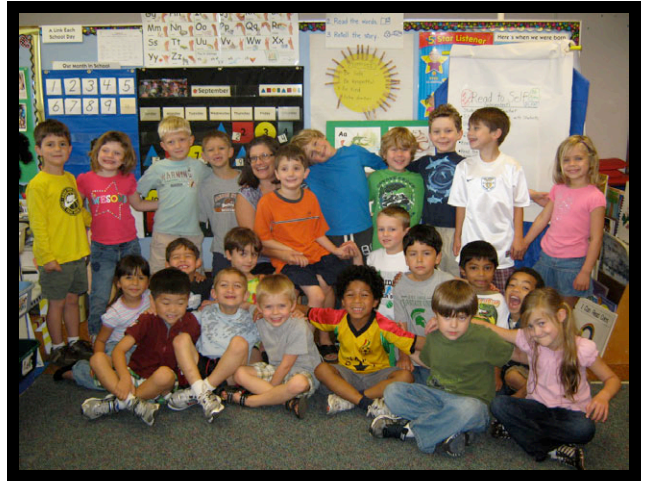


How to Develop a Kindergarten Philosophy and Photo Essay Notebook: Share with Parents and Administrators

My Philosophy and Practice – How Children Learn

- **Write a one-page personal philosophy statement of your beliefs**, based on research and experience, about how children learn.
- **Assemble twenty to thirty photos of children engaged in learning** inside and outside of your classroom. Write short captions that express how the children are learning. (See sample captions.)
- **Include a cover with your name**, school and at least one photo showing who you are.
- Include another sheet with name, address, phone number, teaching experiences, degrees held, any special training or skills, and significant continuing education training.
- Consider including a **page providing photos and captions about your family** and/or your special interests.
- Highlight key pieces of early literacy and child development research.
- Emphasize research on how the brain learns best.
- Include favorite quotes.
- You might even include one of those wonderful picture-letters that kindergartners spontaneously send – “To teacher. I love you. From Joshua.”
- Choose some of your favorite colors for the photo pages and develop a consistent, unifying theme (i.e., pages in primary colors, pictures with photo corners, and print on white).
- **Organize the pages inside plastic sheet protectors in a white 3-ring view binder.**



Consider this book as an ongoing project that might help you:

- Introduce yourself to the parents of your students. Consider doing captions in English and Spanish.
- “Sell yourself” in applying for a teaching job.
- Articulate who you are in the lives of children for school evaluation purposes.
- Meet the practicum requirement for professional development credit.
- Document your professional growth as a part of National Board Certification.
- Meet district requirements for new teachers developing professional growth plans.
- Have a wonderful memory book of your passion for exemplary kindergarten teaching and the young children whose lives you have touched.

Tip: 4x6 or 5x7 pictures work best.

You are welcome to use or adapt any of the materials included in this document with credits noted. See “About Nellie Edge” at <http://www.nellieedge.com/myphilosophy.htm> for sample kindergarten philosophy pages.

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Personal Philosophy and Photo Essay: Sample Captions

A Photo Essay on your teaching philosophy showing students actively engaged in meaningful learning becomes a powerful communication piece to share with colleagues and parents. We recommend using a 3-ring notebook with clear plastic sleeves to protect the photos. Here are some sample captions that you are welcome to use or adapt:

Our classroom is a literacy-rich environment that reflects the lives of our children. Notice the poetry posters and student self-portraits.

Shared reading experiences teach children concepts about print and provide a social context for learning. These children are reading and dramatizing the Read and Sing Big Book™ *Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear*.

Phonemic awareness skills are strengthened by memorizing and reciting poems and songs. These children are reciting *Alligator Pie*.

Children develop language effortlessly and joyfully through memorizing and performing many songs. Our children sing throughout the day.

Cooking in our kindergarten gives children practice reading and measuring. Here we are making playdough from our picture recipe.

Children use art to remember important learning experiences. This collage represents memories of our visit to the pumpkin patch.

Children learn about science by thinking like a scientist. In our science observation center these children are observing the changes in their sprouts. They are recording observations in their *Little Sprouts* journal.

Children learn best as a joyful community of learners in a non-competitive environment. These children are helping each other read the Read and Sing Big Book™ *The Opposite Song*.

Kindergarten children love to “buddy read.” We tell children “**the more you read the better you read, so read, read, read!**” These buddies are checking for comprehension.

Our kinders love wonderful books. Giving children experiences with quality literature helps them **develop a life-long love of reading.** Jessica hugs the book *Mama Do You Love Me?* as she stands next to our “Favorite Books” bulletin board.

Children develop high-frequency vocabulary words by using word stamps to build sentences. **These children are making their own “stamp and read” skinny book,** “I see a...” They love to read these books.

Learning in science depends on actively doing science. Here children are planting bulbs.

All children deserve to own a collection of books that they can joyfully read from cover to cover. These children are “reading-to-self” from their Read and Sing Little Book bags. Children will choose “Just Right: I Can Read” Books to read over and over again, at school—and at home.

Through art experiences, children develop their visual intelligence and learn new vocabulary. Kimberly is standing next to one of our easels. She wants to be an artist when she grows up.

Personal Philosophy and Photo Essay: Sample Captions, continued

Learning to work cooperatively as a member of a group develops important life skills. Here children are building a castle.

By using writing for real world purposes, there is a natural motivation for children to learn new words and improve their handwriting and phonics-based spelling. Here children are creating Valentine cards.

Children learn through active exploration and interaction with adults, other children and materials. These children are exploring floating and sinking objects. They are making a picture graph of what they are learning.

In our classroom we use reading and writing for real purposes. These children are making signs for their block structure.

Kindergarten children need to think of themselves as writers, to select topics, take risks, and write everyday. These children are writing, using both their phonics-based spelling and some high-frequency words that they have learned to spell conventionally. Notice Joshua's writing, "To Mom, I love you. From Joshua."

Student-led parent conferences allow children to play an active role in setting goals and reporting their learning progress. Joseph is sharing his portfolio of projects with his family.

The dramatic play area allows children to develop social skills and concepts around thematic topics. Here the children have set up a veterinarian's office.

Kindergarten children need to memorize, recite and perform language. These children are reciting *Hey, Diddle, Diddle* at our Mother Goose Recital. We have several parent performances every year.

It is important for children to have opportunities to share their writing. Here Landon sits in the author's chair and shares a book he has written and illustrated. The children are an attentive and respectful audience. Later they will give him positive feedback. "I like the way you..."

Kindergarten is a place where memories of learning to read must be ones of joy and success. Kimberly proudly reads and sings the predictable Big Book *I Can Read Colors* to our principal.

We invite children to respond to literature to deepen comprehension and build vocabulary and story knowledge. These children are dramatizing the book *Caps for Sale*.

Children love reading and illustrating their poetry "I Can Read" Anthology pages. Here Kyle is illustrating the *Reading is Fun* rhyme.

My goal in kindergarten is to create a joyful community of learners who care and share together. These three girls are collaborating on a mural of our walking trip to the post office.

Parents are our vital partners in helping each child develop a love of reading. These children are carrying their book bags, which go home nightly.

From *Parents as Partners in Kindergarten and Early Literacy: Family Connections that Multiply Our Teaching Effectiveness*. 2012. Permission granted for teachers to use or adapt these captions in developing photo essays for families.