

## Kathie Bridges' Children Memorize, Recite, and Perform Language: *The ABC Sign Language and Phonics Song*



Kathie Bridges teaches two two-and-a-half-hour kindergarten sessions in a mixed socio-economic community in Salem, Oregon.

Kathie's joyful, language-rich classroom, high expectations for student achievement, and her own background using Sign Language in special education made *The ABC Sign Language and Phonics Song* a natural part of her curriculum. The children quickly learned

the song and signed with precision and delight. **They performed with great pride for their fourth-grade buddies, the school secretary, and to enthusiastic applause from families during the Winter (Christmas) Celebration.**

Pringle Elementary is one of Salem's oldest schools, with a long tradition of celebrating the arts and high expectations that all of its students become good performers. This more often than not becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. **Pringle children rise to meet high expectations with amazing performance skills.**

### How did Kathie help the slower Sign Language learners?

Kathie helps the children individually to form each sign correctly. She talks to the children about the deaf community ("When communicating in Sign Language, the palm of your hand is like your face. You would never turn your back to people when speaking to them, so keep your palm facing outward."). Kathie adds four to eight new letters every few days and reviews often.

Copies of the ABC chart and flashcards go home with each child. Most families keep the chart on the refrigerator. The children love to practice, and their parents are so impressed.

Kathie further reinforces the Sign Language ABCs by dismissing the children silently by fingerspelling the first letter of their name. "If your name begins with ...(Kathie signs a letter) then you may be excused." This teaches the children to really pay attention and sharpen their visual skills. High-frequency words are also fingerspelled.



Kathie Bridges makes ABC and phonics learning meaningful, engaging, multisensory, and fun! She further builds automaticity with letters and sounds through a program of individual, systematic, daily repetition at home and at school using ABC flashcards until mastery is achieved.