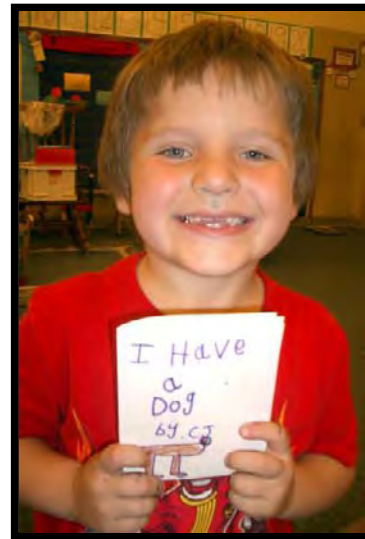



# Ten Best Practices in Joyful Accelerated Kindergarten Literacy: *Proven Strategies That Achieve Exceptional Results*



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

 Video clips and e-Books of exemplary practices available.

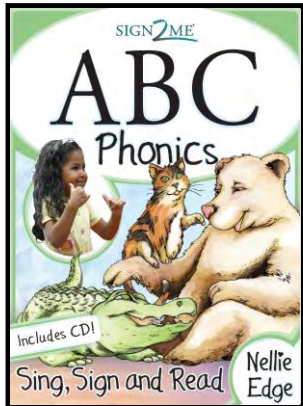
# **Ten Best Practices in Joyful Accelerated Kindergarten Literacy: *Proven Strategies that Achieve Exceptional Results***

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# 1. Make Your Multisensory ABC and Phonics Immersion Program Be the Best it Can Be: Sing, Sign, and Send it Home!

(With special appreciation to my ABC and Phonics Immersion Pilot Team)



- **♪ Sing and Sign: Add ASL fingerspelling** for each letter and **sign the key phonics word**.
- **Teach for instant letter/sound association in the brain.** “A-ă-alligator” (accompanied with the emotionally engaging ASL) is a more efficient mnemonic device than “a-alligator-ă.”
- **Dramatically explore** each key phonics word (e.g., alligator, bear, cat, dog, etc.). Let children dramatize the animals or objects to heighten comprehension and emotional involvement. **Have puppets and/or stuffed animals available** for additional small group letter/sound instruction for those children who need it.
- **Read, sing and sign your ABC Phonics picture book or language chart several times a day.** Provide explicit large group instruction for four to eight sounds/symbols at a time. Then **provide several 15-second reviews** during the day (e.g., on the way to the library, out to recess, transitioning to story time, etc.).
- **Send it home: ♪ Communicate, educate and engage “parents as partners”** in ABC and phonics immersion. Send home copies of the CD, the wall chart, and flashcards that accompany the *ABC Phonics: Sing, Sign and Read* book. Invite parents to have fun practicing with their child – several times every day. **Ask each child, “Where did you hang your chart up?” “Who did you sing and sign for?”** Expect nightly review.
- **Have high expectations:** provide emotionally engaging, multisensory instruction that motivates and accelerates learning! **You will be amazed** at the progress.
- **Have one consistent ABC and phonics book with key symbols and sign language charts available throughout the room:** keep miniature versions in children’s writing notebook, on the walls, in the art center, as mini-books in the home literacy center, etc.
- **Personalize your sign language ABC and phonics songbook** and wall charts with children’s art and photos of children signing. Let every child become an expert at one letter, sound and symbol – especially the most challenged learners.
- **Teach fingerspelling for children’s names.** Fingerspell as you quietly go down the hall. Fingerspell the *L-O-V-E Spells Love* and *M-O-M Spells Mom* songs. See 📺 video clips at [www.nellieedge.com](http://www.nellieedge.com).
- **Give children real words and sentences to sing, sign, spell, read and write.** Teach “I” and “the” through auditory and kinesthetic channels; teach “I love you.”

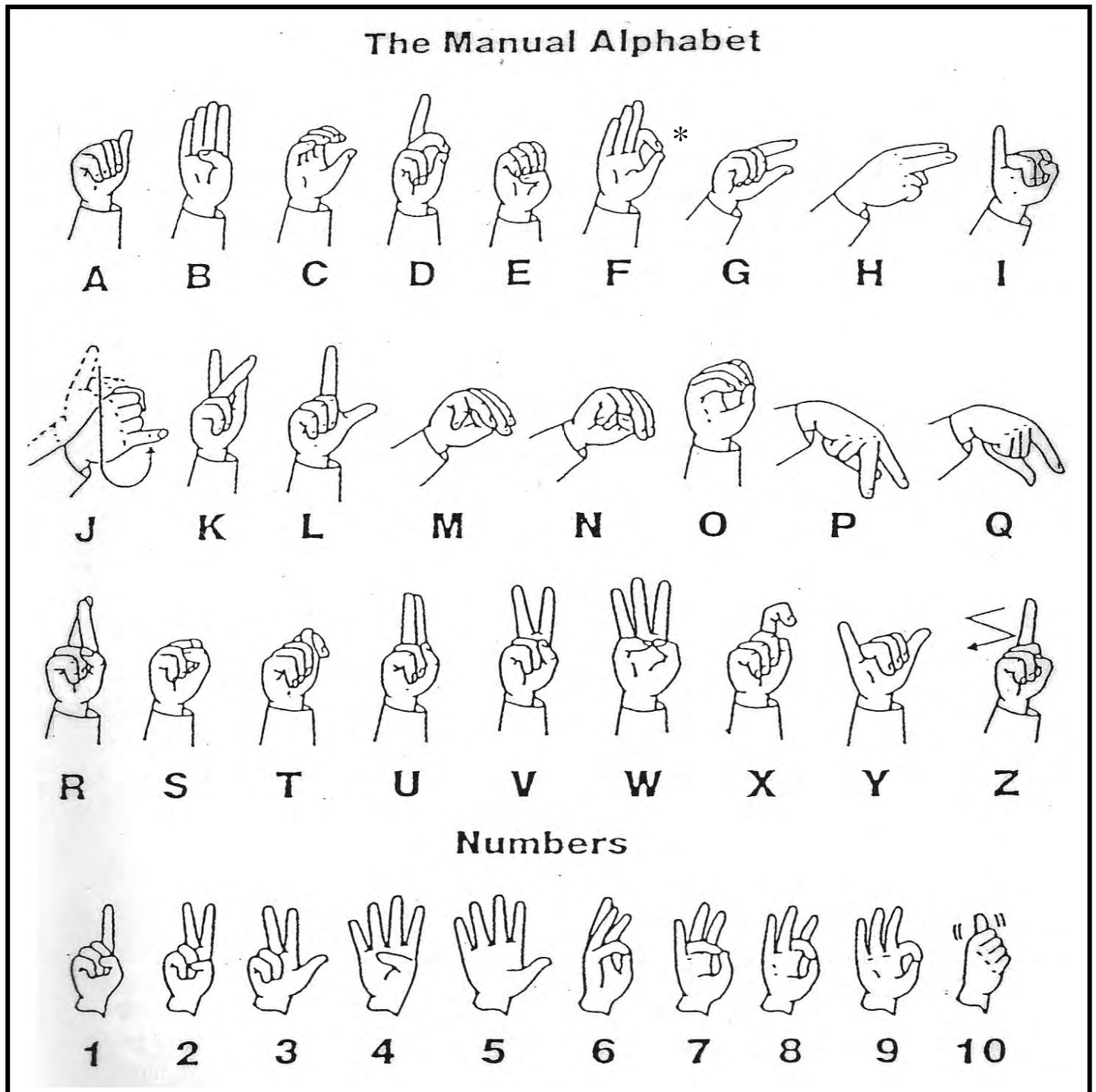


★ *How will you make your ABC and phonics instruction more memorable?*



# Use One, Consistent, Multisensory ABC and Phonics Program

For powerful ABC and Phonics Immersion, add American Sign Language (ASL), fingerspelling, and a signed ABC and Phonics book and chart to your classroom. Children more easily access memory for letters and sounds when they fingerspell. Send a copy of your ABC song chart and CD home. Children love sharing this new language with family. **Adding the kinesthetic element of ASL for the ABC's and key phonics symbols creates powerful hooks to long-term memory** with any ABC and phonics program. **Singing allows the brain to chunk all 26 letters, sounds and key phonics symbols into one memory space.** We use the **ABC Phonics: Sing, Sign and Read book, CD, and DVD, by Nellie Edge.** (Enhanced version available spring 2009, from Sign2Me.)



\* F is signed both with the three fingers spread and with them closed. Used with permission.  
For free manual alphabet chart and ASL Instructional Video of *ABC Phonics: Sing Sign and Read* see [www.Sign2Me.com](http://www.Sign2Me.com).



## Tips from Becky Leber, Title 1, All-Day Kindergarten: *Practicing for the ABC Challenge is Collaborative and Fun*



**Leaving the ABC chart at the floor level makes this a natural literacy center.** Within 4 to 6 weeks of multisensory ABC and phonics immersion, children are eager to take the “ABC Challenge” and see if they can identify each letter (A-Z), make the corresponding sound and read the key phonics word – complete with American Sign Language (ASL). Hooray for the ABC champs!

**At kindergarten orientation I gave each family a copy of *The ABC Sign Language and Phonics Song* book, chart, CD and program.** I really emphasized how important it was for parents to become partners in ABC and phonics learning. The beginning of the year, we immerse all of the children in multisensory ABC activities: **we sing, sign, read, play games, clap, handjive and march to the rhythms and language of our ABC song.** Children often choose the ABC/Phonics Literacy Center to proudly perform their new skills for each other. Motivation is high!

### **ABC/Sign Language/Phonics center needs:**

- Multiple copies of *The ABC Sign Language and Phonics Song* book (enhanced version called *ABC Phonics: Sing, Sing and Read*)
- The corresponding laminated ABC chart at floor level
- Reading the room pointers (dowel with an eraser attached)



Having multiple copies of the ABC book helps. The beginning-of-the-year kinders are especially excited to practice their new sign language and phonics skills. Any visitor who happens by hears, **“Do you want to hear me sing the ABC’s?”** They are so proud of themselves. This is my first year to use the program and **I am amazed at how excited the kids are and how quickly they learned all the letters.** They all want to take the ABC challenge and be a champ. One child, who is still “making good progress” was advised by his friends, **“Go home and practice with your book and CD!”**

# Kathy Magoun Makes Learning Relevant: Use Multisensory ABC and Phonics Immersion Across the Curriculum



Kathy Magoun, former teacher of the year from Connecticut, is a long-time advocate of using sign language for joyful, multisensory learning so she was excited to discover our original *ABC Sign Language and Phonics Song*. She integrates ABC/phonics skills throughout her child-centered kindergarten program. Learning ABC skills is rarely an isolated literacy event.

- I asked Kathy, “When and how she introduced other ABC books?”

“After most children have a memorable sense of *The ABC Sign Language and Phonics Song* (which we sing all the

way through often the first few weeks of school), we use the pattern to introduce each new page in other ABC books (e.g., A “a” alligator and A “a” apple). This keeps the learning new and interesting.”

- Kathy elaborated, “We review the letter/sound/sign language throughout the day and across the curriculum whenever it’s relevant rather than singing the whole song repeatedly. When we talk about families I say, “F “f” fox and F “f” family...” This way connecting letter/sound/sign language becomes a part of all of our discussions and everything we do – and children learn naturally and almost effortlessly.”

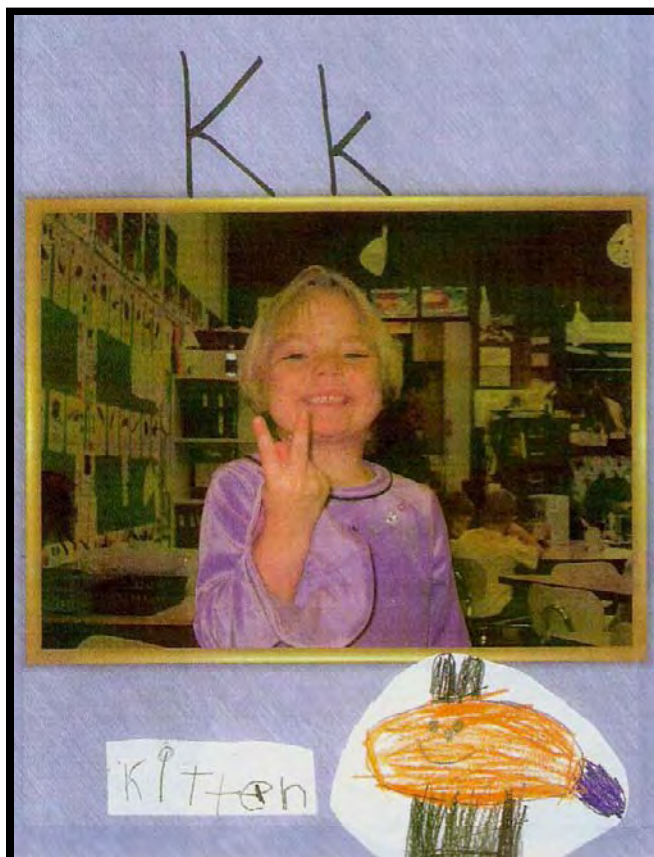
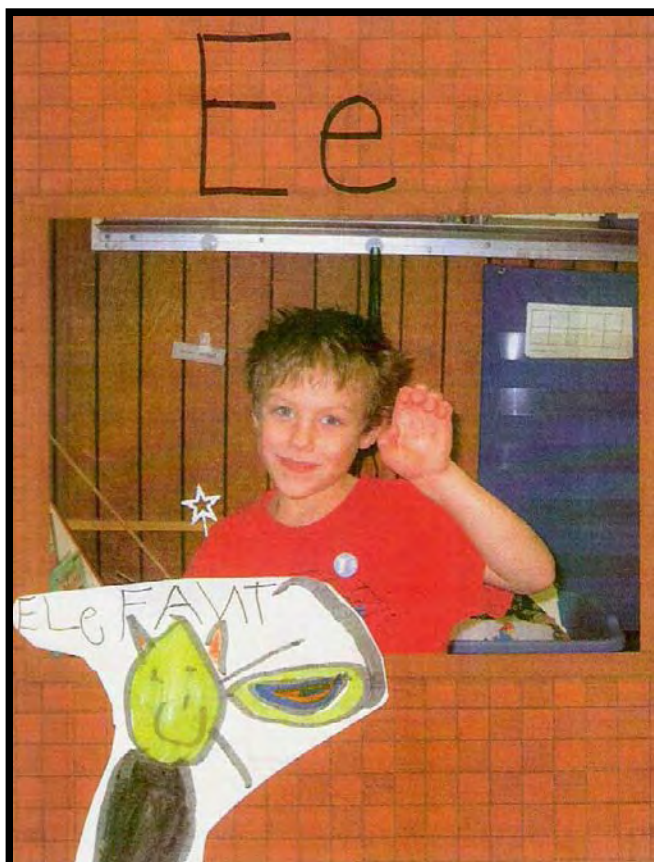
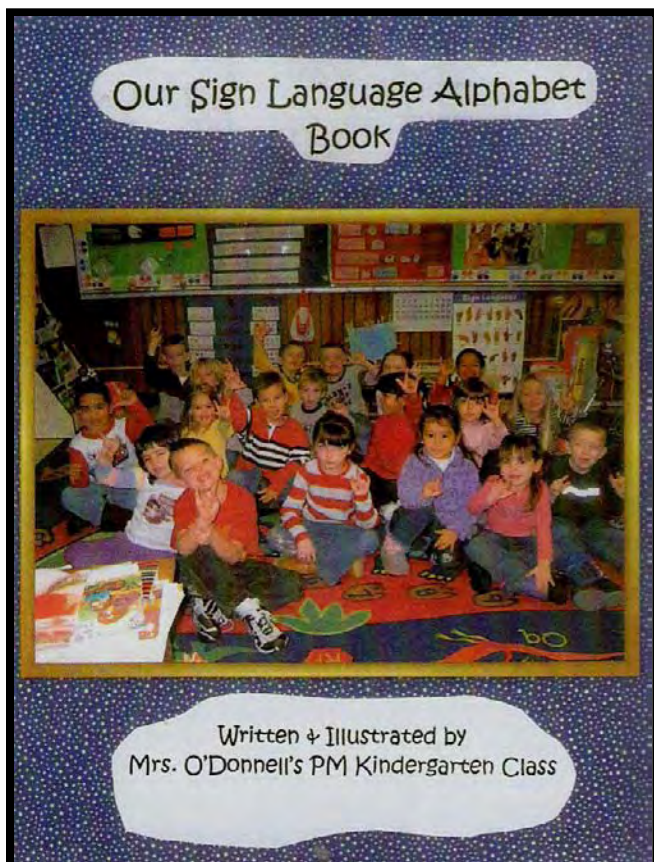
*Consider using the pattern from ABC Phonics: Sing, Sign and Read (a.k.a. ABC Sign Language and Phonics Songs) with the names of your kinders: A “a” alligator and A “a” Allison, B “b” bear and B “b” Bryon...*



*“When the theater for the deaf visited our school, we sang and signed for them. They were so impressed and my kids were so proud!”*



# Personalize Your ABC and Phonics Program: Create a Classroom of Signing Experts



What a wonderful ABC memory book: each child's photo, name, writing, and art.  
*Special thanks to Jill O'Donnell for sharing.*



# Enhance Your ABC and Phonics Immersion Program: Create Memory Hooks Using the Letters of Each Child's Name

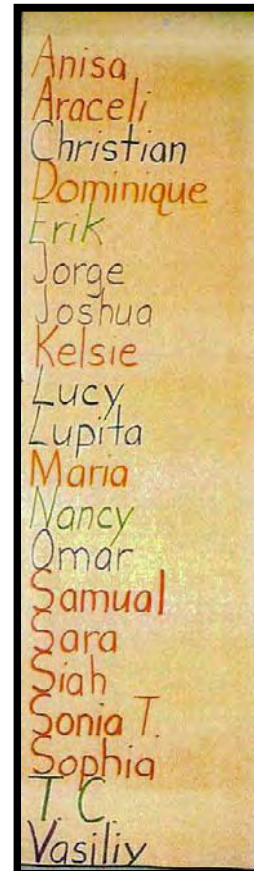


Julie Rundquist created a lovely and colorful ABC book of children's names. "Who has a 'd' in their name?"



Julie Lay keeps this moveable word wall of name cards available for children to use during "Kid Writing" workshop.

## ABC Immersion Strategies – Start with Names



Jennifer Foster posts a color-highlighted, alphabetized list of children's names for comparison and study.

## 2. Use The Susie Haas Name Ticket Strategy and Kindergarten-Friendly Handwriting

Dear Parents,

**Learning to print one's first (and later last) name is an important literacy skill in kindergarten. Enclosed is a name card showing how we will teach your child to form the letters. Please encourage your child to practice several times a day at home.** Your child will be asked to carefully practice forming the letters on a 2" x 4" blank card and then to name the letters first thing every day in kindergarten. If they make a mistake printing, they just take another card and do it again. Making improvement and giving our best effort is important to learning. We celebrate each child's progress and talk about the "best letter." Then we choose one letter to practice making over and over until the brain and fingers make the connection. Repetition builds control and confidence until efficient letter forms become automatic.

**A child's name is the most important word he or she will ever learn to write.** Once the child gains mastery over these letter formations, they will have internalized many handwriting principals and other letters will be easier to form efficiently.

**Please post this name card on your refrigerator and keep one copy in the area where your child likes to write and draw.** With daily practice at home and at school you'll be amazed at how quickly your child's ability to form letters improves.



- While **good handwriting is not the most important focus for young writers**, learning to automatically control letter forms within a growing number of high-frequency ("by heart") words, frees the child to focus more energy into expressing their ideas in daily "kid writing."
- **We honor and celebrate all children's initial writing explorations and understand that small muscle coordination varies greatly from child to child.** Kindergarten letter formation instruction is always positive, individualized and encouraging. It is integrated into real writing activities so the children are motivated.

*Incorrect muscle memories can be hard to unlearn later. Our aim is to encourage efficient letter forms right from the start — beginning with the child's name.*

## Kindergarten-Friendly Handwriting: Use Music, Movement, Sign Language, Dance, and Self-Evaluation

- **Fingerspelling helps develop the small muscles for handwriting.** Begin with “I,” letters of one’s name, and *L-O-V-E Spells Love*.
- **Teach the “O” dance** early on and review it often the first week of school, as many letters are shaped with a counter-clockwise circular motion. Put on fluid dance music and move the entire body with dominant arm extended and elbow straight while singing, “‘O’ goes around and around and around...” to the Woodie Guthrie song *Dance Around* on the CD *I’ll Sing for You and Handed Down* by Tom Hunter. Follow up the “O” dance with an art page of O’s – using different colors and making many sizes. (Introduce crayons, markers, or watercolors with this playful learning experience.)

Pay attention to any child who is not making “O” efficiently and give him or her positive, playful, multisensory practice, providing just enough support (scaffolding) for the child to be successful.

**Believe that correct letter formation is an important gift that you can gently, yet firmly, help young children acquire.**

- **What fun it is to cover the blackboard** with O’s or I’s. (And later words like “love.”)
- **Finger-paint** an “O” design. Make Mono prints and label one “Joshua’s O design.”
- **Focus on the letters of each child’s name** – expect that they be formed clearly and efficiently. Encourage pride in good letter formation. Laura Flocker invites her kindergartners to evaluate their own letters; they put a star by the one they think is the best and explain their reasons. Then Laura puts a star by her choice for best letter and also verbalizes why. Give the children one new letter to improve upon from their name tickets or journal writing every day or two. Guide their practice in a supportive way until they get it right. **The most effective teachers we have observed integrate handwriting into meaningful and multisensory activities for strong memory connections and motivation. “Best practices” emphasize daily experiences with drawing and kid writing.**
- **Give children encouraging language: emphasize effort and progress.**
  - “You really worked hard on that!”
  - “Look at how clearly you formed that letter.”
  - “It is easy to read when you print so clearly.”
  - “Boy have you made progress on printing your name! Look at your beginning-of-the-year printing. Aren’t you amazed at how much you’ve improved?”
  - “You are becoming a real expert at printing your name!”
  - “Which letter do you think is best? Why?”



***Do not let inefficient handwriting habits get established. Incorrect muscle memories are hard to unlearn later.***

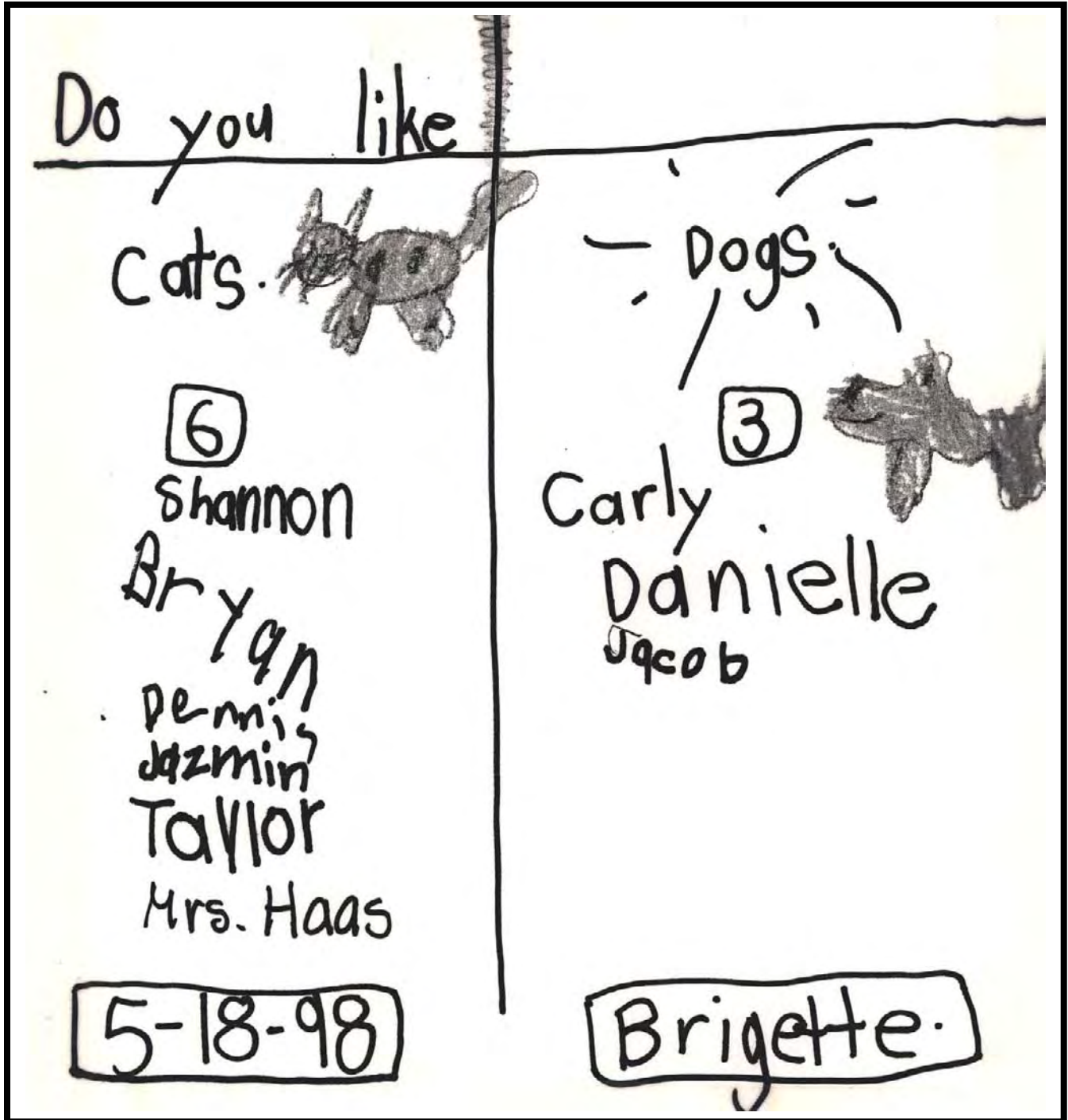
For additional *Guidelines for Teaching Handwriting in Kindergarten* see [www.nellieedge.com/articles\\_resources/GuidelinesHandwriting.htm](http://www.nellieedge.com/articles_resources/GuidelinesHandwriting.htm).

A Web Seminar on Kindergarten-Friendly Handwriting will be announced by Fall 2009.



# Kindergartners Use Their Writing to Take Surveys

All they need is a clipboard, paper and pen.

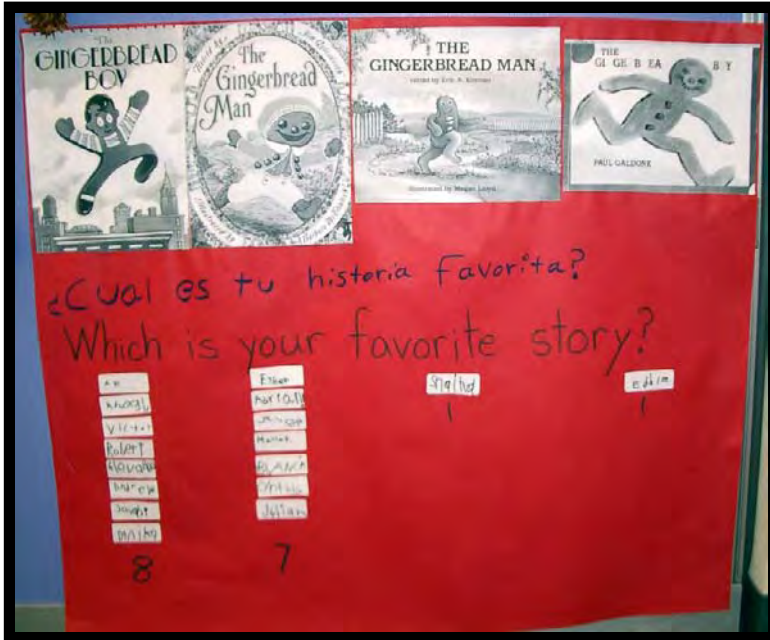


At the beginning of the school year, kindergarten children practice writing their name daily at home and at school using the Susie Haas name ticket strategy\*. Efficient letter formation and pencil-holding skills are individually modeled and supported within a context that has meaning to the child. (There are no “ditto” sheets!) Children take pride in printing the letters of their name clearly so that everyone can read it. Automaticity with letter forms and handwriting control is reinforced through daily “kid writing” for real purposes – including taking kid surveys.

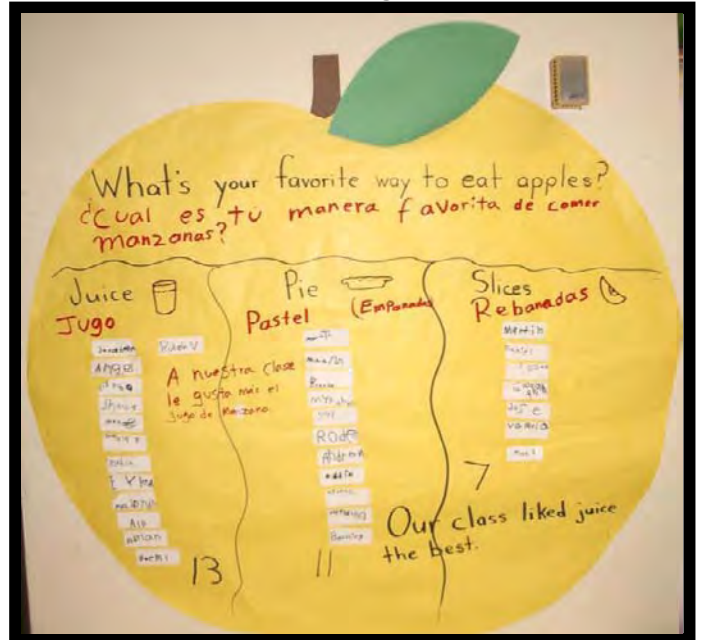
\**Cornerstones of Kindergarten Literacy: A Balanced Literacy Foundation for Emergent Readers and Writers*, by Susie Haas, Scribbles-n-Dots, 2000.

# Give Children a Reason to Print Their Name Clearly: Use Name Tickets for Graphing

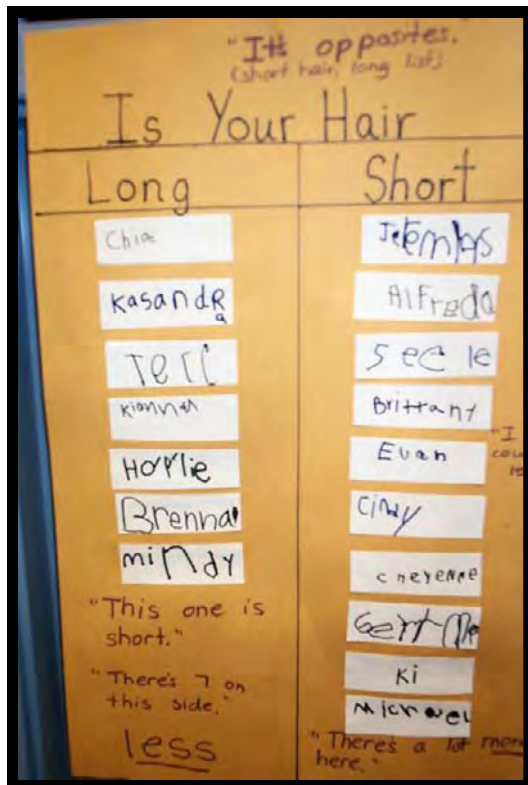
Photos from Jennifer Foster's and Janice Neilson's kindergarten



Which is your favorite version of *The Gingerbread Man*?



What's your favorite way to eat apples?



## Other graph ideas:

- How do your shoes fasten? (velcro, buckle, tie)
- Would you jump over a candlestick? (yes / no)
- How did you get to school? (bus, car, walking)
- Is your favorite color red, green, or blue?
- Do you like dogs or cats?
- Would you rather have a chocolate kiss or a kiss from Mom?

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

– Marie Clay

## Teach Letter Formations with Movement and Consistent Language

- Use the whole arm with two fingers extended to develop the muscle memory for each letter and encourage the children to verbalize the movements. Do "Sky Writing" and The "O" Dance. Use crepe paper streamers for active arm writing movements.
- Be consistent with your ABC letter formation language and **send the information home** to parents. Use the "Name Ticket Strategy". Involve children in ongoing assessment.
- **Be systematic. Be intentional. Have high expectations! Teach for fluency!**

a	around, up and down	b	down, up and around
c	around	d	down, up and around
e	out and around	f	over, down, (pick up) across
g	around, up, way down, and smile	h	down, up, over and down
i	down, dot	j	way down and smile, dot
k	down, (pick up), in and out	l	down
m	down up over, down up over, down	n	down, up, over and down
o	around in a circle	p	way down, up and around
q	around, up, way down and monkey tail	r	down, up and over
s	curve around and back around	t	down, (pick up) and across
u	down, over, up and down	v	slant down and up
w	slant down, up down, up	x	slant down, (pick up) slant down
y	slant down, (pick up) slant way down	z	across, slant down, across

*A	slant up, and down, (pick up) across	B	down, up, around, around
C	around	D	down, up, around
E	down, (pick up) over, over and over	F	down, (pick up) over, and over
G	around, up and in	H	down, (pick up) down, across
I	down, (pick up) across and across	J	down, smile (and across) <i>optional</i>
K	down, (pick up) in and out	L	down, over
*M	up, down, up, down	N	down, (pick up) slant down, straight up
O	around in a circle	P	down, up, and around
Q	around in a circle, (pick up) little slant	R	down, up, around and slant
S	curve around, and back around	T	down, (pick up) across
U	down, curve, and up	V	slant down and up
W	slant down, up, down, up	X	slant down, (pick up) slant down
Y	slant down and up, straight tail	Z	across, slant down and across

\*A and M are the exceptions to our letter rule song: ***I Always Start My Letters at the Top***  
(Sung to the tune of *If You're Happy and You Know it*)

***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!).***





# Kindergarten Friends Challenge: “I Can Say Every Name!”



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

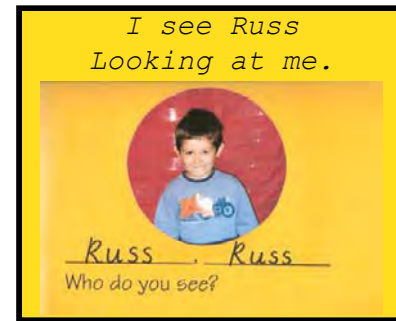


*A Name/Picture Pocket Chart invites children to practice quick recall of names.*

**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.”**

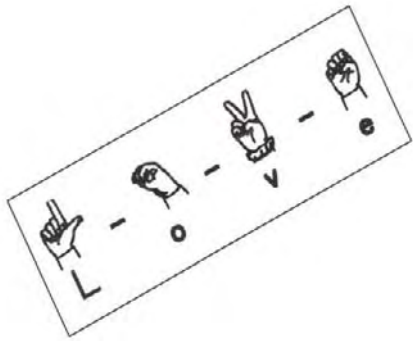
*A special thank you to Dan Gurney for the original idea from the CKA newsletter(fall 2006) which we have adapted.*



# Build Fluency and Accelerate Literacy: Sing, Sign and Spell L-O-V-E

## 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.

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

See video clip at [www.nellieedge.com](http://www.nellieedge.com) from **The Magic of Signing Songs** seminar literacy manual and DVD II.



# Sing, Sign and Spell to Accelerate Literacy

## *M-O-M Spells Mom*

**Mom:** Touch thumb of '5' hand to chin once or twice.

**Dad:** Touch thumb of '5' hand to center of forehead once or twice.

**You:** Index finger points outward to other person.

**Me:** Index finger points to self (in chest area).

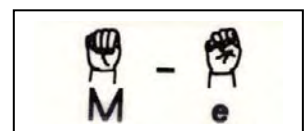
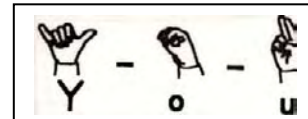
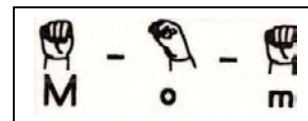
M-o-m spells mom.

D-a-d spells dad.

Y-o-u spells you.

And m-e spells me.\*

*by Nellie Edge*



\*Some teachers substitute or add "and m-y spells my."

*M-O-M Spells Mom*  
words and music by Nellie Edge

M - O - M spells "Mom" and D - A - D spells "Dad" Y - O - U spells "you" and M - E spells "Me".



### Phonemic Awareness: Build Success Segmenting and Blending

This is a perfect song to develop phonemic awareness. After the children have a memorable sense of the song, sing it in phonemes (no fingerspelling) and then invite the children to join you. "M-o-m is mom...and y-ou is you." This gives children instant success with the concept of stretching out the sounds (phonemes) in words and blending them together.

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

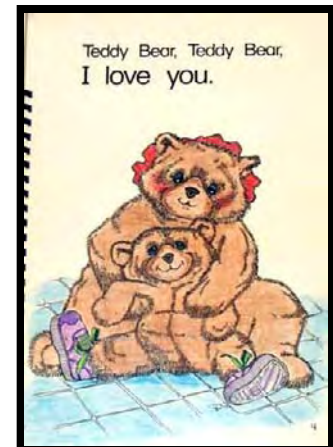
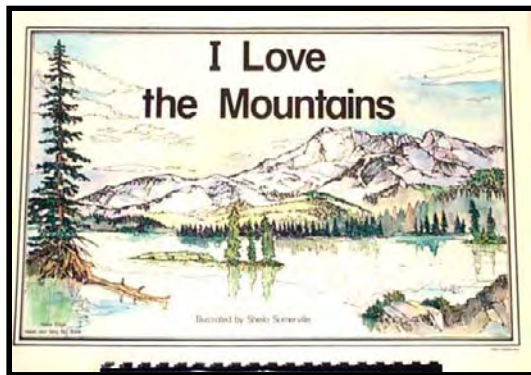
See video clip at [www.nellieedge.com](http://www.nellieedge.com) from **The Magic of Signing Songs** seminar literacy manual and DVD II.

# Teach Children to Read and Write Beautiful Language: “I Love You” and All Its Variations

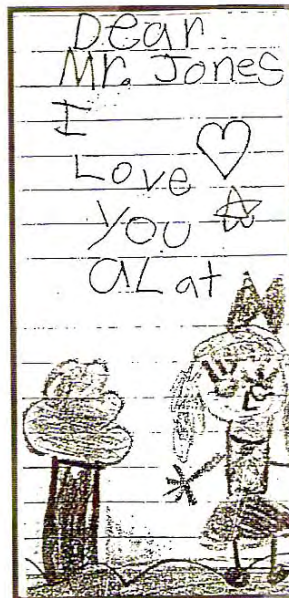
*(I love my Mom because... I love to... I love the cat... I love my dog...)*

Begin by teaching the *L-O-V-E Spells Love* song with sign language. Feel the gentle rhythm as you sing it loud (forte) and soft (pianissimo) and then with “no voice at all.” Children delight in signing the letters, mouthing the words – “but no sound comes out.” Then teach the *M-O-M Spells Mom* song so the children can use auditory and kinesthetic memory hooks to read, write, sign and spell “Mom,” “Dad,” “me,” and “you.”

Children begin finding the words “**I** **love** **you**” again and again in predictable literature and Nellie Edge Read and Sing Big Books™:

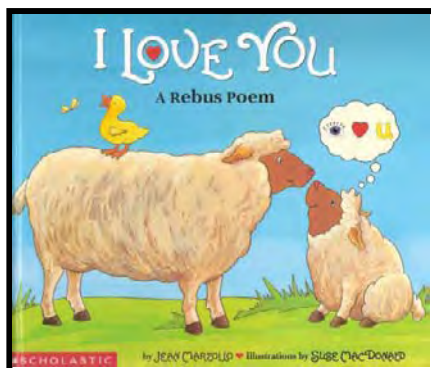


Page from *Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, A Nellie Edge Read and Sing Big Book™*

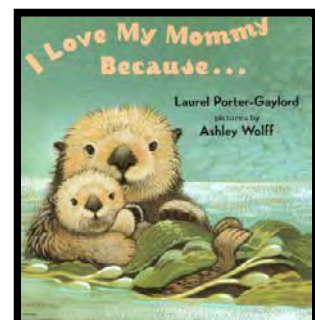


Page from *I Have A Cat, A Nellie Edge Read and Sing Big Book™*

Pages from *I Love the Mountains, A Nellie Edge Read and Sing Big Book™*



**See rebus and board books:**  
*I Love You: A Rebus Poem* by Jean Marzano.  
*I Love My Mommy Because,* by Laurel Porter.  
*I Love You, Sun, I Love You, Moon,* by Karen Pandell.





# Building Fluency with High-Frequency Words: Cat and Dog



Ask the children to demonstrate how to write “cat.” Monitor each child for efficient letter formation. Those who have mastered “cat” can write it repeatedly to build fluency. Then they can draw a picture. **Differentiate instruction: Some may write a whole sentence, “I love my cat.”** Work individually with any child who is not able to quickly and accurately write “cat.” This same activity can be used with word families: cat, hat, fat...



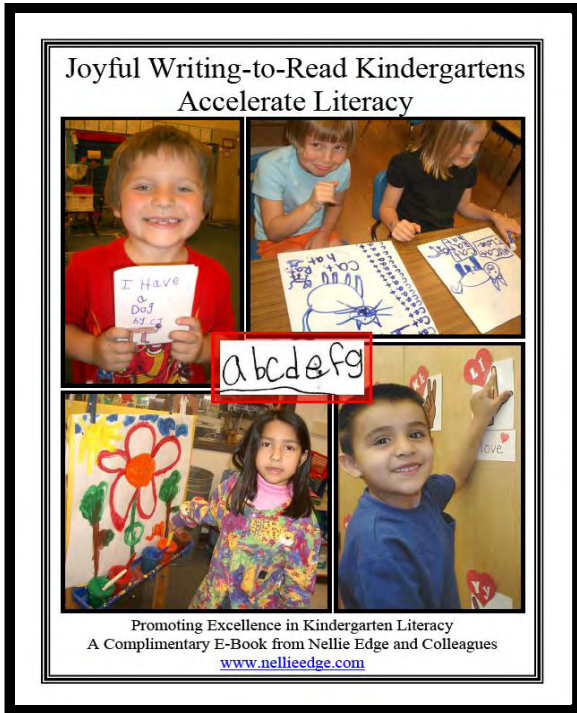
**Writing the word “dog” requires the correct “o” formation.** You may discover confident kid writers who are, however, forming the letters “d o g” backwards or inefficiently. Stop the writing. Practice the direction of “o” – first in the air, then on paper or a white board. Let the child practice repeatedly. Praise their effort. “Yes, you know the direction for the “o”!” **“Which “o” do you think is best?”** Make a note to monitor that child’s writing of “o a d and g” the rest of the week. Help him self-correct and affirm what he has learned. **Incorrect muscle memories are hard to break.** Do fast writes. **Over-learn for automaticity.**

Notice the amazing drawing confidence these kinders from Laura Flocker’s class display. **Guided drawing instruction is one piece of a strong writing-to-read kindergarten.**

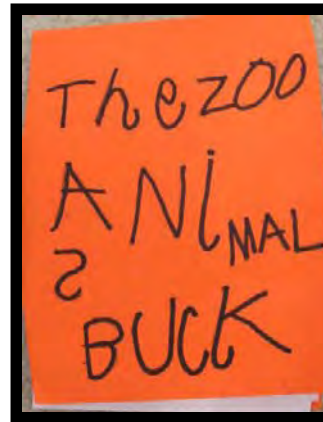
See *I Have A Cat* and *I Can Spell Cat*, Nellie Edge Read and Sing Big Books, Nellie Edge Resources, Inc.



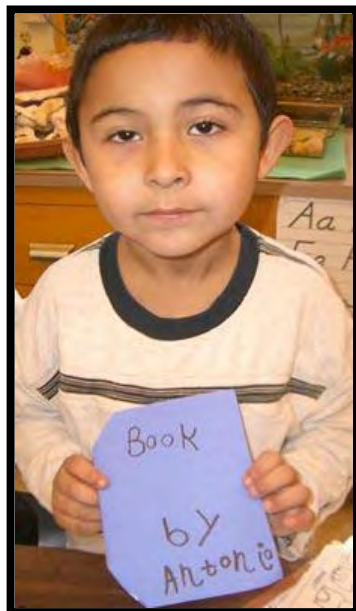
# 4. Create a Joyful “Kid Writing” Classroom: *Keep Writing Real and Let Them Write Everyday!*



**Writing Centers Provide Authentic Word Work Practice**



See Photo Essay for Details



**Children love to make really cool books.**  
Keep Fold-a-Books and Rubber Band Books available.

**Download beautiful 30-page full-color Writing e-Books**

# Literacy Centers Provide Authentic Writing Practice



**Write a Message Center empowers children to use writing for real purposes.** Here they develop efficiency in writing high-frequency words and phrases: to, from, Mom, I love you... Children get to create a message for a friend or family member. **The requirement is that they write who the piece is “to,” who it is “from,” and a message for someone to read.** The center tote contains everything needed for this engaging writing activity. The message can be decorated with personal drawings, stamps or stickers. Children deliver

their messages to friends or take them home. The messages to Mrs. Leber are tacked on her special message board.

## This center tote contains:

- Picture/name cards of classmates
- Assorted paper and writing materials
- Message idea cards
- Sample “Kinder-created” messages and cards
- Stamps, stickers, old greeting cards



**Children are encouraged to assist any new student** or less experienced writer by demonstrating how to use the center writing prompts. **Learning is differentiated and cooperative.**

See Photo Essay: *Becky Leber’s Literacy Centers* at [www.nelliedge.com](http://www.nelliedge.com).

I love you.	Grandma
I like you.	Grandpa
You are my friend.	Mom    Dad
Happy Birthday	to    from

## 5. Celebrate Language With Memorable Songs, Poems, and Rhymes and Bridge Oral Language to Print:

*Do it Systematically with Great Intention and Joy!*

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>See You Later, Alligator</b></p> <p>See you later, alligator After awhile, crocodile Bye-bye, butterfly Give a hug, ladybug Toodle-ee-oo, kangaroo See you soon, raccoon Time to go, buffalo Can't stay, blue jay Mañana, iguana The end, my friend!</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>adapted by Nellie Edge</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Apples, Peaches, Pears, and Plums</b></p> <p>Apples, peaches, pears, and plums, Tell me when your birthday comes. January? February? March? April? May? June? July? August? September? October? November? December?</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>traditional</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Fuzzy Wuzzy</b></p> <p>Fuzzy Wuzzy was a bear. Fuzzy Wuzzy lost his hair. Then Fuzzy Wuzzy wasn't fuzzy. Was he?</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Traditional</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Star Light, Star Bright</b></p> <p>Star light, star bright The first star I see tonight I wish I may, I wish I might, Have the wish I wish tonight.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>traditional</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>November</b></p> <p>no green grass no blue sky no bare feet going by no birds no bees no leaves on trees November</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>author unknown</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Leaves are Falling</b></p> <p>Leaves are falling, Falling to the ground. Leaves are falling, Falling to the ground. See them gently twirl around Floating 'til they touch the ground. Leaves are falling, Falling to the ground.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Nellie Edge</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Algy Met A Bear</b></p> <p>Agly met a bear. A bear met Algy. The bear was bulgy. The bulge was Algy.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>traditional</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>May There Always Be Sunshine</b></p> <p>May there always be sunshine, May there always be blue skies, May there always be Mama and Papa, May there always be me.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>traditional from Russia</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reading is Fun</b></p> <p>Reading is fun. Reading is fun. Reading is fun for everyone. The more you read, The better you read, So read, read, read.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Nellie Edge</i></p>

**Download over 200 complimentary copyright secured poems, songs and rhymes for “I Can Read” Poetry Notebooks at our website.**



# Playfulness and Poetry Surround Our Young Writers: *Under the dark is a star.*



*Remember the Poem*

***Sleeping Outdoors***

by Marchette Chute

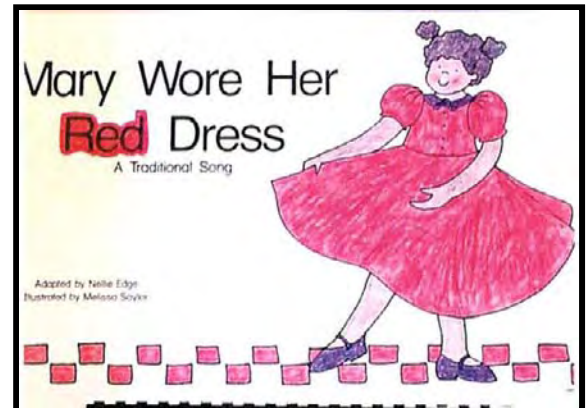
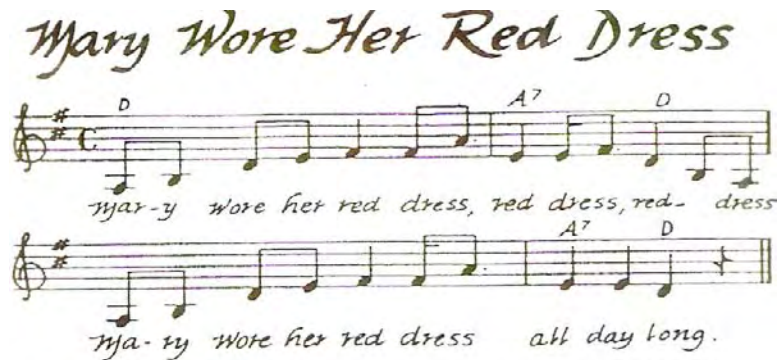
*Under the dark is a star.*

*Under the star is a tree.*

- Children practice the consistent decodable word chunk “ar” (see page 62).
- Pocket Chart Highlighter Strips focus attention on high-frequency words. (See [www.abcestuff.com](http://www.abcestuff.com))
- Children can manipulate words in the pocket chart.

# 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 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. (See "Tips on Making Big Books.") Thank the children for being the innovators of this new 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.*



# Sing Songs That Build Friendships and Literacy

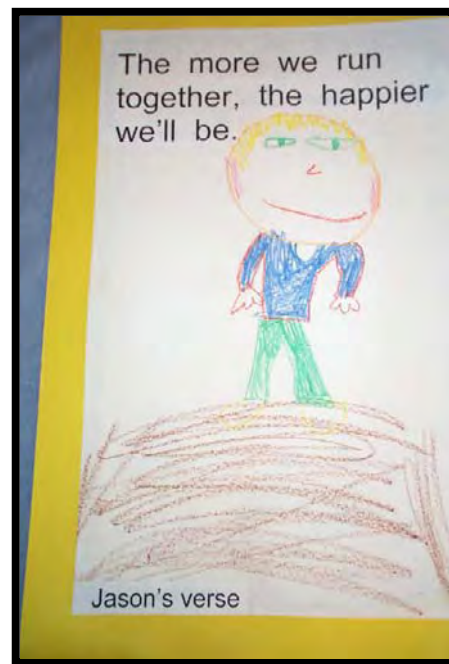
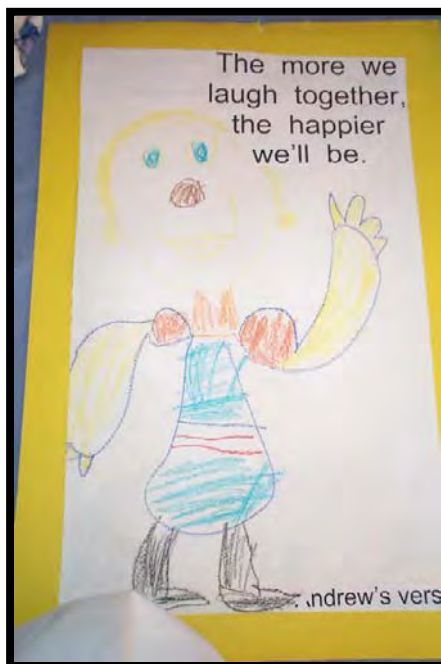


**The More We Get Together**  
The more we get together,  
together, together,  
The more we get together,  
The happier we'll be.  
For your friends are my friends,  
And my friends are your friends.  
The more we get together,  
The happier we'll be.  
**The end**

**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 Spelling Chant

You can say thē  
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.
- 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 video: *The Magic of Signing Songs, Volume II* and supplemental ASL signing guide by Nellie Edge and Diane Larson.

## 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* (available in English and Spanish), A Nellie Edge Read and Sing Big Book™, 1996. Nellie Edge Resources, Inc.

Recorded in English on *Music is Magic* CD and in Spanish on *Music is Magic in Teaching Spanish* cassette.



# 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

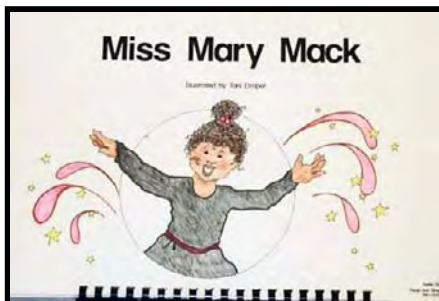
Clap slap clap slap clap slap

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.



**When I introduce children to handjiving**

*I teach a slow, simple pattern of slapping thighs and clapping partner's hands or a simple "patty cake" pattern. Expert handjivers will emerge from each class and will delight in demonstrating more complicated rhythmic patterns. What fun!*

## Bridge Oral Language to Print:

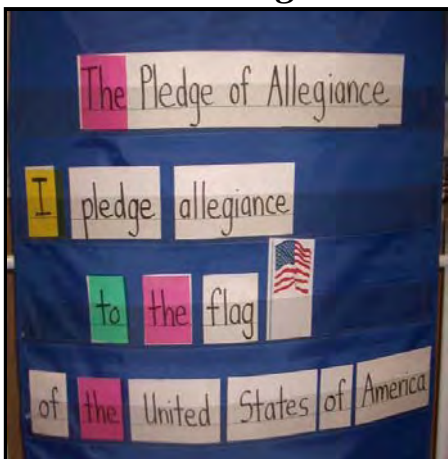
### Use a Systematic Approach for Joyful Accelerated Literacy

**Oral language is still the vital foundation needed for a successful literacy program.** However, in order to connect oral language to print and accelerate reading development, we **need** a systematic plan of differentiated instruction. With the support of repeated readings, children build fluency and confidence.

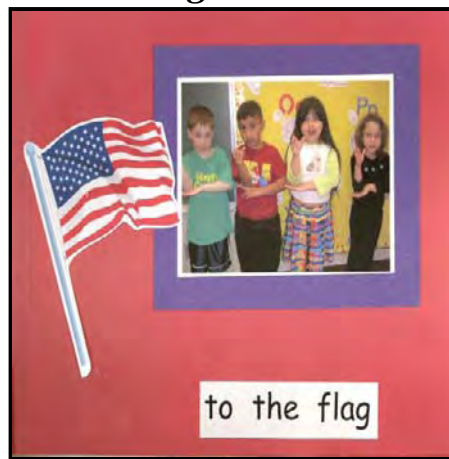
**Give children meaningful and memorable language as an invitation to read.** Teach them to sign and perform the language with confidence. Then plan the environment to systematically support reading behavior until mastery is obtained. Transition from the support of shared and guided reading to individual practice using helpers trained in the Neurological Impress Method (a gradual release of responsibility model). When we teach children to recite, perform and read language with confidence, fluency, and joy these positive beginnings build motivation and reading independence.

1. **Use a Big Book, language chart or pocket chart** with enlarged text to model the strategies that successful readers use. Teach new literacy skills and high-frequency words within the context of the whole piece of language. Focus on one part of the text for explicit instruction and then return to reading/singing/signing the entire text in unison, while tracking the words.
2. **Consider making class books or “poem boards”** for songs and rhymes that are not already available in book format (and easily accessible for classroom reading). 10" x 12" poem boards can be laminated and stored in a “poetry board” box. These can be selected for daily “read to self” time throughout the year by the children, even after newer poems, songs, chants and pledges have replaced earlier language charts in key positions on classroom walls. (Alas, there is never enough wall space!)
3. **Give every child a growing collection of personal Little Books and/or “I Can Read” Notebook** pages of the new language for further reading practice. (**Buddy reading** with a fluent, trained 4<sup>th</sup> grader is helpful.) Little Books and “I Can Read” Notebooks go home for **family reading**.

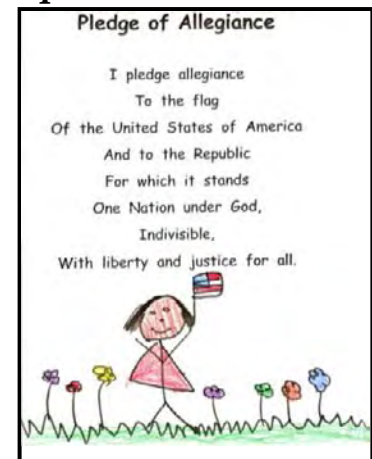
*Shared Reading* → *Guided Reading Practice* → *Independent Rehearsal*



*Language is printed on individual word cards that can be manipulated in a pocket chart. Colored acetate overlays high-frequency words. Children recite words in unison. Skills are taught in context.*



*A class book is made featuring children signing The Pledge of Allegiance. (Notice the spacing between words.) This book is available in the library or the child's book boxes for guided and independent reading.*



*The same lyrics are also placed in each child's "I Can Read" or "Read Together" Notebook as an anthology page or Little Book so they can be read over and over again with fluency and delight.*



**What organized system have you developed to accelerate literacy with predictable and memorable print?**



# Give Children the Most Exquisite Language We Speak: Poetry

**Greet children at the door with lines from poetry:**

**The earth is wet. The sky is gray...** (*The Earth is Wet*, Karla Kushkin)

**I saw the lovely arch of rainbow** span the sky... (*Rainbow*, Walter de la Mare)

**One Misty Moisty Morning...** (traditional)

**Let the rain kiss you. Let the rain beat upon your head with silver liquid drops...** (*April Rain Song*, Langston Hughes)



*Songs and Rhymes for a Rainy Day*, a Nellie Edge Read and Sing™ Big Book



**Consider the imagery and metaphors** in lines from these "I Can Read" Poetry Notebook Pages:

**White sheep, white sheep, on a blue hill...** (*Clouds*, Christina Rossetti)

**The earth is like a butterfly** with frail blue wings... (*Easter*, Joyce Kilmer)

But when **the leaves hang trembling...** (*Who Has Seen the Wind*, Christina Rossetti)

With such a lot of nice fresh air **all sandwiched in between...** (*I'm Glad the Sky is Painted Blue*, Kay Choro)

**How thin and sharp and ghostly white...** (*Winter Moon*, Langston Hughes)

Now the **drowsy sunshine...** (*Evening*, Harry Behn)

Nor **cricket chirping cheerily...** (*Hurt No Living Thing*, Christina Rossetti)

Smooth as satin, **soft and sleek...** (*Pussy Willows*, Aileen Fisher)

**What lines from poetry do you recite when you speak to your children?**

*Nellie Edge Poetry Anthologies Volume I and Volume II, Small Poems of Some Delight.*

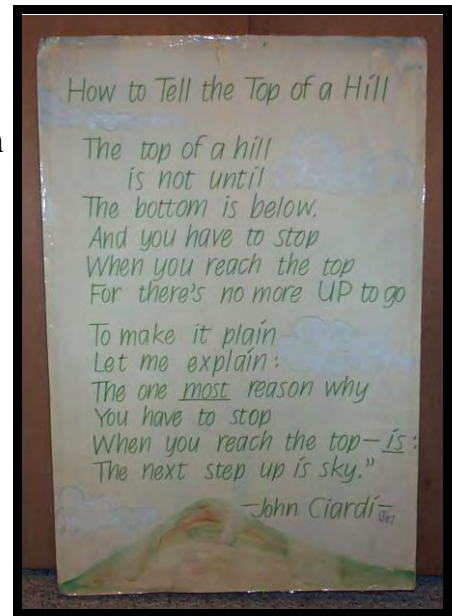


# How to Organize Poetry (“I Can Read”) Notebooks (a.k.a. “Read Together” Anthologies and “Family Reading” Notebooks)

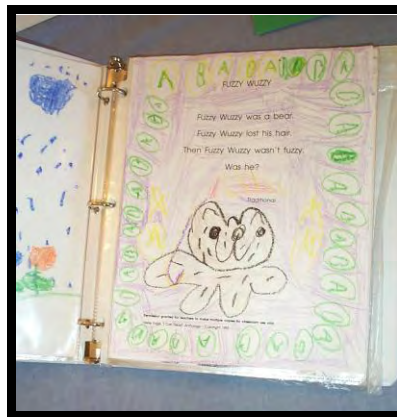
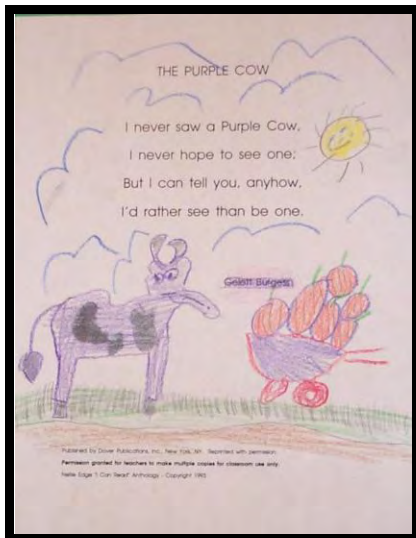


Favorite songs, poems, rhymes, chants and story excerpts are first learned orally. Children will both memorize and read the words from language charts, pocket charts or big books.

***This provides the necessary oral language foundation for building strong phonemic awareness skills.***



(Copyright regulations allow teachers to make one copy of any poem or song for class use.)



Once children have a memorable sense of the poem, they are given a printed 8 1/2" x 11" copy to illustrate with crayons or colored pencils.

**Finished poems are kept in clear plastic sleeves or each page is three-hole punched and reinforced with hole reinforcements. The pages accumulate in individual notebooks.**

***The entire notebook becomes an end-of-the-year gift to your children and their families. Parents in return present notebooks for next year's children.***

## 6. Implement Gradual-Release-of-Responsibility Models and Differentiate Instruction: *Use the Neurological Impress Method of Guided Reading and Strategies that Simultaneously Develop Language and Reading Fluency*

**Providing repeated reading experiences** using the Neurological Impress Method (N.I.M.) is a simple, research-proven, strategy for developing fluent readers. It was originally devised and researched by R.G. Heckelman, PhD in the 1960's using a **gradual release of responsibility model**. This approach of oral read-along practice provides one-on-one language modeling using a fluent reader in a relaxed, non-threatening environment. **It is ideal for our “parents as partners” nightly reading at home – especially with the predictable literature of songs, poems, and rhythmic rhyming language.**

Your child will already have experienced several shared reading experiences with these books, or with the songs and rhymes in their “I Can Read” notebook. We have used this language to develop oral language fluency, reinforce phonics skills, and teach high-frequency words. Your child may have dramatized the language, danced to the rhythm, or sang and signed the lyrics. You will probably find that your child already has a memorable sense of at least part of the print.

**Now you can help train your child’s eyes to sweep across the page, as his finger movements and voice are all synchronized to the words.** Your child will greatly benefit from repeated readings of the familiar language along with your voice as a model. Soon he will be able to independently perform the reading with fluency, expression, confidence, and delight.

### How to do it:

- **Dr. Heckelman recommends that the reading tutor or parent sit to the right of the child,** with the child slightly in front so the parent’s voice can be close to the child’s ear. We think it is equally important to be in a comfortable and relaxed setting.
- **Let your child choose the song picture book or anthology pages** of poems and rhymes that they want to practice reading with you.
- **Read the material with your child, using a little louder voice** and reading with fluency, careful articulation, and enthusiasm.
- **Move your finger and your child’s under the spoken words in a smooth continuous manner,** matching the precise speed of the verbal reading. Help the child gradually take over the tracking.
- **Pay special attention to the end of a line.** Move the finger rapidly back to the beginning of the next line to train the eye. Keep everything synchronized. Reread a line, page, or section of a book repeatedly to build fluency.
- **At no point should you correct, teach the child, or ask questions.** The focus is on the fluency of language and making the voice-to-print match.
- You might call this “practice for performance reading.” **Keep these “read together” sessions short and enjoyable.** This should only take 5 to 10 minutes of your nightly reading time.
- **Compliment your child for their effort and progress.** Soon they will be able to perform the reading of this book or poem for any appreciative audience.
- From time to time we will send home audiocassettes with accompanying books. **Reading aloud with an audiocassette also produces accelerated reading gains.**

## Use the Neurological Impress Method and Help the Child Gradually Take Over the Tracking and Reading



Start with the repetitive language of a highly predictable book. **Give your child positive encouraging feedback:**

- “Let’s read that together again.”
- “That sounds so good, let’s read it again.”
- “Now I bet you can read this page all by yourself.”
- “Listen to you – you are learning to read!”
- “Let’s go read it to Dad!”

Train your kindergarten parents and “Reading Buddies” to value “magical memory reading” and transition into “touch reading” and later independent reading using the Neurological Impress Method.

### Build a Parent Lending Library of Predictable Literature

Consider building a parents’ library with multiple copies of your favorite predictable books to send home with families at the beginning of the year. Some of these may be the same books you use for shared literacy. (See page 184 for a list of quality literature with high picture and text support for emergent readers.)



Ryan is proudly reading *I Can Read Colors* (by Nellie Edge) with his Mom.

*This method also works well using poetry “I Can Read” Notebook pages, and the clear word-for-word adult underwriting that is underneath the child’s “kid-writing.”*



## 7. Keep Phonics Instruction Meaningful, Multisensory and Engaging: Use *ABC and Phonics Immersion*, and “*Kid Writing*”; Assess Progress and Differentiate Learning



### We Can Write Nonsense Words

(to the tune...♪ “*Here We Go Loopty Loo*”)

We can write nonsense words.


They are so easy to do.

We can write nonsense words.

They’re silly and mean nothing too!

by Diane Bonica

... and we can write real words!

 See free video clip of Diane Bonica demonstrating her “We Can Write Nonsense Words” song at [www.nellieedge.com](http://www.nellieedge.com).

We Can Write “By Heart” Words

♪*adapted by Nellie Edge*

We can write “by heart” words.

They are important to do.

We can write “by heart” words.

Here is our best work for you!

- you may change “best work” to “quick write” depending on your purpose.



From the manuscript in progress, *Joyful and Rigorous Kindergarten Experiences*, by Diane Bonica and Nellie Edge

# Your Children Can Read, Sing and Sign

## *I Can Spell Cat*

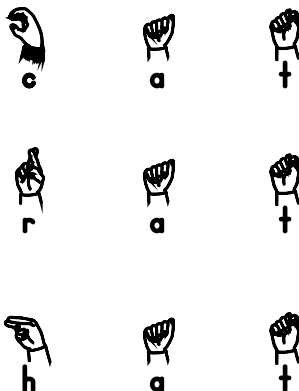
- Sing this Read and Sing Big Book™ song to the familiar *Skip to My Lou* melody. Discuss the pictures to enhance comprehension.
- **What do you notice** about the cover of this book? Who can find the word cat?
- **Play with the word cat**, and other “at” family words aurally and in writing (segmenting and blending the sounds). Sing through the book again.
- Learn to **fingerspell c-a-t**.
- **Sing, spell and sign** the key words of the song, segmenting the sounds. Change “I can spell” to “I can say.” “I can say cat, c-a-t... I can say rat, r-a-t... I can spell, listen to me.”
- Emphasize the final lines **“I can spell. Listen to me.”** Sing and sign the language with fluency, joy and confidence. **“I can spell” becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy with multisensory spelling techniques.**

**I Can Spell Cat**

I can spell “cat,” c-a-t.  
 I can spell “rat,” r-a-t.  
 I can spell “hat,” h-a-t.  
 I can spell.  
 Listen to me.

I can spell “dog,” d-o-g.  
 I can spell “hog,” h-o-g.  
 I can spell “log,” l-o-g.  
 I can spell.  
 Listen to me.

*by Nellie Edge © 1994*  
*A Nellie Edge Read and Sing Big Book™*



**Cat is one of my handwriting “anchor words.”** It is so much more motivating and meaningful to practice writing “cat” than practicing a single letter.

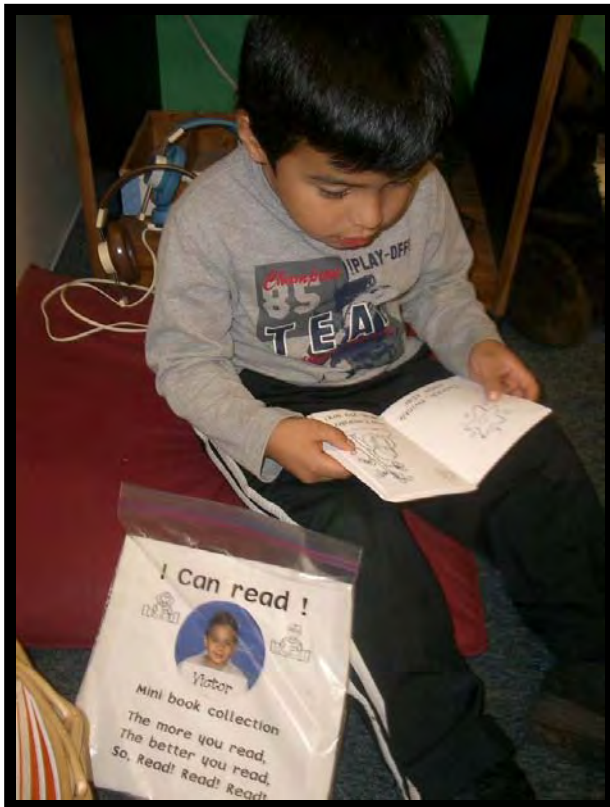
Use paper or white dry erase boards for a “quick write” to practice for fluency and efficient handwriting. Differentiate instruction and provide individual guidance.

**Notice the affirmation: I can spell. Listen to me.**

*Children can kinesthetically feel how the words c-at and r-at and h-at are different at the beginning of the word but they all end with the same sound.*



## 8. Give Children Quality Literature, Good-Fit Books, and a Framework for Building Reading Independence and Stamina



### Kindergartners “Read to Self” Early in the School Year with “Just Right: I Can Read” Books

This boy is memory reading *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*, while his classmate is fluently reading the Little Book, *The More We Get Together*. These books represent language that these kindergarten children have been joyfully singing and signing from Nellie Edge Read and Sing Big Books™ and language charts from the first day of school.

### Mother Goose Rhymes and Read and Sing Little Books are Stored in Re-sealable Book Bags

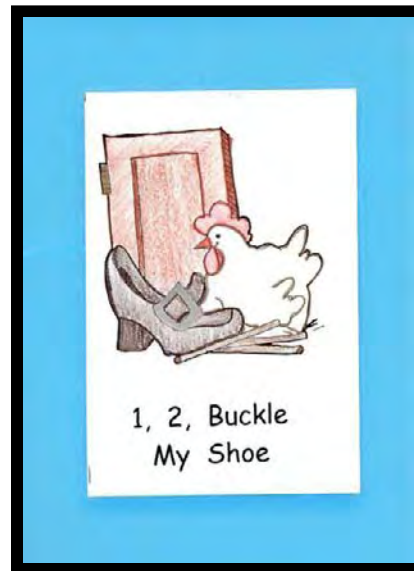
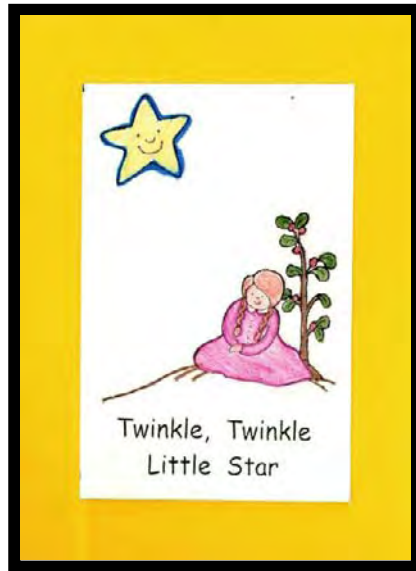


See [www.thedailycafe.com](http://www.thedailycafe.com) for information about *The Daily 5* book & DVD, by Gail Boushey and Joan Moser. Stenhouse. 2006.

In Becky Leber’s kindergarten, the children chant the *Reading is Fun* rhyme daily and review their “I chart” (“I” is for Independence). They think about why they are learning to read, and what their responsibility is during independent “Read to Self” time. **Daily review helps build positive reading behaviors.**

# Oral Language Traditions Provide the Foundation for Developing Language and Reading Skills Simultaneously

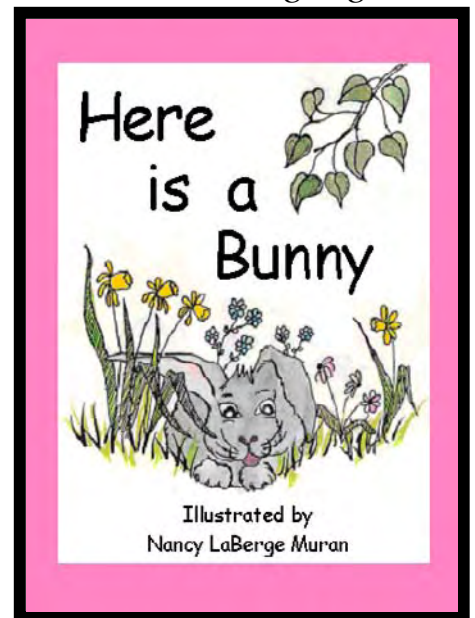
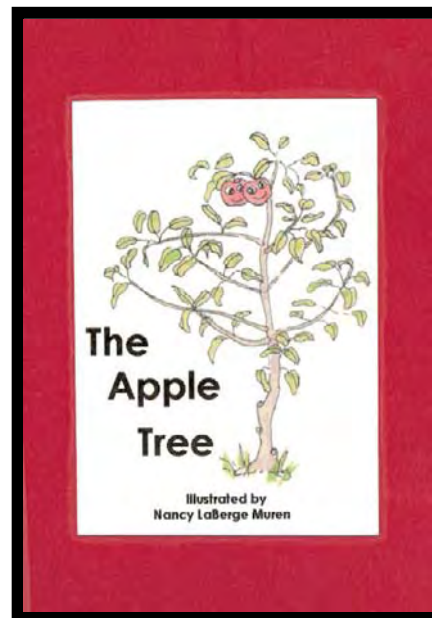
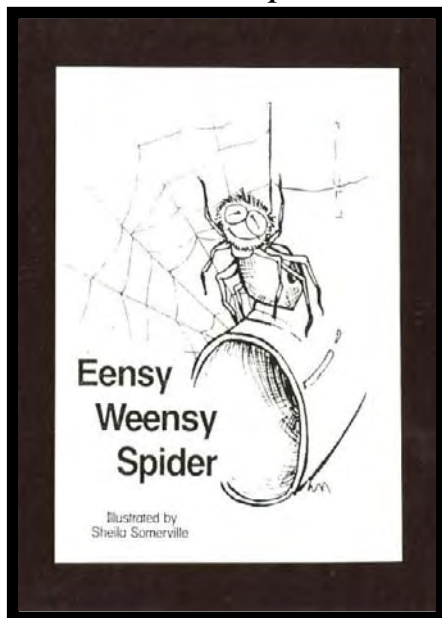
*Begin the Year With Mother Goose Rhymes: The Perfect “Read to Self” Books.*



Children will memorize, recite and dramatize these rhymes. They will engage in “magical memory reading” using their beginning tracking skills.

## Favorite Finger Plays Build Reading Confidence and Fluency

*Provide Repeated Creative and Dramatic Encounters with the Language*



Children love to re-read books with language that they have recited, dramatized, and internalized. This allows them to more easily self-correct as readers.

They cherish these emergent readers because of the built-in ownership and success!

**These Little Books are free downloads at [www.nellieedge.com](http://www.nellieedge.com).** They can be enlarged, colored, backed, and laminated. Tape the pages together for “guided reading” and library books. Ask parent volunteers to make sets of six.




## 9. Use Ongoing, Authentic Assessment Culminating in Student-Led Parent Conferences: *Children Learn to Self-Evaluate, Set Goals, and Take Learning Into Their Own Hands*



I can introduce my parents to my teacher and student teacher. I have learned how to make polite introductions.



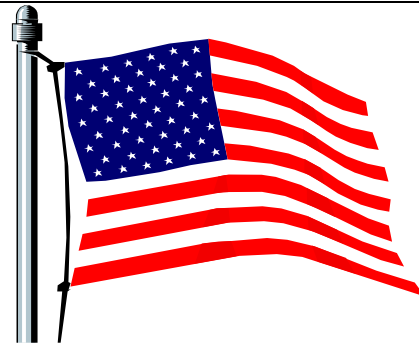
Our kindergarten is all set up for four conferences at a time – one on each of our tables. We have gathered many of our important projects together. It is fun to share them with Mom and Dad. (We have role-played how to do this all week, so **now we feel confident and proud!**)

See  video clip and February 2009 *Excellence in Kindergarten and Early Literacy* Newsletter for Additional Information.

# Student-Led Parent Conference: In Kindergarten I Can...



Introduce you to my teacher



Say and sign the Pledge of Allegiance

Ryan Kendrick

Write my name on a Name Ticket



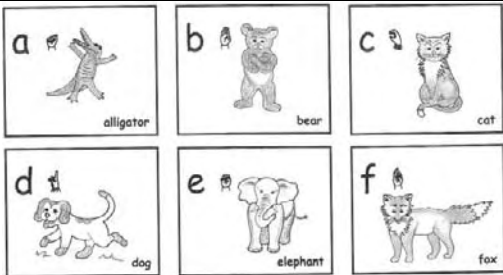
Write my numbers from 1 to 10



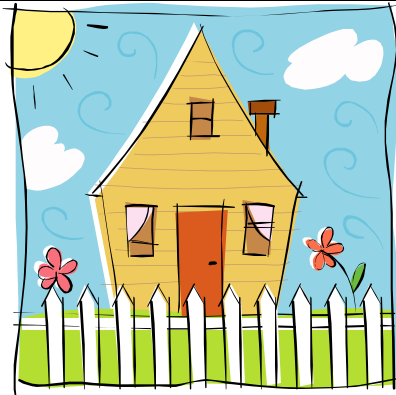
Say my telephone number



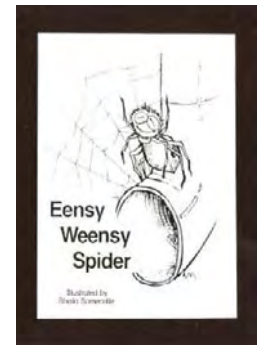
I am an expert shoelace tier!



Read and sign *ABC Phonics: Sing, Sign and Read*



Say my address



“Read to Someone” from my book box



Read, write and spell “by heart” (high-frequency) words

a b c d e f g ...

Print my lower-case letters from a to z in 1 minute – without looking at a chart!



Recite and read poems and rhymes from class charts

We have adapted this from Heidi Schovel’s Kindergarten I Can



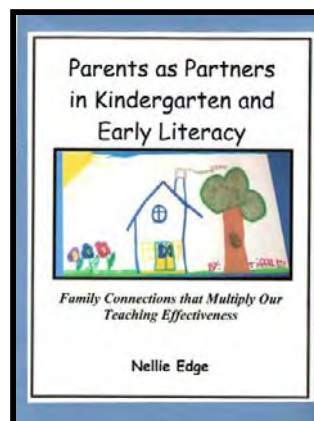
## 10. Build a Respectful and Supportive Parents as Partners in Kindergarten Literacy Program: *Family Connections Multiply Our Teaching Effectiveness*

*A parent's job is to love their child passionately: laugh and sing, talk and explore nature, read and write with them every day and every night.  
Celebrate childhood and celebrate language.*




### Seven Components of a Powerful “Parents as Partners” Program:

1. **Build respectful and supportive parent communication and education:** home visits, phone calls, newsletters, “Good News from Kindergarten” Postcards, Parent Information Letters, Literacy Night...
2. **Have a policy that parents are always welcome in the classroom.**
3. **Engage parents in teaching their child to print their name and to collaborate on multisensory ABC and phonics immersion.**
4. **Promote nightly reading at home and meaningful family learning experiences.**
5. **Create Poetry (“I Can Read”) Notebooks encouraging children to perform and share oral language with the family on a weekly basis. (See Photo Essay)**
6. **Facilitate student-led teacher-parent conferences – yes, even at the kindergarten level. (See Video Clip)**
7. **Make school a “celebrative place”:** Invite families to Learning Celebrations.



**What parents really want to know: “I love teaching kindergarten, I care about your child, and your child will love coming to school.”**

For more details Read the Monthly Newsletter “*Excellence in Kindergarten and Early Literacy*”, and see articles, photo essays, and  video clips at [www.nellieedge.com](http://www.nellieedge.com).

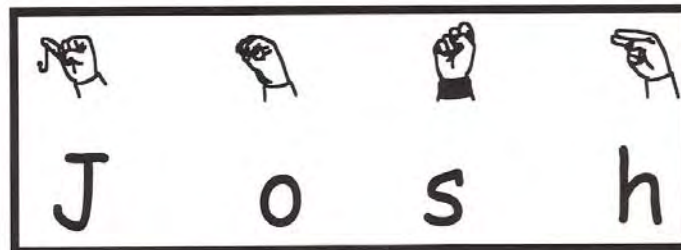
# Send Your Students a Welcoming Letter: Fingerspell Your Name!

August 2008

Dear Josh,

Soon it will be time for school to start. We will laugh and play and talk and dance together. Learning to read and write will be a grand adventure. Everyday we will sing and sign our ABC's and learn about animals and fascinating things in the real world - from alligators to volcanoes. We will learn to draw and we will memorize many poems and Mother Goose rhymes.

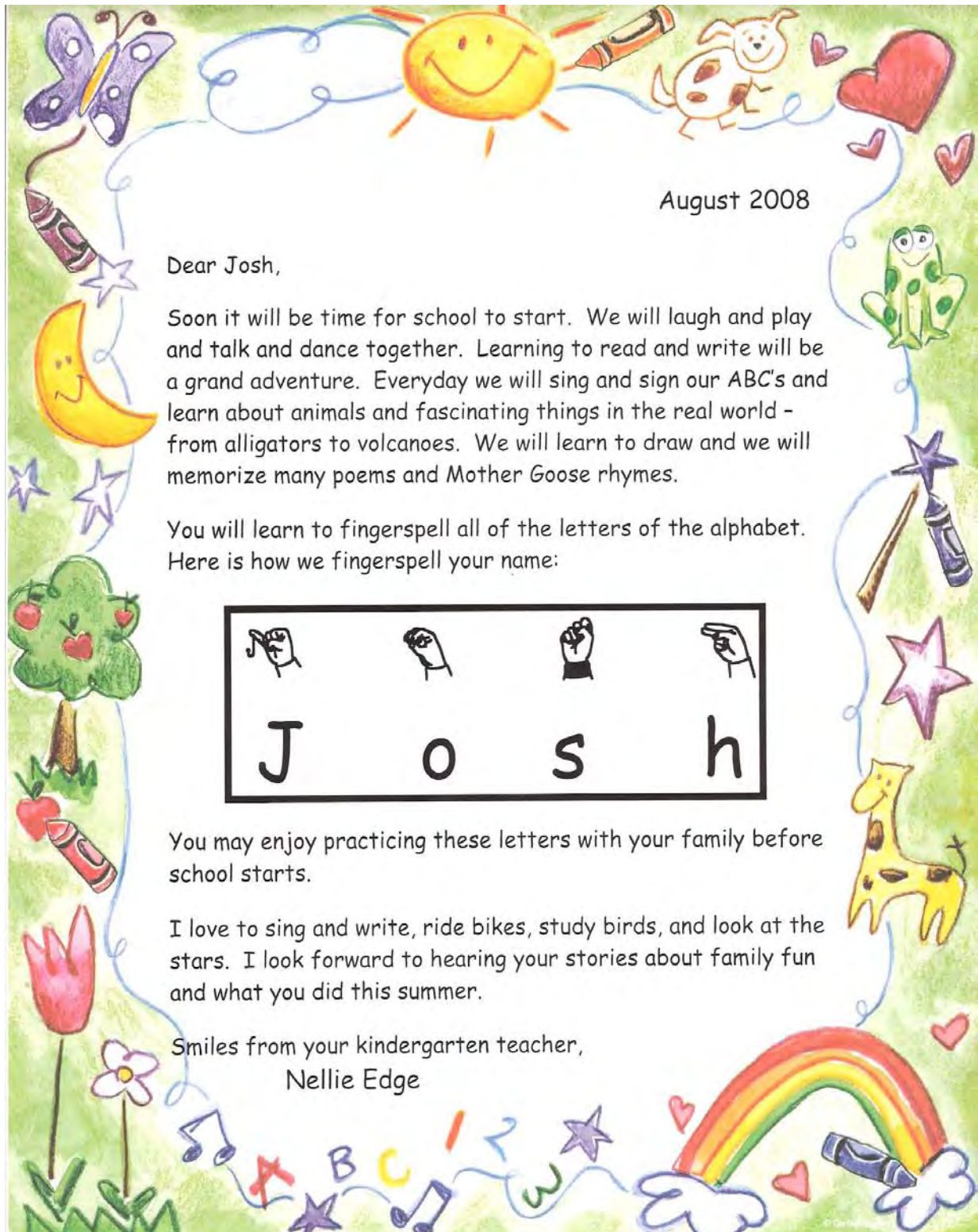
You will learn to fingerspell all of the letters of the alphabet. Here is how we fingerspell your name:



You may enjoy practicing these letters with your family before school starts.

I love to sing and write, ride bikes, study birds, and look at the stars. I look forward to hearing your stories about family fun and what you did this summer.

Smiles from your kindergarten teacher,  
Nellie Edge





# The Kinder Stars Year-End Family Celebration: *Children Share Sign Language and Learning and Love*



With high expectations, we reach for the stars with the lives of our children.



The Kinder Stars classroom is set up for the last performance and party of the year.



The Kinder Stars are in their places and waiting to shine for their proud parents.



The children begin with a moving American Sign Language performance of *I Pledge Allegiance* to the music by Lee Greenwood. They are focused on their teacher as they sing and sign.

Thank you to Celeste Starr for sharing this performance with us. See complete photo essay at [www.nellieedge.com](http://www.nellieedge.com).