

Resources

Activities to Promote Early Literacy

www.familyconnect.org

Provides activities, blogs and information on toys and technology for children with low or no vision.

Center for Parent Information & Resources

www.parentcenterhub.org

The Center serves as a central resource of information and products to the community of Parent Training Information (PTI) Centers and the Community Parent Resource Centers (CPRCs).

Literacy & Pre-braille for Young Children Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired

www.perkinselearning.org/scout

This site offers an introduction to the forms of literacy for children who are blind and visually impaired, ranging from tactile symbols and calendar boxes to print and braille.

National Association of Parents of Children with Visual Impairments (NAPVI)

www.napvi.org

NAPVI provides parents with the support and information they need to become the best advocates for their children.

National Federation of the Blind Braille Reading Pals Club

www.nfb.org/programs

The Braille Reading Pals Club fosters a positive attitude about braille for children and their families and promotes a love of reading by encouraging parents to read daily with their children.

National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

www.loc.gov/thataillmayread

Provides free braille and audio books by mail or download.

Parent Resources from the National Federation of the Blind

www.nfb.org/parent-resources

This site provides resources, inspiration for parents, Listservs that allow parents with similar situations to learn from each other, and recommended toys for blind children.



1

2

3

4

5

Five Early Literacy Practices for Children with Low or No Vision

1

Reading

Reading with children is the best way to help them learn to read. Read early and often. When you make reading fun, kids will want to learn.

1. Read in the language you know best.
2. Introduce braille at the beginning. If they need to read braille, they will have a head start. If not, they will know a really cool secret code they can teach their friends.
3. Share books with print and braille to read together. While reading, guide

your child's fingers over the braille on the page. Have them help turn the page.

4. Create tactile books:
www.tactilebooks.org/making
5. Use toys and real objects to add meaning to books. Describe the pictures.
6. Actively engage your child. Talk about the books you read. Ask your child to guess what will happen next.

2

Talking

Children need to hear and use language to learn it. It is harder for children with low or no vision to learn from observing people and activities. Your child will need extra descriptions and explanations.

1. Talk in the language you know best.
2. Describe the things you and your child are doing. This will give them words for the things they are experiencing. Let them know things are going on that they are not participating in, like

cutting up food or putting away toys. Describe your activities. Let them touch and get actively involved where safe.

3. Respond to what your child says.
4. Describe things your child hears, feels, smells and tastes. For example, "That loud grinding is the garbage truck picking up the garbage again."

3

Playing

Playing is a big part of early development. Young children with low vision may move around their world less. It is important to encourage them to explore with play. This teaches problem-solving, imagination, new words, and the motor skills needed for reading braille.

1. Give your child lots of playtime.
2. Create a safe space, and encourage your child to explore their environment.
3. Encourage your child to pretend and create stories.
4. Provide toys with lots of sounds and tactile interests, and encourage your child to grasp, move toward, or interact with them. Consider getting balls that make noise or have textures, rattles, music boxes, and toys that vibrate or change shape. Don't forget the braille alphabet blocks!
5. Encourage pretend play with items such as honking cars, dress-up dolls, empty boxes, paper towel tubes, chair cushions, natural objects (tree bark, seashells) and outdoor time, balance boards and play tunnels.

**Have
Fun!**

4 Writing

Writing goes hand in hand with reading, and it evolves with practice. A baby's scribbles are the beginnings of adult writing. Children with low or no vision can practice writing in a different way.

1. Provide thick, dark markers for high contrast on white paper, or make textured lines by pressing hard onto paper laid on a semi-soft surface, or with a commercial tactile drawing pad.
2. Encourage tactile art with textured or scented paint, clay, wax sticks, pipe cleaners, string and glue, and even cooked spaghetti.
3. Help your child explore a stylus and slate, braille alphabet cards and cells, a braille writer, and even voice input computers.
4. Provide dots to create play braille. Use sequins, googly eyes or children's clay. (Supervise children under the age of 3 carefully.)
5. Talk to them about what they create. Ask open-ended questions.
6. Write together, read your children's stories, and write descriptions of their artwork. Create braille labels around the house, and help your child touch them. Braille and share shopping lists.

5 Singing

Singing is a fun way to learn about language. When we slow language down, the sounds that make up words become more evident. Rhyming helps too. Singing helps us learn new words and improve our memory.

1. Sing the alphabet, nursery rhymes, and rhyming songs.
2. Make up songs about your day or what you're doing right now.
3. Clap along to songs to demonstrate syllables, or add in finger movements or actions to expand connection to the story.