

Systematically Organize for Accelerated Literacy

Reciting and performing songs, poems and rhymes in English and American Sign Language (ASL) accelerates fluency and comprehension of oral language. However, accelerated reading gains will only occur within a systematic approach to literacy that allows children to build on success while feeling emotionally safe. Children first practice reading the language, in unison, with group support and teacher modeling. Then small-group guided reading experiences and one-on-one practice provides for gradual release of support until mastery is achieved.

Teach High Frequency Words: *I, the, and.*

The words to the *Pledge of Allegiance* are printed on sentence strips or word cards that can be manipulated in the pocket chart. **Colored plastic¹ is used to cover high-frequency words:**

- I – yellow
- the – pink
- and – green

(a-n-d: stretch the word and punch out the final sound)

Many children learn “I” on the first day of school. Their reading skills are supported by highlighting “I” using color and inviting them to find “I” within familiar language.

We teach “the” through Kinesthetic Auditory Rhythm and Rhyme (KARR). Children love our jazzy approach to spelling and are proud to wear a heart necklace of the word they know “by heart.” (See page 149.)

Enhance comprehension by teaching the ASL symbols and discussing the meaning of key vocabulary.

Use the Neurological Impress Method to Build Mastery of Language.

We need to systematically support children as they move from shared and guided reading experiences with familiar text to one-on-one read-aloud practice with the support of a skilled reading coach (fluent “Reading Buddy” or parent). Using the Neurological Impress Method (see page 47), the child rehearses the language until they are confident and fluent. This type of reading practice is solidly supported by research. **Consider making audio recordings** for further practice at home and at school. In one study, listening to beautifully articulated language while reading aloud with the recording accelerated fluency gains by 65%. That is one more reason why we encourage children to **memorize, recite, and perform songs and rhymes in sign language and connect the language to print.**



¹ See “Reading Acceleration Program,” *The Reading Teacher*, September, 2004. See www.abcstuff.com for Pocket Chart Highlighter Strips, item #HT010.