

Ideas to Promote Braille Awareness and Literacy

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Children need to be exposed to braille in a functional and fun way. Here are just a few ideas...

- Parents and teachers should share what they are writing (e.g., grocery list, note home) and read aloud as they do so. Let children know how and why you use print (or braille).
- Provide the child with lots of activities to use the hands and build tactile awareness and strength (e.g., play dough, shaving cream, opening jar lids, playing a keyboard).
- Braille notes for the child and "hide" in lunchbox, desk, etc. for the child to find and "read" (include print on the note so the child can get assistance in "reading" the note).
- Provide braille writer and a slate and stylus for the child to experiment with and write notes with. Don't worry about mechanics or true reading...these will come later.
- Point out braille in the community (e.g., elevators, signs) and ask for braille menus in restaurants (When appropriate, have the child do the asking!).
- Label things that are important to the child (e.g., cubby in classroom, book covers, food containers).
- Make experience books with the child using activities and materials that are meaningful to him/her (e.g., bath time, trip to Grandma's, going to the park).
- Make sure the child has access to books – place on a low shelf. Label books for the child so he/she can identify the book sought.
- Make story boxes for favorite commercial books (a box or bag of materials that correspond to the story) and spend time sharing the materials as you read the book to the child.
- Take the child to the public library for "story hour". Many libraries use a variety of hands-on materials during story hour and most librarians are glad to work with parents to meet the challenge of a tactile learner!
- Use the plastic sheets that come with bacon to write braille on for books.