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Braille Literacy: Beginning Young
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Developed for
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Outreach Programs
Braille Literacy: Beginning Young

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There are numerous videos and photos in this presentation that are not included in this outline due to confidentiality. All pictures and videos will be described. This outline contains slide text only.

Getting Read-y to Read

This slide shows four pictures, captioned as follows:

- I'll write you a note to tell you what I did at school today.
- Learning together
- What comes next?
- Mom, Look what I wrote!

Braille Video #1

Emergent Literacy

- Process of learning about the environment that leads to the development of meaning and concepts.
- The knowledge that the young child gains about reading and writing before formal reading instruction begins.
- The child gains knowledge that the written words are symbols which convey meaning.
To Achieve Literacy

To achieve literacy, there must be reading.
To achieve reading, it must be meaningful.
To achieve meaningfulness, there must be communication.
To achieve communication, there must be experience.
To achieve experience, there must be opportunity.
To achieve opportunity, there must be care and understanding.
Adapted from Laurie Hinzman, LaFayette Elementary, San Diego

Page from a story book

Text reads: When the new growing season came, the younger brother had no ox to help him, so he decided to use his dog instead. As the younger brother began to work, a merchant passed by and made a bet with him. “If the dog can plow, I’ll give you all my goods in the wagon.” As a result the young brother won.
The image shown is of a boy patching the roof of a house.

Fostering Emergent Literacy

Two images:
A young girl draws with a red crayon.
A young girl looks at a television image from a distance of about 6 inches.

Emergent Literacy

Two images: An adult helps a young child tactiley explore wind shield wipers on a vehicle and the same adult and child ice cupcakes.
• Process of learning about the environment that leads to the development of meaning and concepts.

Emergent Literacy
Two images: A young boy shares a book with an adult and a teacher uses hand-over-hand with a young girl who is Brailling with a slate and stylus.

• The knowledge that the young child gains about reading and writing before formal reading instruction begins.

Braille Video #2
Project SLATE: Holbrook & Koenig

Emergent Literacy
Two images: A young girl uses a Perkins Brailler while her teacher looks on and another young girl explores braille in a book.

The child grains knowledge that the written words are symbols which convey meaning.

Braille Video #3
To Achieve Literacy
• To achieve literacy, there must be reading.
• To achieve reading, it must be meaningful.
• To achieve meaningfulness, there must be communication.
• To achieve communication, there must be experience.
• To achieve experience, there must be opportunity.
• To achieve opportunity, there must be care and understanding.

Adapted from Laurie Hinzman, LaFayette Elementary, San Diego

Experience Leads to Literacy
Image: a young girl wearing pajamas and seated in her dads lap plays with his trombone while her mom looks on.

Experience Leads to Literacy
[My husband] and I decided to make more of an effort to write with M after a particularly wonderful family outing. So we've brailed about marching in the 4th of July parade (M and baby brother in backpacks, mom and dad playing trombone, M on "air trombone"), discovery museums, amusement parks, shaving cream fun in the backyard, whatever. It never would have occurred to me to have her dictate what she wants to write and then do it hand-over-hand with her. Thanks for that suggestion. I would have waited until she could braille by herself to even think about it, but instead we've really taken off w/it and now have a little braille diary of our adventures w/M. Now....I gotta do the same for the 3 year-old on the PC! :-)

- Mother of M age 4, totally blind

**Early Reading Experiences Needed by All Young Children**

(Aldridge & Emfinger, 2004)

**Literacy Models**

Images: Adult uses a Perkins Brailler and the toddler feels her hands as she works. In the second image an adult explores a switching device with a young girl using hand-under-hand.

**Print Rich Environments**

Four images: A young girl explores braille on an elevator, a girl tactually explores a jobs list with object symbols and print, a young girl uses an augmentative communication device with picture symbols, and a young boy turns the pages of a book while the adult holds it upright for him.

**Braille Video 4**

Foundation for Blind Children

**Experiences that Develop Phonemic Awareness**

**Opportunities to Discuss What is Read and Written with Responsive Adults**

Image a young girl and an adult read braille together.

**First Hand Experiences**

Three images: A young boy on a motor cycle, a baby with dad in the water at the beach, a young boy pets a horse.
Play that Incorporates Literacy Tools
Or as We Call It in the Vision World: Concept Development

Two images: One of a girl checking out a horse with her mom and the same girl riding a rocking horse.

**Braille Video #5**
Foundation for Blind Children

**Daily Reading of High Quality Books**

Braille Video #6
Foundation for Blind Children

**Making Reading Aloud a Learning Experience**

- Before you read:
  - Preview concepts
  - Make predictions (e.g., What do you think will happen?)
- During reading:
  - Have child fill in rhyming words
  - Take turns reading
  - Ask questions (e.g., What will happen next? How does the character feel?)
- After you read:
  - What was the book about?
  - How did the character feel?
  - Where did the story happen?
  - What happened first, second, third etc.?
  - Act out the story

**Braille Video #7**
VIPS, Concept Development
Helping Your Child Develop Braille Reading and Writing Skills

“Children who are learning braille can discover a great deal about reading when provided with daily opportunities to write. Some children initially find writing on the braillewriter easier than making the fine discriminations necessary in reading braille characters.”
- Swenson, 1999, pp. 32-33

Readiness Skills for Braille Reading

- Ability to interpret symbols
- Ability to locate top and bottom of page
- Ability to move hands in a left to right sequence
- Ability to use both hands together
- Tactile discrimination
- Muscle control for light touch

Help Your Child Build Mechanical Skills

- Finger dexterity
- Wrist flexibility
- Coordinated hand movements
- Finger strength
- Light touch

To images: A toddler plays with pop-beads, and two children play with clothes pins clipped to a coffee can.

Book Skills to Build with Your Child

- Awareness of different book media-print, braille, audio, large print
- Independently listens to books on tape and explores tactile illustrations
- Locates and identifies parts of books and pages
- Able to read and comprehend books at grade level

Image of a father and mother sharing books with their toddler and infant.
Ideas for Modeling Literacy Behaviors for Your Child

- Read a book using braille
- Read aloud and sound out words as you read
- Have your child “ride” her hands on yours as you track a page of braille
- Write a letter together

Image: the adult uses a Perkins Brailler while the toddler feels her hands.

Braille Video #8
Project SLATE: Holbrook & Koenig

Selecting Books for Your Child

- Sturdy and durable
- Content should be about familiar topics
- Braille and tactual symbols
- Real objects with books / in books
- If book is dependent on pictures, it may not be appropriate
- Sources
  - National Braille Press
  - Seedlings

Providing Your Child Access to Books

- Allow time for your child to explore books on his own.
- Provide books on a low shelf that he can access.
- Put tactile symbols on the covers so that he can easily distinguish the books.
- Provide a comfortable place for reading.
- If your child has low vision, provide books with high contrast, clutter free pictures.
- Early Training Center for Infants and Toddlers with Visual Impairments, Communication and Emergent Literacy, Session
The Literacy Center

Two images: A reading area with book shelf, lamp, and posters, and the same area next to a computer area.

Bringing Books to Life

- Manipulatives
- Pairing objects with stories
- Tactile illustrations
- Book bags or boxes

![BRAILS ALPHABET](image)

Directions, place a piece of masking tape above each brailier key. Put a different color on each piece. Color the alphabet below to correspond to the colors on the brailier. Sighted children can then braille their names or other words using this color key.

Figure 2 A color-coded Perkins Brailler and Braille Alphabet sheet.

Bringing Books to Life

Tools for promoting a child’s interaction with books
**Manipulatives**

Four images: A sock-puppet of the caterpillar and the book, The Hungry Caterpillar. Another sock puppet of the caterpillar with his head popping through felt images, the book Chicka Chicka Boom Boom and a poster with a palm tree and a small and capital letter “k” attached to the trunk, and the book, Five Little Pumpkins and tactile pumpkins on a fence made from popsicle sticks.

**Pairing Objects with Stories**

Images of children exploring pumpkins, one young child shares a photo book about pumpkins with an adult as they sit beside a real pumpkin.

**Tactile Illustrations**

![Figure 3 Illustration of a starfish.](image1)

![Figure 4 Tactile illustration of a spider in a spider web.](image2)
Figure 5 Book with tactile illustrations of a feather and a pocket.

Figure 6 Tactile illustration of spiders, a spider web and a wooden frame.

**Considerations for Tactile Illustrations**

- Children need to be familiar with a concept to interpret the drawing.
- Simple is better.
- Drawings don’t need to be pretty; they need to be tactual!
- Teach children to systematically scan tactual drawings.
Book Bags or Boxes

Figure 7 Book bag and the book, A Pocket for Corduroy.

Figure 8 A collection of materials for the story, Baby Bop's Purse.

Figure 9 A collection of materials for the book, The Jacket I Wear in the Snow.

Involve Your Child in Adapting Books

- Spend time talking about the subject before writing.
- Compose words and sentences together (use repetition).
- Verbalize sounds as words as you write them.
- Have your child write some of the words or sentences (scribbling is fine!).
- Write the story over several days.
- Illustrate the story tactually.

- Swenson, 1999
Braille Video #9
Project SLATE: Holbrook & Koenig

Meaningful Reading and Writing
Braille Video #10
Foundation for Blind Children

Teaching Your Child to Load the Braille Writer

- Teach the names of the braille writer parts.
- Use and verbalize the same sequence each time.
- Lay the paper flat on the bar, don’t allow your child to hold it vertically.
- Put the embossing head in the center, after paper is loaded move it to the left.
- Use smaller pieces of paper so your child gets multiple opportunities to load paper.

Swenson, 1999

Image: A very young boy loading a braille writer.

What to Strive for By the End of Kindergarten

- Read and write alphabet (some reversals)
- Read and write a core of tactile sight words (e.g., names of family members, one cell contractions, number words)
- Read and write some common part word contractions (e.g., st, ch)
- Begin to use phonics, meaning and structure cues for word recognition
- Track braille from top to bottom and left to right efficiently
- Use sound-symbol relationships to write words (invented spelling)
- Use some spacing between words when writing

- Swenson, 1999
Mountbatten

- Computerized brailler
- Lighter touch than a Perkins
- Auditory feedback for student / ability for sighted adult to see what is brailed
- $4000 price range

Image: A young boy using a Mountbatten brailler.

**Braille Video #11**

AFB Press, *Understanding Braille Literacy*

**Considerations in Making Literacy Media Decisions**

*(Mangold & Mangold)*

- Portability
- Reading rates
- Reading accuracy
- Visual fatigue
- Working distance from the page

Five images: A young girl with low vision looks at print, a young girl uses a CCTV to see a photo of a boy, a young girl reads a story she has illustrated using braille, and a young girl explores braille on an elevator panel.

**Ways Your Family Can Learn Braille**

- Hadley Institute for the Blind and Visually Impaired courses
- *Just Enough to Know Better*
  - National Braille Press
- Adults or older children who are braille readers
- *Dots for Families on Paths to Literacy*
  - [http://www.pathstoliteracy.org/dots-families](http://www.pathstoliteracy.org/dots-families)
- Family literacy class

**Families Sharing Literacy**
Five images: mother and son explore what he has written in braille, mom practices brailling with her son, adults share a picture book with a baby, a mom and toddler tactiley explore a book, and two parents share books with their toddler and baby.

**Minnie Shares with Her Family What She Has Learned 1st Grade**

Braille video #12

**I’m Already an Author and I’m Only 8!**

Image: An adult and boy walk together down the sidewalk using canes.

**Braille Video #13**

video

**Braille Resource Packet for Families of Young Children**


![Figure 10 Cover of Braille Resource Packet for Families of Young Children.](image)

**Contact Information**

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Figure 11 TSBVI logo.

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Figure 12 IDEAs that Work logo and OSEP disclaimer.