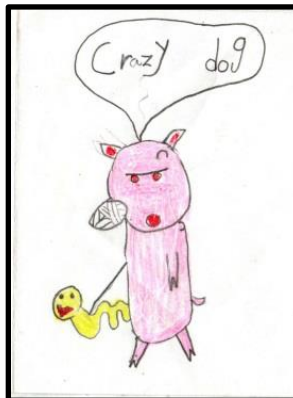
Name \_\_\_\_\_

**The Elephant and Piggie Book Club**

Please read this book with me!		I can read with fluency!	
	A Big Guy Took My Ball		Are You Ready to Play Outside?
	Elephants Cannot Dance!		Happy Pig Day!
	I Am Invited to a Party!		I Broke My Trunk!
	I Will Surprise My Friend!		Let's Go for a Drive!
	Pigs Make Me Sneezel		Should I Share My Ice Cream?
	Today I Will Fly!		Watch Me Throw My Ball!
	I Am Going!		I Love My New Toy!
	My Friend is Sad		There is a Bird On Your Head!
	We Are in a Book!		We Are in a Book!

Please read each book to three different people and ask for their initials under the book title. Then bring it back to school and choose your next book.

**Happy Reading!**

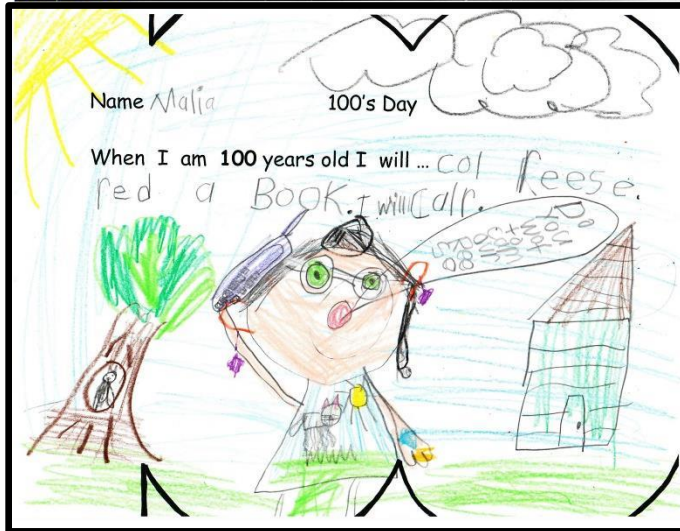


Laura Flocker carefully teaches children how to draw the Elephant and Piggie character, how to use speech bubbles, and how to create facial expressions. Then they are ready to use Mo Willems books as mentor texts to inspire clever new adventures featuring these engaging characters.

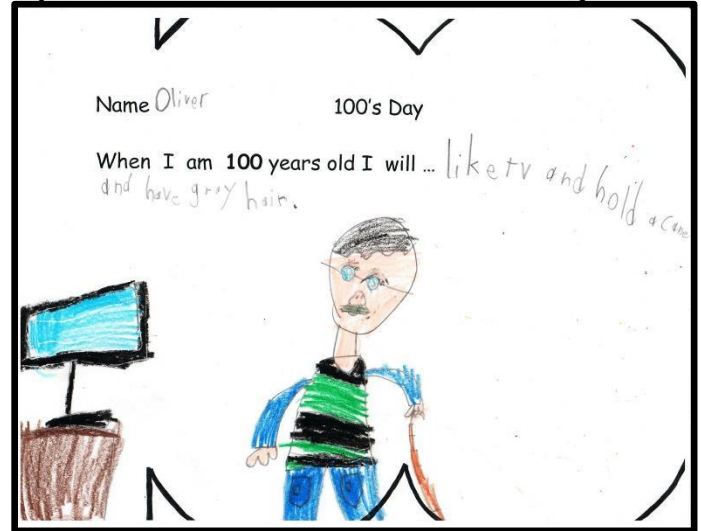


# Laura Flocker Turned Students into Writers and Illustrators: She Gave Them Authentic Invitations to Think Creatively

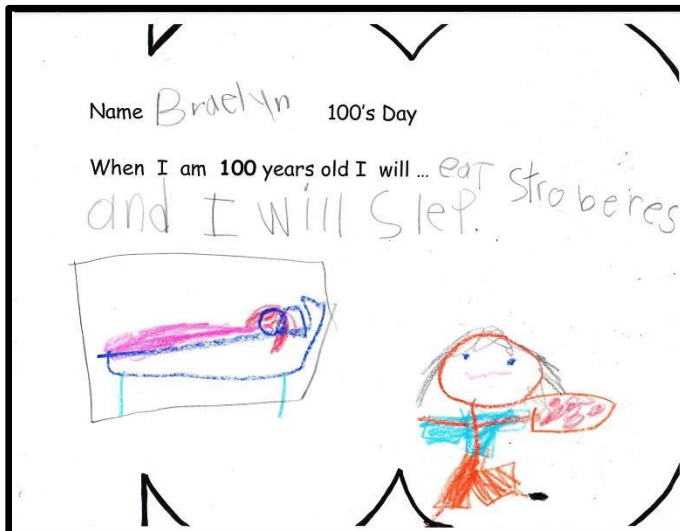
*The 100<sup>th</sup> Day of School Is Always a Celebration of Learning*



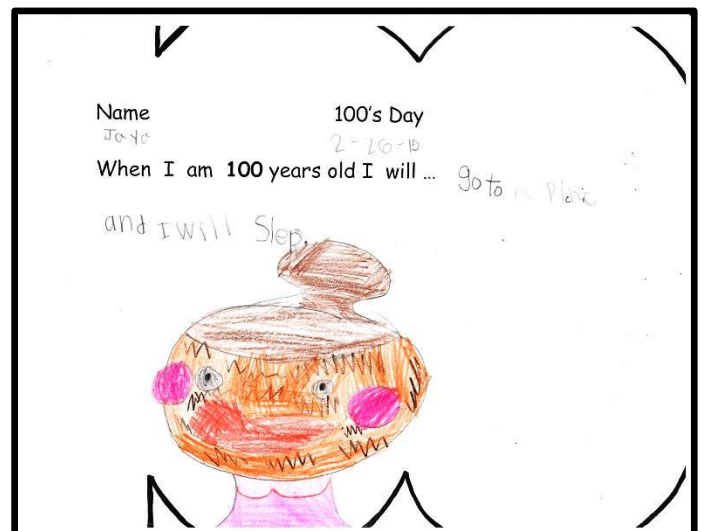
...call Reese. Read a book. I will call "Do you want to come over Reese?"



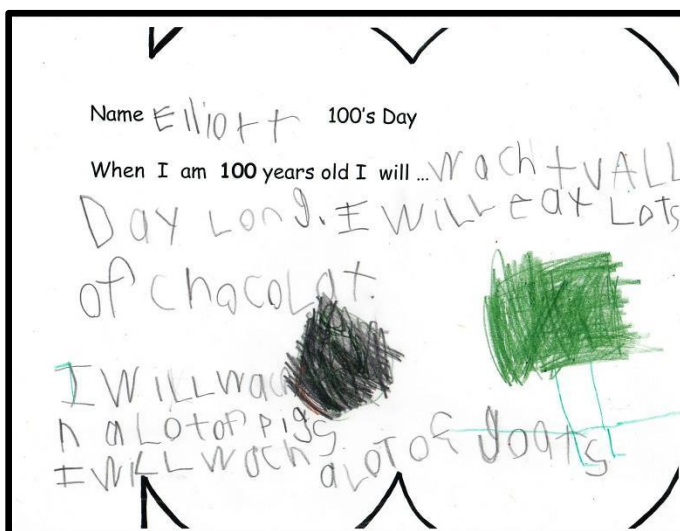
...like TV and hold a cane and have gray hair.



...eat strawberries and I will sleep.



...go to a picnic and I will sleep.



...watch TV all day long. I will eat lots of chocolate.  
I will watch a lot of pigs. I will watch a lot of goats.



...pick flowers and have picnics.



# Prolific Writers Celebration

## Kindergartners Plan Their Lives as Writers Over the Summer



All week the children had been singing our latest song ...  
♪ "Prolific writers are we, we write and write you see..." ♪  
remembering all the things they have been writing this year: books, messages, heart words, news stories, ABCs, name tickets, the room, math problems, book reports, lists, jokes, science journals, labels, surveys, thank you notes...no wonder they have become such motivated, purposeful writers. As a class they truly have internalized "The more you write, the better you write. So write, write, write!"

It's the end of the year; the room is filled with packing up energy and it feels appropriate to celebrate our writers with one more affirming event. Our "Prolific Writers" ceremony was the culmination of an incredible journey documenting the power of meaning-centered writing-to-read curriculum within a joyful kindergarten community.



One by one our prolific writers walked up to their teachers (with soft music in the background) to receive an "I am a prolific writer" award, handshakes, hugs, words of praise and endearment; they also received three blank books to take home for summer writing. They were applauded by their kindergarten friends and most were already thinking of what they were going to write about this summer: snakes, an everyday journal, sea creatures, my summer activities, the human body study, my spy book... the list goes on.

***We have created a culture of engaged kindergarten writers.***



**How do you celebrate young authors?**



## Come Together at the End of the Day with Warmth, Humor, a Touch of Ceremony—and Memorable Language

- **Briefly review the day's important events and new learnings:** Thinking about and verbalizing "what I learned today" reinforces new learning and provides rehearsal for children when later asked by family, "What did you do at school today?"

**Think-pair-and-share:** Ask children to, "Talk with your neighbor. Sit eye-to-eye and knee-to-knee. Tell them what you learned about turtles today! What did you read, draw and write about?"

**Stand-talk-and-affirm:** "Tell your neighbor something you loved doing today."

- **Invite students to share appreciation and affirm their friendship:**

"I really appreciated the way Hunter helped me..."

Children can sing and sign *Friends* (to the wonderful Mozart melody of *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*):

### Friends

by Nellie Edge

*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.*

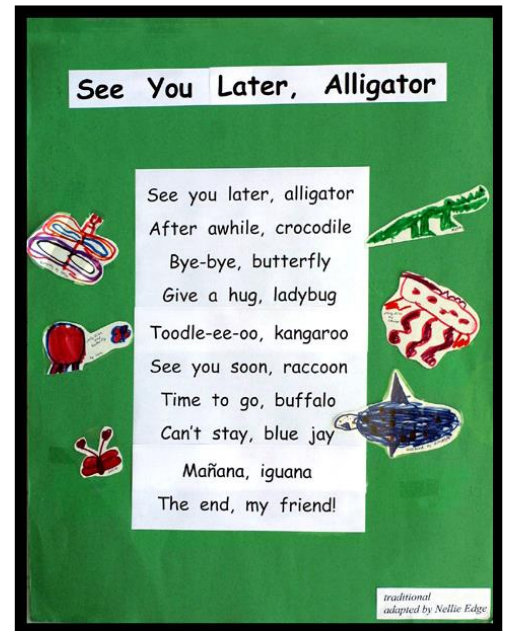


Friends signing "friends."

- **Reaffirm your caring relationship for each child in English and the child's home language:**
  - Teacher can stand by the door and invite each child to **choose a hug, handshake, or high-five!** Mitzi Shirk says, "Choose an 'h!'"
  - Kay Goines, mentor kindergarten teacher from Carmel, had a special farewell salute for each student, "Goodbye—I love you passionately!" ("¡Te quiero muchísimo!")
  - Bev Bos, preschool teacher, author, and recording artist, stands by the door and says "Get a hug if you need one!"
  - Valerie Welk, mentor kindergarten teacher and national kindergarten trainer, sings and signs an old classic, "♪ *Happy Trails to you...until we meet again...*" before her children leave for the day.
  - While sending children out the door, I love to build anticipation for tomorrow "We'll laugh and sing again tomorrow!"

## See You Later, Alligator (Rhyming Play to End the Day, Nellie Edge's adaptation)

*See you later, alligator (echo after each line)  
After awhile, crocodile  
Bye-bye, butterfly  
Give a hug, ladybug  
Toodl-ee-oo, kangaroo  
See you soon, raccoon  
Time to go, buffalo  
Can't stay, blue jay  
Mañana, iguana  
The end, my friend!*



- **Invite the children to play with alliterations:**
  - Delightful Diane dances during dinner.
  - Brave Brian boldly bounces to the bus.
  - Nimble Nellie notices nearly nothing.
- **Slow down the pace and bring closure to the day's activities in an emotionally satisfying way:** Bring the children together in a circle on the floor for a goodbye song. Relax, smile, sing and sign together. These lovely songs are available on the Magic of Signing Songs videos:

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

*"Goodnight Irene" can be adapted to "Gina Goodbye, Brian Goodbye..."*

*"Sing Your Way Home at the End of the Day..."*

★ How do you bring closure to the day and end on a harmonious note?

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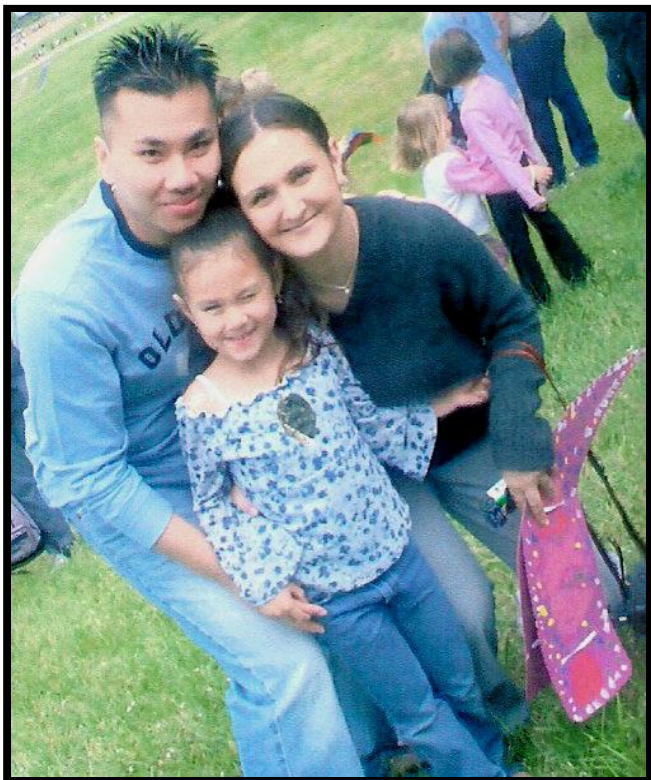
See You Later Alligator is in **Social Emotional Learning Supplement, Part 1.**



## End-of-Year Family Ritual: Kindergartners Paint Wings and Fly Away

Susan Ventura and Mitzi Shirk's kindergartens in Eugene, Oregon are busy hand painting wings in May for the end-of-the-year Kindergarten Fly Away Celebration. Parent volunteers trace and cut out a set of wings from railroad board for each child. **"After the children paint their wings with bright colors and designs (and sometimes feathers and glitter) we attach two elastic straps to hold these on their arms.** On our last day of school families are invited for an informal picnic lunch and popsicle event which concludes with the children donning their wings and "flying away" from kindergarten. **Children love the effect of sailing in their wings down the sloping hills and meadow areas at the edge of the school woods!"** Susan writes.

Families watch and applaud at the bottom of the hill as their joyful child comes floating down to them. **What a lovely, symbolic way to bring closure to a joyful kindergarten year. (With special thanks to Mary Christensen and Connie Cazort for inspiration.)**



**Appropriate music for "The Fly Away:"**

*I Believe I Can Fly* (chorus) by R. Kelly Lyrics from the Soundtrack Space Jam

*See Me Beautiful* by Red Grammer

*What A Wonderful World* by Louis Armstrong



# End-of-Year Family Performance and Picnic at the Park

with Celeste Starr and her kindergartners

The children sang a joyful medley of heart-connection songs in sign language, gave "love" necklaces away to their families, and were given bubbles and a bug catcher. Families enjoyed visiting and the relaxed camaraderie of a local park. One of the fathers, a former marine, carried the U.S. flag and helped lead the procession to the park for this **celebration of language and community**.



**Parents as Partners.** *In the Basic School, the circle of community extends outward to embrace parents, who are viewed as the child's first and most important teachers. A vital partnership is created between the home and school, one that begins during the preschool years, is strengthened when the child formally enrolls, and continues from kindergarten through grade five.* -Ernest L. Boyer,

From *The Basic School: A Community for Learning*, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1995.

***Islands of excellence*** include parents as partners, authentic curriculum, the centrality of language, and a commitment to social and emotional learning.



## End-of-the-Year Celebrations Bring Closure to the Learning Community and Add Dignity and Delight

- Kindergarten teacher Barbara Sagen gathers the children around her and together they remember many of the magical things they have shared during the year. On the last day of school they remember being the "Three Billy Goats Gruff" and other animals and characters from stories... **"But today," she says, "We're going to do the most magical thing of all—we're going to turn you into first graders! We're going to do it with a hug."** She puts on special music and, one at a time, she calls the children up to her. Barb takes time to share with each child something special that she will always remember about them and then they hug. **The child goes off with a look of wonder and transformation on his or her face, saying, "I'm a first grader now."**
- Children have a picnic and share stories of favorite school year experiences **and sing and sign all of their favorite songs.**
- One teacher ends every Friday with his second-grade **children holding hands in a circle and reciting to each other "I love you little. I love you lots..."** The rhyme had become such a part of their community that on the last day of school they spontaneously chanted it together.<sup>1</sup>
- **Children gather in a circle around a candle.** With the lights off, they share what they loved most during the year.
- The teacher works with students to **create a photo story of the year.** The booklet is copied for each child, leaving blank pages for the children to autograph and write in.
- **Year-end, student-led parent conferences are a powerful culminating celebration of learning.**
- As a final salute to her kindergarten children, **one teacher sent off homing pigeons.** Think of the symbolism—setting them off to fly and knowing they will always return home.
- **Fill the room with flowers and invite each child to make a bouquet to carry home.** Wrap a wet paper towel around their bouquet and put it inside a paper cup.
- **Have the children plant nasturtium seeds.** "Take these with you as you go. Remember us as the flowers grow.""
- Children can **march to the bus** on the last day of school singing **"I've got that 1<sup>st</sup>-grade feeling up in my head..."** (tune of the traditional fight song.)
- Children reread their Poetry Notebook and sing the "I Love to Read" song together again.

1. From Nellie Edge Poetry Notebook, TPT



*How do you bring closure to the school year?*

## **Chapter 4**

### *The Heart of Kindergarten: Memorable Rituals, Traditions and Celebrations*

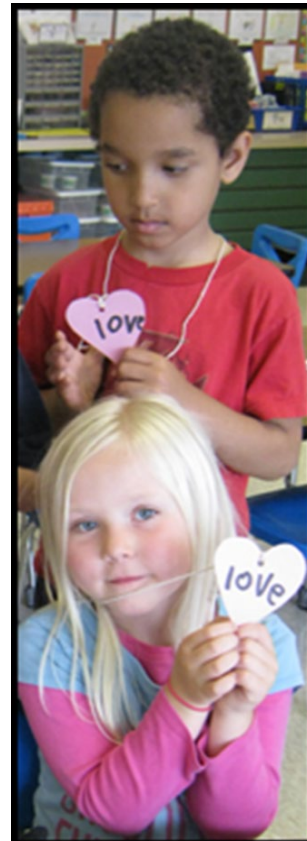
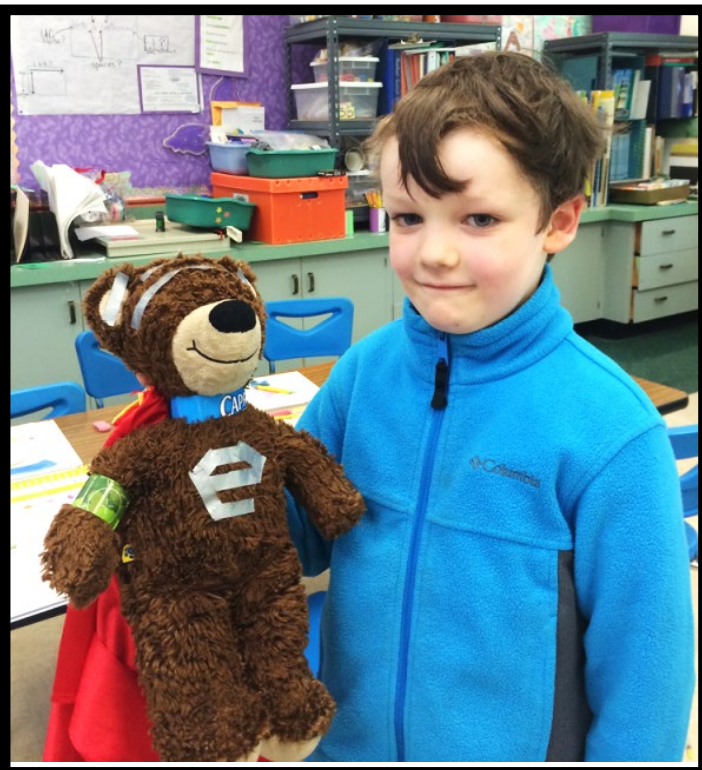
## **NOTES**



## Chapter 5

# Joyful, Engaging Lessons That Accelerate Learning:

*Choose Strategies That Build Literacy, Social-Emotional Skills, and a Love of Learning!*



**Writing-to-Read Strategies Support Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Literacy**

# What Are Nellie Edge Writing-to-Read "Heart Words?": How Does Kindergarten Writing Support Phonics Instruction?



Nellie Edge writing-to-read "heart words" invite kindergartners to write **heart-connecting sentences** such as "I love you..." early in the year to build **circles of writing mastery!** (I see the..., I like my..., I can ..., I have a ...) When several sentence starters are automatic (with good handwriting), **the brain has the memory space to fearlessly encode sounds to print for unknown words.** Building engaged and motivated writers supports phonics proficiency.

- Writing unknown words provides powerful, authentic phonics practice
- The best way to assess phonics knowledge? Look at student writing!

## What Are the Research-Based Principles That Guide Our Teaching of Writing-to-Read Heart Words?

- **Children learn best when you give them a crystal-clear achievable target to work towards and you acknowledge and celebrate their success:** Each new color-coded set has 16 words! Student, parent, and teacher all know what the next learning target is! We teach for mastery. (See Dr. Hattie's research: *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement*, Routledge, 2009.)

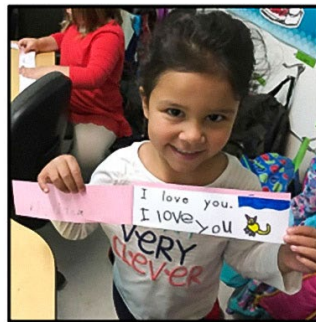
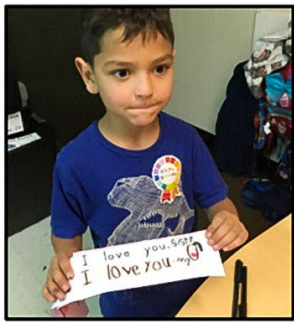
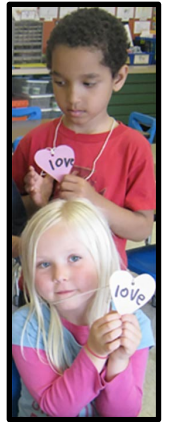


- **The brain is a musical brain:** singing releases happy chemicals. We sing, sign, spell, and write "heart word" sentences for mastery.
- **Multimodal instruction with song and fingerspelling accelerates learning** of "heart words" and phonics-based words for ALL learners.
- **Emotional engagement is the key to powerful learning:** We make writing real and personally motivating.
- **ABC Phonics Immersion with fingerspelling is part of a comprehensive writing program** that allows us to systematically reinforce phonemic awareness and phonics instruction throughout the day.

## "I love you" Becomes the First Circle of Kindergarten Writing Mastery, followed by "I see, I like, I can, I have..."

Three things young writers know for sure:

1. If I practice writing "heart word" sentences with good handwriting every day, my writing is going to get really good!
2. *The more I practice phonics-based spelling, the better I get!*
3. If I keep listening for sounds and stretching through words, soon I will be able to **fearlessly tackle any unknown word!**



**This Is What Kindergarten Heart Word Sentence "Fluency Practice" Looks Like by the End of the Year**

<p>Name: <u>Emily</u> Date: <u>June 2015</u></p> <p>I can write 5 different heart word sentences!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1♥ I love My Panda!</li> <li>2♥ I See a Bee?</li> <li>3♥ I like Bunnies!</li> <li>4♥ I can swim?</li> <li>5♥ I have a Pika Bot!</li> </ol> <p>Why do I practice writing "heart word" sentences?</p> <p>If I practice this every day, my writing is going to get really good!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> heart words spelled correctly</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good handwriting</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> spaces between words</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> a period at the end of each sentence</li> </ul> <p><b>* I am an expert at 5 heart word sentences! *</b></p>	<p>Name: <u>Colton Wallace</u> Date: <u>June</u></p> <p>I can write 5 different heart word sentences!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1♥ I like cats.</li> <li>2♥ I love Dogs.</li> <li>3♥ I see a fox.</li> <li>4♥ I can run.</li> <li>5♥ I have a cat.</li> </ol> <p>Why do I practice writing "heart word" sentences?</p> <p>If I practice this every day, my writing is going to get really good!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> heart words spelled correctly</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good handwriting</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> spaces between words</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> a period at the end of each sentence</li> </ul> <p><b>* I am an expert at 5 heart word sentences! *</b></p>
<p>Name: <u>Kochell</u> Date: _____</p> <p>I can write 5 different heart word sentences!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1♥ I love you.</li> <li>2♥ I see a cat.</li> <li>3♥ I like my mom.</li> <li>4♥ I can see a dog.</li> <li>5♥ I have a dog.</li> </ol> <p>Why do I practice writing "heart word" sentences?</p> <p>If I practice this every day, my writing is going to get really good!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> heart words spelled correctly</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good handwriting</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> spaces between words</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> a period at the end of each sentence</li> </ul> <p><b>* I am an expert at 5 heart word sentences! *</b></p>	<p>Name: <u>Caroline Roth</u> Date: _____</p> <p>I can write 5 different heart word sentences!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1♥ I love art!</li> <li>2♥ I See the Cardinals.</li> <li>3♥ look at the Carus!</li> <li>4♥ I Can See a tree.</li> <li>5♥ I have a house.</li> </ol> <p>Why do I practice writing "heart word" sentences?</p> <p>If I practice this every day, my writing is going to get really good!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> heart words spelled correctly</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good handwriting</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> spaces between words</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> a period at the end of each sentence</li> </ul> <p><b>* I am an expert at 5 heart word sentences! *</b></p>

**Save precious classroom minutes: Implement integrated learning!**

This comprehensive, multisensory approach to writing integrates good handwriting with writing-to-read "heart words," building early writing mastery. 116

# Begin the Year Expecting Students to Write Their Names and the Word "love" with Good Handwriting

"My Teacher says 'love' is the most important word—in the world."  
**Accelerate literacy:** Sing, Sign, Fingerspell, and Practice Writing-to-Read!

## 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 (forte) 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"!



**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 and write "I love you" secret messages to take home and hide.

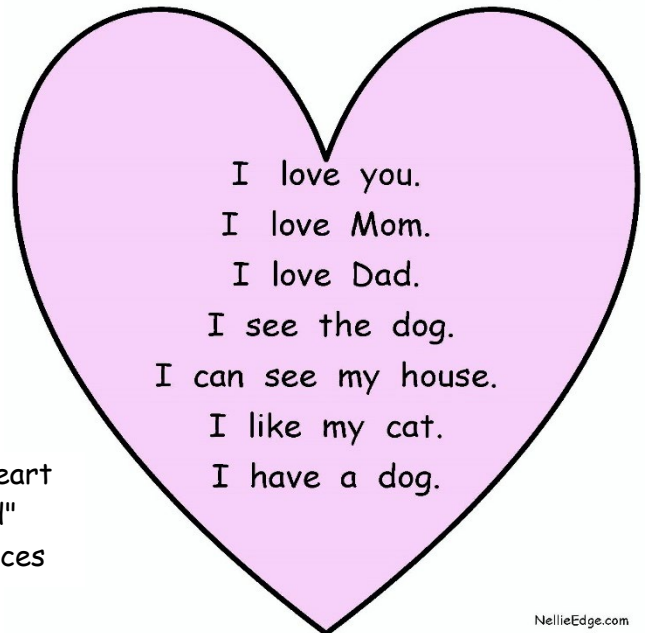
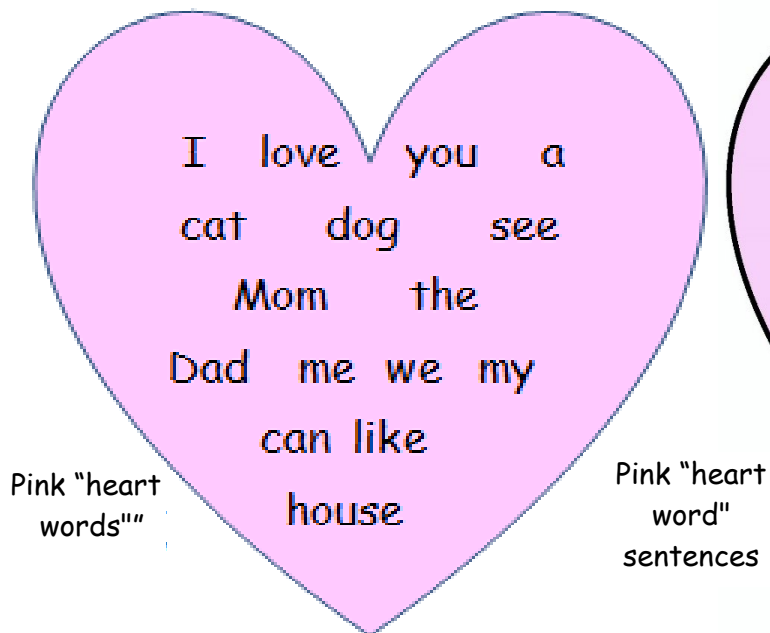
Available on *Music is Magic* CD with Nellie Edge and Tom Hunter.



See L-O-V-E Spells Love ASL video clip at [www.nellieedge.com](http://www.nellieedge.com) from *The Magic of Signing Songs* seminar DVD.



**We Call These Writing-to-Read Words "Heart Words"**  
Because we want to learn them "by heart" for writing fluency and  
because these words let us write heart-connecting sentences



NellieEdge.com

These are the words young children use most in their kindergarten writing:  
**They are different than most traditional basal word lists.**

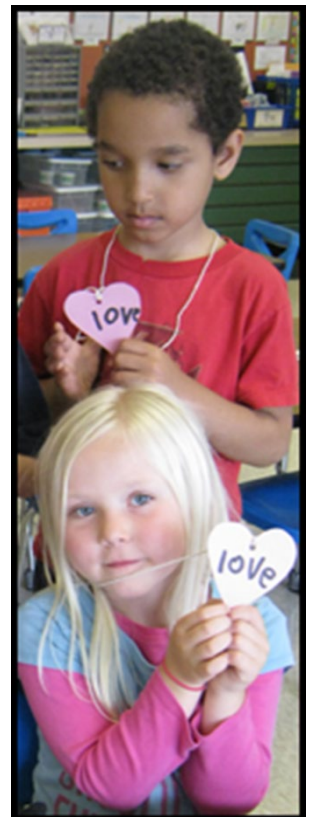
## **What Are The Research-Based Principles That Guide Our Practice?**

- Children learn best when you give them a **crystal clear achievable target** to work towards and you acknowledge their success.
- The brain is a **musical brain**.
- **Emotional engagement** is the key to all powerful learning.
- Beginning **writing instruction teaches reading**.

**Young writers need authentic experiences and:**

1. A repertoire of words they can write "by heart" (**fluently and automatically**).
2. Proficiency with phonics so they can **fearlessly tackle any unknown words**.

We are focusing on how to teach "heart words" through joyful accelerated literacy strategies.



## A September Literacy Ritual: Taking Home Our First Set of Pink Writing-to-Read "Heart Words" in a Sparkly Purple Box



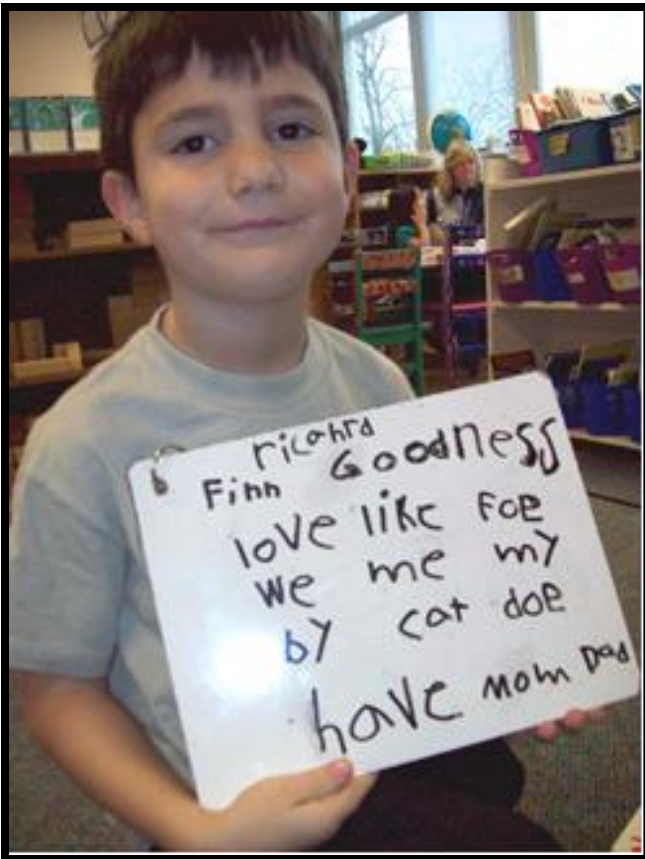
Laura Flocker hand paints the "heart word" (jewelry) boxes with glitter to make them special! Once children have learned several words, the first set of pink "heart words" goes home for nightly practice.



The individual photos of children with their "heart word" boxes will be used in a book, honoring each child's literacy accomplishments. Multisensory *Sing, Sing, Spell, and Read!* strategies with "Parents as Partners" accelerate children's learning. Already (in September) children are starting to master the first 16 pink "heart words" and are proudly asking for the purple "heart word" set to take home! Children with a strong, left-brain, visual learning style often master over 100 words during the kindergarten year. Almost all children master 60.



## Key Principles: How to Systematically Teach "Heart Words"



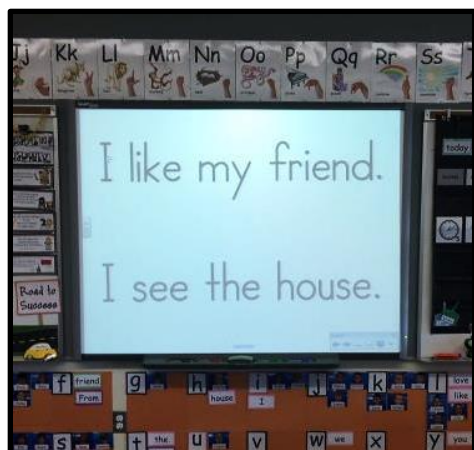
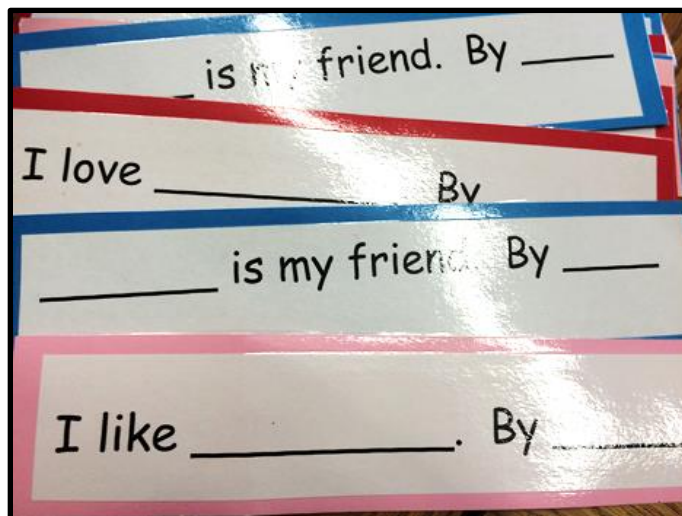
- Start with Kindergarten-Friendly Handwriting
- *Sing, Sign, Spell, and Read!*
- Define crystal-clear targets: Child, parent, teacher
- Challenge the early readers to set ambitious goals: "What's the next set of heart words you get to learn?"
- Give empowering language: "Wow! How did you remember that word?"
- Use private or group acknowledgment
- Create a growth mind set: "You worked hard!"
- Develop metacognition: "How did you teach your brain to remember?"



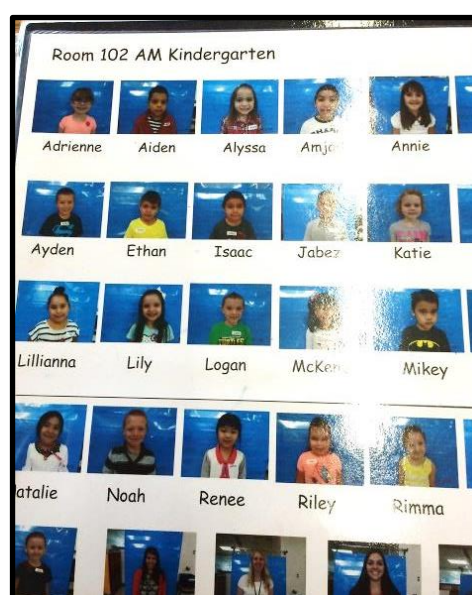
How do you systematically teach children to read, write, and spell high-frequency writing-to-read "heart words"?



# Literacy Traditions Include Writing "Heart Word" Sentences to Friends... and Becoming Word Experts!



Special thanks to Shanda Lung and her beautiful kindergarten





# Hip, Hip, Hooray: I am an Expert at Pink Heart Words!

Children Love This Class Book: They Are So Proud of Their Page



Hip Hip Hooray!



We Know Our Heart Words

Class-Made Book

*Hip, Hip Hooray! Class-Made Book template is on Nellie Edge TPT Store.*

Hip, Hip Hooray!



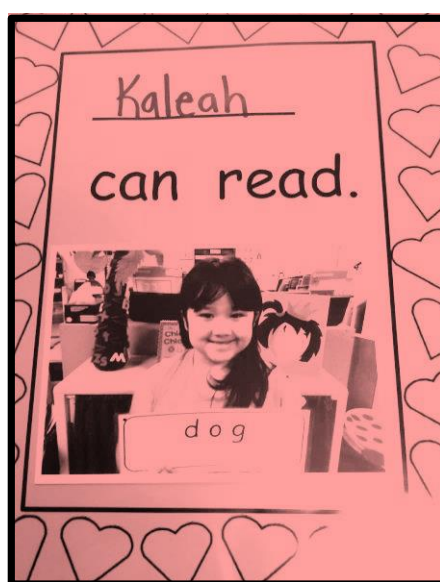
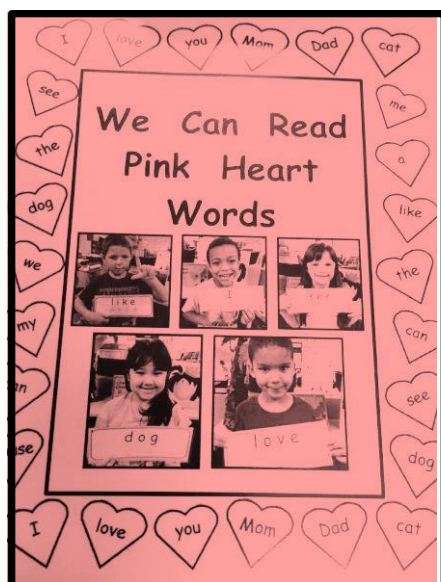
We Know our Heart Words!

Hip Hip Hooray!

Nathan



Knows pink purple yellow green  
Heart words!



**Favorite Class-Made Books Encourage Reading Fluency**

Kindergartners love books featuring their lives and accomplishments.



See Social Emotional Learning Supplement, Part 1

# September Whole Class Writing-to-Read Experience

♪ "This Is My House, H - O - U - S - E"

Using the music from our *Sing, Sign, Spell and Read!* CD, Winter Curry and I presented a short lesson on the word "house." The children were introduced to the sign language for the key concept words "this," "my," and "house." We sang and practiced fingerspelling h-o-u-s-e repeatedly. We looked at many different illustrated houses from favorite picture books, explored rich vocabulary, and gave the students several writing models of "My house" at each table. It takes many short repeated experiences with the song before the spelling—and fingerspelling—are internalized.



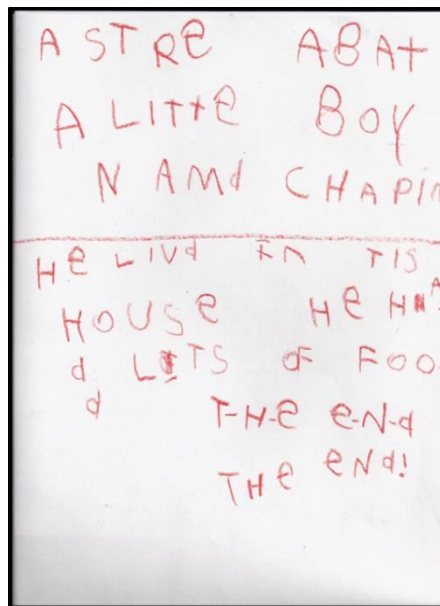
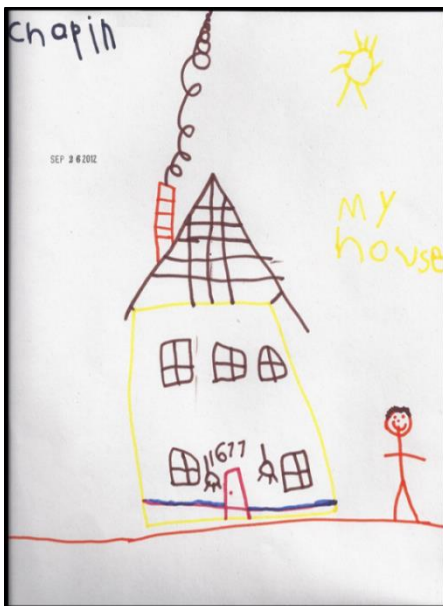
After our lesson combining singing, signing, fingerspelling and illustration study, the children were invited to draw a house and label their pictures.

Multisensory experiences and dialog inspire detailed drawing.

See additional details of this lesson on the Read and Sing tab at [nellieedge.com](http://nellieedge.com).

Read & Sing

One little boy finished his house quickly, so I asked him to tell me about the picture. "Chapin," I said, "I bet you could write a story about that house."



After working with several other children, I returned to Chapin and there was a little story, written on the back of his house picture.

*A story about a little boy named Chapin. He lived in this house. He had lots of food. T-h-e e-n-d The end!*





# Teach an Attitude of Gratitude

And give children practice saying and signing "thank you!"

**Teach the "I Can Spell Thank You" song from early in year**

Be generous and sincere when thanking students:

**Thank you for...**

- *Holding the door open.*
- *Helping pick up the blocks.*
- *Speaking softly.*
- *Lining up right away.*
- *Remembering to bring your Poetry Notebook back*
- *Practicing your "heart words" so diligently*
- *Doing such a good job cleaning off the play dough table*
- *Being the Helper of the Day*
- *Thank you for coming to school on time today?*
- *Holding the door open. That's showing kindergarten kindness!*
- *Listening so quietly. Everyone was able to hear.*
- *Working so hard: You learned to write "I love you!"*
- *Wow! Thank you for helping us clean up so quickly. That's showing kindergarten responsibility.*



## Examples of language:

*Josh! Thank you for pushing all the chairs in. No one even had to ask you! You sure know how to take care of our classroom.*

*Thank you for helping Jacob put the blocks away. Good friends help each other—that's kindergarten kindness!*

*I bet many of you will remember to thank Marisa for holding the door open.*

**The happy hormones in our brains are influenced by the words we hear and speak.**



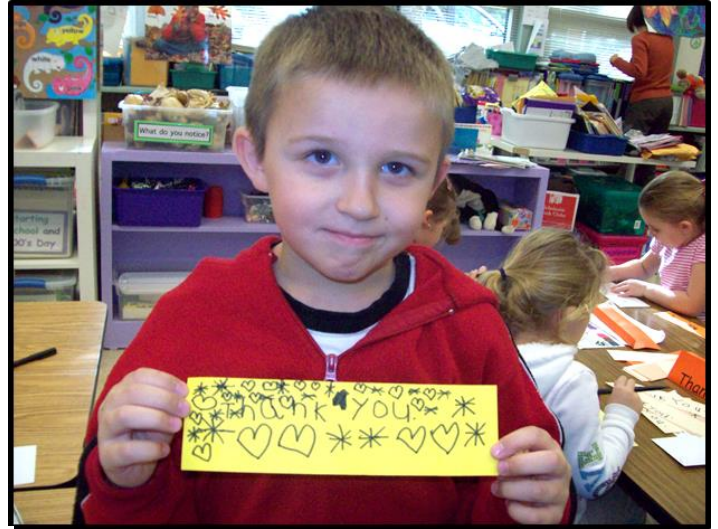
*How do your students practice gratitude?*

# *Sing, Sign, Spell, and Read! ♪ I Can Spell "Thank You" ♪*

Children prepare secret messages to take home



Do your best printing. (Children had practiced handwriting the word "you" earlier.)

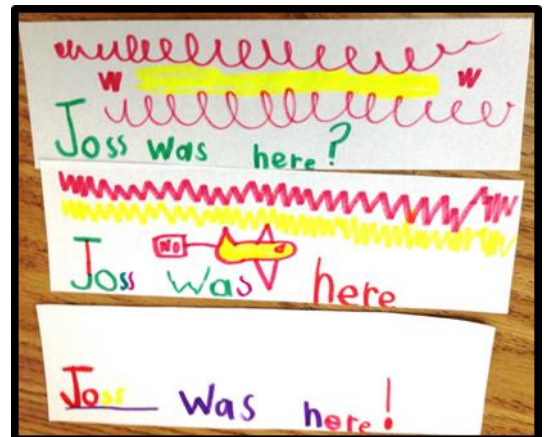


After you have printed several messages using your best handwriting, you may want to create designs to fancy them up.



## **Children sing, sign, fingerspell, and read "Thank you"**

- Share favorite books about Thanksgiving.
- Children talk to their elbow buddies about people, animals, and things in nature that they are thankful for.
- Fingerspelling "th" builds writing muscles and teaches digraphs.
- Explore period and exclamation marks: Read "Thank you" with different tones of voice. We are writing for a reader and punctuation helps us express the writer's ideas.

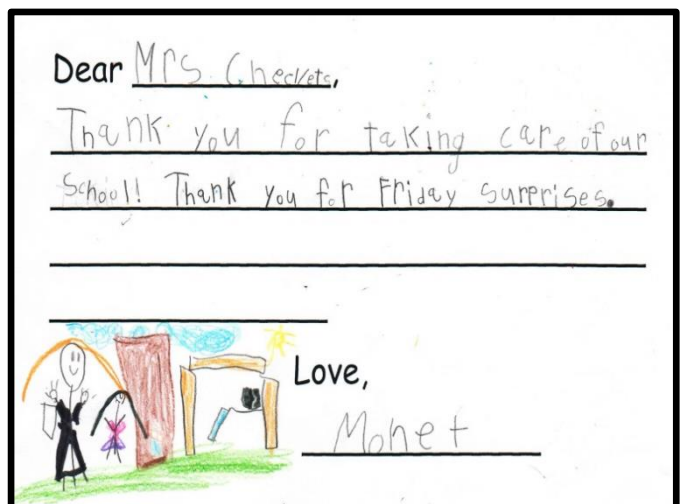
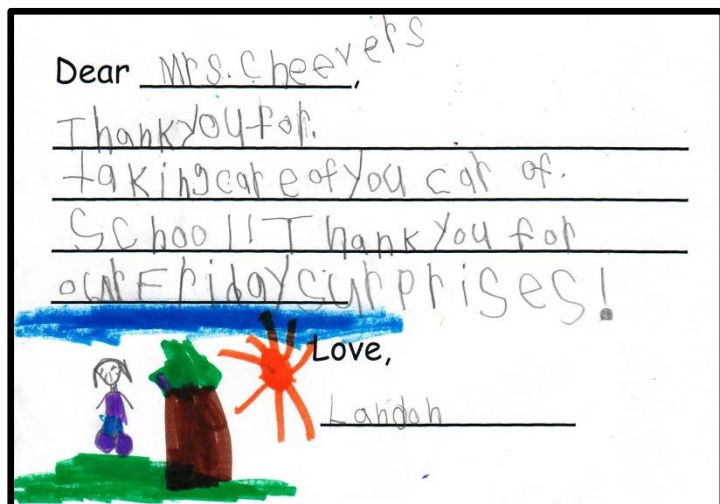
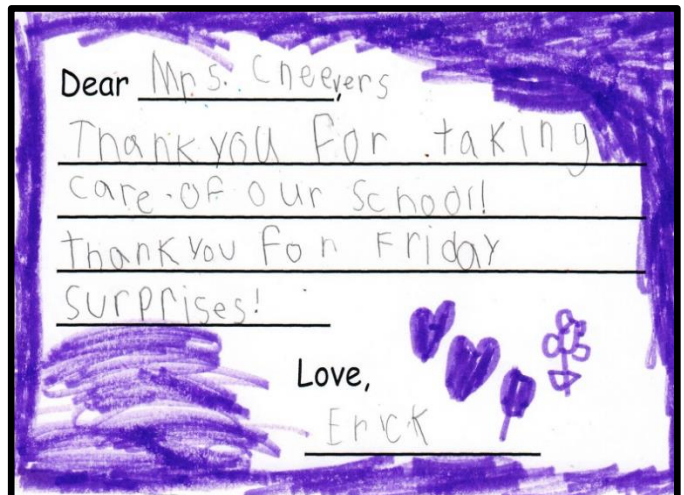
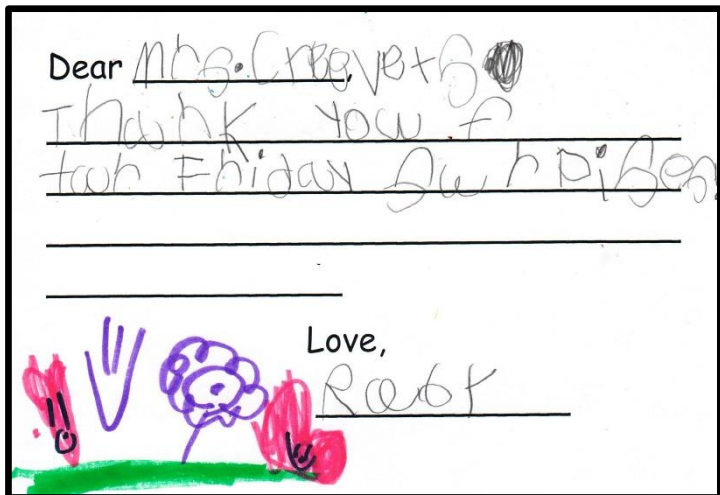
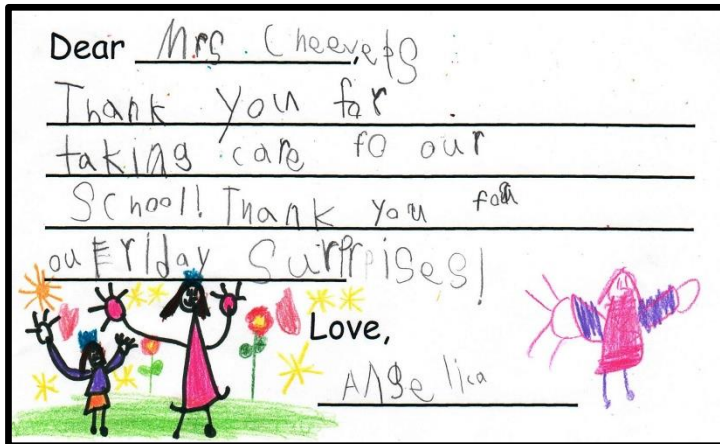


Recorded on *Sing, Sign, Spell, and Read!* CD by Nellie Edge and Gina Edge



## Thank You Letters to Mrs. Cheevers

We teach children to sing and sign the *T-h-a-n-k: Thank You* song from *Sing, Sign, Spell, and Read!* CD and provide authentic reasons for them to write and show appreciation: This is one way we build a caring school community. Kindergarten kindness, showing gratitude, and giving to others is a year-long theme.



**Note:** "Dear," "love," "thank," and "you" are all writing-to-read words that children learn to write "by heart." They love to write thank you notes! Several students used the principal's favorite colors in their illustrations. Mrs. Cheevers establishes a **very** personal relationship with the kindergarten students in this Title I school.

## Routines and Rituals for Building an Attitude of Gratitude

We can teach young children to work hard, be kind, and develop an attitude of gratitude. *Our intentional focus on social emotional skills will actually rewire our students brains*, helping them to do well in school—and in life.

**This book contains helpful routines and traditions to build gratitude.**

- Let children hear you express gratitude for the beautiful day and how kind the students are to each other.
- Greet children with a handshake, hug, or high-five, establishing eye contact and sharing an *"I'm so glad you're here!"*
- Invite students to share things they are grateful for as a part of your morning circle.
- Teach children to sing and sign uplifting songs such as *What a Wonderful World* and variations of *You Are My Sunshine*.
- Create a Write-a-Message Center with language models such as *"Thank you for being my friend."*
- Keep an on-going class chart: **We Are Grateful Kids**
  - I'm grateful my mom cooks for me.
  - I am grateful that Jason played with me.
  - I am grateful for the sunny day.
- Sing and sign the "T-h-a-n-k Thank You" song.
- Write Thank You letters to principals, volunteers, or custodians.
- Verbalize often: *"Wow! You are kind and grateful kids!"*
- Teach children to choose partners for class dances by saying *"please"* and *"thank you."*



For over 4 decades the underlying foundation of our work in Joyful Accelerated Kindergarten Literacy has been to nurture values of kindness, gratitude, friendship, and an "I can do it!" growth mindset. **Thoughtful educators will recognize these values** in all the professional development resources on NellieEdge.com, YouTube, Pinterest, and Nellie Edge TPT Store...and it makes me SMILE knowing *our resources support your best teaching practices!*



# "The Peace Table"

by Sally Haughey (Fairy Dust Teaching)

I appreciate reading the wise, heartwarming blogs from [fairydustteaching.com](http://fairydustteaching.com).

Sally explains in her March 14, 2012, blog:

*One of the best gifts from Montessori education has to be the Peace Table. The Peace Table is a conflict resolution tool for the classroom. Traditionally, there is a peace rose that the children can present to a child they have a conflict with and "go" to the table to work it out. I have adapted the process for my classroom and circumstance and am using a little heart stone a friend gave me. My Peace Table is small and easy to sit on the floor with. The child who is upset brings the issue to the Peace Table. Holding the stone, they state the problem. I coach the child to state the problem as "I did not like it when..." Then from that point on, it is a "I feel \_\_\_\_\_ when \_\_\_\_\_" statement. ("I" statements!) The other child has a chance to state what they are feeling as well. The peace stone goes back and forth until the children have expressed all their feelings and the issue is resolved.*

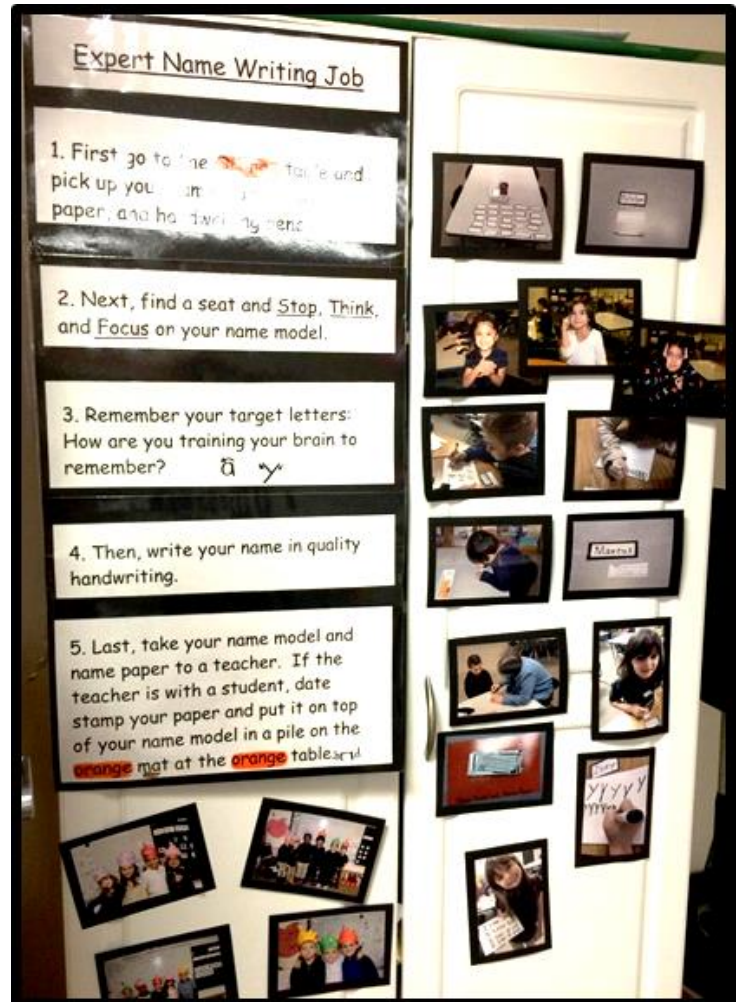
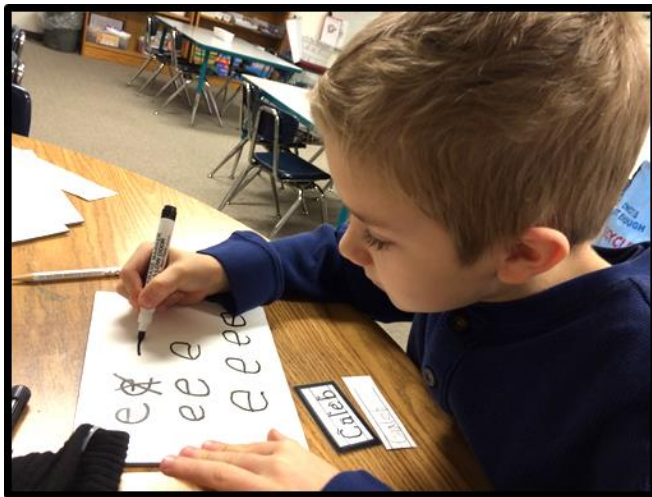
*What is amazing about the process is that the children are given a chance to safely express their feelings to a peer. There is a tool for "talk turns"—the peace rose or stone. It eliminates tattling as I just send them to the Peace Table. Nine times out of ten, the problem is resolved by the very act of communicating their feelings. The children who have trouble with their peers need help with this process—but it is a great forum to do it!*

*Wish we could have a global Peace Tables for big people...and it worked like this does!!!*

Shared with permission



# Kindergarten-Friendly Name Writing Practice Until You Are An Expert: Then Celebrate Reaching Your Handwriting Goal!



Photos from Jaime Corliss





# Emotional Engagement is the Key to All Powerful Learning: Teach "ing"

## Invite Children to Create and Make Crowns!

"The King of 'ing'" crown is a playful visual memory aide from the authors of "Kid Writing." I love the memory hook; however, I decided it might be even more powerful if every child could create and wear their own "King of 'ing'" crown.

Mo Willems, author of the our favorite "Elephant and Piggie" books (see *I Love My New Toy!*, *Today I Will Fly!* and *Watch Me Throw the Ball!*) often uses "ing" (doing, going, throwing) words so these books provided a great introduction to "The King of -ing." The children practiced handwriting "ing" on their wipe-off boards. We verbalized, "I am the King who remembers ing"... "I remember 'ing', it starts with 'i.'"" The children were so delighted with their crowns they creatively added their own personality with playful and fancy design elements. They were so proud of their crowns, they even wanted to wear them outside for recess in the rain!

- We brainstormed words that rhyme with king (sing, wing, ring, bring...).
- We verbalized, "You'll remember how to write words that end in 'ing' because 'I' am the king of 'ing.'"" (Use fingerspelling for a powerful memory aide!)
- Throughout the day, I would ask, "How do you spell 'ing'?" and "what rhymes with King?"
- In one class (after taping the crown together), the teacher elegantly bowed to each child and placed the king of "ing" crown regally on his or her head.



One of the girls was insistent that she was not the "King of 'ing.'" She was the Queen! We smiled, saying, "Oh yes! You are the Queen of the King of 'ing!'"" We immediately see "ing" spelled conventionally in the children's writing pieces.



# There's An "ing" in King: Creating Memorable Literacy Rituals



What a grand time I have sharing multisensory and joyful writing-to-read lessons in local classrooms! An invitation to write a song that teaches "i-n-g" was all I needed for expanding my "King of ing" lesson with a new sing, sign, and fingerspell song: ***There's an "ing" in King: i-n-g***. (Melody is similar to Beverly Hillbillies Theme Song.)

One of my favorite writing-to-read lessons is to invite children to learn about the "King of ing" and make a crown as a memorable, visual reminder. Children first brainstorm "i-n-g" words and we make lists. We rehearse fingerspelling and sing "i-n-g" many times over before creating the crowns. This year's King of "ing" crowns were even more detailed and well-loved than last year's. Once again, the children simply do not want to take them off. The reading/writing lesson that wrapped its arm around this time of pure serendipity was memorable and filled with SMILES...

## What did I learn?

- Kindergartners love making crowns!
- Multisensory teaching through music and sign language create powerful memory hooks.
- Writing teaches reading.
- Intentional teaching is often close coaching: "And how do you sign "ing?""

Listen to ["There's an 'ing' in King"](#) on Nellie Edge YouTube. See *Sing, Sign, Spell, and Read!* within the [Nellie Edge Sight Word BUNDLE](#) on TpT.

### There's an "ing" in King

by Nellie Edge

There's an "ing" in king: i-n-g  
There's an "ing" in bring: i-n-g  
There's an "ing" in swing: i-n-g  
There's an "ing" in sing: i-n-g

I am going: i-n-g  
I am coming: i-n-g  
I am playing: i-n-g  
I am stopping: i-n-g

by Nellie Edge  
For Laura Flocker and Ann Winkler

i n g

i	insect	n	nest	g	goat
---	--------	---	------	---	------

Photos from ABC Phonics: Sing, Sign, and Read! by Nellie Edge © 2010 Sign2Me Publishers



See **Social Emotional Learning** Supplement, Part 1



# Kindergarten Provides a Thinking and Caring Curriculum: Friends Develop Speaking Skills and Collaboration

*You're My F - r - i - e - n - d!* (To the tune ♪ *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star* ♪)

A favorite song and engaging literacy activity from our *Sing, Sign, Spell, and Read!* CD and "I Can Read" Anthology is *You're My Friend*. First children sing the entire song. Then they turn to a friend (or elbow buddy), establish eye contact, and say, "You're my friend." The whole class softly sings and signs, "f-r-i-e-n-d, f-r-i-e-n-d." Time permitting, they turn to another friend and perform this friendship, language, and literacy ritual again. The sign for "friend" is hooking index fingers together. We call it "finger hugs."



Under the **Speaking and Listening** strand of CCSS is **Comprehension and Collaboration**:  
SL.K.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about *kindergarten topics and texts* with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

- Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., listening to others and taking turns speaking about the topics and texts under discussion).

**We create an environment that naturally invites children to build friendship, language, and collaboration skills: Friends work and play together. Friends speak and listen to each other. Friends care and share.**

We weave speaking and listening opportunities into literacy learning throughout the day.

- Our language builds community: how can we help our friends?
- Teach children how to politely find a partner, asking "Will you be my partner, please?"
- Teach children to verbalize and sign "thank you" to each other.
- Talk about feelings and how a kind action is like a "Warm Fuzzy..."
- Read *The Wrinkled Heart Story* from Nellie Edge Excellence in Kindergarten Literacy February 2013 newsletter. Scroll down to the link to Jacque Verrell's website.
- Group singing, story drama, and friendship rituals are a vital part of our curriculum.



**Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings and ideas clearly.**



See **Social Emotional Learning Supplement**, Part 1

# Talking Circles: Friends Build Speaking and Listening Skills



## Talking questions:

- What are you learning and **what are you wondering about butterflies?**
- What was your favorite part of the story?
- What's your favorite kindergarten activity and why?
- **Tell about something you're good at.**
- Tell about your current writing piece.

Talking Circles provides a safe environment with maximum opportunity for each child to develop good speaking and listening skills. It's a great way for children to review and cement new science concepts and to have an opportunity to talk to every other child in the classroom.

## Organizational Tips:

Form two straight lines of children. Show the first line how to sit in a circle facing out—they become "the inner circle." Then walk the other children over to form "the outer circle" with each child facing one student on the inner circle. The students on the inner circle get to talk for 30 seconds while the outer circle students listen.



**At the bell, the inner circle rotates (scoots) clockwise one person.** They greet their new listening friend and talk again. Rotate four or five times and then switch roles with the outer circle becoming the talkers and movers.

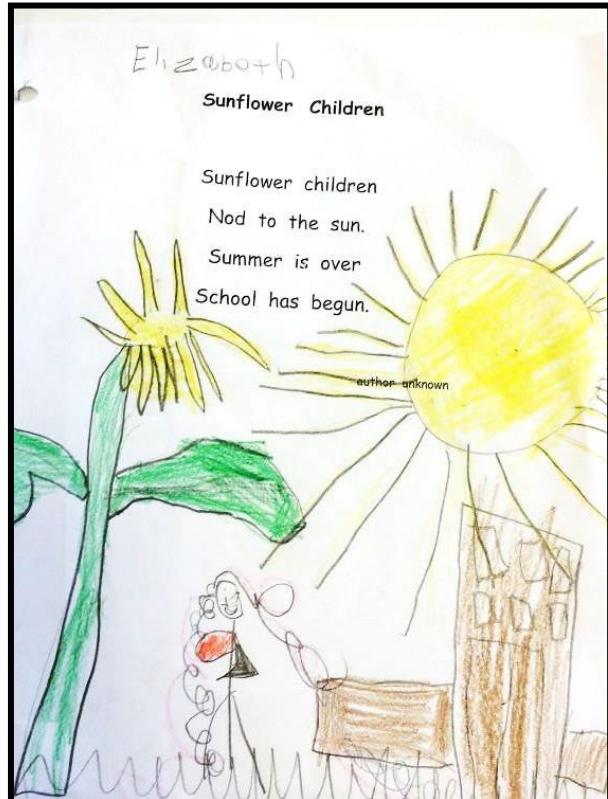
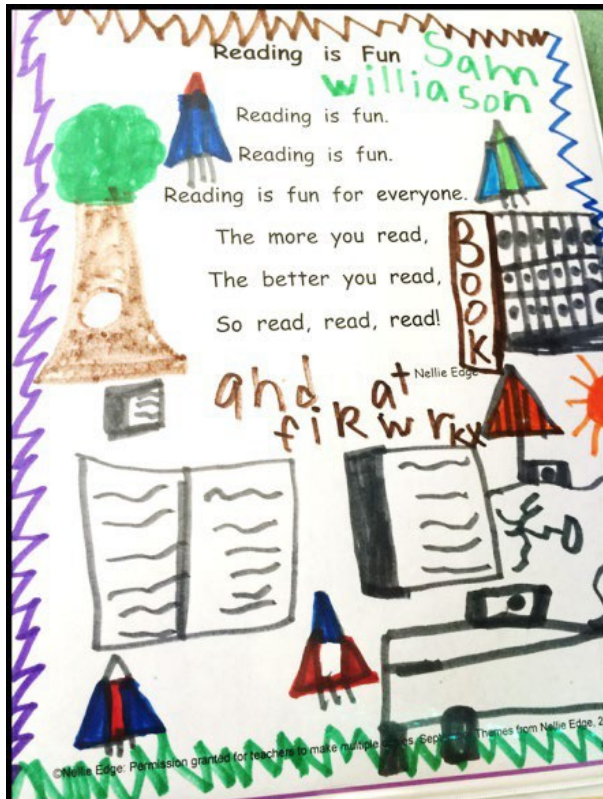


- **Children build friendships** and develop confidence in speaking to each other.
- **Learning increases** when children have a chance to talk about new concepts!
- **It is helpful for the shy child** to be on the listening side first.



# Reading Is Fun Is Often Our First - and Last "I Can Read" Poetry Notebook Page to Reread

Children illustrate our reading chant again the last day of school, tucking it into the back page cover of their Poetry Notebook. This joyful literacy ritual builds an "I can do it!" growth mindset.



Children love to see how much they've grown as illustrators!





# Engage the Imagination with "Vowel Bat" and His Song

What a Memorable Way to Reinforce Sounds, the Concept of Vowels, and Apply Phonics and Fingerspelling Skills



Winter Curry has adapted and slowed down the popular Vowel Bat Song from Diane Bonica and Shari Sloane. Her children perform it with exuberance!

- Speak and sing vowels slowly and distinctly if your **goal is phonics practice**.
- A fast and jivy version of "Vowel Bat" is recorded by Shari Sloane from the album "School is Cool." See Shari Sloane on [www.kidscount123.com](http://www.kidscount123.com)—it is a direct link from our Literacy Award and other Favorite Websites at [www.nellieedge.com](http://www.nellieedge.com).
- The puppet is from Katie & Co. (We made our own lowercase letters for the visual aid rather than use the uppercase letters that came with the puppet. Letters are attached with Velcro.)
- Sing slowly and challenge all learners to sing, sign, and articulate ♪"a-e-i-o-u: Vowel Bat!" **Reinforce the concept of nocturnal animals.**
- See the ASL tutorial browser for visual instruction for bat: [Michigan State University ASL \(American Sign Language\) Browser](http://Michigan State University ASL (American Sign Language) Browser). There is a direct link from our website under Literacy Award tab.

## Slow Vowel Bat Song ă

ă-ă-ă-ă

ă-ă-ă-ă

A bat

A bat

Vowel Bat

a - e - i - o - u

✎ - ✎ - ✎ - ✎ - ✎

## Vowel Bat

Invite the children to fingerspell and sign this playful phonics song. The sign for "bat" is hands crossed over chest to show folded wings, with index finger extended to show hanging upside down.





## What Are the Most Memorable Ways to Reinforce Phonics Skills?

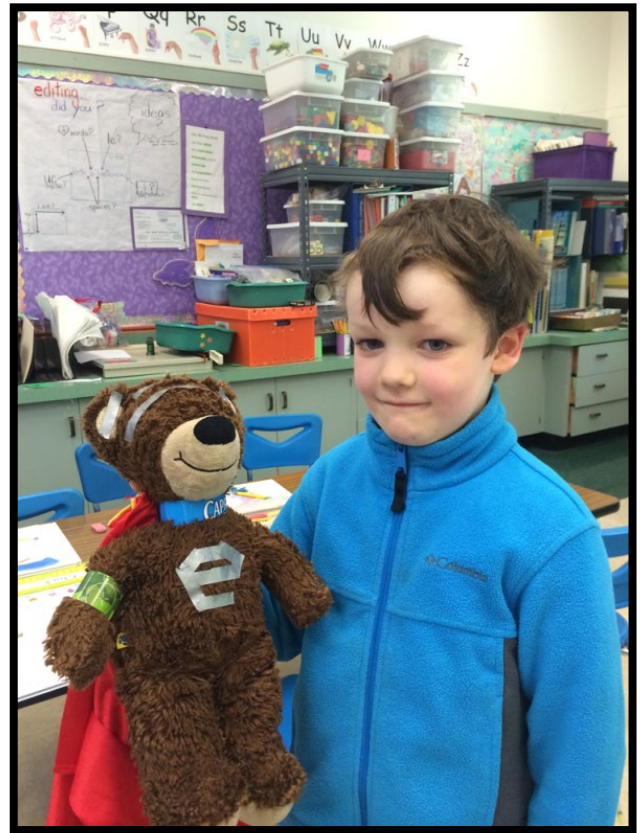
We take advantage of the musical brain and playful puppets:

♪ *Silent E Man is a Phonics Super Hero!*



With special thanks to Diane Bonica for "playing with phonics" and giving us this delightful song and dramatic literacy lesson.

♪ Who can turn hop into hope?  
Who can turn hop into hope?  
Silent E can!  
Silent E can!  
He's the one.  
Baby! ♪



Here's Adrian and his Silent E Bear!

Laura Flocker's students were so delighted with Silent E Man, who swooped down into the classroom singing his song, that children soon started arriving with their own "Silent E" characters that they had talked someone into helping them create from home.

### Phonological Awareness:

RF.K.2 Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes).

### Phonics and Word Recognition:

RF.K.3 Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.

Associate the long and short sounds with the common spellings (graphemes) for the five major vowels.



See video at [www.nellieedge.com](http://www.nellieedge.com) under Video Clips tab.

See Literacy Songs and Rhymes in Poetry Notebook Bundle on TPT



See Social Emotional Learning Supplement, Part 1

## ***The "Silent E" Man Song***

by Diane Bonica

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

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!

pop into Pope  
dot into dote  
pet into Pete

Tim into time  
bad into bade  
cop into cope

fad into fade  
tam into tame  
man into man



# Make Writing Real: Build a Culture of Engaged and Purposeful Writers

We Study About Class Pets and Read Fascinating Nonfiction

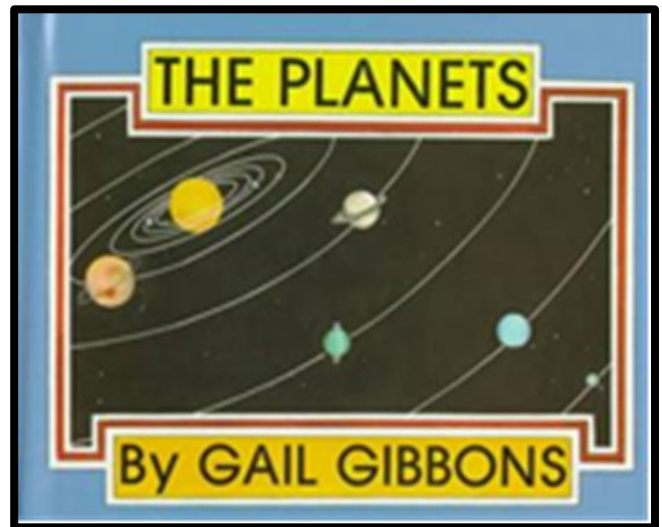


## Charlie the Turtle and his mailbox

When asked what he was doing as a writer this week, Dylan proudly announced he and John were writing a sequel to their book about Charlie, the class turtle. Online research was their tool.



*...They found that Charlie eats worms and he likes scrambled eggs...*



*The Planets by Gail Gibbons, Holiday House, 1993.*

- 50% of the books we read with children are nonfiction.
- Children independently choose to engage in information writing.
- Students are fascinated learning about the real world.



W.K.2., W.K.5. ...Name what they are writing about.

W.K.6. Explore a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing including collaboration with peers...

W.K.7. Participate in shared research and writing projects.



# Charlie and Gizmo Are the Kindergarten Mascot Box Turtles

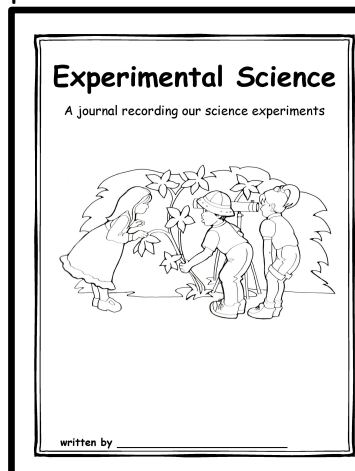
All year long students observe closely and study the life of their class turtles



Children observe the physical characteristics of these reptiles. They learn how turtles move, what they eat, and what their natural and classroom habitat is. Children learn how to draw a turtle and record their observations in the Experimental Science Journal.




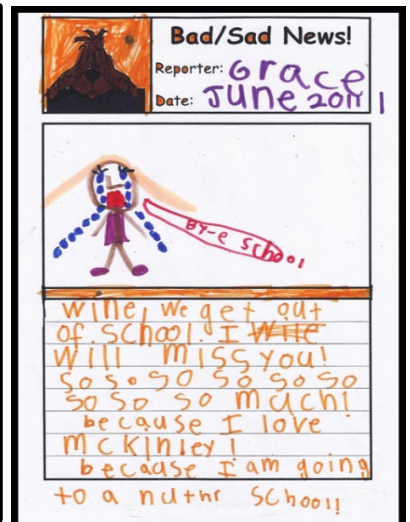
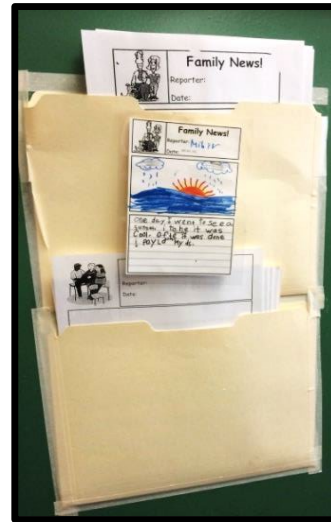
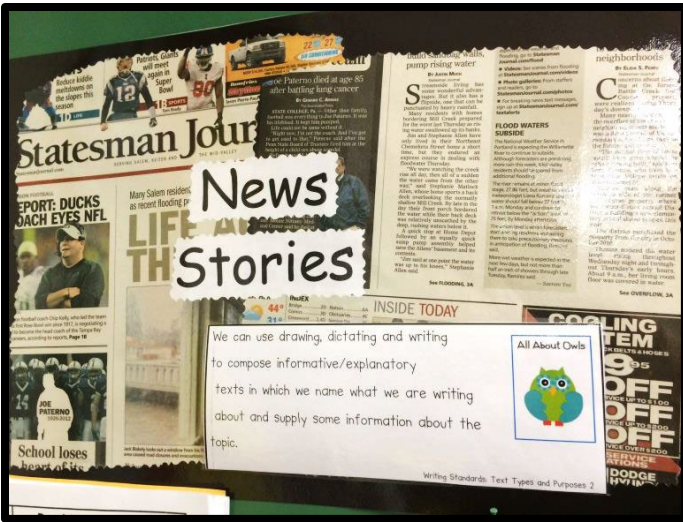
Kindergarten with Katie Nelson





# Building a Community of Engaged and Purposeful Writers

W.K.2. We can use drawing, dictating and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which we name what we are writing about and supply some information about the topic. 



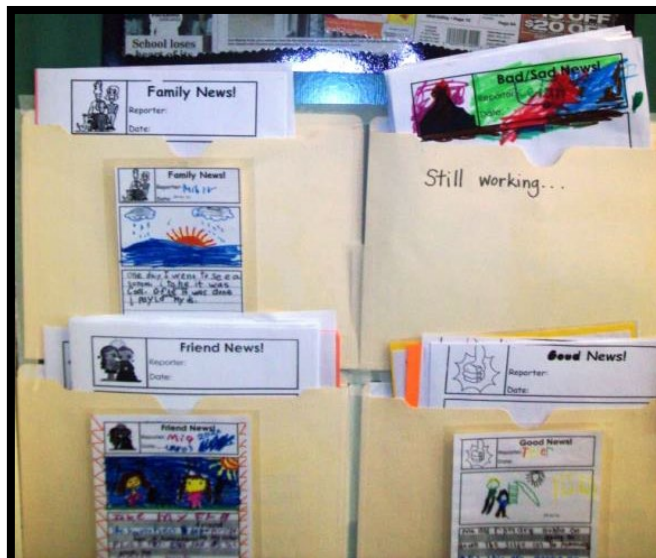
Children choose a News Story Template and write about a personally meaningful experience.

The story is date stamped and put in the "finished" basket to be shared later.

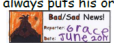


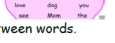
Adult underwriting is phased out as soon as it is no longer needed.

Later in the year, students self-reflect: What am I doing well?

Children become self-regulated learners. News Story File Folders and Templates are attached to the door. Katie Nelson saves and shares exemplars from children's actual independent writing to inform future kid writers.



## What Makes a Good News Story?

1. The news reporter always puts his or her name on the news story. 
2. The illustration shows details and matches the story. 
3. The reporter answers the questions: Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How? 
4. The reporter spells "heart words" conventionally and uses their best kid writing. 
5. The reporter leaves spaces between words.
6. The reporter uses punctuation at the end of every sentence. ( . , ? ! )
7. The reporter always writes in the white space.
8. The reporter reads his or her own news story.
9. The reporter often asks for "adult writing" and editing assistance.
10. The reporter stamps the date on the news story.

3 - 10 - 14

A variety of News Story choices are available to the young writers: Good News, Bad/Sad News, Friends News, Family News, Lost Tooth News, Ouch News. See FREEBIE K-1 News Story Printables on Nellie Edge TPT Store

# We Teach Children to Be Independent, Self-Regulated Learners


"I" Charts can be mounted on plain or decorated border paper.

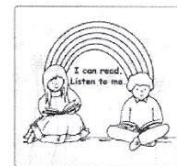
## The Stamp and Read Skinny Book Center: My Job

### "I" Chart

#### I is for Independence!

1. Follow the directions to make a stamp and read book.
2. On the cover, write **My Book**.
3. Also write by     (your name)    .
4. Choose one animal stamp and animal card to start with.  
"Remember: start at the staple."
5. Do one sentence per page.
6. Stamp a sentence with stamps and stamp cards. Leave a space between each word and put a period at the end.  

I	see	the		dog.
---	-----	-----	---	------
7. You can also write the animal name on each page and add your own kid writing ideas.
8. Write **the end** on the last page!
9. Read the book to a teacher. Ask the teacher to stamp: "I Can Read, Listen to Me!"
10. Use the date stamp on the inside cover of the book.
11. Put the book in the "finished basket" or share it at circle time.





# Empowered Writers Conduct End-of-Year Surveys

## We learned we are wonderfully imperfect!

*"Choose a random sample of 10-15 children. Remind everyone to do their very best 'name ticket writing'! Count and analyze the results: What did you learn?"*

### Are you perfect?


### What did you learn?

Kindergarten Survey	
yes	no
Emma Mihir SKYAN	Teacher Nellie CYPUS DANNO hh beetle ssike
by <u>Athan</u> date: _____	
I learned: _____	

Writing to Read: Compliments of [www.writingtoread.com](http://www.writingtoread.com)

NO  
Most of the people  
were honest.

- After noticing the first children surveyed were all answering yes, they were perfect, I said, *I'm going to put my name under the "no" column. I'm not perfect. I make lots of mistakes. It's how I learn!* From then on, the children felt more comfortable acknowledging that they too were learners and made mistakes.
- Analyzing was the second part of the survey. Athan's evaluation brought him to this conclusion: *Most of the people were honest.*

 Information writing and analyzing research: It was amazing to see by the end of the year how many children were able to write all of the names of their classmates—and they chose to do it! They were thoughtful and engaged as they wrote about what they had observed or learned.

 Survey forms available for in **Social Emotional Learning** supplement

## Ask Families to Make Blank Books for School and Home: How to Make a Stapled Skinny Book for Writing

Dear Parents,

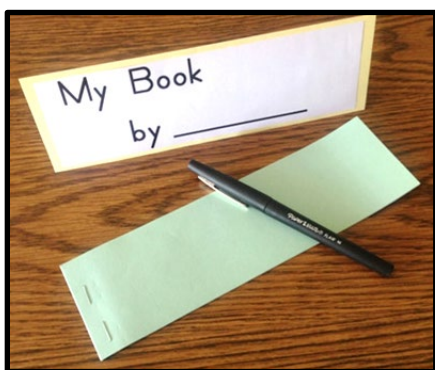
Here's a simple way to **create stapled blank "Skinny Books"** for your young writer and illustrator. The ideal size is about 2" x 8.5". Use colored paper if you have it for a front and back. Staple two or three white blank pages inside.

**We encourage the children to write "My Book by \_\_\_\_\_" and/or to create their own book title.** They can also "fancy up" a page that says "The end."

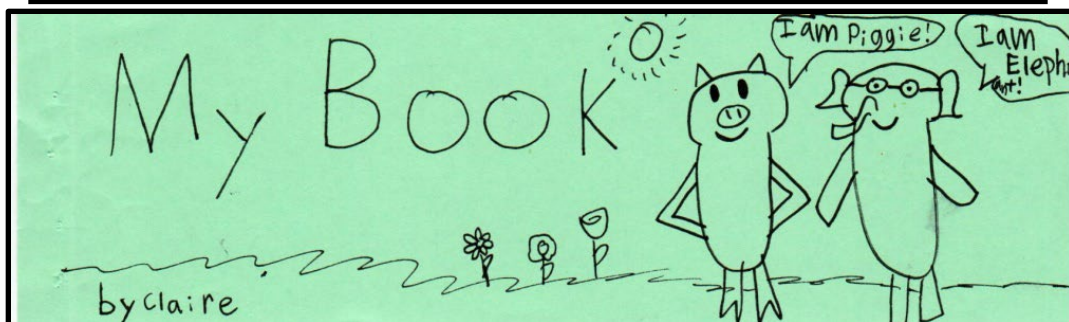
As needed, give your child a model for "My Book" and "The end" as well as a "heart word sentence" to copy such as "I see a..." or "I see the..."

**Your young writer may need lots of practice** before the writing is legible. That's okay! Honor your child's progress: Accept your child's approximation to conventional writing and keep the bookmaking process FUN!

**Consider giving your child stamps or stickers** to complete the sentence or encourage him or her to draw a favorite animal on each page and to start writing each sentence by the staples. (See drawing guides in this collection.)



**Tip: Create more independence:**  
Teach your child **how to use a stapler** and make their own Skinny Book.



From *A Family Guide to Growing Young Writers* by Nellie Edge, © 2019, TPT.



## Parents as Partners

### How to Make Rubber Band Books

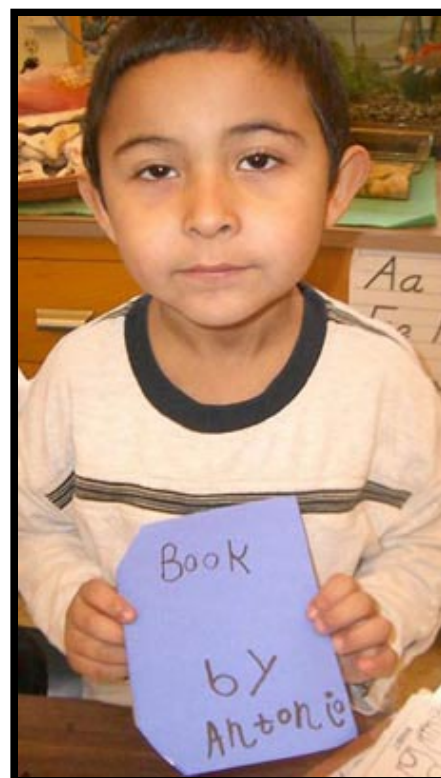
1. Pre-cut 8.5" x 5.75" strips of white paper.
2. Fold in half.
3. Cut a "V" from the top and the bottom.
4. Cut 8.5 x 11-inch colored construction paper in half and fold.
5. Rubber bands 3# is best size.
6. Children choose from assorted colored covers and assemble the book by laying the smaller white sheet on top of the colored sheet and attaching the rubber band in the V cut out.

One folded paper and one cover makes a 4-page book.

**Tip:** Children love to make their own Rubber Band Books!  
Teach them how step-by-step.



Special thanks to Becky Leber, from whom we first learned about these really cool little books.



# How to Make Folded Blank Books for Writing

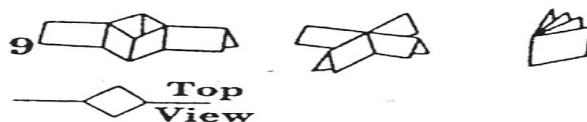
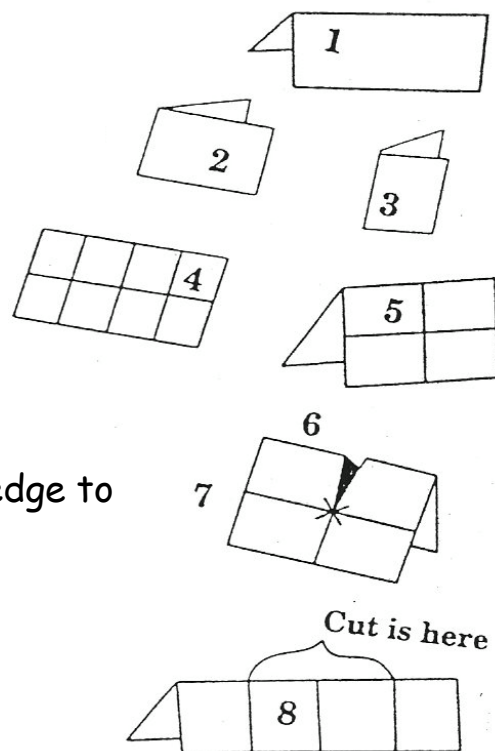
Or empower your child by teaching them to make their own!

Dear Parents,

Here's a great technique for creating a folded blank book. Make several! If your child wants to master the fold-a-book technique, work with them. Soon they may create their own blank books for writing and illustrating purposes. Start with an 11" x 17" sheet; later, try using an 8.5" x 11" sheet.

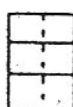
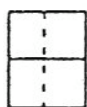
## Fold-A-Book Instructions

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** (up 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

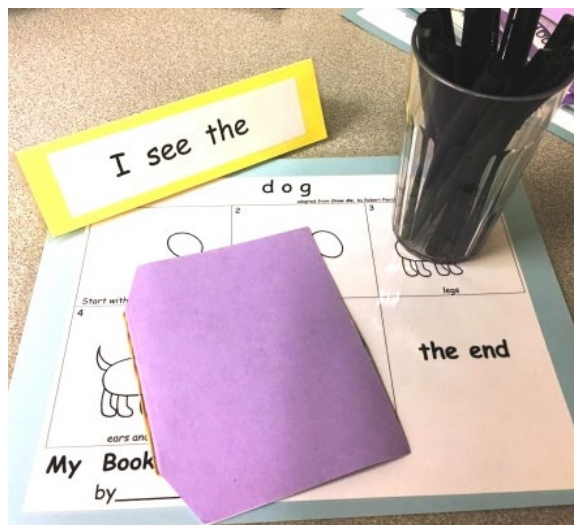
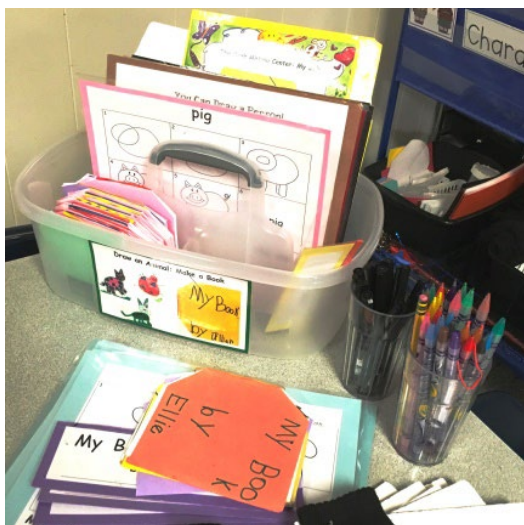
A sheet (or sheets) of paper are cut in half or thirds and stapled to form an 8, 12, or 16-page child-size Little Book.





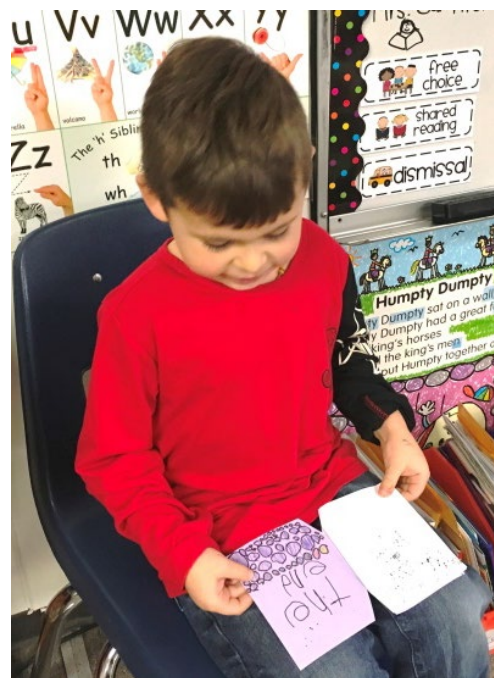
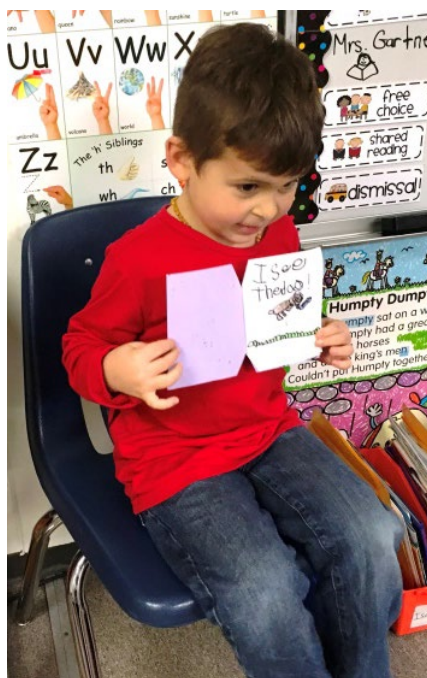
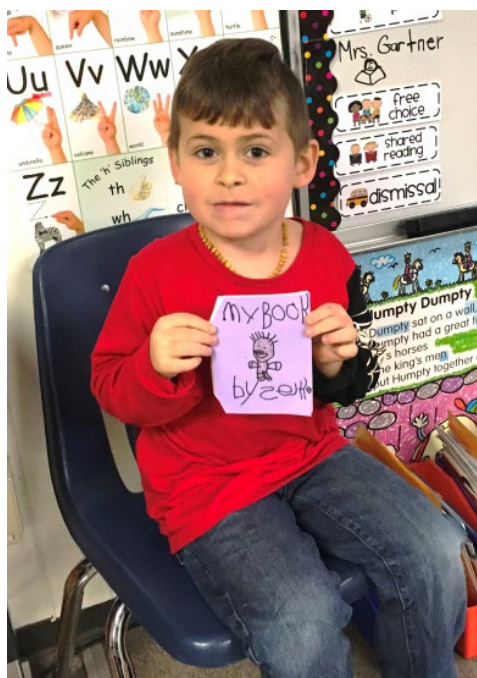
# Young Writers Build "I Can Do It!" Writing Confidence: I Am an Author Now!

A simple "heart word" sentence model supports kindergartners in making their own little book: "I see the..."



Kindergartners love to draw animals and write their own little books. Meaningful word work activities involve making books using guided animal drawing pages, sentence writing models, pens, and writing materials stored in an Independent Writing Center Tote. In this lesson, students learn to draw a dog. They practice writing "My book," "by," "the end" and a sentence (I see the dog.) about their animal. As children build their writing stamina, additional pages may be added to the "Rubber Band Books." **This Is the Beginning of Bookmaking.** By the end of the year each child will write, edit, illustrate, and publish an 8-page board book.

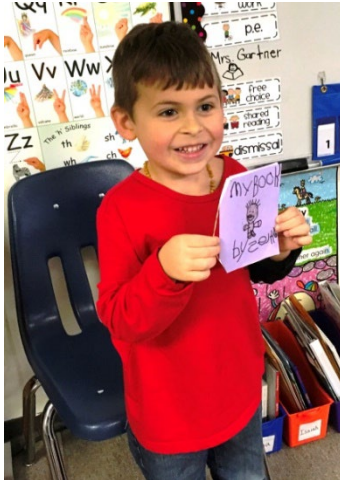
## Students Enjoy Writing When We Give Them Scaffolding to Build on Success



The experience of sitting in the Author's Chair and proudly sharing his work helps this young author see himself as an author and illustrator who does quality work.



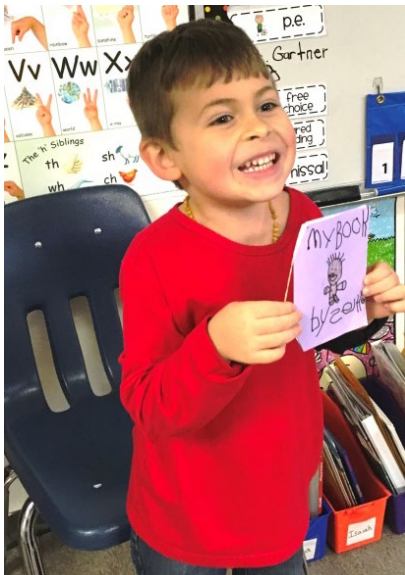
## The Final Piece of the Writing Process Is Sharing Your Writing and Receiving Feedback



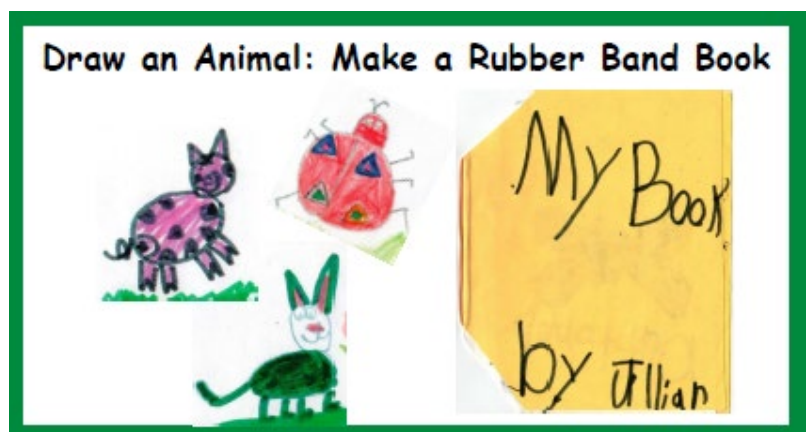
While Zeke is reading his book, the children listen attentively. After he shares his last page with "the end," his teacher, Mrs. Corliss, provides feedback to the whole class:

- Notice he wrote "My Book," and "by Zeke," and he left spaces between words.
- Zeke decided to draw a picture of himself on his book cover.
- He wrote "the end" and fancied up the page by drawing—rocks!
- Thank you for sharing your book. We can tell you like to do quality work.
- Who has a compliment or question for Zeke?
- Okay, you can give Zeke applause for his book now.

### What a Sense of Pride and Awe



All smiles, Zeke then turns to teacher and says, "And I'm an author now!"



Authentic word work grows kindergarten writers. Children build fluency for writing workshop by repeatedly writing high-frequency "heart word" sentences (I see the..., I like my..., I can see a...).

We tell students: "Your words and pictures tell a story."



# Sitting in the Author's Chair by Bobbi Fisher

From *Inside the Classroom*, collected articles by Bobbi Fisher, Heinemann, 1996.

Having an author's chair (Hansen and Graves 1983) is one way to encourage the children to share themselves as writers, to listen as readers, and to experience reading like a writer and writing like a reader.

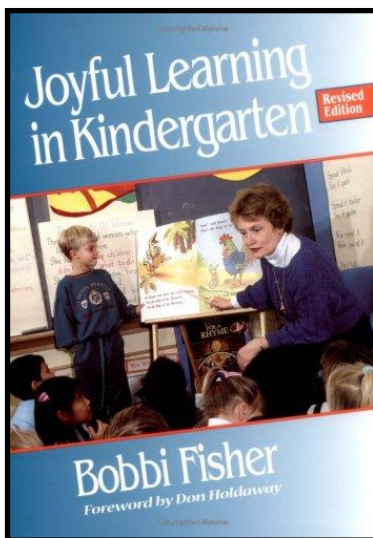
## Supporting the Children

**My role is to support the children in becoming more and more in charge of the author's chair** by helping them develop a procedure for sharing and by modeling what writers (the authors and readers (the audience) do in the process. At the beginning of the year, although I sit in the group as one of the audience, I am more directive about what goes on. As time passes, I become just another member of the group.

**During the first few days of author's chair, I initiate the introductory reading by the author, the "I notice" questions, and the procedure for calling on people to share**, by sharing a piece I have written. Then, after two children have shared their work, we discuss what went on and begin to write some rules for the audience. We start by focusing on the role of the audience because everyone has participated as a member of that group. The rules usually include, *Don't talk*, *Wait to be called*, and *Say what you notice*.

After a few weeks, when most of the children have sat in the author's chair, we write some rules for the author: *Hold your paper so everyone can see it*, *Don't be silly*, and *Don't call on the same people all of the time*. Throughout the year, we review, edit, and rewrite these rules.

**I continually demonstrate different audience responses.** At first, I mention things I "notice": **"I notice that you have a capital at the beginning of your sentence."** Then, when I feel that enough trust has developed in our classroom community, I model more open-ended comments and questions that go beyond what the author is doing: **"How did you learn to draw roofs on houses?"** "Are you going to draw any more pictures about baseball?"



Throughout the year, during author's chair, we continually focus on both the writer's stance (as an author) and the reader's stance (as an audience member). My goal is for the children to take more and more responsibility in the process and know that they are authors.

-----

*Our collaboration with master kindergarten teacher and best-selling author Bobbi Fisher continues to inspire "best practices" in early literacy. Her understanding of the role of "community," respect for the integrity of childhood, and wisdom in honoring the learning process are all parts of our framework for excellence. N.E.*

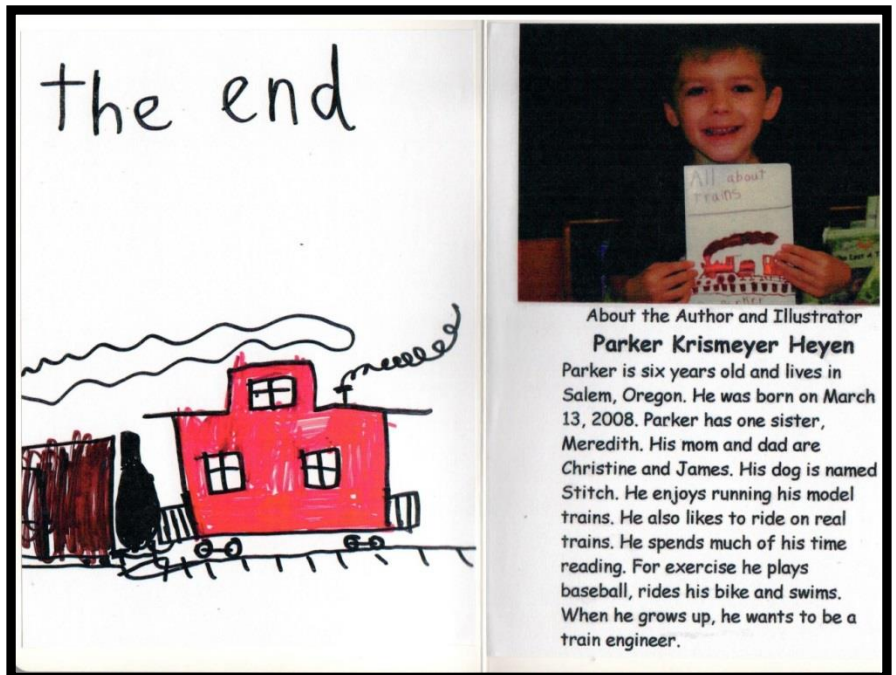
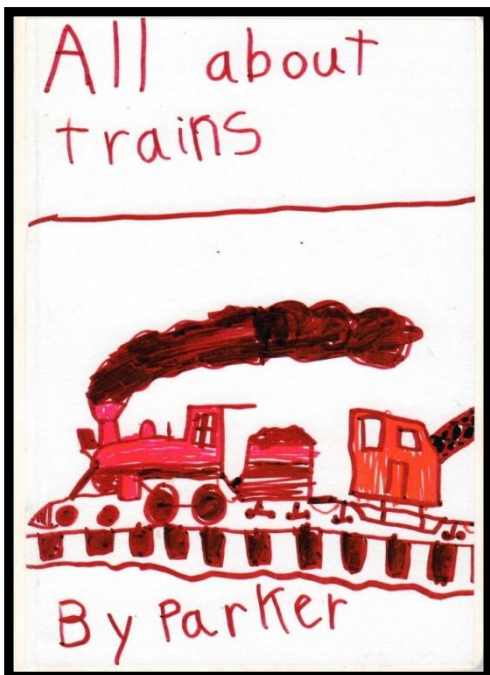
# Allow Your Writing Framework to Nurture Creativity

## Celebrate the Voices of Kindergarten Writers

Not all writing pieces need to fit into one prescriptive category of opinion, narrative, or information writing. Provide children opportunity for the creative process to unfold and they will write about what is most real in their lives. Their hearts and imaginations are reflected through pages of pen and ink. After all, building the disposition of prolific writers is the purpose of deep meaning-centered CCSS writing instruction.



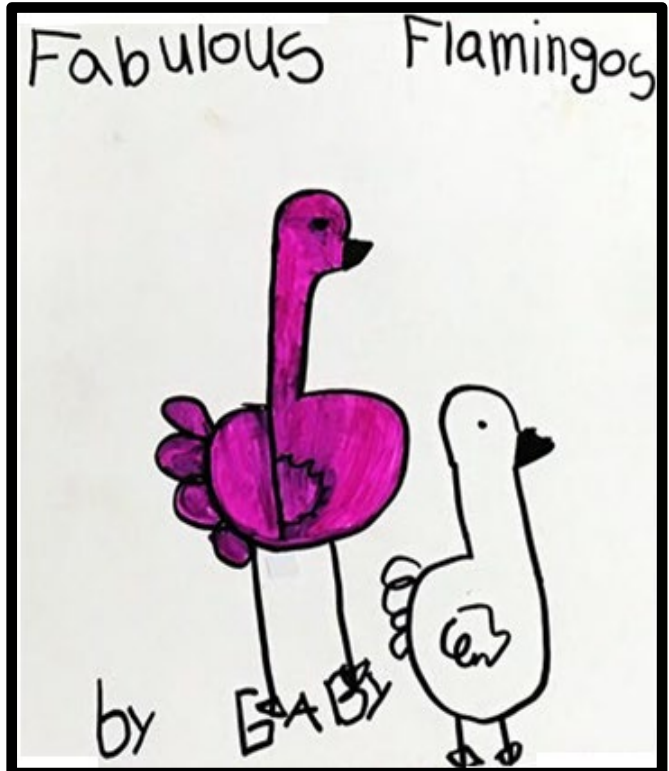
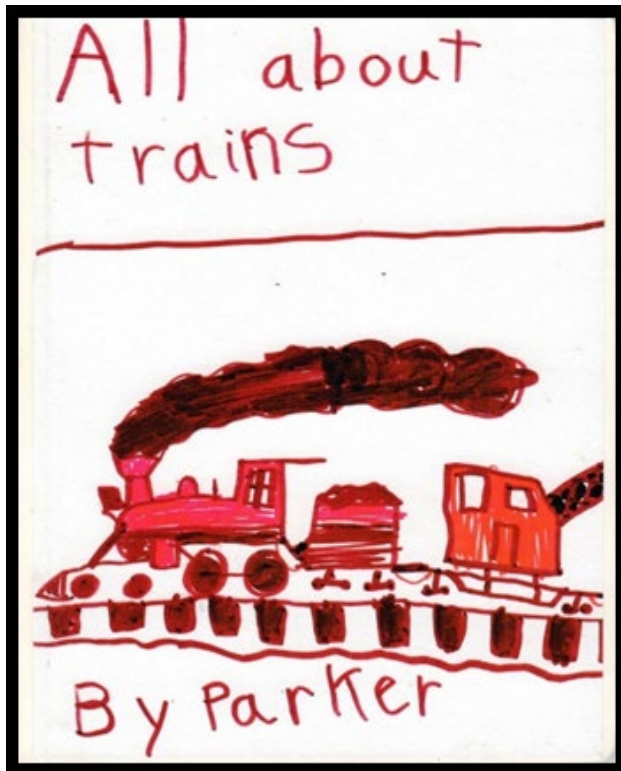
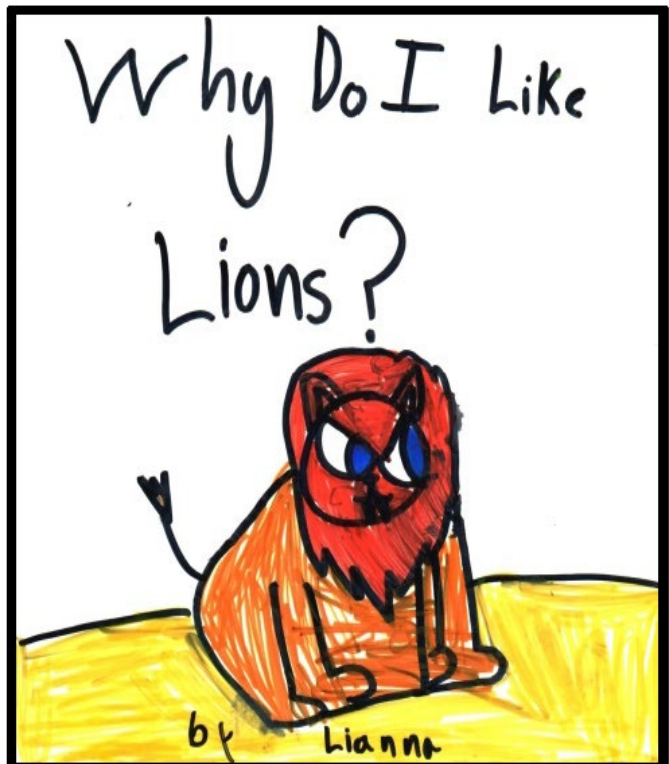
**All year, Parker was the boy who loved trains**



Children write and draw directly onto the blank board book from their edited draft. We make color copies to have as mentor texts for the following year. Parker's information book was rich in detail: A perfect addition to the class library!



**Publish Children's Books and Celebrate Young Authors:**  
*This is one of the best things we can do to build an  
"I can do it" mindset!*

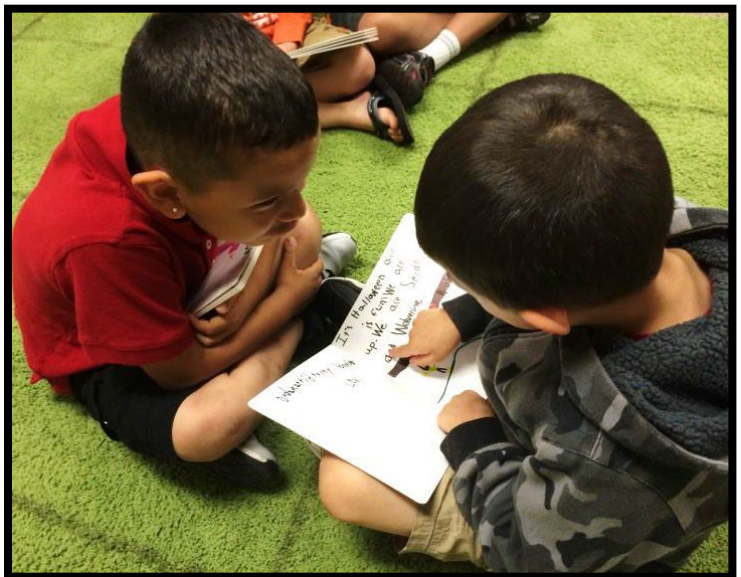
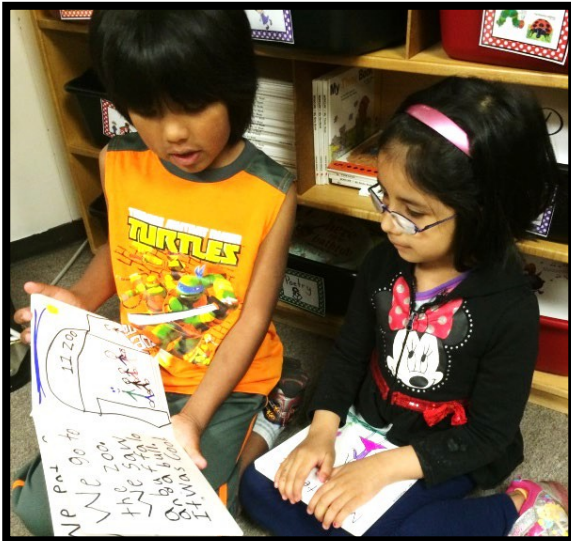


*Grow engaged and purposeful writers and empower them to  
love the writing process!*



## Friends Honor and Listen to Each Other, Ask Questions, and Provide Empowering Feedback About Published Books

**Teachers:** You must save time for students to share and celebrate their new skills as authors and illustrators: What a way to end the year!



***In our comprehensive writing curriculum, writing becomes a vehicle for reading fluency!***

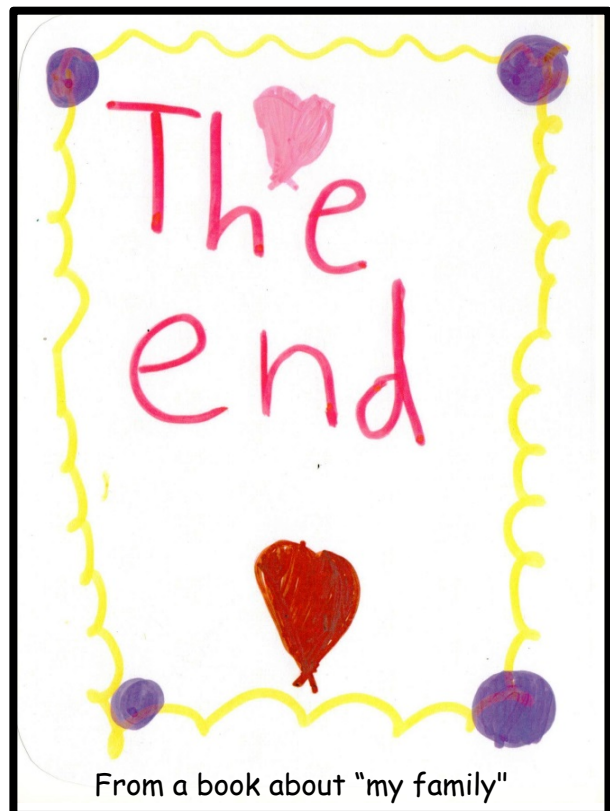
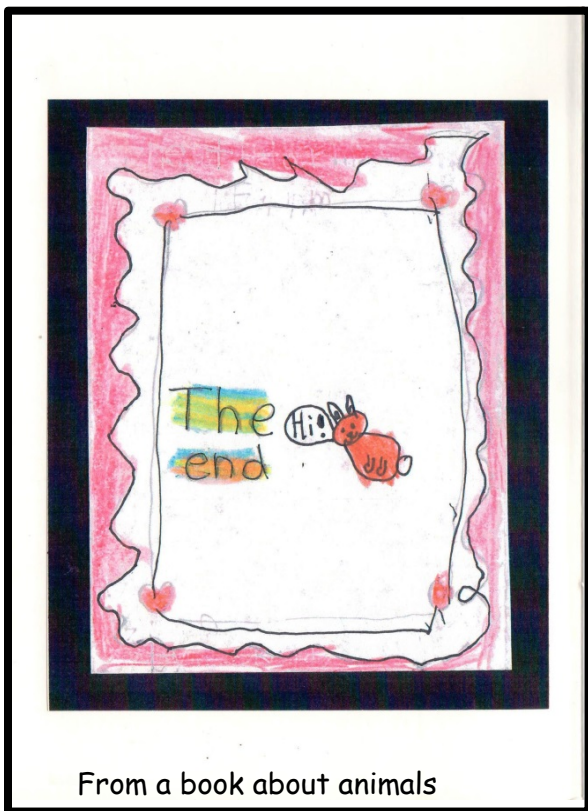
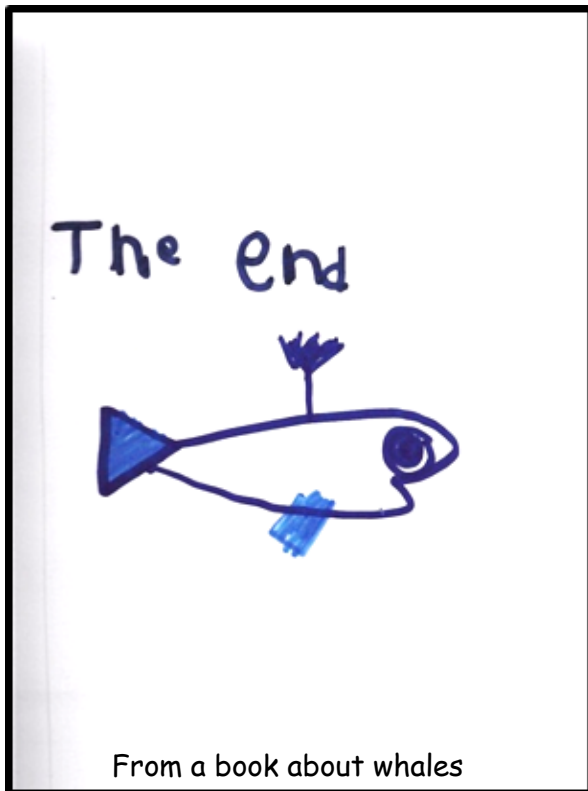
- Students have learned to touch under each word.
- Students have the stamina to write and illustrate 8-page books!
- It is hard to imagine kindergarten writers being more empowered!

***Not only do students learn to write; they love to write...now and forever!***



# Kindergarten Authors and Illustrators Fancy Up Their End Pages

Young writers do quality handwriting, create "the end" pages, and make really cool books!



Consider storing this in the Independent Writing Totes as samples of kindergarten writing.

## How do we talk to young writers?

- "Wow! You did quality handwriting: it sure is easy to read."
- "You put a lot of design work into that page. It is interesting and fun to look at."
- "You must feel proud of your detailed page. You sure have grown as a writer."

From Nellie Edge Online Seminar #3  
[www.nellieedge.com](http://www.nellieedge.com)

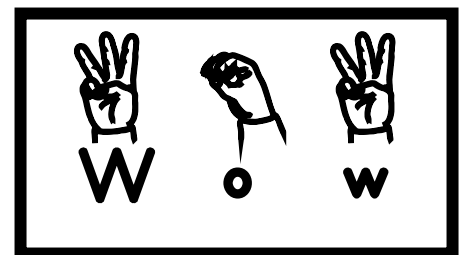


# Children Learn Many Playful Ways to Salute Their Friends: "Let's Give Her a WOW!"

This playful WOW Fingerspelling Salute is used to honor children in Katie Nelson's Kindergarten. After sharing a young author's book, she might invite the children, "Let's give him a Wow!"



Let's give him A "WOW"!



Children practice "quick writes." This becomes a playful part of phonics word work: *If you know 'wow' - you also know how, now, cow, bow, and pow!* Children soon create the house of "ow" using whiteboards.



# Social Emotional Learning in Kindergarten: Book 1 Printables

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<b>Research and Beliefs about Teaching and Learning</b> .....	<b>1.</b>
Writing Tote Labels: We Love Lists, Draw an Animal: Make a Book .....	
<b>Oral Language Traditions: Building a Joyful Community of Learners</b> .....	<b>2.</b>
Hola Mis Amigos/Hello My Friend, Adios Amigos/Goodbye My Friends .....	
Hickety, Tickety Bumble Bee .....	
Willabee Wallabee Woo .....	
The More We Get Together .....	
Helper of the Day .....	
The Pledge .....	
Fall is Coming .....	
ABC Phonics: Sing, Sign, and Read! Family Chart .....	
Baby Birdie .....	
You're My Friend .....	
Hello Neighbor .....	
I Am a Good Speaker .....	
I Am a Good Listener .....	
Miss Mary Mack .....	
<b>Nurturing Social-Emotional Skills Within a Joyful Classroom</b> .....	<b>3.</b>
Before You Speak (Wrinkled Heart Rhyme) .....	
Hands Are Not for Hurting™ .....	
The Kindness Pledge .....	
Poem for Martin Luther King, Jr. (Acts of Peace) .....	
T-h-a-n-k: Thank You Song .....	
American Sign Language Question Cue Cards .....	
<b>The Heart of Kindergarten: Memorable Rituals, Traditions, and Celebrations!</b> .....	<b>4.</b>
Hola Mis Amigos / Adios Amigos .....	
Hawaiian Birthday Love Song .....	
The Earth Revolves Around the Sun .....	
Home-to-School Book Buddy Ritual .....	
Read and Sing Book Club and Parent Letter .....	
When I am 100 Years Old .....	
See You Later, Alligator .....	
<b>Engaging Strategies Accelerate Learning: Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing</b> .....	<b>5.</b>
L-O-V-E Spells Love .....	
This is My House: H-o-u-s-e .....	
There's an "ing" in King .....	
You're My Friend: F-r-i-e-n-d .....	
Reading is Fun .....	
Slow Vowel Bat Song .....	
Silent E Man Song .....	
End-of-Year Kindergarten Survey .....	
The End .....	
WOW! The house of "ow" .....	
How to Use QR Codes .....	

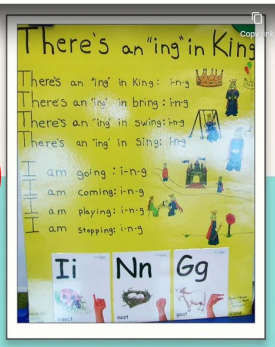
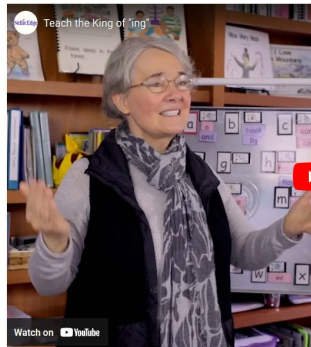
# Where Can I Learn More? 3 Ways To...

- Enjoy joyful, multisensory strategies across the curriculum
- Build an "I can do it!" mindset and love of learning
- Honor English Language Learners
- Take advantage of how the brain learns best
- Provide actionable Parents as Partners resources

## 1. **Follow** Nellie Edge SEL and Literacy Blogs

<https://nellieedge.com/weekly-focus/>

## 2. **Watch** joyful, multisensory teaching and learning on Nellie Edge YouTube channel.



## 3. **Study** Nellie Edge Online Seminars: Choose strategies to watch again and again. Make best practices come alive in your own classroom! Includes all the resources needed to implement these proven practices. **Have the best year ever!** <https://nellieedge.com/kindergarten-online-seminars/>

**Watch for SEL Online Seminar! Follow Nellie Edge Weekly Blog for 1st chance!**



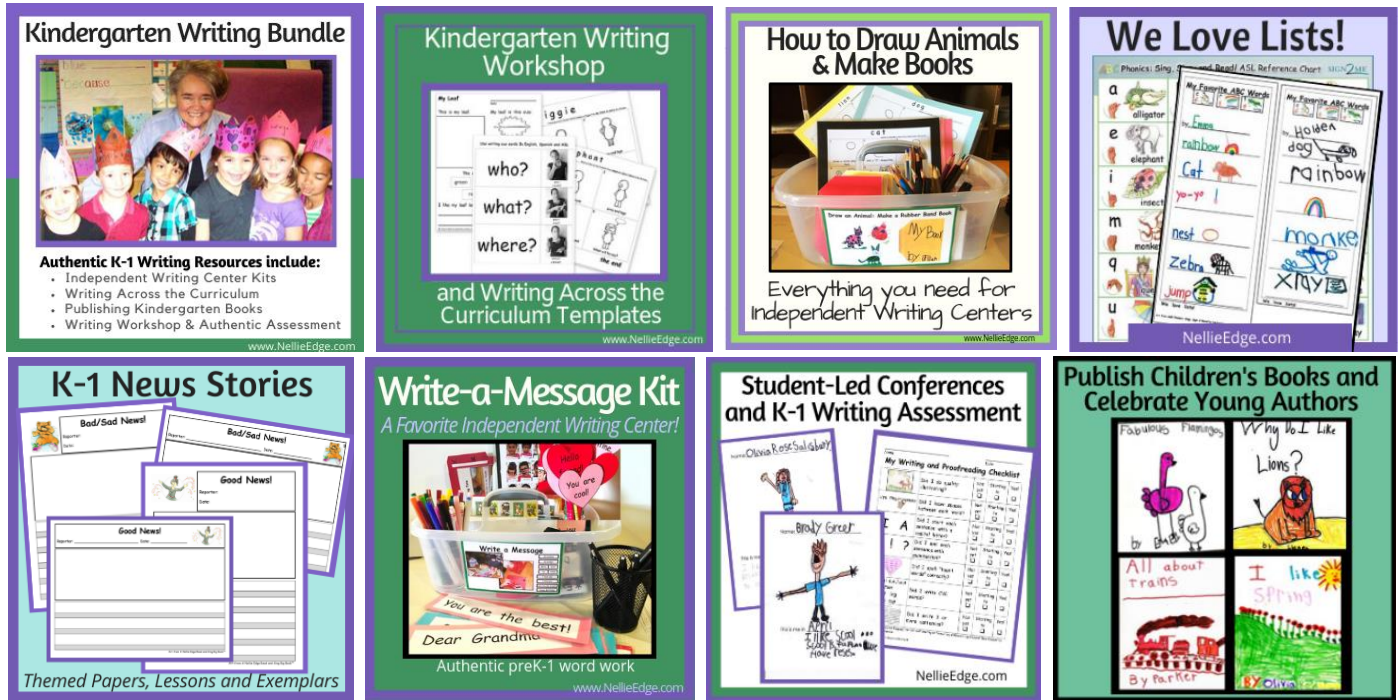
- State-of-the-arts MasterClass: More online seminars coming
- Step-by-step video tutorials
- By kindergarten teachers for kindergarten and early literacy educators
- Optional graduate credit available
- Make your PLC time count!

*"All the best things I do come from Nellie Edge Seminars!"*



# Authentic Writing Experiences Empower Learners with an "I can do it!" Attitude

Choose resources that scaffold learning and help students find their own voice to build confidence drawing, writing, thinking, and creating!



## So Many Reasons to Love It!

*"This bundle gave my kinders the scaffolding and confidence to truly become writers. The ideas are simple yet profound; this product should be required in every kinder classroom."* M.R. quote from TPT

*"Just finished one of her workshops and it was amazing! Can't wait to use this in my classroom and see the great works of writing my students will produce. Thank you for this amazing resource."* Nicola L. quote from TPT

*"My first-grade students love learning how to draw and write about the animals. The grocery and friends list was a big hit with my class."* Kristiana P. quote from TPT

*"I attended a Nellie Edge training with my building's kindergarten team and loved the resources! I knew what the kinder team was teaching, and I am able to expand on that in first grade."* Shana M. quote from TPT

*"A super resource! So much packed in one bundle. Thanks!"* Renee B. quote from TPT

*"The kids loved this as an intervention supplement."* Sarah T. quote from TPT

## Chapter 5

# ***Lessons That Celebrate Excellence and Build a Love of Learning***

*With our hearts we know how to apply best practices -systematically  
and with great intention.*

## **NOTES**



***Reach for the stars with the lives of our children...***

N.E.



# **Social Emotional Learning in Kindergarten:** *Celebrating Islands of Excellence with Joyful Teaching and Learning*

*As a result of studying this book or taking this workshop or online seminar, what do you want to be doing in the classroom 1 week, 1 month, and 4 months from now?*

*What additional joyful and empowering strategies will you weave into your curriculum to nurture Social Emotional Learning?*

*Consider these professional development goals as **practicum projects** and as **dialog topics** for your Professional Learning Community (PLC).*

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**Give yourself permission to go slowly**

*Remember: The most important ingredient in the classroom is a wise, caring, and responsive teacher. So be kind to yourself, walk softly, and enjoy the journey...*

# **Take Your Teaching to a Higher Level: Earn Graduate Credit!**

## ***Social Emotional Learning in Kindergarten: Meaningful Practicum Suggestions***

*University Credit Option - PEDU 9625: Joyful Accelerated Literacy Practicum*

15 hours practicum project work is required for **each** unit of credit. *Social Emotional Learning in Kindergarten* may be taken for up to 3 units of credits.

**Choose any one suggestion to develop an in-depth practicum or any combination of meaningful projects that would allow you to apply the skills shared in this resource book/online seminar in the most useful and relevant way.** How can you use the content of this Nellie Edge Distance Learning PD to make your teaching more effective and powerful for the lives of your students? What do you want to be doing in your classroom one week, one month, and four months from now as a result of this professional development?

**Dr. Lifson at the University of the Pacific always allows teachers to design their own practicum project** that meets their unique teaching and learning needs. You **DO NOT NEED** to write a 3-page paper unless that is a meaningful project and would be the best way for you to improve your teaching. **Consider the practicum suggestions on the following Sample Time Log:** Which projects will meet your goal of weaving social and emotional learning across the curriculum and including meaningful family involvement?

- Register at <https://teacherfriendly.com/nellie-edge-online-seminars/> using a credit card.
- Each unit of graduate credit costs \$62.00.
- You may take this practicum for up to 3 semester hours of graduate credit.
- You have up to 4 months to complete your practicum from when you submit the official registration form online. You may request an extension.
- **The final projects are submitted online directly to the University.** Nellie Edge does not see them unless you email a copy to [info@NellieEdge.com](mailto:info@NellieEdge.com) or send it to 1580 Rio Vista Way S., Salem, OR 97302. (I DO enjoy seeing practicum projects and sharing them with other teachers.)
- **For support**, you can use the "Contact Support" link found on the registration page, contact [info@teacherfriendly.com](mailto:info@teacherfriendly.com) or call 949-646-9696.

*Dr. Lifson says our teachers turn in the finest projects in the country!*


***What will be the most relevant practicum projects for you?***

(Need ideas? Start with sample projects you'll find on the next page.)



## Sample Time Log for Graduate Credit Suggestions

*Each practicum project may take 2-5 hours (or more) depending on what you include.*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Objective: Weave SEL Strategies Across the Curriculum</b>	<b>Hours</b> (example)
	Printed and bound "Social Emotional Learning in Kindergarten." Studied book and responded to Professional Learning Community (PLC) questions.  Downloaded and organized SEL Book 1 Supplement pages	10
	Made class books: <i>"All About Teacher" in English and Spanish, "I Love The Earth," and "Hip Hip Hooray!"</i> to celebrate student heart word mastery.	6
	Developed resources/props for Back-to-School Family Scavenger Hunt; mounted and laminated 26 <i>ABC Phonics</i> charts with magnets for parents.	4
	Studied ASL video: Learned to sing and sign <i>The More We Get Together</i> . Downloaded connect-to-print resources. Used "I Can Read" page.	
	Made and laminated large "Reading Is Fun!" poster; added photos of students reading, printed sets of "I Can Read" pages, and purchased and prepared 26 Poetry Notebooks for students.	
	Edited 10 "Parents as Partners" letters for my kindergarten SEL program.	
	Taught 6 songs, poems, and rhymes that develop Social and Emotional Learning. Gave students the "I Can Read" page and invited them to illustrate the words.	
	Learned to sing and <b>fingerspell</b> the <i>ABC Phonics: Sing, Sign, and Read!</i> song. Created vertical <i>ABC Phonics</i> chart backed with foam board.	
	Studied Nellie Edge website pages documenting a multisensory, art-rich, comprehensive writing program. Created a list of the SEL best writing practices I want to make routine in my classroom.	
	Designed a Parents as Partners in Kindergarten Success program. Adapted eight SEL parent letters. Created an information booklet to send home.	
	Studied Optimum Learning Model and presented "I love you" circles of writing mastery lessons, integrating handwriting and "heart words."	
	Downloaded and edited Nellie Edge Family-Friendly Learning Calendar. Printed 30 copies	
	Taught the "King of ing" lesson after studying ASL video; created crowns and poster. Printed "I Can Read" pages for Poetry Notebook.	
	Learned an Spanish/English Greeting Song: <i>Hola Mis Amigos/Hello My Friend</i> .	
	Implemented Helper of the Day strategy: Created student name/fingerspelling cards.	
	Organized and copied practicum projects. Took photos. Submitted practicum online.	
	<b>Total hours of involvement: 15 hours per credit (45 hours = 3 credits)</b>	

# How to Bind Your Social Emotional Learning Resource Book

For this product and instructions, we used FedEx for their binding services. You can submit your request two ways. One is more expensive and less work; the other requires more of your time and resources but is less expensive.

**Option 1 (the only affordable way):** Print the product yourself and have it bound:

- This will cost around \$6.00.
- You may be able to wait at FedEx while they bind the book.

1. Print the first page on heavy paper in full color.
2. When printing double-sided, use 24# ultra-white paper.
3. Consider printing pages of beautiful exemplars in full color!
4. Print the remaining product with these choices on the Print screen:
  - a. Click: Print in grayscale (black and white)
  - b. Double-sided (if this is an option)
  - c. Pages to Print: All
  - d. Orientation: Portrait

5. Take the printed pages to your local FedEx Print Center and request:
  - a. Coil bound on long edge; clear front cover; black vinyl back cover.

Go to <https://www.fedex.com/en-us/printing.html> and sign up if you wish.

**Option 2:** Email your PDF file as a link to a local FedEx Print Center for them to print:

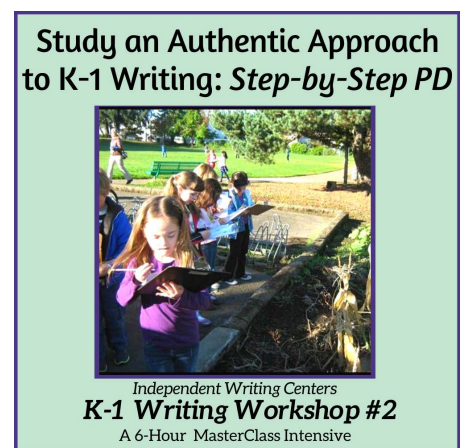
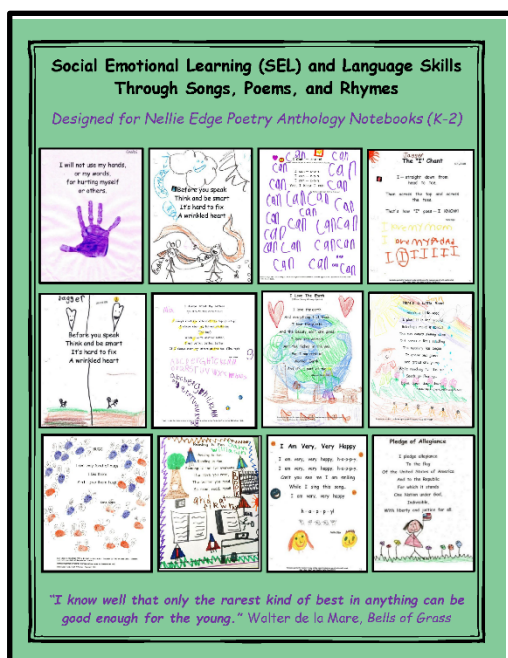
1. This will cost \$30.00 or more. **Be sure to get a quote prior to printing.**
2. Search online for your local FedEx Print Center (not just shipping center); call and request their email address.





3. If you don't have it, [download Adobe Reader DC](#) and keep the box checked for "Install the Acrobat Reader Chrome Extension."
4. Follow the directions to connect your Google (or Facebook or Apple) account.
5. Open your downloaded product file in Adobe Reader DC and make sure you're signed into Adobe.
6. Click on "Share" in the top right corner.
7. In the pop-up box, click "Get Link" and "Create Link."
8. When it appears, click "Copy Link," and it will be on your clipboard.
9. Compose an email to your local FedEx Print Center and paste the file link into the body of the email.
10. Paste these instructions below:
  - a. Print pages full size portrait
  - b. Print back-to-back on 24# ultra-white paper (except cover), use photo paper for cover
  - c. Print the first page as the cover on heavy paper
  - d. Include the first page (cover) as part of the book
  - e. Coil bound on long edge
  - f. Clear front cover
  - g. Black vinyl cover

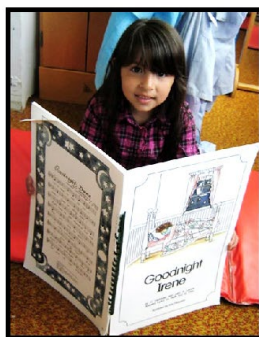
**Other Nellie Edge Resource Books on TPT to consider binding for curriculum planning:**



## Social Emotional Learning in Kindergarten: *What Is coming in Book 2 and Printables?*

## Chapter 1

## Choose Books Worthy of Our Children for Grand Conversations and Social Emotional Learning



I know well that only the rarest  
kind of best in anything can be  
good enough for the young.  
Walter de la Mare *Bells of Grass*



## Chapter 2

## Parents as Partners in Developing Social Emotional Intelligence and Literacy



*As teachers of the young, we have a "covenant" with parents that says,  
"We jointly share responsibility for teaching your child."*

- Ernest Boyer  
The Carnegie Foundation for the  
Advancement of Teaching

## Chapter 3

### Purposeful Literacy Play: Develop Self-Regulation, Language, and Social-Emotional Skills



Photos and inspiration from Jacque Verrall



*Make play and games important parts of the curriculum...Instead of getting rid of blocks and dress-up clothes, kindergarten teachers need to primarily focus on improving the quality of make-believe play...*

Excerpts from *Tools of the Mind: A Vygotskian Approach to Early Childhood Education*, by Elena Bodrova and Deborah Lee. 2006.

*I still remember the fun I had in kindergarten!*

## Chapter 4

### Poetry and Songs Build Social Emotional Skills and Language



*Children need to memorize, recite, and perform language, to take pleasure in the sound of language and turn that pleasure over to an audience. -Donald Hall*

## Chapter 5: Resources for Excellence and University Credit Option

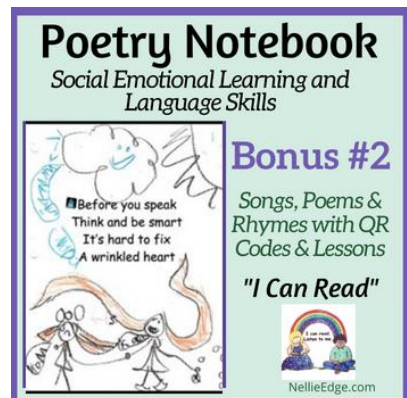
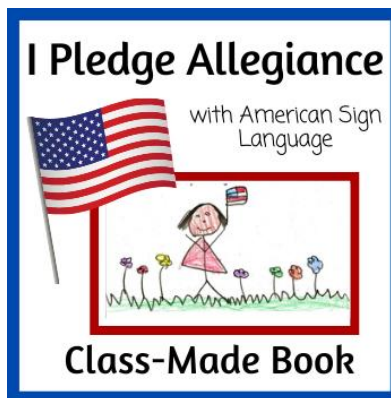
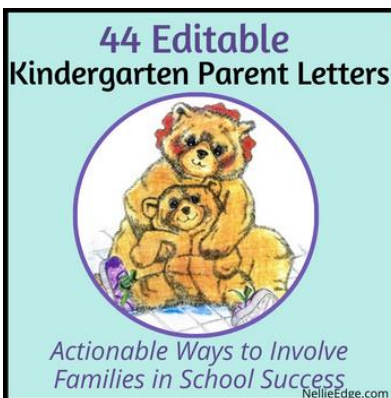
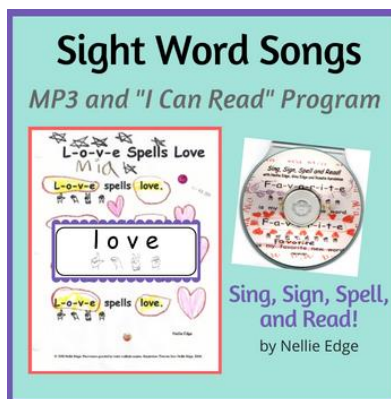
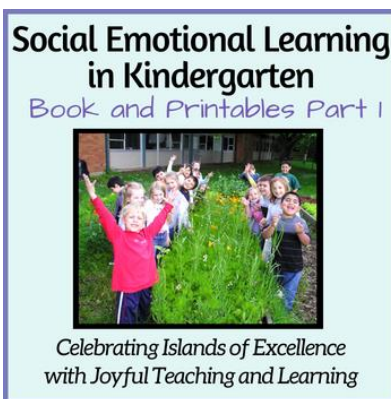
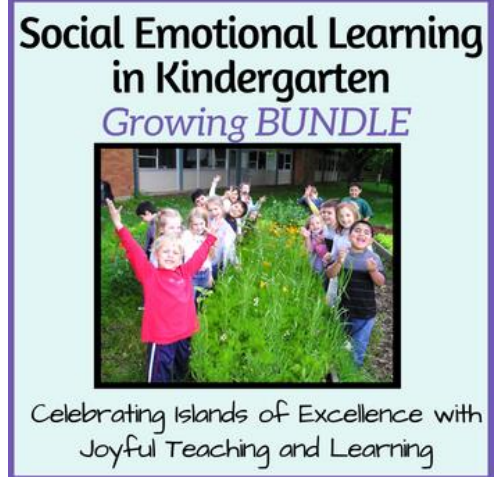


# Find SEL BUNDLE on TPT

## Visit [Nellie Edge Kindergarten Store](https://www.nelliedge.com)

### Social Emotional Learning in Kindergarten (BUNDLE)

- Social Emotional Learning: Book 1 and Printables
- 44 Editable Kindergarten Parent Letters: Actionable Invitations to Family Literacy
- Sight Word Songs (a.k.a. Writing-to-Read Heart Words) Pages with MP3
- Write-a-Message Center (Friendship Messages)
- Poetry Notebook Bonus 2: 55 Songs, Poems, Rhymes and Lessons for Social Emotional Learning
- Class-Made Book: I Pledge Allegiance



### Still coming in this growing BUNDLE:

- Social Emotional Learning (SEL): Book 2 and Printables
- Discover Best Kindergarten SEL Practices: Spark Joy All Year Long!
- A Family Guide to Social Emotional Learning in the Early Years



# Best Practices in Early Literacy and Social Emotional Learning:

*Joyful, Authentic Lessons that Students Love!*

**Engage Parents as Partners • Celebrate Language • Accelerate Literacy**

## Kindergarten Writing Bundle





**Authentic K-1 Writing Resources include:**

- Independent Writing Center Kits
- Writing Across the Curriculum
- Publishing Kindergarten Books
- Writing Workshop & Authentic Assessment

[www.NellieEdge.com](http://www.NellieEdge.com)

## Kindergarten Handwriting Program

*Kindergarten-Friendly Handwriting, Phonics, and Word Work*


**Bundle Includes:**

- Teacher's Guide
- 30 Essential Handwriting Lessons
- A-Z Student Practice Book
- Master Class Intensive

[www.NellieEdge.com](http://www.NellieEdge.com)

## Kindergarten Sight Words

*a.k.a. Nellie Edge Heart Word Program*




**Bundle includes:**

- Master-Class Intensive Power Guide
- Sight Word Songs: MP3s and 1 Can Read® program
- Heart Word templates, posters, and activities

[www.NellieEdge.com](http://www.NellieEdge.com)

## Poetry Notebook Bundle



*"I Can Read!"*

## Kindergarten Writing PD BUNDLE

**Writing Workshops #1 & #2**





**Earn 6 Graduate Credits:** Make Best Practices Routine in Your Classroom!

## Sight Word Play Dough Mats



**The BUNDLE**  
Multisensory Word Work

## K-1 Family Guide to Literacy



**Engaging Distance Learning PDFs BUNDLE**

## Parents as Partners in Kindergarten Success

**Bundle and SAVE!**



[www.NellieEdge.com](http://www.NellieEdge.com)

## 5 traditional Spanish folk songs



**Little Book Bundle**

[NellieEdge.com](http://NellieEdge.com)

## Class-Made Books Kindergarten Bundle



**Class-Made Book**

[NellieEdge.com](http://NellieEdge.com)

**Bundle and Save! Sets 1 & 2**



**Read and Sing Little Book Masters**

## Kindergarten Parents as Partners



**SUPER BUNDLE!**

[NellieEdge.com](http://NellieEdge.com)



## Thank You for Downloading this Nellie Edge Social Emotional Learning Resource



If you have any comments or questions please email me at [info@nellieedge.com](mailto:info@nellieedge.com). We appreciate your feedback on our store!

**Follow my store** to be notified of new Nellie Edge Resources. All new items are listed at 50% off for the first 48 hours after posting.

**All photos and children's art are used with parental and teacher permission and copyrighted to Nellie Edge, 2023.**

This resource is a digital download and available for teachers who have purchased our Poetry Notebook Bundle from my TPT store.

As such, it is for use in one classroom only. This item is bound by copyright laws and redistributing, editing, selling or posting this item (or any part thereof) on the internet are all strictly prohibited without first gaining permission from the author. Violations are subject to the penalties of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act. Review this item for the purpose of recommending it to others as long as there is a direct link for it to be purchased from Nellie Edge Resources. Please contact me if you wish to request special permissions!

Clip art from

**Nellie Edge Read and Sing Big Books™**



Again, thank you for your interest in Social Emotional Learning. If you like this product, be sure to check out our early literacy resource BUNDLES:

<b>Kindergarten Writing Bundle</b>  <b>Authentic K-1 Writing Resources include:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Independent Writing Center Kits</li><li>• Writing Across the Curriculum</li><li>• Publishing Kindergarten Books</li><li>• Writing Workshop &amp; Authentic Assessment</li></ul> <small>www.NellieEdge.com</small>	<b>Kindergarten Handwriting Program</b> <i>Kindergarten-Friendly Handwriting, Phonics, and Word Work</i>  <b>Bundle includes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teacher's Guide</li><li>• 30 Essential Handwriting Lessons</li><li>• A-Z Student Practice Book</li><li>• MasterClass Intensive</li></ul> <small>www.NellieEdge.com</small>	<b>Kindergarten Sight Words</b> <i>a.k.a. Nellie Edge Heart Word Program</i>  <b>Bundle includes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• MasterClass Intensive Power Guide</li><li>• Sight Word Songs: MP3 and I Can Read program</li><li>• Heart Word templates, posters, and activities</li></ul> <small>www.NellieEdge.com</small>	<b>Sight Word Play Dough Mats</b>  <b>The BUNDLE</b> <i>Multisensory Word Work</i>
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Follow my **BLOG** for more ideas and resources!  
SMILES and Happy Teaching! **Nellie Edge**



Follow my  
YouTube channel