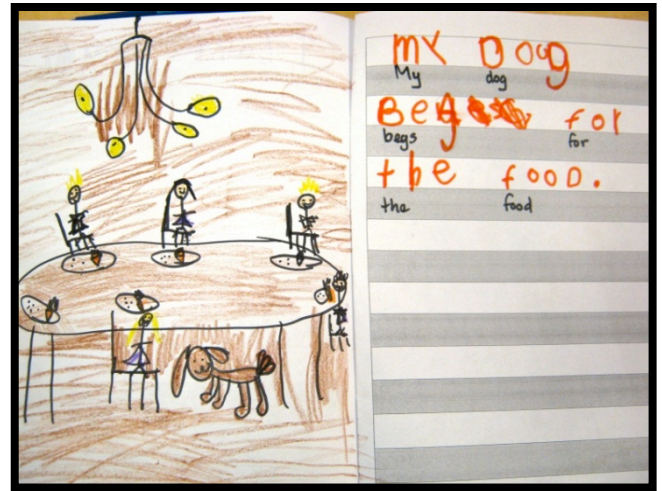# Kid Writing Workshop: Details and Paper Choice Matter!

I recently spent the morning with master kindergarten and kid-writing workshop teacher Julie Lay in her classroom in Bend, Oregon. I was reminded that for optimum results with the "kid writing" workshop approach, details matter:
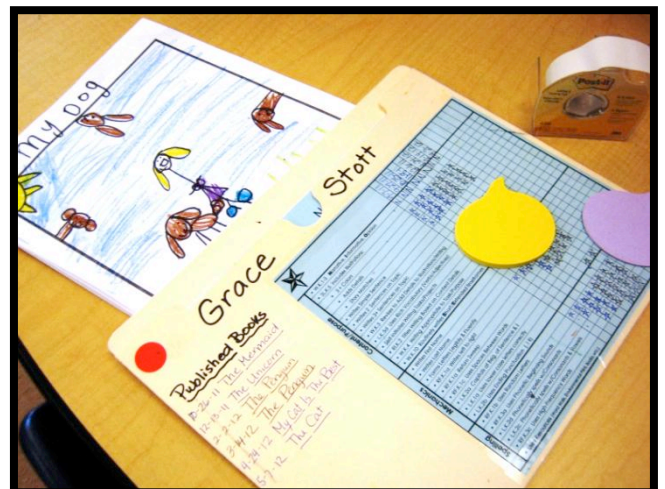

- Defined lined paper with a shaded space for adult underwriting supports emergent writers.
- **24# weight paper** allows the children to use marking pens without bleed-through.
- "Kid writing" is done with colored marker; there is less drag and fatigue on the child's hand.
- **The adult writing is done word-for-word directly underneath the child's writing** so the child can visually see their progress towards "adult writing" and so the child can read the "kid writing".

- When children are taught to **first draw their illustrations using a black non-bleed, non-toxic pen,** and then use color to finish their illustrations, the quality of the work is noticeably better. (See: "What Makes a Quality Illustration")
- By the spring, our goal is that the most children have moved from "kid writing" to "adult writing", and will no longer need underwriting. They can instantly write 60 or more sight words and have the skills, confidence and motivation to write any other words using phonetic spelling.

We do not expect children to prematurely write on three-lined penmanship paper (dotted middle line format) **which is not developmentally appropriate for most children until first grade.**

While there is no one right way to conduct writing workshop with your youngest students, we still see the optimum results when teachers intentionally model how to stretch out words and listen for sounds, recording their "kid writing" (a.k.a. phonetic spelling). The scaffolding of adult underwriting connects the reading and writing process. Children are expected to read their writing, touching each word (initially) as they begin this writing-to-read process.

Writing paper samples are available online for members at www.nellieedge.com and on CD.