

Building Confidence at Kindergarten and First Grade

Try bringing in some environmental print at the beginning of K and first grade to let children know that they CAN ALREADY READ! Try framing this by saying, "Boys and girls, we're all going to be readers this year, but I wonder if anyone can already read this?"

At that point, hold up a piece of very familiar environmental print such as a Burger King® crown, a McDonald's® bag, or a Pizza Hut® menu. Surely, the children will all chime in with the right words. Then, with your most surprised look, respond by saying, "I can't believe this is kindergarten (or first grade) and that you're all readers!!!"

You might follow this with an assignment to have the children bring in something they can read, preferably from their kitchen cabinets. Ask if parents could kindly send the empty boxes from products such as Jello®, cereal, Hamburger Helper®, Kleenex® and other products that they use. Treat these products somewhat like the children's names during the *Getting to Know You* activity by writing the names on sentence strips, clapping the letters in them, cutting them apart, and putting them back together correctly.

After the products have gotten their time in the spotlight, here are two uses for them:

- Make an environmental print wall either separate from or combined with the Name Wall (where students' names are displayed).
- Bind the actual boxes together, using silver rings, to make an environmental print book for your class library that the students can all read.
- Place the products in an environmental print center.
- Place the products in the housekeeping center.

What a great way to start the year, building the confidence of all your students as readers! And, we all know that confidence goes a long, long way!