
The Braille Readiness Skills Grid: A Guide to Building a Foundation for Literacy

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Abstract: The Braille Readiness Skills Grid is designed to help those who work with young children who are blind or visually impaired identify, in a systematic manner, activities and skills that will foster braille readiness in children who are potential braille readers. Three intended benefits of the grid are (1) to increase parents' confidence in interventions that foster braille reading readiness, (2) to encourage adults to engage potential braille readers in systematic braille readiness activities from infancy, and (3) to renew the confidence of teachers, parents, and children who are potential braille readers and to foster the children's enthusiasm for reading.

Play is the avenue of learning, and fun is the obvious motivating strategy when teaching young children. These facts are the cornerstones of early intervention teaching. But the fun and play aspects of reading do not seem to be getting through to young readers, both potential braille readers and sighted readers. Teachers of preschoolers who are visually impaired or blind see many youngsters who are trying to learn braille but few who have fallen in love with reading, who sleep with their books, or who beg to be read to. In short, infants, toddlers, and preschoolers who are visually impaired or blind are not experiencing enough of the fun and enthusiasm of reading to build a firm environment of literacy and to formulate a developmental foundation for braille reading.

The importance of building a foundation

Stratton and Wright (1991b, pp xi-xii) stated that "literacy begins to develop at birth; it does not wait until a child reads his first word or even until he opens his first book. Literacy is a basic process, set in motion long before actual reading and writing take place, and it involves all of the child's development." Furthermore, as Miller (1985, p. 3) noted, "the literate environment so important in encouraging development . . . will

not occur naturally for the blind child." Therefore, building a solid foundation of readiness skills and fun experiences from infancy is a critical part of teaching reading and fostering a love of books in children.

Teachers and parents

What happens in the process of teaching potential braille readers that dampens the fun and enthusiasm? Various explanations have been offered for the increasing decline of literacy among braille readers. Spungin (1989) mentioned the insufficient training of teachers in braille and an increasingly negative attitude toward braille and braille readers. Wittenstein (1993) suggested that instructors have insufficient knowledge of the methodology of teaching braille, and Miller (1985) described how difficult and frustrating it was to find enjoyable and motivating materials for her young daughter who was blind. Teachers will find it difficult to be enthusiastic about braille if they are insecure about their knowledge of it.

Perhaps teachers have left out the fun part of reading when teaching braille readers because they do not know exactly what to teach them. Typical preschool teachers who have potential braille readers in their programs consistently express fear and frustration about giving children who are visually impaired or blind what they need to reach their potential.

Early intervention teachers of visually impaired children are charged with relieving preschool teachers' fears and showing them what to do to enable potential braille readers to flourish. If they are insecure about their own foundation and methodology, they cannot help these teachers. As a result, children miss opportunities to gain valuable experiences.

Parents play a focal role in fostering a love of reading in young children. In the author's experience, parents of young children who are visually impaired or blind seem to avoid activities that involve books, reading, and braille unless they are given confident guidance from professionals. But if early intervention teachers of children who are visually impaired or blind are not sure what experiences build braille readiness, they cannot guide parents. As a result, the fun and excitement of reading may be lost to children in these early years.

The grid

The early intervention program for children who are visually impaired and their parents in the Center for the Visually Impaired, Atlanta, devised a tool to help parents, teachers, and professionals who are not in the field identify, in a systematic manner, activities and experiences that will foster the foundations for braille reading. The grid is designed developmentally. The development components that build literacy in young children have been consistently noted in the literature (Stratton & Wright, 1991a), and Nolan and Kederis (1969) discussed some critical developmental areas of braille readiness preparation for young readers who are blind.

The one-page Braille Readiness Skills Grid (Figure 1) identifies areas of development that create a foundation for braille reading readiness. Each area is then divided into skills or experiences that are loosely sequential. The segments were drawn from the usual practices of experienced teachers and users of braille and from the curricula noted in the references (Caton, Pester, & Bradley, 1987; Duncan, 1974; Mangold,

1977; Swallow, Mangold, & Mangold, 1978). A teacher or parent can use the grid as a guide to plan experiences for a young child who is visually impaired or blind. The ultimate goal is to expose a child systematically, early, and often to experiences that will build a foundation and enthusiasm for braille reading.

The grid is not a formula or recipe, and it is not intended to replace favorite curricula. Rather, it is a flexible tool that can easily be changed to meet the needs of an individual child. Since it was designed for a child with no other impairments, entire strands could be inserted to target an individual child's additional developmental needs. A teacher of visually impaired children should be the leader who guides parents and other early intervention specialists in using the grid.

READINESS AREAS

The grid is divided into five readiness areas: tactile, fine motor, listening and attention, concept, and book and story. Each area is labeled along the left vertical margin of the page. Each area is two lines long. The skills start at the left top margin and move to the right top margin. They resume at the left margin of the second lines and move to its right top margin. Each area moves along the line just the way a reader's eyes move along a printed text—left to right and top to bottom. A child's progress can be marked with a highlighter, so that skills to be targeted for the future can be easily identified.

It is the author's hope that the grid will achieve three things: (1) increase the confidence of parents, teachers, and other professionals in which experiences a young potential braille reader needs to build the necessary prereading foundation, (2) encourage parents and teachers to introduce these readiness activities to infants and young children who are visually impaired or blind, and (3) engender confidence and an enthusiasm for reading in both adults and children who are teaching and using braille.

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**CENTER FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED
BEGIN PROGRAM
LITERACY READINESS ACTIVITIES SUGGESTIONS**

SKILLS AREA: LISTENING AND ATTENTION

ALERTS TO SOUND

- *Introduce baby to a variety of sound making objects.
- *Provide a calm sound environment.
- *Don't clutter the sound environment with ongoing television and radio.
- *Repeat sounds frequently at different times so the child can start to relate to them as familiar sounds.
- *Take child to the source of the sounds in the environment and help her understand how the sound is produced.

LISTENS TO INTERACTIVE SONGS

- *During lap time sing songs like "Patty Cake", "Row, Row, Row Your Boat", and move hands through the appropriate motions. Repeat favorite songs or familiar songs at regular intervals during part of your lap and play time. After baby has been exposed to the songs for months and months, start to reduce the hand over hand modeling and let baby do some of the hand gestures by himself.
- *Make a tape of favorite songs while you and baby are doing them together and encourage him to listen to the tape frequently when he is having relaxation time alone. Discourage the over use of any tape or automated sound entertainment source.

SOCIALLY SITS WITH ADULT FOR FIVE TO TEN MINUTES

- *Encourage a regular routine that incorporates lap time that has stories, songs and tactile reading opportunities.
- *Have a set work/play time that the child can predict.
- *Start play time that is structured as just a few minutes long and increase as the child's interest level increases.
- *Vary sitting activities with movement activities.

LISTENS TO AND ENJOYS RHYMES

- *Simple nursery rhymes can be found in early infancy books.
- *"Wee Sing" has simple songs and rhymes.
- *Pages of the Oregon Program have simple songs and rhymes.
- *Remember any rhyme will entertain a child. Anything that is done with a child can be put into a rhythm, whether or not it rhymes, and will have a similar effect of attaining the child's attention and appealing to a sense of beat and rhythm.

PARTICIPATES IN FINGER PLAYS AND SONGS

Same activities as above.

FOLLOW TWO STEP DIRECTIONS

- *Encourage cooperation and behavior management.
- *Provide fun activities in which the child completes one step directions that have a high motivation and reward for the child. For example, provide a direction where the child has to choose one target. "Take the cereal out of the bowl". Maybe there would be a bowl and a cup on the child's tray.
- *Directions that involve movement may be more difficult for children but definitely are important.
- *Be sure that following directions is introduced in play to foster more cooperation and not make the child feel like a robot. When one step directions seem easy for the child to master, introduce two step, unrelated directions. "Clap your hands and give Mommy a kiss", would be an example of unrelated directions. "Bounce the ball and bring it to me" is actually not an unrelated direction.

MATCHES SOUND CANS

- *Start having children match instruments for their sound products.
- *Have children help you build sound cans and experiment with the different sounds of each.
- *Encourage random play with sound cans.
- *Have the child select two cans out of three that sound alike.
- *Have the child select three and four cans out of five and six that sound alike.
- *Have the child match cans in twos.

SHOWS INTEREST IN SHORT STORIES ABOUT SELF

- *During lap time, from the time baby is very small, incorporate stories about his day.
- *For children with low vision, create a "Me" book with photographs.
- *For totally blind children create a "Me" book using puff paints and familiar textures, for example, of their favorite blanket.
- *Make stories very short.
- *Include sound effects in stories whenever possible.
- *Remember to repeat stories often.

SHOWS INTEREST IN SHORT STORIES ABOUT OTHERS WITH PARTICIPATION

- *Make up short stories about child and another and have directions in there so the child can either take objects out of the story bag or clap hands at a certain time or indicate their hair if you are talking about washing their hair, so the child gets physical participation in the story in addition to listening.
- *Tell short stories about family members, excluding the child from the story.
- *Tell brief stories about someone like the child.

- *Remember to watch for child's interest and enjoyment level. This should be lots of fun.

SHOWS INTEREST IN STORIES ABOUT OTHERS WITHOUT PARTICIPATION

- *Repeat the previous activities excluding the physical participation part
- *Make stories slightly longer.
- *Perhaps add new stories to the story repertoire.
- *Try reading very simple stories in books, particularly Twin Vision books and tactile books.
- *Remember to paraphrase stories from a book so that you don't have to read the exact words.

USES JARGON AND IMITATION ON PHONE

- * Encourage child to be on your lap while you are on the telephone so that he can experience what you are doing when you are talking on the telephone.
- *Provide a very similar play phone, perhaps an old family phone or one that has been unplugged for child to explore and play with.
- *Encourage child to talk on the phone with relatives for brief times, just to listen to their voice and perhaps to say, "Hi".
- *Encourage child to talk to their dolls and teddy bears as you do on the telephone.

TELL SIMPLE EVENT (IDEA)

- *Listen with attention when the child is relating an idea, even though it may be expressed in just a few words.
- *Repeat to the child what they said or what you believe they said, for example, "You fell down and hurt yourself". Ask the child simple questions that are not answered by yes or no.
- *Be sure to leave time for a child to do his own talking.
- *Be sure not to talk for the child all of the time.
- *Don't hurry the child while they are expressing an idea.

MAKES UP SIMPLE STORIES (THREE IDEAS)

- *Find some novel objects that the child can feel and tell you about. You may have to prompt for ideas. Example: Sea shell; Let the child feel the sea shell and you might say, "Tell me about what you are feeling", "What do you think this is?", "What can you do with this?".
- *Ask the child to tell you about their favorite playthings.
- *Encourage the child to use a tape recorder to hear their voice while they are talking.
- *There are no right or wrong answers. This is supposed to be fun and a positive self building experience.

LISTENS TO SIMPLE STORY TAPE

- *Encourage the child to make a tape with you that they can listen to.
- *You make a tape while you are telling a story that is a favorite story and encourage the child to listen to the tape.
- *Buy a simple story tape and listen to it with the child. Stop the tape and re-tell the story to the child.
- *Repeat story activities often.

MANAGES TAPE RECORDER WITH HELP USING HAND OVER HAND DEMONSTRATION

- *Help the child work all of the different buttons on the tape recorder individually.
- *Encourage the child to experiment with the different buttons on the tape recorder.
- *Encourage the child to teach you how to use the tape recorder.
- *Be sure that you are working with a very simple and child proof tape recorder that will not jam or break.

MANAGES TAPE RECORDER INDEPENDENTLY

- *Encourage the child to use the tape recorder during role playing activities.
- *Encourage the child to use the tape recorder for listening sessions while you are close by and can help with any difficulty.

ATTENTION TO TASK COMPLETION (FIVE TO TWENTY MINUTES)

**CENTER FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED
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LITERACY READINESS ACTIVITIES SUGGESTIONS**

SKILLS AREA: FINE MOTOR

HOLDS OBJECT IN EACH HAND

- *Using hand over hand intervention, have baby hold bottle.
- *Place interesting objects in baby's hand and use a gentle over pressure to demonstrate holding.
- *Secure interesting object in baby's hands for short periods of time (preferably sound making rattles).
- *Play games in which baby is holding two objects that parent brings together to make a knocking noise.

USES PINCER GRASP

- *Have baby take small pieces of cereal out of the individual cups of an egg carton.
- *Help baby peel off tape from clothing (masking tape with the end tucked under).
- *Playing with sticky substances like syrup or peanut butter, encourage baby to pick off feathers in the sticky stuff.
- *Distribute pieces of cereal or favorite food around food tray for baby to secure.

OPENS AND CLOSSES BOOKS

- *Engage in book play during lap reading time.
- *Provide books that make noise/music when opened and closed.
- *Give baby a book to manipulate during lap reading time.

TURNS CARDBOARD PAGES

- *During lap reading time have baby feel pages.
- *Place tape tabs on paper or cardboard pages to encourage baby to turn the pages.
- *Introduce "Chubby" books that fit small hands.
- *Provide interesting books that have novel tactile pieces on each page.

USES TWO HANDS COOPERATIVELY

- *Provide over sized toys that baby has a high interest in to encourage two hand play.
- *Provide cause/effect toys like cash register that baby has to steady with one hand while operating with the other.
- *Frequently use hand over hand modeling from behind the child to encourage two hands working together on a project.
- *Encourage the habit of one hand steadying a project.

USES APPROPRIATE GRASP WITH STYLUS

- *Use hand over hand demonstration with child to monitor stylus hold frequently.
- *Encourage scribbling in writing with stylus.

MAKE STYLUS ART WITH CONSTRUCTION PAPER.

*Using a carpet piece in a same sized cardboard box, place brown paper bag paper that has been cut to fit the box over the carpet and encourage the child using hand over hand modeling from behind to poke into the paper. Perhaps make this an activity during writing or art time, or at home part of an art or play project. Help the child turn the paper over to experience the results of the poking.

URNS PAGES ONE AT A TIME

*Provide highly interesting paper page books with tactile interest or highly visible pictures.

*Provide magazine play for small children, remembering to discourage paper tearing.

*Provide pages with small tape tabs to make turning easier.

*Encourage children to turn pages during lap reading time.

COPIES PATTERNS WITH PEGS, MUFFIN TINS, GEO BOARDS, ETC.

*This is a seated task and teachers and parents want to be sure that the activity is part of a fun experience without pressure. The child is encouraged to feel the model in one demonstration board and repeat on their own board. Begin with simple placement of one item like one tennis ball in a muffin tin and have the child place a tennis ball in the corresponding section of their muffin tin. Work with one item until the child is proficient. Increase the amount of items until the child can work two, then three successfully. String boards and peg boards and parquetry pieces lend themselves to this activity. **This should be a fun activity and not a difficult, structured task for children.**

SHOWS HAND STRENGTH AND FLEXIBILITY

*Encourage hand play with beans, oatmeal, sand and water.

*Encourage squeezing play dough, silly putty, thera-putty and clay.

*Present activities that encourage pulling such as See and Say toys.

*Poking activities with finger isolation where finger strength is required such as playing the piano, pushing down on the keys of a toy cash register, etc.

*Manipulation skills of turning.

PLACED INDIVIDUAL FINGER ON BRAILLE KEYS

*Introduce to Mountbatten machine. (Electric Braille)

*Work with child's fingers over your fingers placed on braille keys.

*Encourage electric organ and piano play.

MANAGES PAPER INTO SLOT

*Practice "mailing" letters in a toy mail box.

*Practice folding paper horizontally and vertically.

*Place cards in playing card holder.

*Using hand over hand, help child move paper into the slot of the braille and start to turn the knobs.

*Use reverse chaining to take the paper out of the machine.

SCRIBBLES WITH SLATE AND STYLUS

*Provide opportunities for stylus play using carpet square in a box and paper bag cut out paper.

*Help the child position paper in a slate.

*Use hand over hand to poke stylus at random into the different cells and remove the paper to feel the holes.

MANAGES PAPER IN AND OUT OF THE BRAILLER WITH HELP

*Use hand over hand demonstration to help the child move paper in and out of the braille.

POSITIONS FINGERS ON BRAILLE KEYS APPROPRIATELY

*Use tactile indentifiers such as sticky felt pieces, contact paper, tape, etc. to distinguish the keys on the braille and encourage the child to put their fingers on keys, perhaps putting matching tactile indicators on their index, middle and ring fingers of either hand to correspond to the keys on the braille.

*Have the child practice putting their fingers on the keys in the appropriate hand position and then doing something else with their hands like clapping in rhythm with you or finding something on their table and then re-positioning their hands on the keys.

MANAGES PAPER IN AND OUT OF THE BRAILLER INDEPENDENTLY

*This can be encouraged during role playing activities and as part of the readiness step for writing stories.

OPERATES ALL KEYS OF THE BRAILLER APPROPRIATELY

*Encourage children to explore how the different keys move the carriages and figure out themselves what they do.

*Have the child teach another child or you about each key separately and show you what it can do and talk about what it can do.

*Encourage the child to use the keys of the braille in appropriate ways but to make up pretend stories using "scribble play".

**CENTER FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED
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LITERACY READINESS ACTIVITIES SUGGESTIONS**

SKILLS AREA: BOOK AND STORY

USES BOOKS AS TOYS (SQUEAK, PULL, ETC.)

*Provide different kinds of books that baby can play with and enjoy including squeaky books, tactile books, books where something happens, sound making books in which child can press a part of it and identify a sound.

*Have cloth books in baby's bed and in the play area where toys and items cannot roll away.

IDENTIFIES PARTS OF A BOOK (COVER, PAGES, MARGIN, ETC.)

*While playing with baby during lap reading time and during book/play time, incidently identify the different parts of a book.

*Put different, exciting things on a part of the book that you are targeting for language and stress that part during the week/month.

HOLDS BOOK AND TURNS PAGES

*During lap reading time be sure baby holds the book with you and helps to turn the pages.

*Place big tabs on cardboard books so baby can easily get her fingers to turn the pages.

*Make a notebook for baby so that she can turn the index pages easily between cardboard pages.

EXPLORES TACTILE BOOKS USING PAD OF FINGERS

*Remind baby not to use fingernails or scratch pictures "tactile pieces" in a book.

*Using hand over hand help baby find pieces of interest for touch on the page and help him run his fingers across the different textures using the pad of fingers.

*To encourage a feather touch, with pad of fingers place checker pieces on a board and have baby identify the pieces without moving any as part of a game. Index fingers with calluses may need to be soaked and massaged.

* Reluctant children may be encouraged to use their index fingers to feel textures on a page if the fingers are vibrated first or deeply massaged.

*Be sure textures to initiate child into looking at books are textures the child will enjoy.

*Choosing favorite textures and helping the child make their own tactile book is an exciting adventure.

PURPOSEFULLY MARKS IN TACTILE BOOK FROM START TO END

*Play games to have the child trace along a line. Games may include moving from Imaginary person to Imaginary destination, cutting the grass, measuring a road, etc. Use your Imagination and make it fun.

PARTICIPATES IN OBJECT "BOOK" STORY

*Make a book with objects that the child encounters in regular routine. The book can be made with zip lock baggies that have been joined with a ring that locks. Tell the story to the child as they remove different textures and objects from the different bags. Examples of such stories would be bath time, meal time, dressing, teeth brushing, going to Grandmother's, etc.

*Remember lap time is fun time.

*Any book a child helps you make in the early stages of reading may be more exciting.

DAILY TWIN VISION BOOK LAP TIME

*Twin vision books can be bought or made by brailleing what is on a simple child's book and on clear contact paper and placed underneath a line of print.

DICTATES AND READS "SENTENCE BOOK"

*After an adventure or at a special time during the day, have the child tell you, in a sentence or two, about the adventure or special event. Copy what the child says in braille and with the child make some tactile or visual picture to represent the sentence story. Have the child go through the motions of "reading" the story back to you by running their fingers across the braille and reciting the sentence. Repeat frequently until the child has a whole book of sentence stories that they can "read" to you. The tactile or high vision indicator on the page will be their reminder of the story.

SELECTS FAVORITE BOOKS AND STORIES

*You may want to read some books that are favorites onto a tape for your child or you may be able to find a commercial tape.

*Encourage the child's participation in choosing stories to read during the day and especially before bed time.

*In the story, ask the child what will happen next or playful questions that do not disturb the child in the different parts of the story.

"TOUCH AND TELL" AND "PATTERNS" SERIES COMPLETED (APH)

*Instructions accompany both of these series.

*Be sure to use both series with your imagination and during play activities to add an element of fun.

*Reading can be ruined for a child by making it work.

ENJOYS "ON THE WAY TO LITERACY" SERIES (APH)

*Be sure to read the accompanying information before this series. These story books are outstanding for young children and provide their own enjoyment.

*Share in the fun by making some of your own books that are like "On the Way to Literacy".

*Help the child to make some books with you that are like these models.

**CENTER FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED
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LITERACY READINESS ACTIVITIES SUGGESTIONS**

SKILLS AREA: TACTILE

TOLERATES BEING TOUCHED

- *Body massage activity repeated during care giving times
- *Frequent cuddling
- *Exposure to baby carrier on parent's back or tummy.
- *Exposure to a high variety of tactile stimulus including terry cloth, velour cotton, bumpy, rough. (Babies frequently tolerate strong input textures as opposed to tickly textures.)

ENJOYS BEING TOUCHED

- *Continue massage activities incorporating game and song activities like "patty cake".
- * "Play" in textured medium like corn meal and water.
- * Play introduction to finding favorite toys in a bucket of beans, oatmeal or sand.
- * A variety of textures put around bottle such as sweat bands and socks.

EXAMINES OBJECTS BY TOUCH

- * First introduce objects to baby's hands for exploration.
- * Encourage (require) baby to assist in holding bottle.
- * Use hand over hand approach to care giving activities such as dressing,
- * Provide secure and fun lap story time using personal stories about the child with story bags and graduating to story boxes and interactive songs.
- * Encourage manual exploration of objects that attract the child's interest such as food, parent's faces, favorite toys.
- * Use hand over hand approach to help child slowly explore newly introduced toys and objects.

MATCHES AND SORTS OBJECTS

- *Help baby hold similar objects such as their two shoes while dressing and talk about same.
- * Help baby put away household items like silverware by putting spoons in the spoon tray, forks in the fork tray, using hand over hand approach and perhaps as a lap activity with parent.
- * Help sort laundry, perhaps as a lap activity putting socks together, T-shirts, etc.
- *Organize child's play area and work areas so that objects are organized into specific places. For example, all blocks would be in one box and all balls would be in another box.
- *Encourage child to assist parent in putting toys away (This is a fun activity and possibly done with hand over hand.)
- *Stress the language for same and different.

*Vary the matching activities by having the child remove the T-shirt from the stack of socks.

*Help the child find the box of cereal with the shoes in the shoe basket.

*Make a texture basket that has at least two of every object such as tuffies, sponges, feather dusters, terry wash cloths, powder puffs, socks, etc. and encourage the child to find the ones that feel the same and feel different.

*Put different tactile markers on piano keys, using items that are easily removable such as contact paper or sticky back items like stickers that are tactile. Have the child sound the keys that have the same tactile item on them.

TOUCHES BRAILLE IN EXPLORATION

*Provide opportunity for lap reading with twin vision books.

*Braille objects that children are frequently exposed to such as their bottle, powder can, cereal box, play shelf

*Put braille marker on a plain block to create a braille letter block.

*Encourage the child to experience environmental braille in elevators, at ATM machines, on fast food/drink lids, etc.

MATCHES GRADATION OF SANDPAPER

*(Sand paper frequently is very unpleasant for children who are visually impaired or blind.)

*Offer tactile disks with vastly different textures for the child to match.

*Offer different kinds of nail files that have different textures for the child to group and possibly to line from roughest to smoothest.

*Engage in a woodwork activity that requires sanding, exposing the child to course medium and fine sand paper.

Encourage the child to help you put the paper back in the correct classification of box.

LOCATES TACTILE MARK ON PAPER

*Have child locate objects on their high chair tray.

*Have child locate objects on their work tray surface.

*Have child identify felt stick on piece on braille paper, locating top, bottom, left, right and center on different pieces of paper.

USES PAD OF INDEX FINGER TO TOUCH

*Encourage child to play electric organ or piano using a light finger touch.

*Encourage activities where child pushes buttons using the pad of index finger.

*Encourage child to identify checkers on a board without moving the piece (encouraging feather touch).

*In exploratory play encourage child to use the pad of their fingers and not to explore with fingernails.

TRACE THREE DIMENSIONAL OUTLINE OF SHAPE

- *Using hand over hand, encourage child to explore manually outlines of toys and objects they work with every day.
- *Encourage child to move hand around the circumference of dinnerware like plates and cups.
- *Trace two dimensional outline of shape. First glue objects on a paper and encourage child to trace their outline using finger.
- *Put a band aid with sticky surface down on paper and encourage child to trace around the outline of the band aid.
- *Put a piece of masking tape on paper and encourage child to trace around the masking tape.

The above activities are table task activities that require cooperation and interest on the part of the student. These activities must be fun and offered in conjunction with games and stories. Perhaps a story about a rabbit trying to get to a house could be incorporated in having the child use fingers to trace around continuous lines or the child following a continuous line to get to the candy house, etc. Children can practice tracing left to right along courses that have been mapped out on the floor so that they start from the big field using gross motor movements and move to the small field on a single piece of paper using fine motor movements. It is imperative to literacy that table tasks be related to games and fun for young children.

**CENTER FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED
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LITERACY READINESS ACTIVITIES SUGGESTIONS

SKILLS AREA: CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

IDENTIFIES BODY PARTS

- *When massaging baby or during bath times, name the body parts with the baby's name.
- *Frequently engage in body massage activities using songs and different textures, naming all of the body parts starting with the major parts and using minor parts as the child gets older.
- *Find nursery rhymes, finger plays and songs to stress all the body parts.
- *Take a body part a week or a month and "celebrate" that part by talking about it, at least fifty times each day, be decorating it if appropriate, by making up poems and songs and stories about it.
- *Play a game where you say, "Show me your _____" and the child points to or indicates that body part.

NAMES BODY PARTS

- *Have child sing the songs with the body parts with you just supplying the body part name when possible.
- *Have baby name the body parts on their bear or doll.
- *Help baby put together pieces that are shaped like head, body, arms and legs into a picture.

IDENTIFIES OBJECTS AND ACTIONS

- *Before bed or nap time carry baby through the house naming objects in their familiar environment.
- *Choose a few core words that everyone playing and working with baby uses at least fifty times a day. Identify those words on a piece of paper and post for everyone to see.
- *Have child choose between two objects that you name.
- *Expose child to a variety of samples of the same category.

NAMES OBJECTS AND ACTIONS

- *Encourage baby to participate in songs, finger plays and rhymes that stress different words, particularly nouns and action words.
- *Encourage baby to record her sounds and listen to them played back.
- *Encourage child to play with her own volume and pitch by listening to her noises echoed into metal bowl or can.
- *After baby understands labels for objects ask what they want, choosing between two.
- *Make tapes for the child that stress the words of vocabulary that you are working on using rhymes, poems, songs and stories.
- *Make a story bag about the objects that you are talking about.

SHOWS OBJECT PERMANENCE CONCEPT

- *Have baby play in a space like a kiddie pool or large box with three inch

walls so that toys like balls that disappear can be retrieved at arms reach.

*Fasten a few favorite toys on the high chair so that when the toy falls off of the high chair baby can be shown how to retrieve it by pulling the string.

*Have parents and care givers separate from baby for increasingly longer periods of time to point out that important people come back.

*After baby has played with a continuous sound making instrument or object like a radio move the radio, while it is still making noise, away from the child and then move him through retrieving it.

SEARCHES FOR DROPPED OBJECT

*Tie objects and toys to the high chair.

*Have baby play in a hula hoop or over sized box to retrieve lost objects.

*"Help" objects fall from baby's hand and rest against his leg so that he will learn to retrieve the object that is still touching him.

*After baby has been playing with a toy that has a continuous sound like a timer, have the object fall away from baby so that they can bend to retrieve it.

SHOWS SAME AND DIFFERENT CONCEPT AWARENESS

*Introduce child to two objects that are the same, like spoons, bottles, balls, and frequently use the words "same" and "different".

*While feeding child two different foods, ask for their participation in choosing the same food again or a different food.

*Have baby ask for a repeat activity. Replace "more" with "same game".

*Encourage baby to help with sorting activities such as sorting laundry and sorting dishes and utensils from the dishwasher, stressing same in the same piles and different in different piles.

*To stress "different", have baby identify the one that doesn't match in a group.

*When baby seems bored with an activity, ask if they want a different activity or a different song.

*Use the words "same" and "different" in everyday speech.

SHOWS NUMBER AWARENESS OF QUANTITIES UP TO THREE

*Encourage child to choose one cookie from a plate, two candies from a bowl, three pieces of cereal from a pile.

*Stress numbers when playing with baby such as numbering their fingers and toes, identifying they have two shoes, etc.

*Use counting songs, rhythms, and poems.

*Have baby count objects not just rote count.

SHOWS MORE/LESS, BIG/SMALL, LONG/SHORT, WIDE/NARROW CONCEPTS WITH OBJECTS

*Stress these concept words frequently in everyday experience.

*Remember all learning is motor learning. The child must have experiences that they experience with every sense that they can use.

*Refer to the Boehm Basic Concepts Test to identify the important concepts to young children.

PLAYS SYMBOLICALLY

*Play with baby using dolls and stuffed animals. Help them move through the actions of play.

*Have a doll or teddy bear go everywhere with the child whether they seem very attached to it at first or not.

*Have the adults react to the doll or teddy bear as if it is a playmate, not just an object.

*Use play phones and non working real phones.

*Sandbox play is excellent for teaching "cooking" kinds of play activities.

***Children who are visually impaired or blind do not learn typical kinds of imaginative play by watching. They must learn through hand over hand and movement experience. This is a very important part of their development.**

*Uses small, simple box as a room and one doll to move through the room imitating things the child has just done. Several boxes can be added to make a doll house so the child can start to play symbolically without having to move.

SHOWS CONCEPTS OF ABOVE/BELOW, LEFT/RIGHT, BACK/FRONT, UP/DOWN, TOP/BOTTOM, MIDDLE/SIDES (WITH OBSTACLES)

*Stress these concept words frequently in everyday experience.

*Remember all learning is motor learning. The child must have experiences that the experience with every sense that they can use.

*Refer to the Boehm Basic Concepts Test to identify the important concepts to young children.

UNDERSTANDS POSITIONAL CONCEPTS WITH MARKS ON A PAGE

*Using play dough or a tacky substance, move a favorite toy around child's tray or high chair top for them to locate.

*Put food in different places on the high chair or feeding tray for child to locate.

*During lap reading time help the child identify the number signature in the upper right hand corner for braille readers.

*Make "play" pages for child to identify - A scratch 'n sniff sticker placed in the middle, top, bottom, left and right sides of different pages.

*Using a felt square, have the child guess where a favorite felt piece that possibly has some other tactile dimension attached, is located on the "felt page". Have the child check to see if they are correct.

*Use puff paints, high marks or glue to make interesting designs for the child to locate in different parts of the page.

*Stress having the child hold the page with their non reading hand to search the page using the soft, fleshy part of their index finger.

***Activities should all be fun and associated with games and stories.**

RESOURCES

1. *The Mangold Development Program of Tactile Perception and Braille Letter Recognition* by Sally Mangold, Ph.D.
Exceptional Teaching Aids
20102 Woodbine Ave.
Castro Valley, CA 94546
2. *Guidelines and Games for Teaching Efficient Braille Reading* by Myrna R. Olson, Ed.D.
American Foundation for the Blind
11 Penn Plaza, Suite 300
New York, NY 10001
3. *Just Enough To Know Better--A Braille Primer* by Eileen P. Curran, M.Ed.
National Braille Press Inc.
88 St. Stephen Street
Boston, MA 02115
4. *Hands On--Functional Activities for Visually Handicapped Preschoolers*
American Foundation for the Blind
11 Penn Plaza, Suite 300
New York, NY 10001
5. *Set of 10 Braille/Print Raised Line Story Books--1981* by Amanda Hall
American Institutes for Research
P.O. Box 113
Palo Alto, CA 94302
6. *Patterns--(a braille approach to reading)*
American Printing House for the Blind
1839 Frankfort Ave.
P.O. Box 6085
Louisville, Kentucky 40206-0085
7. *Twin Vision Books*
 - a. National Braille Press Inc.
88 St. Stephen Street
Boston, MA 02115
 - b. Seedlings
8447 Mary Grove Dr.
Detroit, MI 48221
 - c. I Can See Books
P.O. Box 601
Nanaimo, B.C.
Canada VQR 5L9
8. *On the Way to Literacy: Early Experiences for Visually Impaired Children*
American Printing House for the Blind
1839 Frankfort Ave.
P.O. Box 6085
Louisville, Kentucky 40206-0085

9. Oregon Project Skills Inventory for Visually Impaired and Blind Preschoolers, 5th Edition.
Jackson Education-Service District
101 N. Grape St.
Medford, OR 97501
10. BOEHM--(Tactual Test of Basic Concepts)
American Printing House for the Blind
1839 Frankfort Ave.
P.O. Box 6085
Louisville, Kentucky 40206-0085
11. *Braille Literacy* (Pamphlet)
American Foundation for the Blind
11 Penn Plaza, Suite 300
New York, NY 10001
12. *Print and Braille Literacy* (Pamphlet)
American Printing House for the Blind
1839 Frankfort Ave.
P.O. Box 6085
Louisville, Kentucky 40206-0085
13. Preschool Braille Program by Connie Katz
Los Padres Unified School Dist.
5210 Clinton St.
L.A., CA
14. Touch and Tell Series (3 book set)
American Printing House for the Blind
1839 Frankfort Ave.
P.O. Box 6085
Louisville, Kentucky 40206-0085
15. *Foundations of Braille Literacy* (Book)
Robert Baker
Evelyn Rex
Alan Koenig
Diane P. Wormsley

American Foundation for the Blind
11 Penn Plaza, Suite 300
New York, NY 10001
16. *Learning Media Assessment* (Manual)--a Resource Guide for Teachers. Alan Koenig and M. Cay Holbrook
Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired
1100 W. 45th Street
Austin, TX 78756
17. Videos
Discovering the magic of reading: Elizabeth's story.
American Printing House for the Blind
1839 Frankfort Ave.
P.O. Box 6085
Louisville, Kentucky 40206-0085

18. *Understanding Literacy*
American Foundation for the Blind
11 Penn Plaza, Suite 300
New York, NY 10001
19. *ABLS—Assessment of Braille Literacy Skills*
Alan Koenig
Carol Farrenkopf
Region IV Educational Service Center
20. *Braille Requisite Skills Inventory*
by Stephanie Labossier
Karne Rhoades
Educational Service Center
P.O. Box 863
Houston, TX 77001-0863
21. *Braille Readiness Skills Grid*
Anne McComiskey
Begin Program Center for the Visually Impaired
763 Peachtree Street, NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30308
22. *The Bridge to Braille: Reading and School Success
for the Young Blind Child*
Carol Castellano
Dawn Kosman
National Organization of Parents of Blind Children
1800 Johnson Street
Baltimore, MD 21230
23. *Instructional Strategies for Braille Literacy*
Editors: Diane P. Wormsley, Frances Mary D'Andrea
American Foundation for the Blind
(See #15)
24. *Fingerprints: A Whole Language Approach to Braille Literacy*
By Gayle Lamb
ISBN: 0-473-03841-2
Published by:
Homai Vision Education Centre
Browns Road, Manurewa
Auckland, New Zealand
FAX: 09 267 4496

Braille Readiness Grid

Developed by Anne McComiskey, Director of the BEGIN early childhood program of the Center for the Visually Impaired

TACTILE	Tolerates Being Touched	Enjoys Being Touched	Locates Objects By Touch	Examines Objects by Touch	Matches and Sorts Objects	Touches Braille in Exploration	Grades textures of Sandpaper	Locates Tactile "Mark" on Paper	Uses Pad of Index Finger to Touch	
	Traces 3 Dimensional Outline of Shape	Traces 2 Dimensional Outline of Shape	Traces left to Right Continuous Line with Sticks, Glue, etc.	Traces Left to Right Using: a. Braille Cell w/no space b. Braille Cell w/space c. Dot 2,3,5,6 w/no space d. Dot 2,3,5,6 w/space	e. Dot 3,6 w/no space f. Dot 3,6 w/space g. Dot 1 w/no space h. Dot 1 w/space	Uses Two Hands Cooperatively in Tracing (Place Marker & Reader Hand)	Locates Braille marked Items in Home	Participates in formal tactual Sheets & Units		
FINE MOTOR	Holds Object in Each Hand	Uses Pincer Grasp	Opens and Closes Books	Turns Cardboard Pages	Uses Two Hands Cooperatively	Uses Appropriate Grasp with Stylus	Makes Stylus Art with Construction Paper	Turns Pages One at a Time	Copies Patterns with Pegs, Muffin Tins, Geo Boards, etc.	
	Shows Hand Strength and Flexibility	Shows Finger Strength and Dexterity	Places Individual Finger on Braille Keys	Manages Paper into Slate	"Scribbles" with Slate and Stylus	Manages Paper in/out of Braille with help	Positions Fingers on Braille Keys Appropriately	Manages Paper in/out of Braille Independently	Operates All Keys of Braille Appropriately	Plays at Braille
LISTENING, ATTENTION and EXPRESSION	Alerts to Sound	Listens to Interaction Songs	Sits Socially with Adult 5-10 Minutes	Listens to and Enjoys Rhymes	Participates in Finger Plays and Songs	Follows Two Step Directions	Uses Jargon and Imitation on Phone	Matches Sound Cans	Shows Interest in Short Stories About Self	Shows Interest in Short Stories about Others, with Participation
	Shows Interest in Stories About Others Without Participation		Tells Simple Event (Idea)	Makes up Simple Stories (3 Ideas)	Listens to Simple Story Tape	Relates Two Events from Short story	understands slow automated voice	Attends to Task Completion (5-20 Minutes)		
CONCEPT BUILDING	Identifies Body Parts	Names Body Parts	Identifies Objects and Actions	Names Objects and Actions	Shows Object Permanence Concept	Searches for Dropped Objects	Shows Same and Different Concept Awareness	Demonstrates Number Awareness of Quantities to 3	Shows More/Less, Big/Small, Long/Short, Wide/Narrow Concepts with Objects	Plays Symbolically
	Shows Concepts Of: Above/Below, Left/Right, Back/Front, Up/Down, Top/Bottom Middle/Sides (with Objects)		Understands Positional Concepts with Marks on Page	Shows Rote Knowledge of Alphabet	Shows Letter/Cell Awareness Using Balls, Marbles, & Braille	Participates in Rich Life Experiences	Says Letters of Name (rote)	Says Names of Braille Keys	Shows Awareness of Touch Patterns Representing Word; i.e., name	
BOOK AND STORY SKILLS	Uses Books as Toys (Squeak, Pull, etc.)	Identifies Parts of a Book (Cover, Pages, Margin, etc.)	Holds Book and Turns Pages	Explores Tactile Books Using Pad of Fingers	Traces Marks purposefully in Tactile Book From Start to End	Participates in Object "Book" Story	Has Lap time with Appropriate Book Daily (ie. Twin Vision)	Dictates and Reads "Sentence" Book		
	Selects Favorite Book and Stories	Completes Formal Braille Primer series (APH)	Reads "On the Way to Literacy" Series (APH)							



Name: _____

DOB: _____

Vision: _____

DIRECTIONS: Reading and writing braille is achieved by systematic building of skills in many areas of development. This literacy readiness grid enables parents and teachers to identify accomplished skills and target other skills for educational programming.

Using observation and informal assessment identify which skills in each area a child has accomplished. Highlight the accomplished skill box entirely. Emerging skills are partially filled with highlighter. Non-highlighted skill boxes are skills targeted for the child's educational program. This is a flexible tool. Add or delete boxes for individual children.

Remember: FUN IS THE KEY INGREDIENT.

Story Boxes

- A story box is simply a collection of items in a box or bag that corresponds to the items mentioned in a story. It is a way for young children with visual impairments to experience a story.



Ideas for story boxes

- [Blueberries for Sal](#) by R. McKloskey.
Contents: Large pail, small pail, berries to cover large pail bottom, (4) berries to clunk in small pail.
- [Jennifer's Messes](#) by Suzette Wright.
Contents: Cheerios, barrettes, (2) coins, comb, pencil, keys, doll purse, pretzel.
- [Goodnight Moon](#) by Margaret Wise Brown. Available in print/braille from [Seedlings](#).
Content: balloon (mylar), picture frame, three plush bears, doll house, furry mouse, bowl, plush kittens, mittens, toy phone, clock, socks, comb, brush, star shape.
- [Listen to the Rain](#) by Bill Martin, Jr.
Contents: Tape of rain sounds, raincoat, boots.
- [Roly Poly Man](#) by Suzette Wright.
Contents: Play Doh.
- [Strega Nona](#) by Tomie de Paola.
Contents: Pasta, pot with lid, bowl, fork.

- [If You Give a Mouse a Cookie](#) by Laura Joffe Numeroff.
Contents: Cookie, cup, mil container, straw, mirror, scissors, dust broom, sponge, blanket, pillow, crayons, tape, paper.
- [Supper Time for Frieda Fuzzypaws](#) by Cyndy Skekeus.
Contents: Cookies, plate, cup, pasta, paper, crayon, paper cookie.
- [The Foot Book](#) by Dr. Seuss. Available in print/braille from [Seedlings](#).
Contents: Slippers, towels, cotton balls, toy clown, big shoes, small shoes.
- [The Jacket I Wear in the Snow](#) by Shirley Neilzel.
Contents: Red wool hat and scarf, zippered jacket, sweater, boots, long underwear, socks, jeans.
- [The Little Engine That Could](#) by Watty Piper. Available in print/braille from [Seedlings](#).
Contents: Dolls, balls, toy engine, sailboats, toy animals, clown.
- [The Longest Noodle](#) by Suzette Wright.
Contents: Noodle, fork, shoelace, jump rope, ribbon, yarn.
- [The Sweet Smell of Christmas](#) by Patricia Scarry.
Contents: Cinnamon, pinecone, candy cane, spirit of peppermint, ginger, cocoa

Important things to remember about story boxes...

- Give your child lots of time.
 - It takes more time to figure out what an object or shape is through tactual exploration than through vision. A tactual learner needs to examine parts of an item separately than put the information they have gathered together to gain full understanding of the item.
- Think beyond words on a page.
 - Words are just symbols representing ideas and concepts. Without meaning words are a series of disconnected sounds and letters. Hands-on experiences help to provide meaning to words.
- Just do a little at a time.
 - You need not present all the items in a box with each reading. Determine your child's interest and attention so as not to overwhelm her with stuff.
- Share the story with others.
 - Get everyone in the family involved, including siblings. Share your story boxes with young sighted children. They are very popular.

3 Steps to Making a Story Box

- 1. Choosing a Story
 - When selecting a story for your child, choose one that is simple and talks about familiar objects and concepts. Story Boxes range from very clear hands-on topics to the more complex and abstract.
 - Initially a box might contain items that your child uses during daily routines. You can make up a story about the routine or family activity. Your child may be the main character of your story. It can be about a trip to visit grandma, bath time or mealtime, a playtime with dad. In this case no book is really needed.
 - Choose books that have characters and items that are readily available. Remember the complexity of the story and the number of items presented should be suited to your child. Often simpler is better.
 - Also choose a story to match your child's attention span. Short and sweet works well for young children. Choose a book that does not rely on visual experiences or pictures to provide meaning to the story. Choose books that are predictable and that have rhyme and rhythm.

2. Constructing the Story Box

- Begin with appropriate book then select corresponding items. You may choose to go on a shopping spree but often collecting familiar objects from your house will do just fine.
- Place the book and items in a storage container.
 - » Zip-Lock Bags
 - » Shoe Box
 - » Plastic container
- Label the exterior of the container so that your child will identify which story they are getting.



• 3. Reading the Story

- Handle the objects in the box one at a time giving your child lots of time to explore. Comment on the item's size, shape, texture and then name the item.
- Children with blindness/VI benefit from an adults modeling the function of the item, so if it's a spoon, pretend to eat. If it's a mitten, try it on. Allow the child to explore freely. Compare items.
- After tactually exploring the items place them aside. Read the story and once again present the items as they are mentioned in the story. Avoid clutter. Too many items at once can be very confusing.
- When reading HAVE FUN! Use sound effects and dramatic intonation to peak your child's interest.
- When you are finished with the story box put clear closure on the activity by having your child help place the objects back in the box, thus providing another opportunity to handle the objects.



Making an Experience Book

- In tactile experience books, artifacts from an event experienced by the child are actually incorporated onto the pages of a simple, sturdy book.

Sandra Lewis



Selecting a topic

- Selecting a topic for a tactile experience book is as easy as examining the objects that are part of the environment in which a child with visual impairments spend time. Events can be planned specifically to collect items for a book, or items can be collected as part of a naturally occurring event.

Selecting Items

- Use items that the child has had contact with **tactually**. (Using car keys to represent going for a ride will not be appropriate unless the child has in some way used the keys, perhaps to unlock the car door.)
- Items must be real, not miniature **representations of an object**. (Miniatures do not provide the same detail to a visually impaired child. For example a toy car would not be appropriate unless the child played with the toy car during the car ride. A better representation may be a swatch of fabric from the child car seat belt buckle that the child has helped to fasten.)

Choosing the background for the book

- Choose material that is easily handled by the child.
- Heavy cardboard should be used for the cover and pages.
- Fasten book together with metal rings (they seem to be more durable).



Assembling Your Book

- Use only one item per page.
- Do not glue the item to the page. (It creates a different experience that the same object held in hand.)
- Items may be fixed to the page with velcro so the child can experience them in 3 dimensions.
- Zip-lock bags that have been glued or stapled to the page can hold items for the child to remove and experience them.
- If you are using large items that are too bulky for the page you can attach it to a string on a particular page and store it outside of the pages, and can be pulled to the child when that page is read.

- Use an object that will help your child to identify the front cover of the book and distinguish it from others in their collection.
- The Braille text should be created on heavy Braille paper in one continuous line. Words should not be cut apart and placed on the page as single units or phrases. Do not glue directly under the Braille because it can reduce the sharpness of the Braille.
- Placement of the Braille should be in the same place on each page.
- Use contracted or uncontracted Braille. It is your preference.
- Use print on the pages also, so that visual readers can share in reading the story.
- Use repetition and short sentences when creating your story.

Example...



"My Garden Walk" by Mary

Title cover: "My Garden Walk" by Mary: *Glued to the center of the cover page were several pebbles from the path on which Mary had walked.*

Page 1: Brailled sentence at the bottom of the page read, "I went for a walk in the school garden. I found 1 piece of tree bark." *Glued to the center of the page was a large piece of tree bark.*

Page 2: Brailled sentence "On the ground were 3 stones. Count them with me." *3 stones, one small, medium, and large, were glued onto this page.*

Page 3: Braille sentence, "I have 4 limbs from a tree." *Arranged in increasing size were 4 limbs from various trees.*

Page 4: Brailled sentence, "I picked 3 leaves, one large, one medium, and one small." *In descending size, three different leaves were glued onto the center of the page.*

Page 5: Brailled sentence, "I petted one bunny rabbit." *In a plastic Zip-lock bag glued to the center of the page was bunny fur found on the ground near the bunny's cage.*

Page 6: Brailled sentence, "I picked a flower." *One flower from a bush was attached to the center of the page.*

Page 7: Brailled sentence, "I had fun walking with Ms. Joan." *Stapled to this page was the elastic from the handle of a discarded cane like the one used by Mary.*

Other Tactile Experience Books

- Use everyday experiences to make a book such as...
 - "My Bathroom" ("In my bathroom there is..." and repeat this statement for each page with the item that goes with it.)
 - "Things in Mommy's Purse"—store items in a purse and have all items removable for easy exploration and manipulation. Let the child make up their own story with the items.
 - "Things in My Hair"... (See next slide...)



Things for My Hair

Title Cover: "Things for My Hair" A hairbrush was attached to cover with Velcro.

Page 1: "Shampoo to clean my hair. Conditioner to make it soft." Small travel-size containers filled with a little shampoo/conditioner attached at the center of the page with Velcro.

Page 2: "A brush and combs for my hair." Two combs and one small brush were attached to the page with Velcro. A large brush was attached to a string and hung outside of the book.

Page 3: "Hair rollers to help curl my hair." Various sizes and makes of rollers were placed into a small plastic bag. The bag was fastened at the top of the page with Velcro.

Page 4: "Large and small barrettes hold my hair in place." Various sizes and types of barrettes were placed in a bag, and the bag was fastened at the top of the page with Velcro.

Page 5: "Bobby pins hold my hair in place." Large, small, and medium-size bobby pins were placed in a bag that was attached to the page.

Page 6: "Ponytail holders keep my hair in a ponytail." Same as pages 4 and 5.

Page 7: "Clincher combs keep my hair back." Same as pages 4 and 5.

Page 8: "Headbands keep my hair out of my face." Same as pages 4 and 5.

Songs and Fingerplays

Way up high in the apple tree

Way up high in the apple tree. (*hands reach up high*)

Two little apples smiled at me. (*making smiling gesture with hands on mouth*)

I shook that tree as hard as I could. (*pretend to hold on to object with both hand and shake it*)

And down came the apples. (*drop hands in a down motion into lap*)

Mmmmmm, they were good! (*rub stomach as if full*)

I=m a Little Pile of Tin

I=m a little pile of tin, nobody knows what shape I=m in. (*baby lays on floor, move their legs in a bicycling motion as if exercising their legs*)

I=ve got four wheels and a running board, I=m a four door, I=m a Ford. (*same motion*)

Honk, honk! (*gently touch baby=s nose like it is a horn*)

Rattle, rattle! (*shake baby=s hands*)

Crash! (*clap baby=s hands together*)

Beep! Beep! (*push on baby=s belly button*)

(repeat this little segment above 3 times)

Honk, honk, honk, honk, honk, honk (*gently touch baby=s nose*)

(Pause)

Aooga! (*said with extra emphasis and surprise as you kiss their stomach or tickle the baby; use whatever the baby enjoys or tolerates in a familiar surprise action*)

This is the way the ladies ride

(*Baby is sitting in your lap, facing out as you hold them by waist or hands, depending on how much support they need. Use rhythm in your voice.*)

This is the way the ladies ride, tree, tray, tree, tray. (*gently move knees up and down, making baby move up and down in an even rhythm like the words*)

This is the way the gentlemen ride, gallop-a-trot, gallop-a-trot. (*change rhythm of knees up and down to match the words....knees held high a little longer on Agallop@ then dropped on Atrot@*)

This is the way the farmers ride, hobbily ho, hobbily ho. (*rock baby side to side on your knees to the rhythm of the words*).

This is the way the hunters ride...gallopy, gallopy, gallopy (*bounce baby more vigorously on knees as if they are on a wilder horse ride*)

Over the fence! (*lift baby high off your knees as if they have come flying out of the saddle*)

Ten Little Fingers (said with rhythm, or you can make up a tune to go with it)

I have ten little fingers, and they all belong to me. (hold all 10 fingers up)

I can make them do things. Would you like to see? (wiggle them)

I can shut them up tight. (clinch fists tightly)

Or open them all wide. (open hands as wide as possible)

Put them all together. (interlock fingers)

Or make them all hide. (hide hands behind back)

I can make them jump high. (hold hands high)

I can make them jump low. (hold hands low)

A can fold them quietly and hold them all just so. (fold hands and put in lap)

I can.... (said in rhythm)

(the actions that go with this are very obvious)

I can tie my shoe lace, I can brush my hair.

I can wash my hands and face.

And dry myself with care.

I can clean my teeth, too.

And fasten up my frocks.

I can say AHow do you do@

And pull up both my socks.

Grandma's Glasses

Here are Grandma's glasses, (fingers around eyes),

And here is Grandma's hat, (make hat on head with hands)

And here's the way she folds her hands, (fold hands)

And puts them on her lap. (put folded hands on lap)

Here are Grandpa's glasses, (fingers around eyes),

And here is Grandpa's hat, (make hat on head with hands)

And here's the way he folds his arms, (fold hands)

And takes a little nap. (put folded arms on chest and snore)

Hickory, dickory, dock

Hickory, dickory, dock, (gently walk fingers up child's arm half way)

The mouse ran up the clock, (fingers run on up to the shoulder)

The clock struck one, (clap hands together)

The mouse ran down, (fingers run back down to elbow)

Hickory, dickory, dock. (fingers gently walk the rest of the way down)

Knock at the Door

Knock at the door, (gently tap child's forehead in rhythm)

Peep in, (point to eyes)

Lift up the latch, (tap end of nose in rhythm)

Walk in, (open mouth, hold finger near)

Chin chopper, chin chopper, chin chopper CHIN! (tap lightly under chin in Rhythm. Finish with sudden tickle on the last "chin")

Beehive

Here is the beehive. Where are the bees? (fold hand over other hand for hive)

Hidden away where nobody sees.

Soon they come creeping out of the hive, (slowly bring fingers, starting with thumb, up and over the hive)

One-two-three-four-five. (bring last three fingers over the "hive" and suddenly tickle the child)

My Body (touch part of body as names)

Here are my ears; here is my nose; here are my fingers; and here are my toes.

Here are my eyes, both open wide; here is my mouth with my teeth inside.

Here is my tongue; that helps me to speak; here is my chin and here are my cheeks.

Here are my hands; to help me play; here are my feet for walking today.

My Bath

After my bath I try, try, try to wipe myself 'till I'm dry, dry, dry. (help child pretend to wipe body dry)

Hands to wipe, and fingers and toes, two wet legs and a shiny nose. (help child touch

those body parts)

Just think how much less time I'd take if I were a dog and could shake, shake, shake. (gently help child shake)

Wiggles (help child follow the directions in the rhyme)

I wiggle my fingers, I wiggle my toes.

I wiggle my shoulders, I wiggle my nose.

Now the wiggles are out of me and I'm just as still as I can be!

Others: Row, Row, Row Your Boat; Incy, Wincy Spider, Little Piggies, I'm a Little Teapot, Where is Thumbkin?, Five Monkeys Jumping on the Bed

Oh I wish I was.... (sung to tune of Alf You're Happy and You Know It)
(These are silly lyrics, but humorous and fun. You can use signs for the key objects or animals in each verse. Preschoolers in particular enjoy this one.)

Oh, I wish I was a little English Sparrow (echo, English Sparrow). (2X)
I would sit on the steeple and I'd spitt on the people.
Oh, I wish I was a little English Sparrow.

Oh, I wish I was a little mus-qui-to (echo, mus-qui-to). (2X) (This is a mosquito.)
Oh, I'd itchy and I'd bity under everybody=s nighty.
Oh, I wish I was a little mus-qui-to.

Oh, I wish I was a little slice of orange (echo, slice of orange). (2X)
I'd go squirty, squirty, squirty over everybody=s shirty.
Oh, I wish I was a little slice of orange.

Oh, I wish I was a little yellow car (echo, yellow car). (2X)
I'd go speedy, speedy, speedy over everybody=s feety.
Oh, I wish I was a little yellow car.

Oh, I wish I was a little blob of mud (echo, blob of mud). (2X)
I would ooey and I'd gooey under everybody=s shoey.
Oh, I wish I was a little blob of mud.

Oh, I wish I was a little fish in a pond (echo, fish in a pond). (2X)
I'd go swimming in my nudey, without my bathing suity.
Oh, I wish I was a little fish in a pond.

Oh, I wish I was a little bottle of pop (echo, bottle of pop). (2X)
I'd go down with a slurp and come up with a burp.
Oh, I wish I was a little bottle of pop

Directions for Making “Scat the Cat”

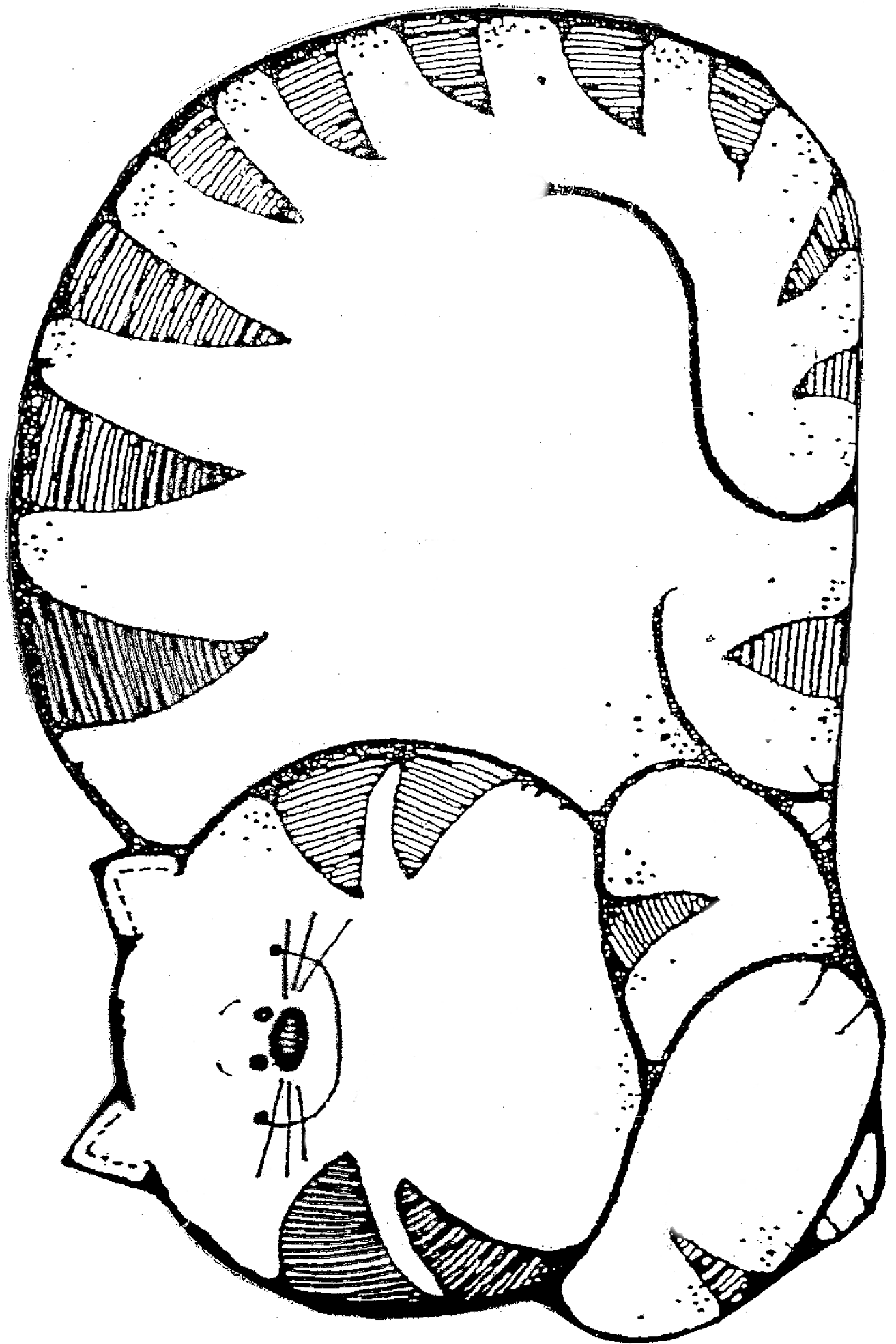
1. Gather 6-8 sheets of 8 ½ by 11 cardstock or construction paper of bold, primary colors; and a white manila envelope that the colored paper will fit in
2. Make a copy of the cat drawing on transparency paper as well as on regular paper.
3. Slip the transparency of the cat inside the white manila envelope so that the drawing of the cat can be faintly seen through the front. Then trace the outline of the cat on the front of the envelope. Cut that outline out of the envelope so that now the transparency of the cat is like the window of the envelope.
4. Put the colored sheets in the envelope behind the cat transparency. The cat will be whatever color is immediately behind it.
5. On the back of the envelope print this little poem.

I’m scat the cat,

I’m happy and fat,

If you don’t like my color you can change it like that.

6. After each time you read the poem, pull a colored sheet out and now the cat is a new color. Children like to help do this and change the cat’s color themselves.
7. When done, put all the colored sheets back in the envelope and you are ready to start over again!



Readings and Assignment Choices following Session III

Reading

Complete the following reading prior to session IV in May. It will prepare you for that content.

1. Chapter 3: pages 123-150, In Touch with Learning and Literacy in *On the Way to Literacy*, APH
2. Explore some of the websites on braille and publishers on line that sell braille books for young children. They may include:

Publishers of books for children:

- Seedlings, Children's Braille Book Club, National Braille Press, The American Printing House for the Blind

Websites:

- Braille Bug site: www.braillebug.org
- Dots for Families website: www.uacoe.arizona.edu/viliteracy
- Paths to Literacy: www.pathstoliteracy.org
- Just Enough to Know Better: A Braille Primer for Parents, National Braille Press: www.nbp.org
- Power at Your Fingertips, manual and video from VIPS in Louisville, KY, www.vips.org
- Elizabeth's Story, a 30-minute video about early literacy experiences for preschoolers from www.aph.org
- Hadley School correspondence course, www.Hadley-school.org

Assignment Choices

Select one of the following assignments to complete and email to Bess before the fourth onsite in May. This assignment is a follow-up to session III on Early Literacy Experiences.

1. Tactile Books/"Experience Boxes"

Look back over the section in the book on Story Boxes and Tactile Books to prepare for this assignment (pages 198 to 212).

Choose an infant, toddler or preschooler that you have been or might have the opportunity to work with. Choose 2 literacy experiences at that level to try with the child (e.g., creating a storybag or box, adapting a book, making a book, braille scribbling, experience story or book).

Develop the materials and procedures for providing these two experiences, briefly describing what you are doing.

Then do it with the child.

Briefly describe the experience, including the materials used (e.g., book/box) and any adaptations you made and the child's response/degree of interest. Which adaptations most enhanced the child's interest in the early literacy experience? What was the child's response?

2. Providing early literacy experiences for a child: AlexAnn

Alex Ann is 2 years old, was born three months premature and has ROP as a result of the prematurity. She is totally blind in the right eye and has rough estimated acuity of 20/800 in the left eye. She has no other disabilities and is quite bright. She walks around her home and yard on her own, likes to play with balls, trucks and on her kiddie car. She is very motivated to use her vision, but is very tuned in to her world auditorally and tactually. She likes to look at picture books and can name some of the larger pictures. As the pictures or objects get smaller, she gets very close to it, with her nose right on it. She is functioning at almost age level in all areas, with more of a delay in fine motor. Tasks that require good depth perception are difficult for her. She scribbles, is naming primary colors and a few basic shapes. She can express her wants and understand most of what is said to her. She is an only child and lives in an apartment with her mom and dad who are both very involved with her. The vision consultant (teacher certified in visual impairment) that works with her feels she will probably be a child who will need to be a dual print/braille reader in the future because of reduced visual efficiency abilities.

With that in mind and knowing a little about her, lay out an early literacy plan for her to share with her parents and begin to work on implementing if you were seeing her regularly in the home. The plan should include activities, materials and strategies in the following areas:

Storybooks in the home (braille and print; homemade and commercial), adaptations to those, use of storybags/boxes; experiences with handling books.

Early read aloud experiences (what kinds, sample toddler books, fingerplays).

Early experiences with scribbling in both print and braille, drawing.

Early exposure to reading and writing routines; print and braille in environment.

Use one of the literacy plans for the home provided at the end of this section.

3. Write up a literacy plan using one of the two forms provided at the end on a preschooler you are now working with in the home or at preschool.

Select a family of an infant or toddler with BVI that you work with, or a preschooler in a center-based setting with whom you would like to see more literacy opportunities provided.

Use one of the two charts provided at the end of this unit to use together with the family/teacher to develop a literacy plan for the child. You will notice that one chart looks at daily routines in the home; the second looks at areas of the house; the third at preschool routines and the fourth at preschool centers. The idea is to come up with activities and materials to use and/or adapt in routines and locations to use in key areas of early literacy: hands-on experiences for building concepts, read aloud experiences (storybooks, rhymes, fingerplays songs), books and storybags/boxes (print and/or tactile), early scribbling (braille/and or print), and labeling or print/braille in the environment. Fill

out the chart with ideas you come up with to try in all the areas. Provide a description of the child (age, vision loss, other disabilities, functioning level and interests), family and home.

Try some of the ideas out in one of the routines or rooms of the home/preschool then discuss how it worked. What worked well? What would you change or modify? How did the family/teacher feel about it? The child?

Literacy Plan: Daily Routines

Brief description of child:

Routines Literacy Area	Mealtime	Dressing	Playtime	
Hands-on, concept building Experiences				
Read aloud experiences (rhymes, songs, stories, fingerplays				
Books, storybags, experience books, tactile books				
Early print/braille Scribbling				
Labeling print/braille				

Literacy Plan: Places in the Home

Brief description of child:

Places Literacy Area	Kitchen	Bathroom	Living Room	
Hands-on, concept building Experiences				
Read aloud experiences (rhymes, songs, stories, fingerplays				
Books, storybags, experience books, tactile books				
Early print/braille Scribbling				
Labeling print/braille				

Literacy Plan: Daily Routines in the Preschool

Brief description of child:

Routines Literacy Area	Opening Circle	Story Time	Snack Time	
Hands-on, concept building Experiences				
Read aloud experiences (rhymes, songs, stories, fingerplays				
Books, storybags, experience books, tactile books				
Early print/braille Scribbling				
Labeling print/braille				

Literacy Plan: Places in the Preschool

Brief description of child:

Places Literacy Area	Large Group Area	Free Play Area	Small Group Centers	
Hands-on, concept building Experiences				
Read aloud experiences (rhymes, songs, stories, fingerplays				
Books, storybags, experience books, tactile books				
Early print/braille Scribbling				
Labeling print/braille				