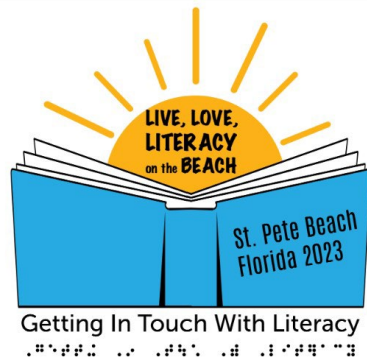


Beyond Being in the Room Where it Happens



Teresa Martinkovic, TVI



Beyond Being In the Room Where It Happens

Getting In Touch With Literacy Conference, November 29, 2023

Four-hour Pre-Conference Session with Teresa Martinkovic

Agenda for Today:

- Background Rationale
- PreK Early Emergent Literacy Learners
- PreK Emergent Literacy Learners
- Kindergarten (Emergent and Beginning)
- First Grade (Beginning Braille Readers)
- Second Grade (Beginning Braille Readers)
- Expanded Core Curriculum



Teresa Martinkovic

Teacher of the visually
impaired and mother of a son
with a visual impairment.



Background Information

RELAX

• AND •

ACCEPT

THE CRAZY

Teresa's
Classroom
Motto!

Teresa is assisted today by:

Kay Ratzlaff

Retired Teacher of the Visually Impaired



Who is in the Room?

- Years of experience?
- Number of students you've taught to read using braille?
- Number of students you've taught that use braille?
- Number of students you currently have that are emergent braille readers?
- Number of students you currently have that are beginning braille readers?



Cay Holbrook and Alan Koenig often spoke of Fundamental Truths and Personal Convictions.

Let's look at what that means for literacy instruction.

**Fundamental
Truths vs Personal
Convictions**

Fundamental Truth #1

Every child who is blind or visually impaired has the right to attain literacy to the greatest extent of his or her abilities.



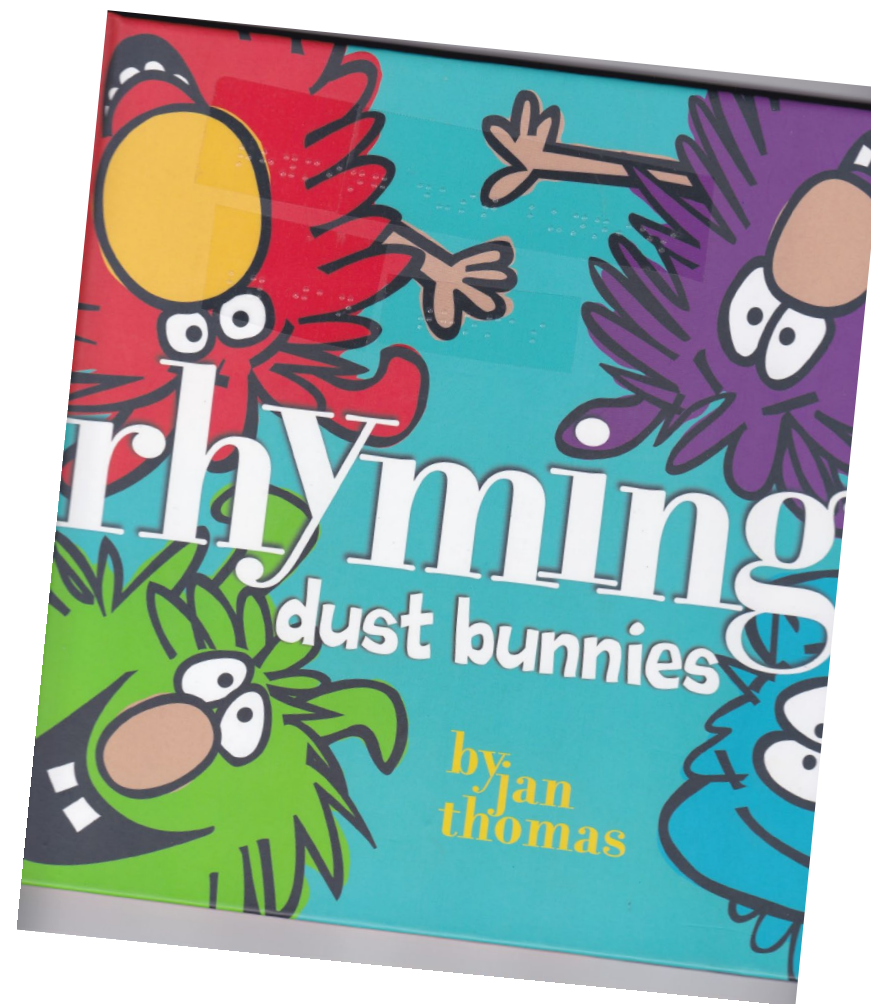
Fundamental Truth #2

All students who are blind or visually impaired have the right to literacy instruction from a qualified teacher of students with visual impairments.



Fundamental Truth #3

Individuals who are blind or visually impaired have the right to written materials in an appropriate medium at the same time as these materials are available to their sighted peers.



Fundamental Truth #4 (Kay's)

Students with visual impairments deserve and have the legal right to the time and intensity of literacy instruction they need.



Fundamental Truth vs Personal Conviction

Fundamental Truth

Every child who is blind or visually impaired has the right to attain literacy to the greatest extent of his or her abilities.

Personal Convictions

Phonics is the best method to teach reading
or
A multi-sensory approach to teaching reading is best.

What Does Fundamental Truth #1 Look Like on a Day-to-Day Basis?

Every child who is blind or visually impaired has the right to attain literacy to the greatest extent of his or her abilities.



What does Fundamental Truth #2 Look Like on a Day-to-Day Basis?

All students who are blind or visually impaired have the right to literacy instruction from a qualified teacher of students with visual impairments.



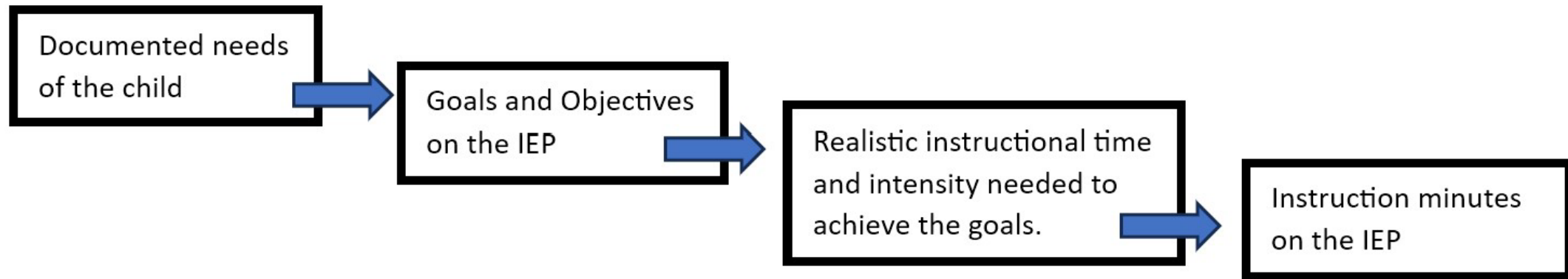
What does Fundamental Truth #3 Look Like on a Day-to-Day Basis?

Students with visual impairments deserve and have the legal right to the time and intensity of literacy instruction they need.



How do we determine the correct amount of time and intensity of instruction?

FVLMA – Assessments of Functional Vision, Learning Media, and Expanded Core Curriculum



Ensuring High-Quality Instruction for Students in Braille Literacy Programs (Koenig and Holbrook, 1999; Published in JVIB)

- Delphi study for professional consensus on instructional time and intensity for students in braille literacy programs.
1. Consistency
 - High = daily contact
 - Moderate = one to three days per week
 - Low = semimonthly or monthly contact

Ensuring High-Quality Instruction for Students in Braille Literacy Programs

2. Total time **per day**

- Long = 1 to 2 hours per session
- Moderate = 30 minutes to 1 hour per session
- Short = less than 30 minutes per session

3. Duration

- Long = throughout at least one school year
- Short = throughout at least one quarter or semester
- Concentrated = one to a few days with high-moderate intensity

Delphi Study – **Emergent** Braille Literacy Skills

The consensus was:

- Consistency is moderate to moderate high – daily to one to three days a week.
- Time per day is moderate to moderate short – 30 minutes to one hour
- Time span is infancy to preschool
- Duration is long – throughout the school year

Early Formal Literacy Skills – **Emergent and Beginning Braille Literacy Skills**

- Consistency is high or daily
- Time is moderate or 30 minutes to one hour
- Time span is preschool through kindergarten
- Duration is long or throughout the school year

Beginning Literacy Skills in **Dual Media** – Print and Braille

- Consistency is high – daily
- Time per day is long – 30 to 60 minutes per session
- Time span is Kindergarten through Grade 3
- Duration is long – throughout the school year

Intermediate Braille Literacy Skills

- Consistency is moderate to moderate high – daily to three days a week
- Time per day is long moderate – 30 to 120 minutes per session
- Time span is grades 4 through 8
- Duration is long – throughout the school year

Advanced Braille Literacy Skills

- Consistency is moderate to moderate-low – one to three days a week
- Time per day is long – 30 to 60 minutes per session
- Time span is grades 9 - 12
- Duration is long – throughout the school year

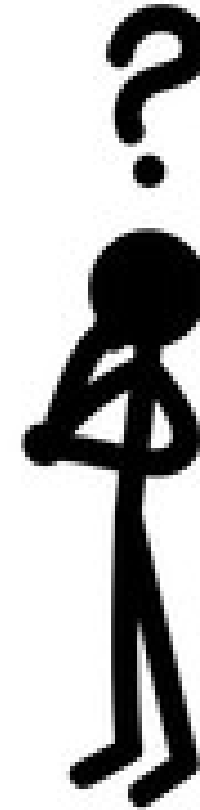
Braille Literacy for Student with Print Literacy Skills

- Consistency is high – daily
- Time per day is long – 30 to 60 minutes per session
- Time span is when appropriate
- Duration is long – throughout the school year

Reflection

Thinking of your students using braille, how do the IEP instructional minutes correlate to the times of the study?

1. We are 100% on it
2. We are close, but not 100%
3. We have work to do to get to that level of instruction
4. We aren't even close



Other Resources for Determining Time and Intensity of Instruction

- VISSIT (Visual Impairment Scale of Service Intensity of Texas)
- The Needs Identified in your Assessments
- Vision Services Severity Rating Scales (VSSRS)
- Others you use?

5 Minute Break Time!



Get Your Inspiration Within

THE
COFFEE BREAK

COLLEGE BREAK

Teresa's Personal Convictions

Teresa's Personal Convictions

1. Know your students.
2. Know what is happening in the general education classroom.
3. Communicate, communicate, and communicate some more with the classroom teachers and administrators.
4. Create opportunities for your students to participate in school activities.

Pre-K and Early Emergent Literacy

Building the Foundation

Introducing Literacy and Concepts for Students at an Early Emergent Literacy Level

Foundational Ideas:

1. Symbolic communication
2. Tactile exploration with objects related to books and songs
3. Use games and activities they enjoy
4. Teach them how to use their hands
5. Texture discrimination
6. Find ways to engage them
7. Object books
8. Daily living skills



Using the multi-sensory approach

Involve all the senses.

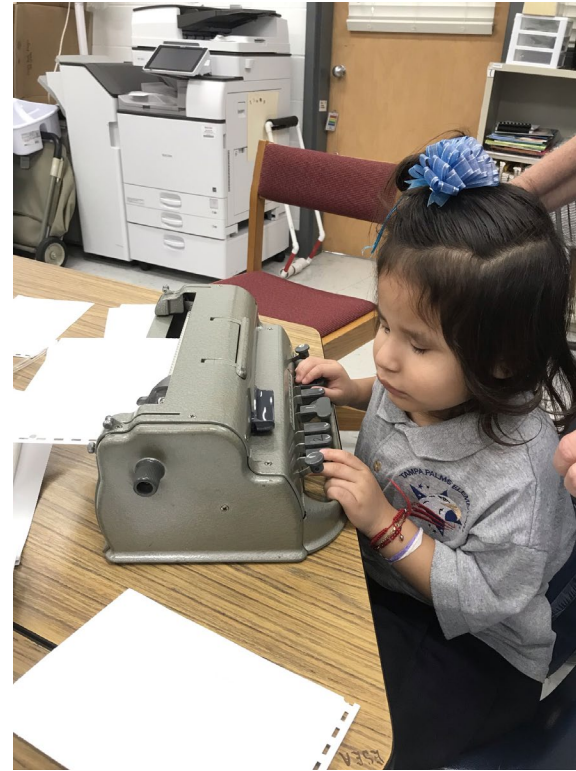
We made Kool Aid !!

8/18/21

In the hot summer, we made Kool-Aid. The second week of school with 3-year-olds.



Connect to literacy. Write it down!



Tactile Exploration Using Objects from Books and Songs

- Building finger and hand skills
- Connecting objects to words



Image by jcomp on Freepik

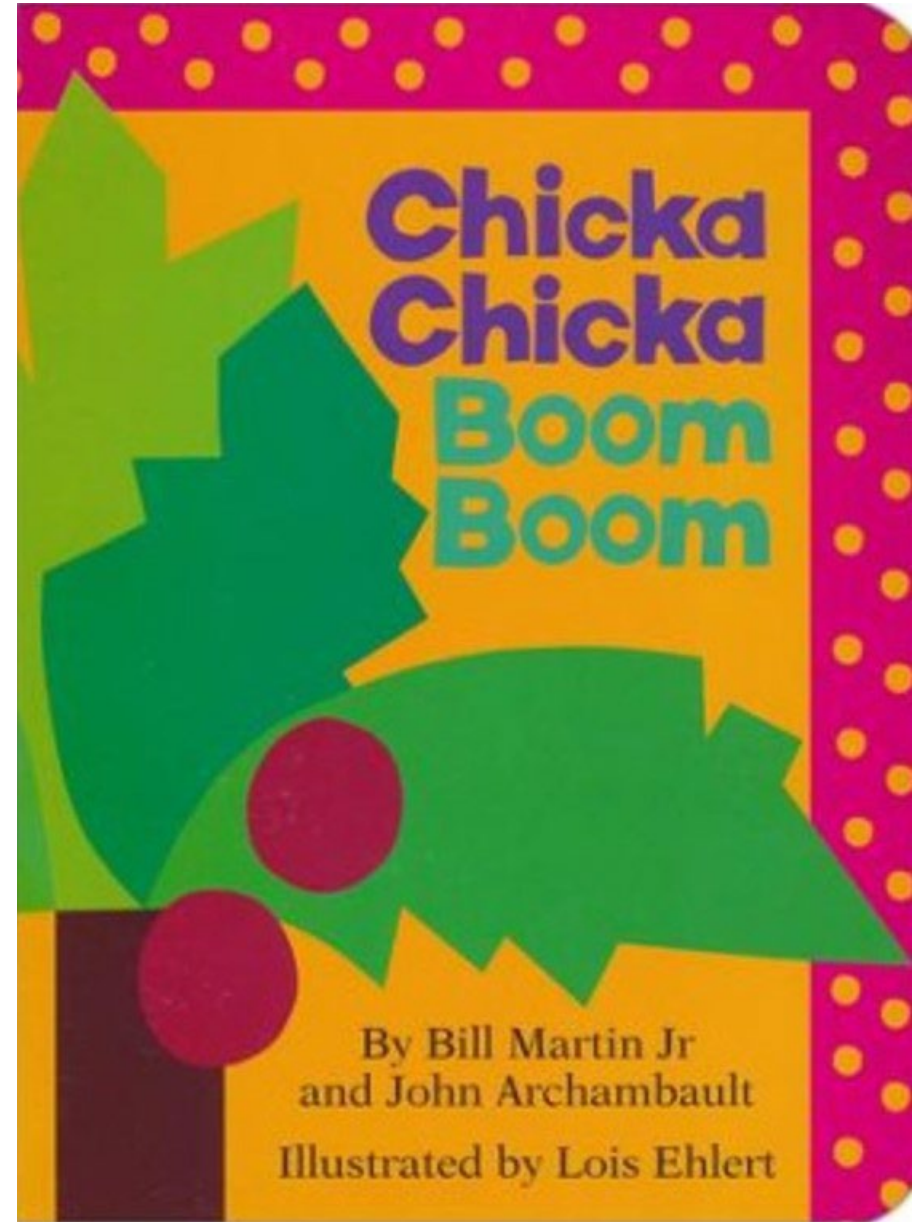
Mouse Mess by Linnea Riley



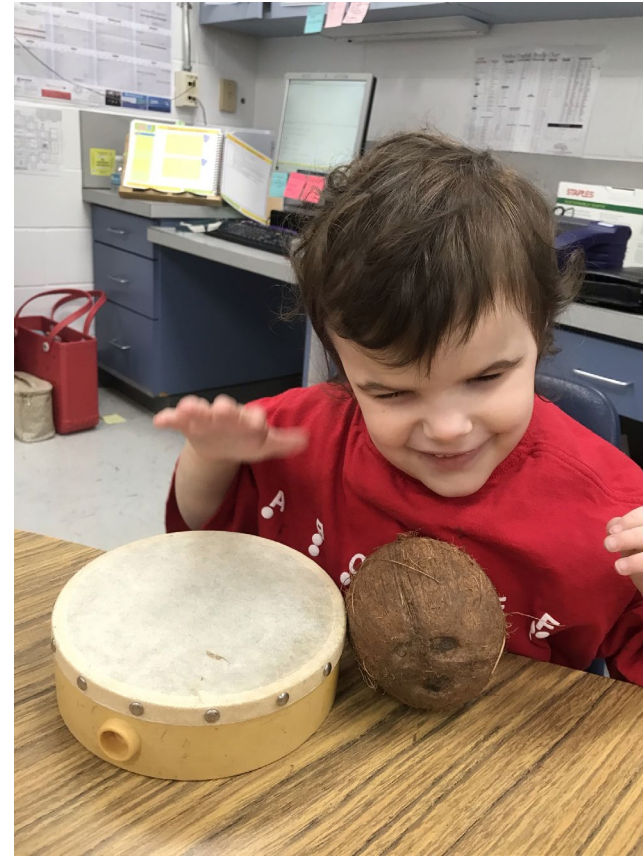
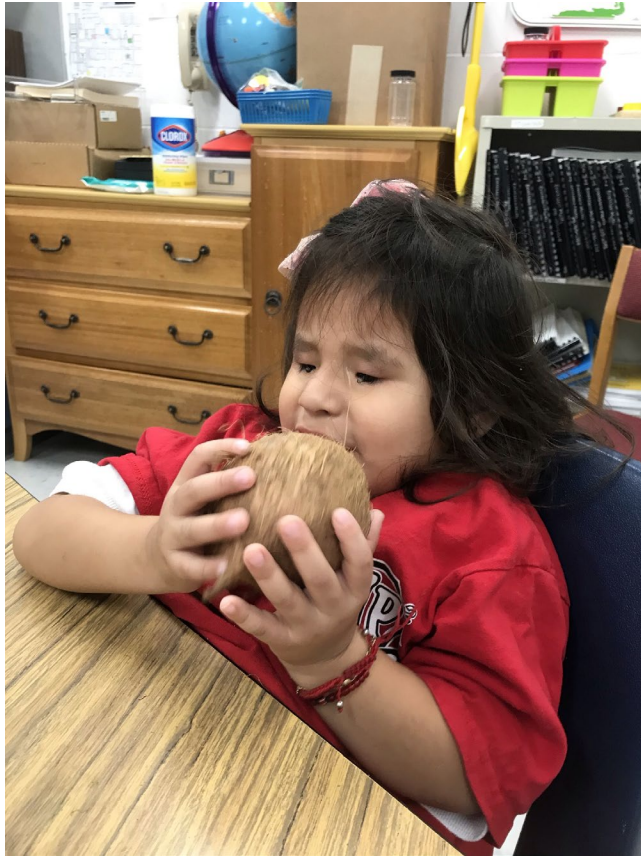
Chicka Chicka Boom Boom

Boom by Bill Martin Jr and John Archambault

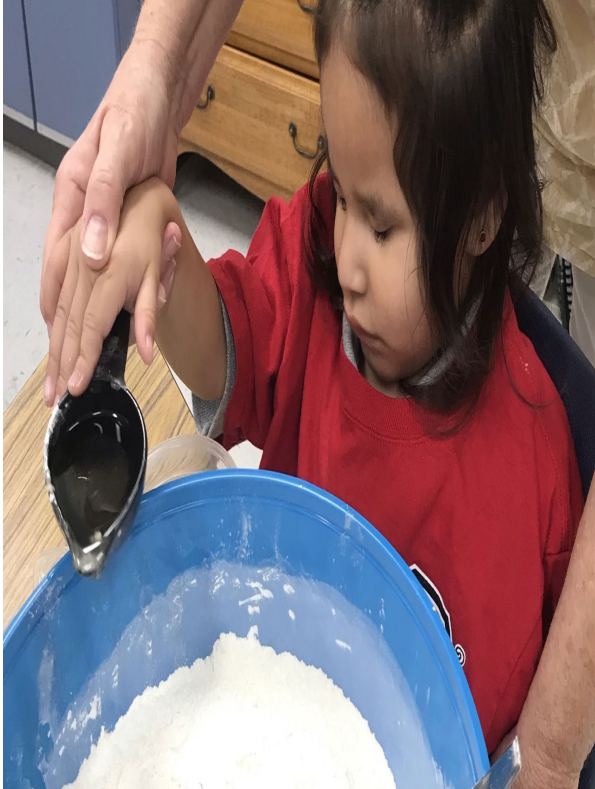
- Coconuts and drums
- Cracked it open
- Ate coconut cookies
- Made scented dough with coconut
- Wrote about it!
- Created artwork

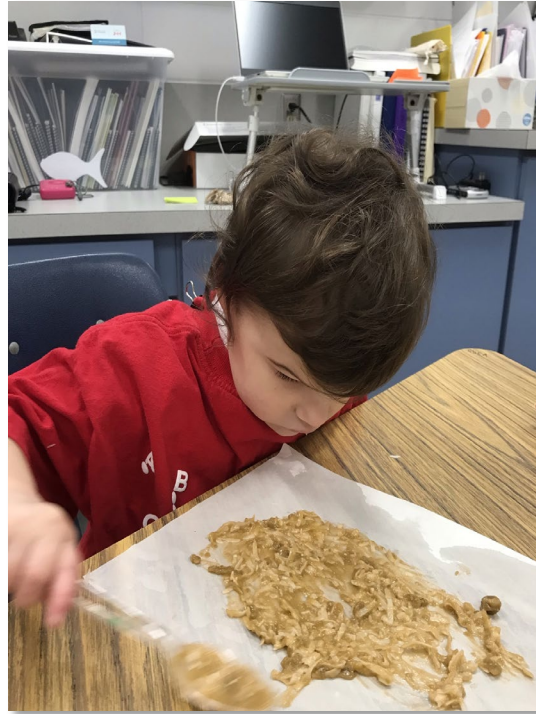


Chicka Chicka Boom Boom

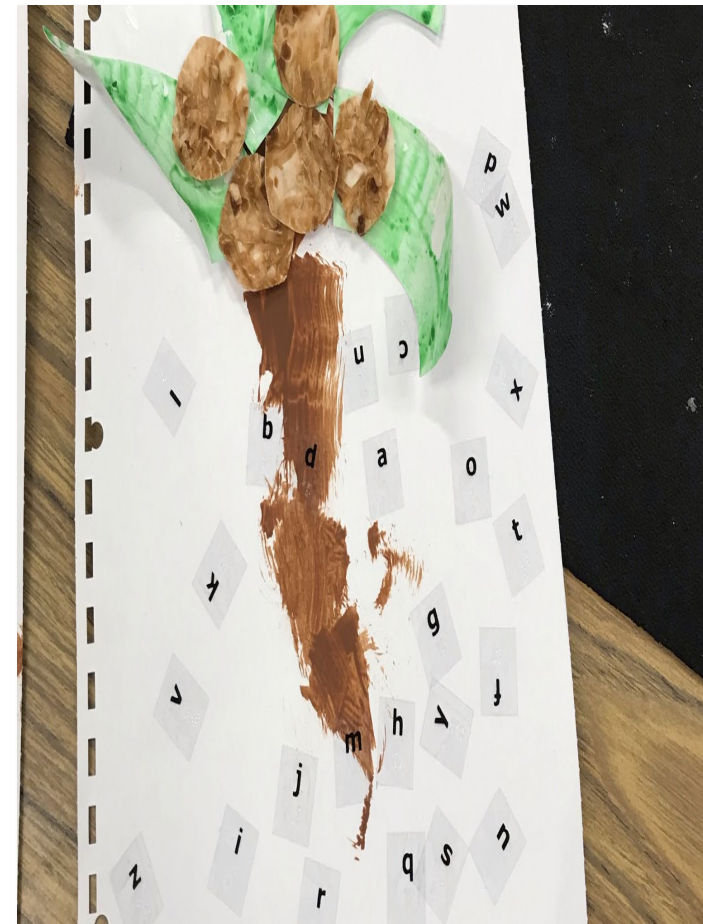
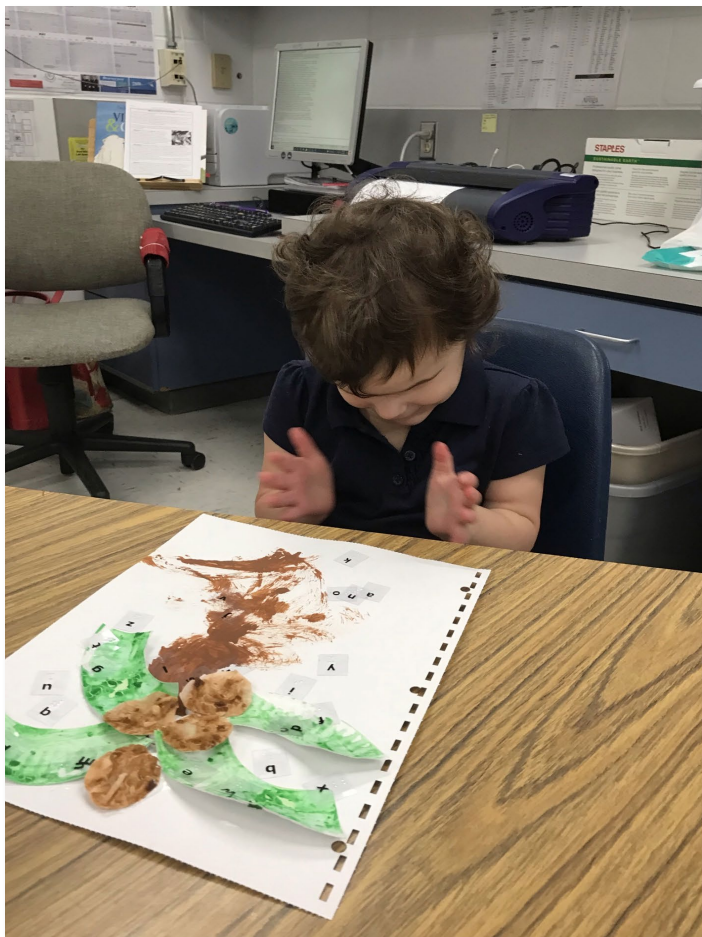


Chicka Chicka Boom Boom – Making it Real





Chicka Chicka Boom Boom- **Making Sensory Dough**



Artwork from the dough we made!



Eating Coconut
Cookies from ...
***Chicka Chicka
Boom Boom***

POP IT!!

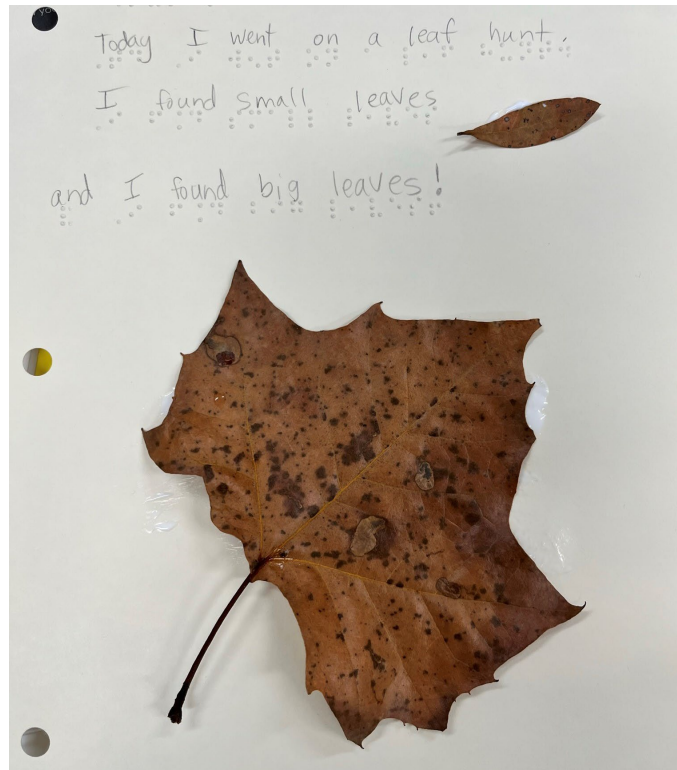
- Left-to-right movement
- Finger isolation
- Strength



Fall Themed Books



Leaf Hunt – Experience Story



Leaf Man

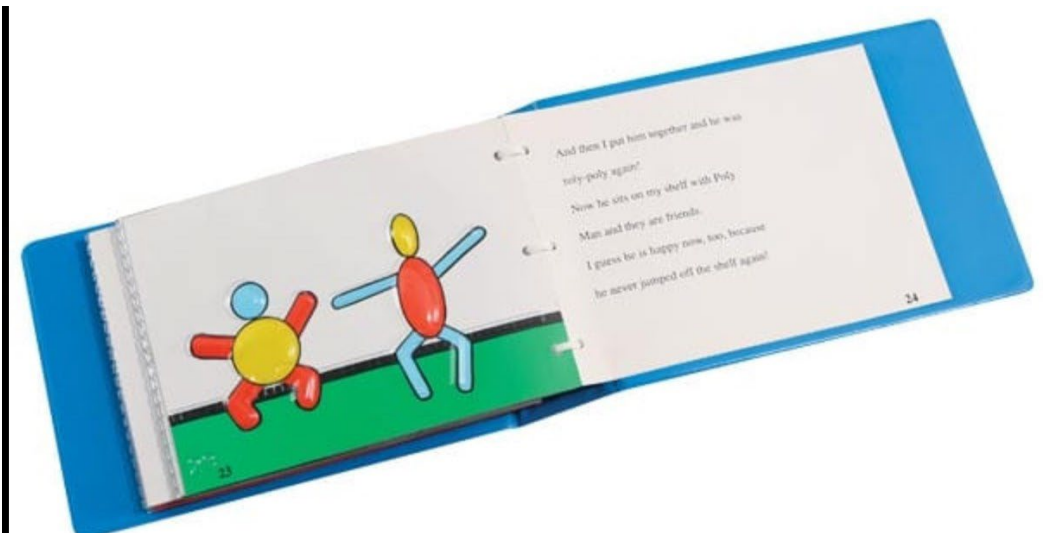


More Activity Ideas for Introducing Literacy to Three-Year-Olds (Emergent Literacy)

- Activity Ideas
 - *Roly-poly Man*
 - Tracking and shape identification
 - Tactual discrimination
 - Counting and positions
 - Experience stories
 - Literacy concept development activities
 - Letter activities such as making popcorn for the letter P

Roly Poly Man (APH)

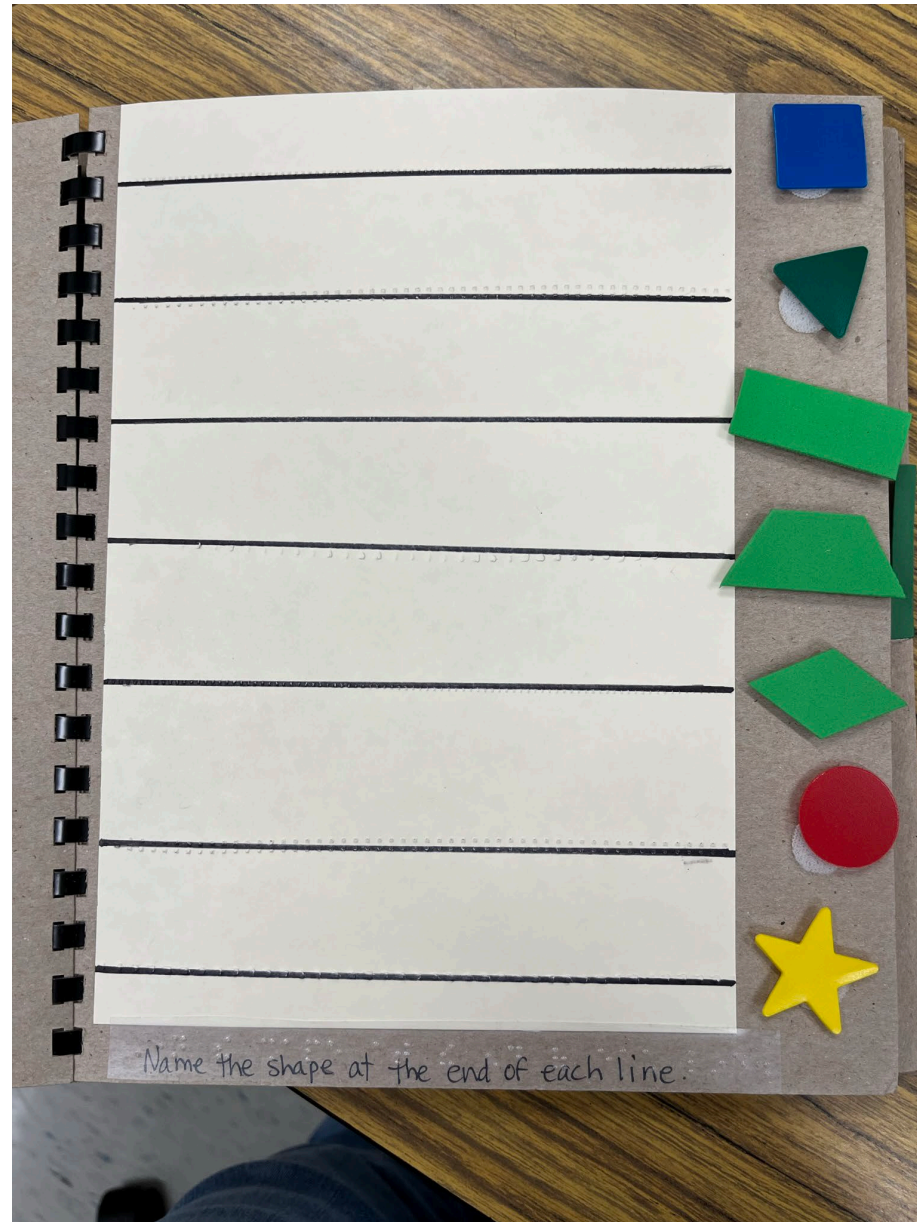
- To move past the hard plastic molds in the book, add activities with therapy putty and/or clay shapes. Teach skills such as:
 - Rolling the clay round like a ball
 - Rolling the clay long like a stick
 - Shaping
 - Making a “Roly Poly Man”



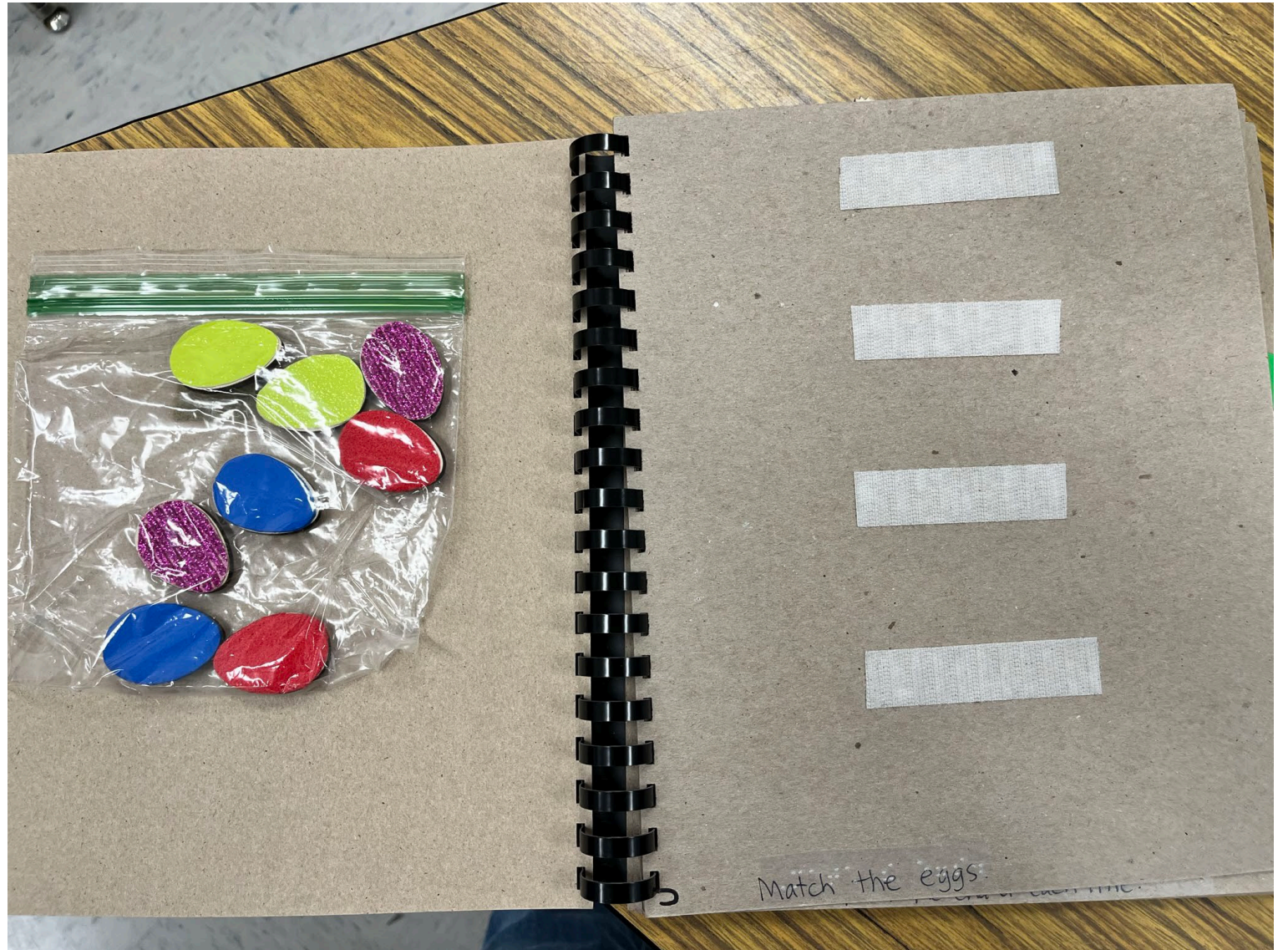
Making Their Own Roly Poly Man



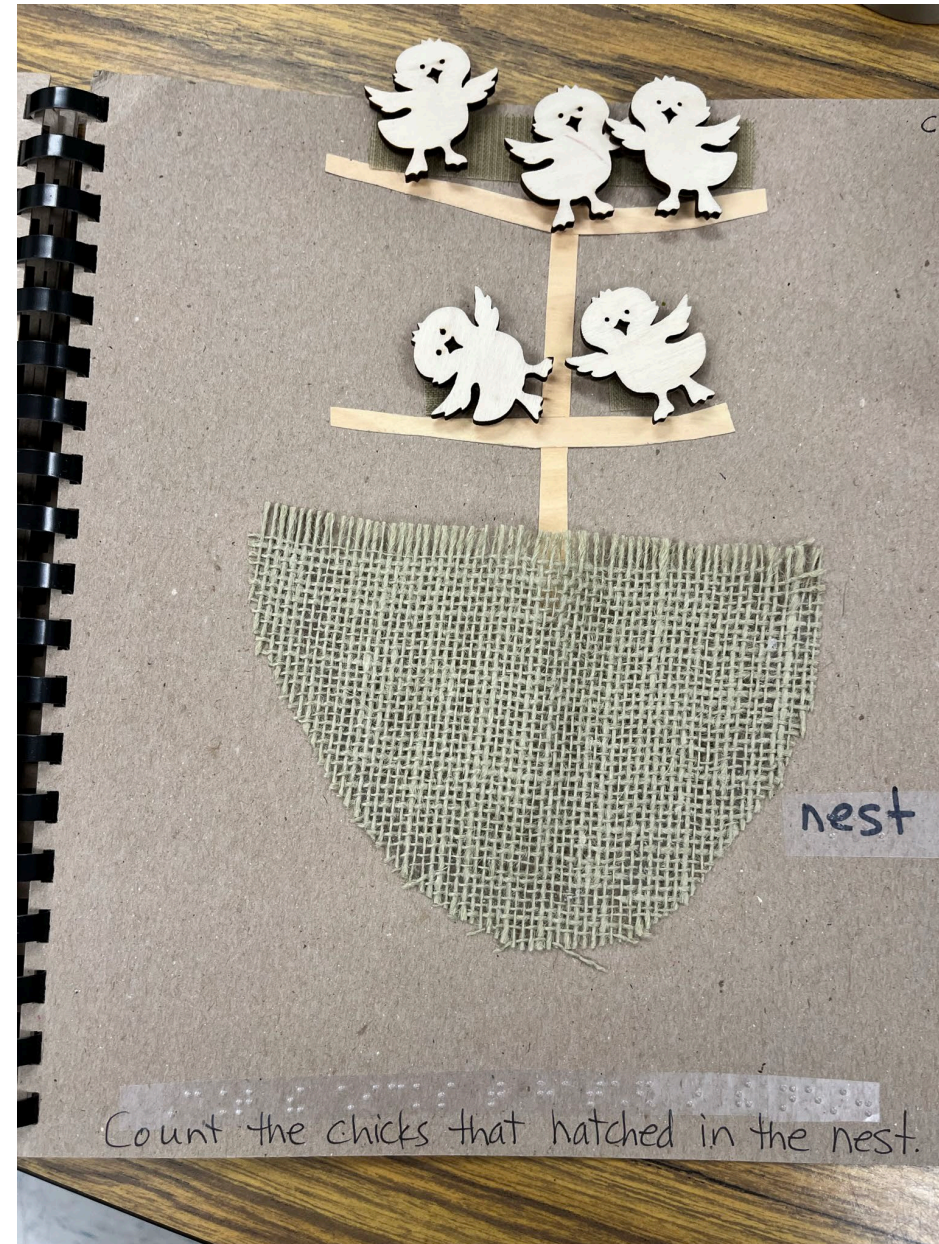
Tracking and Shape Recognition



Tactual discrimination



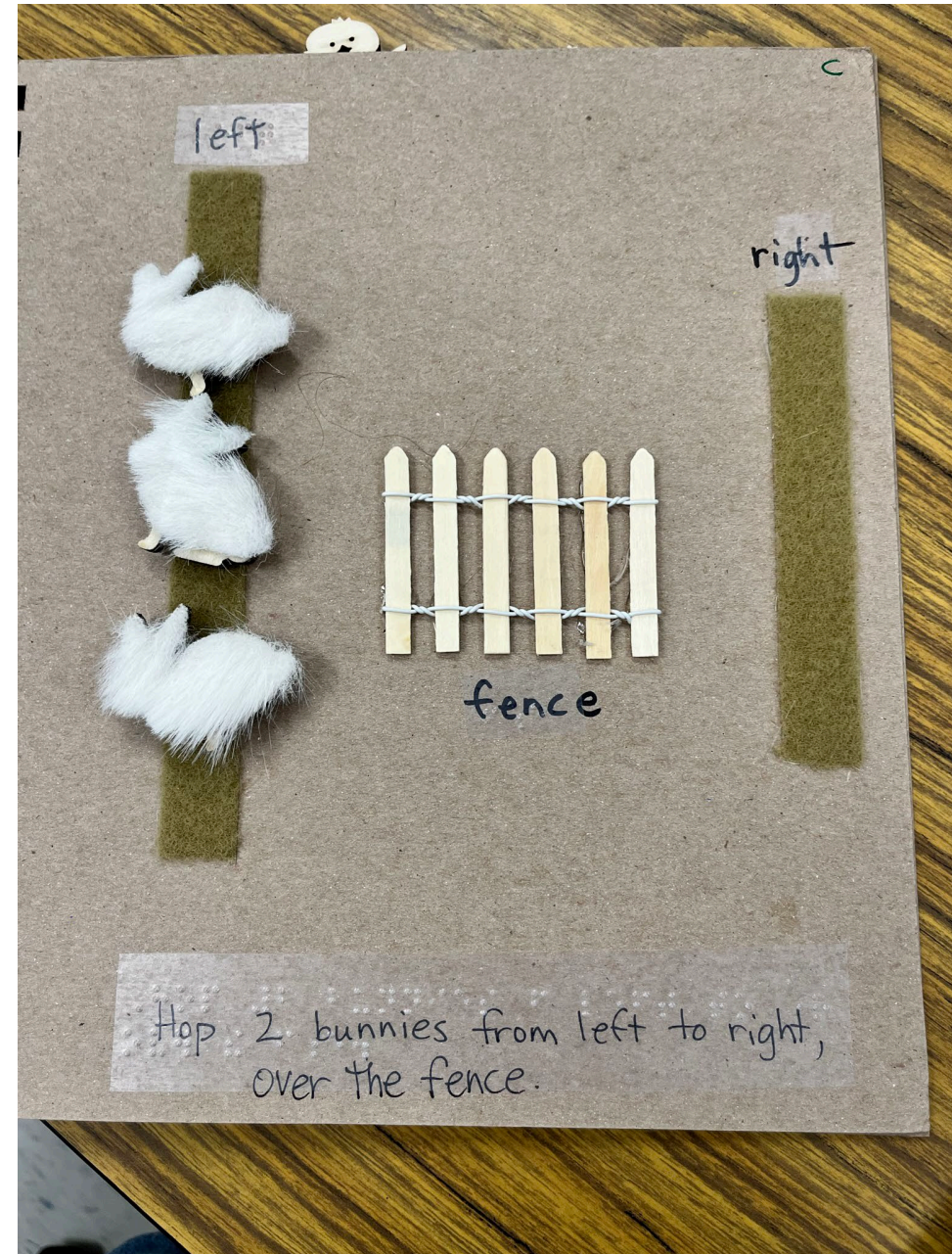
Counting and Concepts



Discussion Time!!

Counting Activities and Concept Building

1. What are the salient features of literacy being introduced?
2. What concepts are being taught and reinforced?
3. What extension activities can be included?

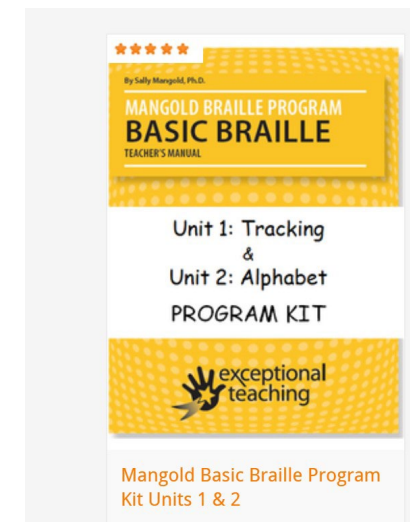


For the Letter P, We Made Popcorn



Resource Materials for Introducing Literacy to Three Year Olds

- Resource Materials
 - Building on Patterns (BOP) Prek Curriculum
 - Mangold
 - Teacher-made materials



Quality and Effective the Tactile Pictures

- Involve the students in making tactile graphics (like Chicka Chicka Boom Boom). This teaches them the concept that pictures have meaning.
- Ask the students to describe what they feel. Avoid telling them what they are supposed to feel.
- Make the tactile graphics meaningful. Attach them to books or songs.
- Use real objects whenever possible.

What to Avoid with Tactile Pictures

- Raised line or puff paint “drawings” with no context or meaning to the child.
- Personal conviction – avoid screen crayon drawings and scented markers
- Encourage the child to “scribble” on the braille writer.
- Personal conviction – No jumbo braille!
- Other personal convictions on this topic?

Introducing three-year-olds to school!

At this age, a big part of the job is just introducing the child to school! Can they:

- Follow directions
- Sit and listen
- Use a fork and spoon independently
- Dress and toilet independently
- Communicate their wants and needs
- Explore items with their hands

Working with the PreK Classroom Teacher

- Adapting Classroom Materials
- Setting Schedules
- When and How to Push-in
- When to Pull-out
- Struggles
- Successes



Adapting PreK Classroom Materials

- Add braille to the curriculum trade-books the teacher is using.
- For centers, use choice boards with objects and braille labels.
- Make story bags or story boxes to leave in the classroom and library.
- Daily chats with the classroom teacher to plan for materials that need to be adapted.
- Work with paraprofessional on adapting materials.

Pre-K Emergent Literacy and Beginning Braille

Strengthening the
Foundation

Building Literacy Skills with Students at Emergent Literacy and Beginning Braille Learning Levels

Foundational Ideas:

1. More opportunities for braille
2. Introduce experience books
3. Create letter books with objects as they learn letters in braille
4. Continue to use games and activities they enjoy
5. Integrate literacy with daily living skills
6. Find ways to celebrate braille

Chicka Chicka Boom Boom Book - Activities for the student who knows a few braille letters



What are some reasons it is a good strategy to repeat the books but with different activities?

The Rainbow Fish

By Marcus Pfister

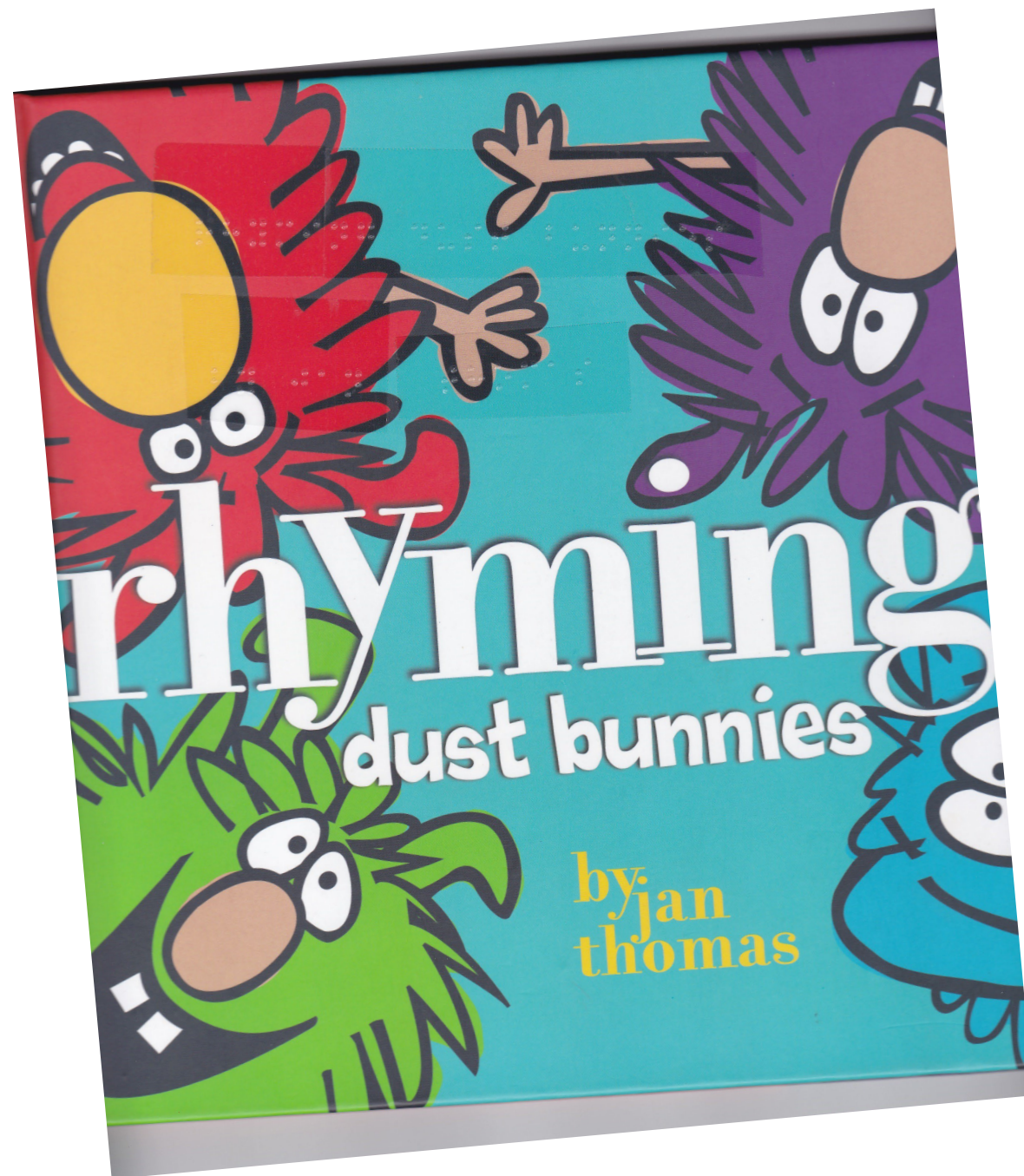


Rhyming

Dust

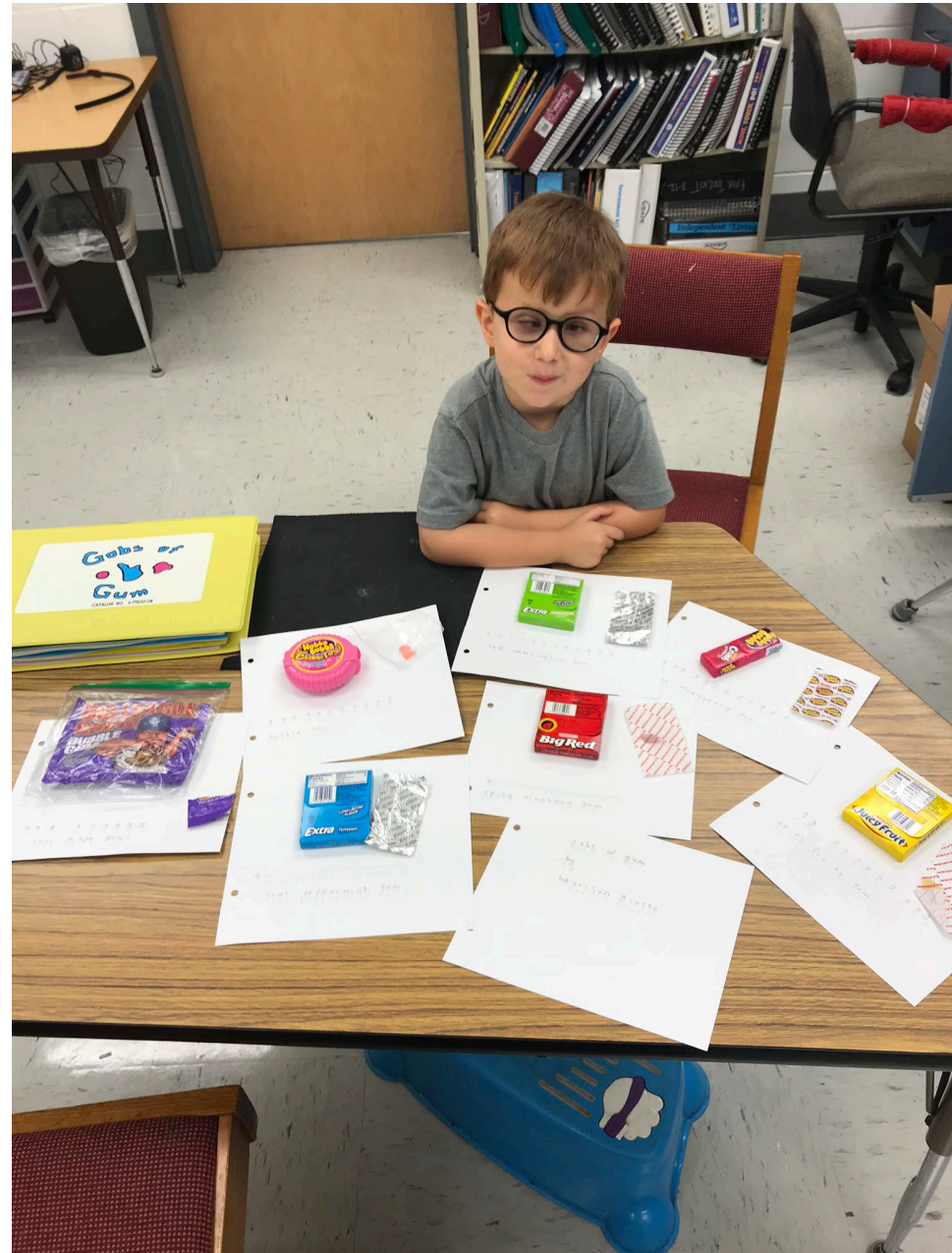
Bunnies

by Jan Thomas



Gobs of Gum

from APH

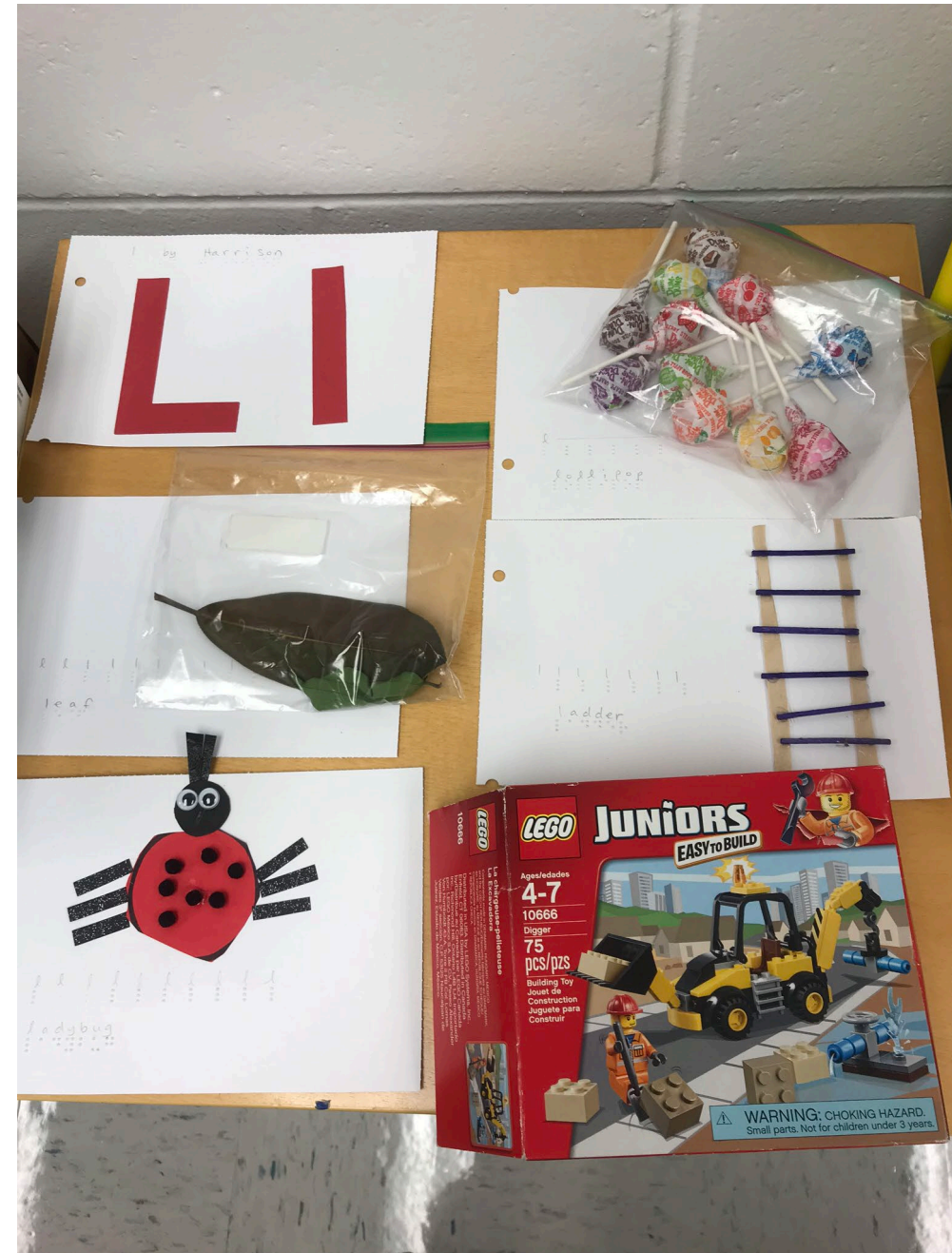


Gobs of Gum – Making it Fun!

- “Experience” the gum
 - Felt it
 - Chewed it
 - Glued on the wrapper
 - Stuck the unchewed gum on the page of an individual book
 - Explored different flavors, sizes, and types of gum
- Send home gum to share with family
- Read ***Gobs of Gum*** and the student-made book with the family

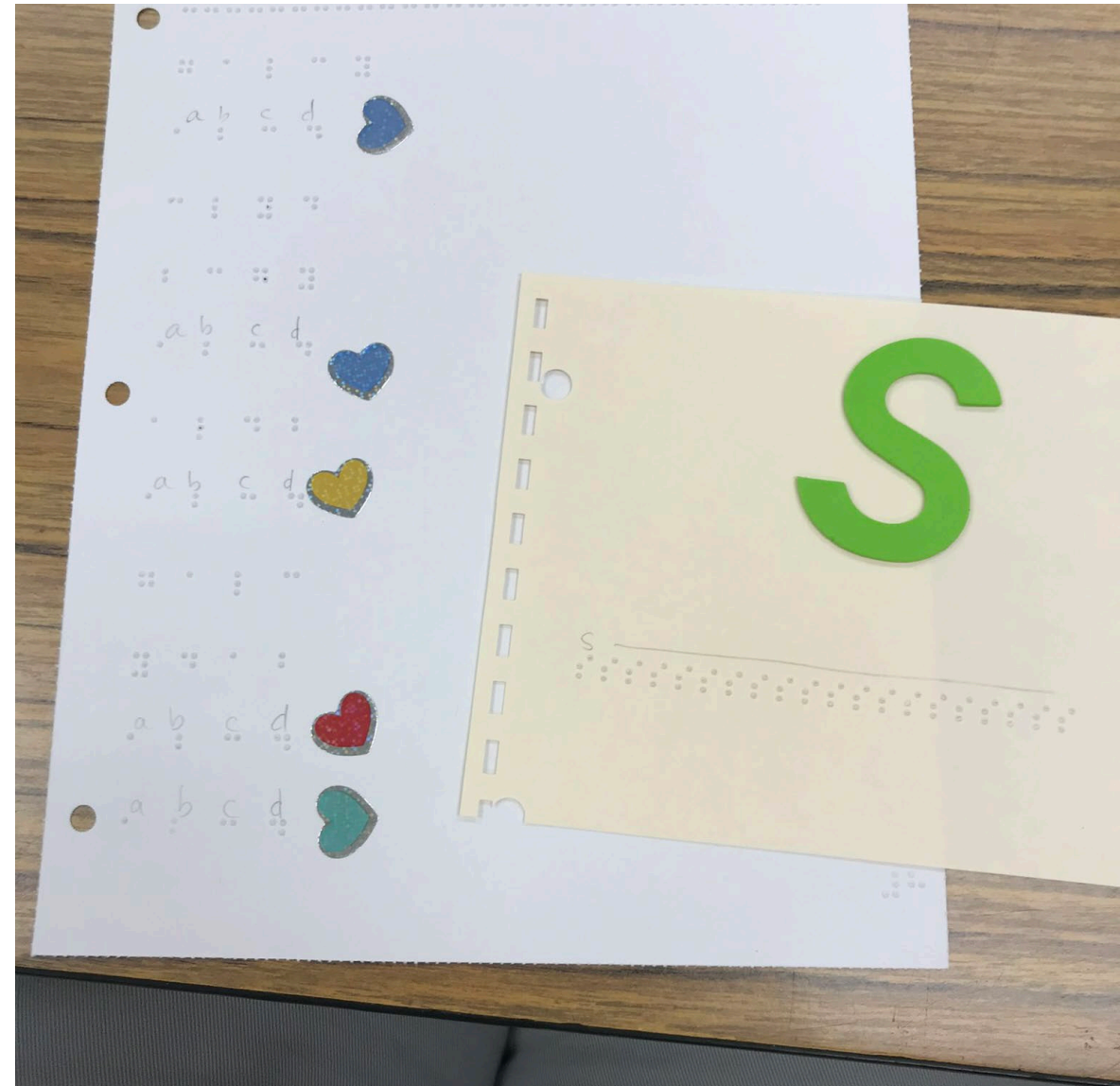
Letter L Object Book

- Leaf
- Lollipop
- Ladder
- Ladybug
- Legos



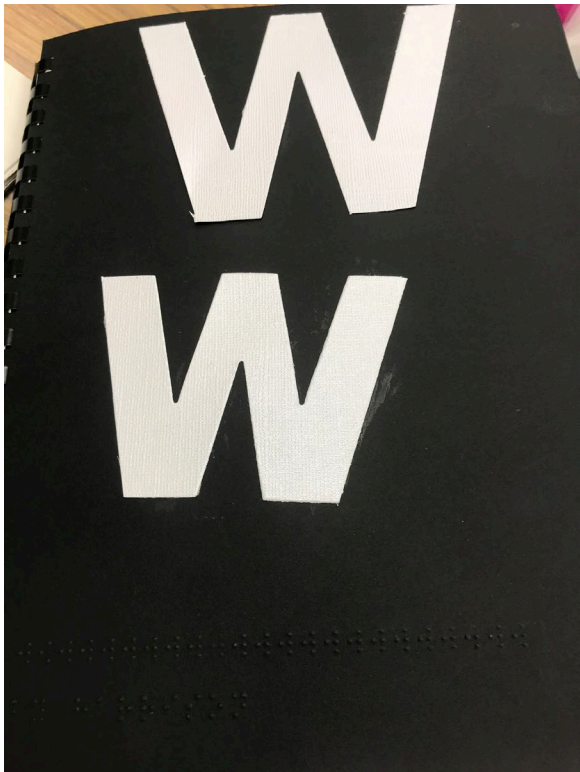
Letter Practice

- Find the a, b, c, d letters mixed in with other combinations
- Write the letter S along with a print cut out of the letter

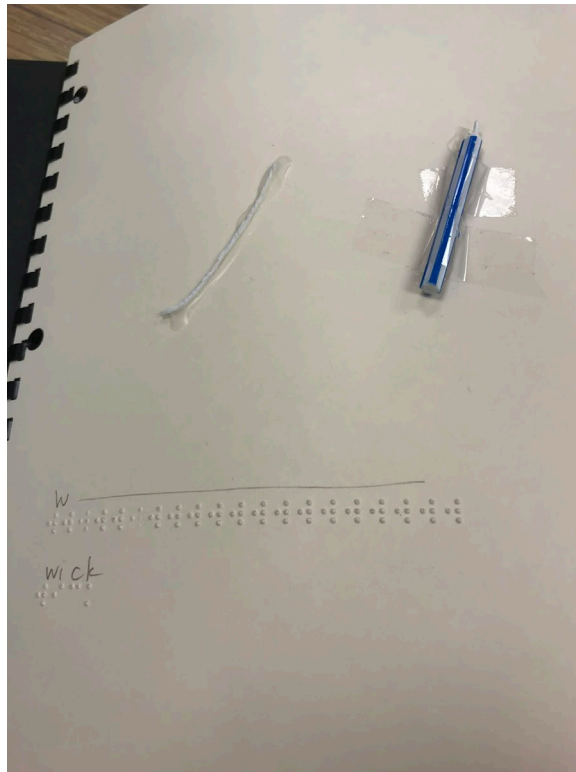


Letter W Book

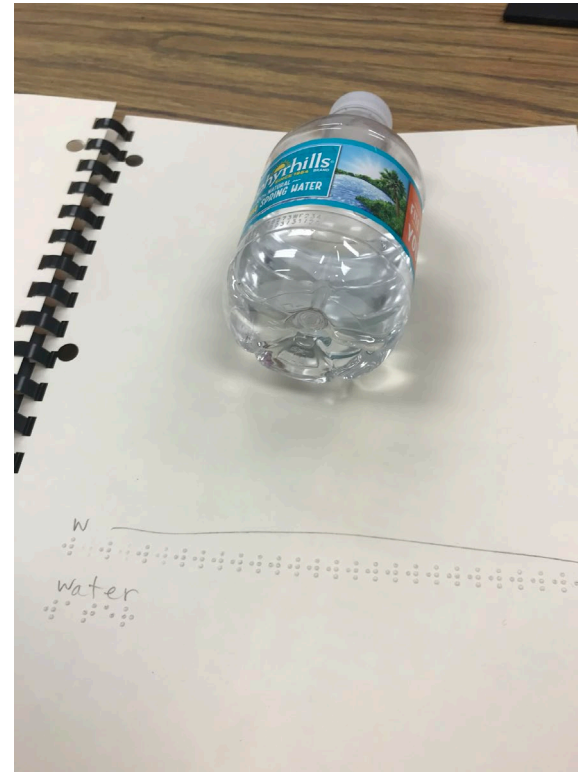
Cover of W book



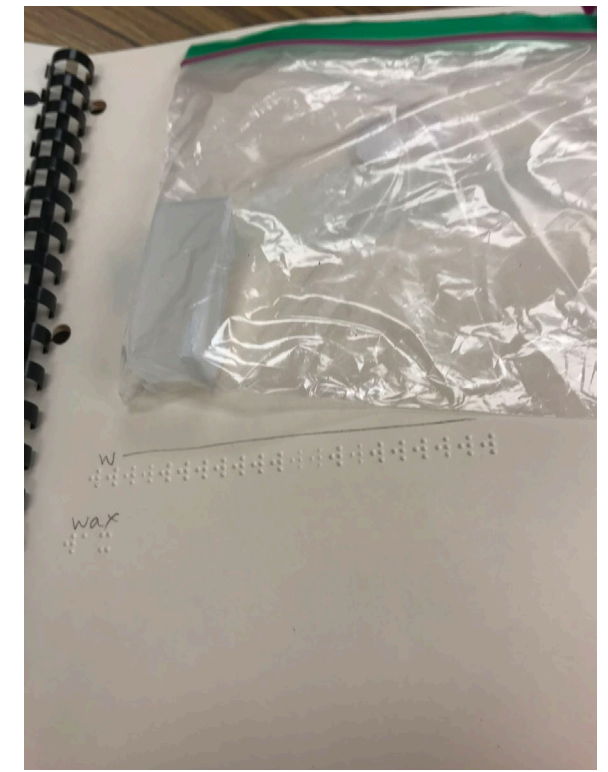
Wick and candle



Water bottle



Wax



Letter Books

- Student writes a row of the letter in braille and as much of the word as they can.
- Glue and/or Velcro the items to the page
- For items, like wax, glue the small plastic page and put the item in the bag. (Also teaches opening and closing, inside and outside, etc.)

Thanksgiving (or Fall) Activity

- Turkey - APH letter stickers
- Braille the letters the student has mastered

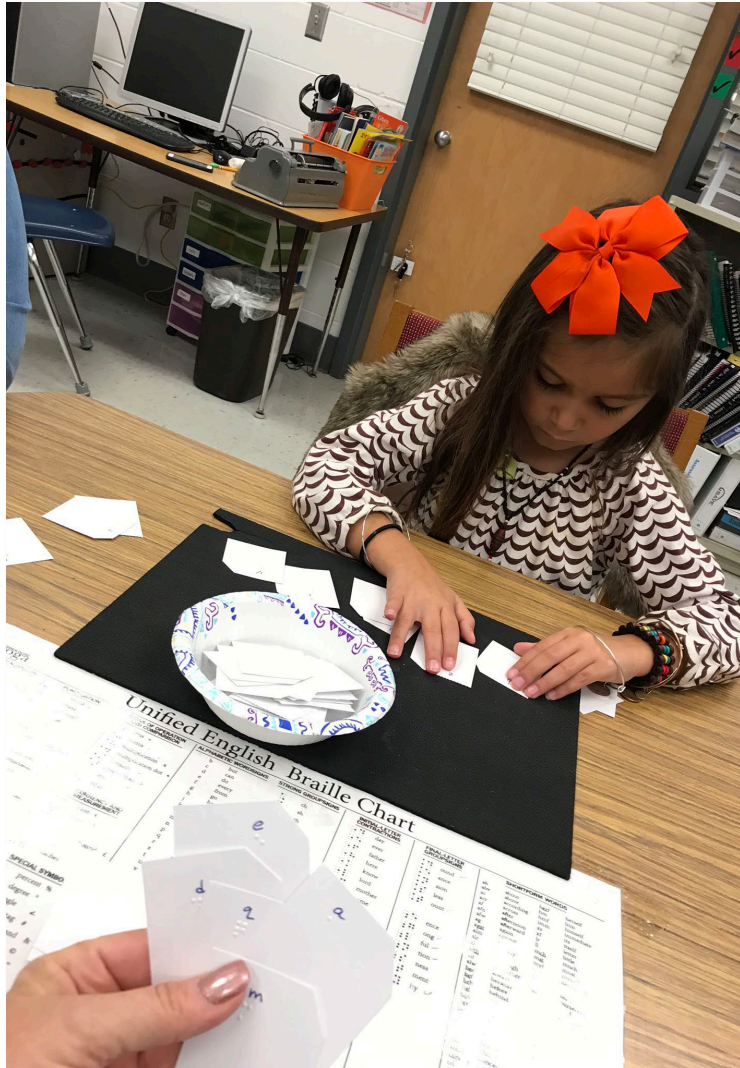


Emergent and Beginning Braille Activities

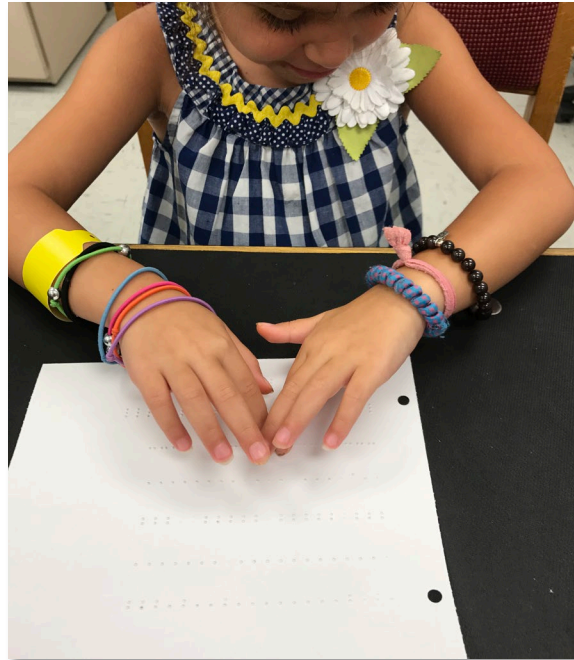
- Play Go Fish with braille letter cards.
- Make rocket letters (or any type of object the student likes). Use the die cut at the school to find cutouts of objects the child likes, then use those for braille practice.
 - Make sets for home and school
- Worksheets to “find the letter” that matches the one on your object
- Can also use the worksheets to teach same and different with braille letters (shapes)

More Braille Practice

1



2



3



Picture 1: Student plays Go Fish with braille letter cards.

Picture 2: Student practices tracking lines of braille.

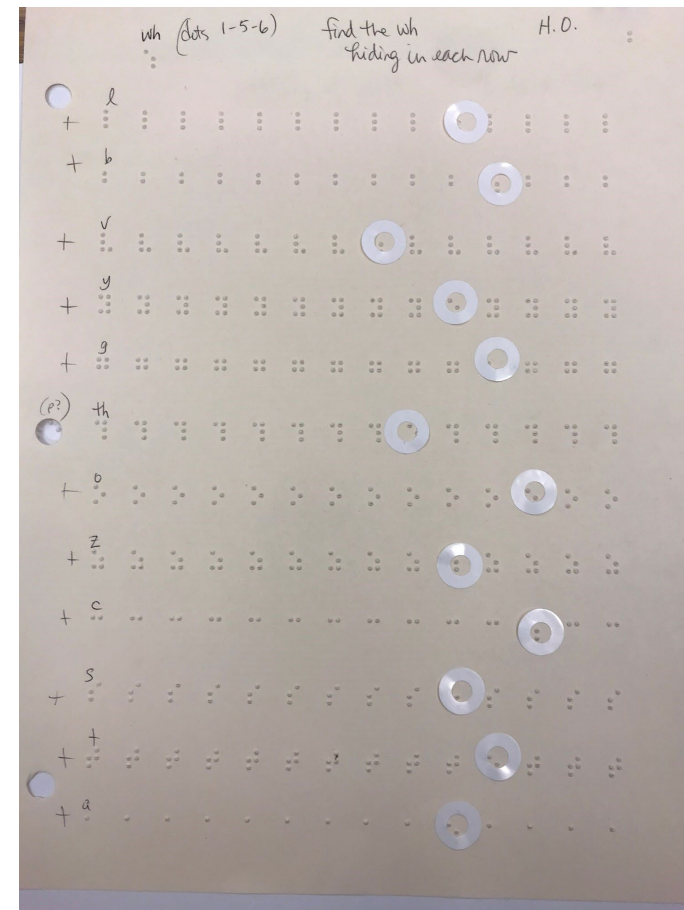
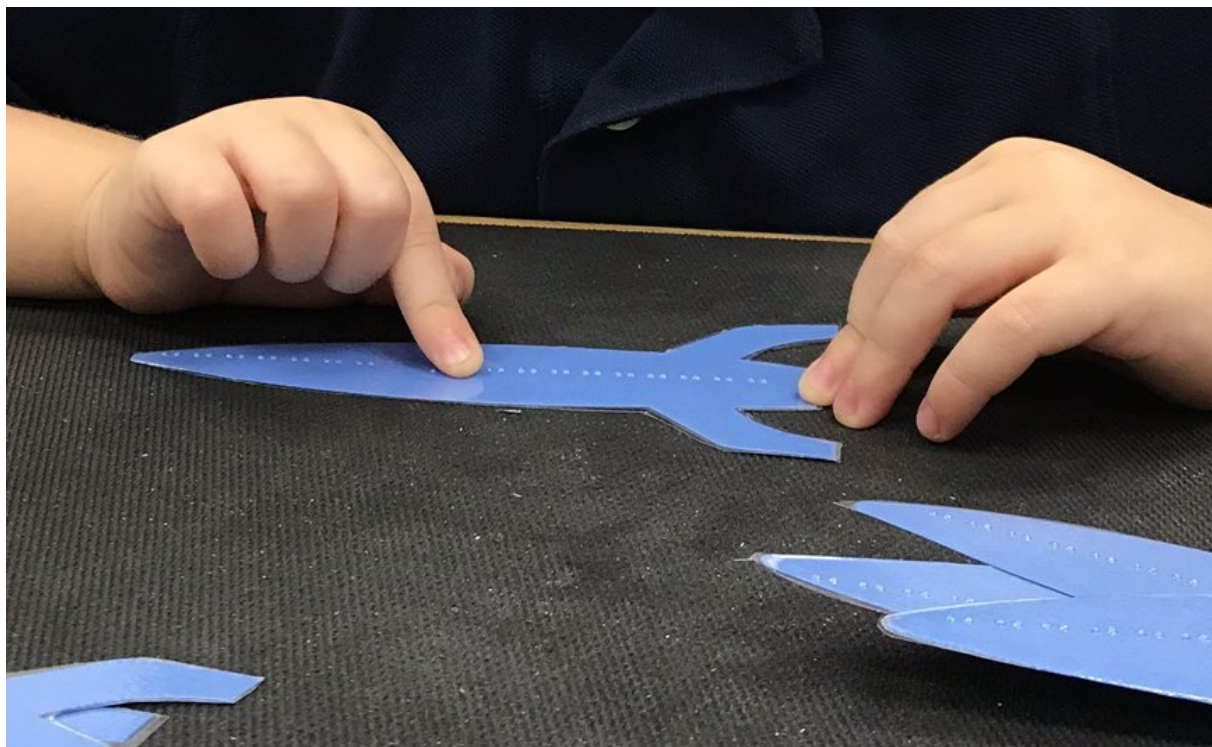
Picture 3: Student completes teacher-created worksheets.



This student is interested
in outer space!

More Braille Practice Activities

Find the letter on the rocket and find the wh contraction on the page.



Group Activity

How would you adapt it?

1. Make a group of three to four people
2. With the book you are given, discuss how to create a literacy activity for a student using:
 - a) Braille
 - b) Print and Braille
3. Bonus points if you create something sighted peers can do along with the student with a visual impairment.
4. When we reconvene, please share your ideas!

Resource Materials Used for Introducing Literacy to Emergent and Beginning Braille Readers

- Resource Materials
 - Building on Patterns (BOP) PreK Curriculum
 - Mangold
 - Adapted trade books
 - Teacher made drill sheets
 - Braille FUNdamentals (TSBVI)



Working with the Classroom Teacher – PreK

- Adapting Classroom Materials
- Setting Schedules
- When and How to Push-in
- When to Pull-out
- Struggles
- Successes



Find Ways to Celebrate Braille

- Participate in the Braille Challenge in your state. No Braille Challenge - start one! (Talk to the National Braille Institute or Sue Glaser.)
- Bring in adults who read braille and talk about their use of braille on a regular basis.
- Go on a Braille Hunt and look for braille in your school.

Even Covid-19 Didn't Stop the Braille Challenge and Tampa Palms Celebrating Braille!



Emergent-Braille Reading Activities at Braille Challenge



Break Time
15 minutes





Kindergarten – Beginning Reading and Writing

Pouring the Cement and
Building the Frame

Starting Literacy with Learners at the Beginning Stages of Literacy:

- Foundational Ideas:
 1. Expanding letter recognition
 2. Connecting letter sounds
 3. Introducing Alphabetic Word Signs (Letter words)
 4. Drilling sight words

Other Strategies for Beginning Literacy

- Activity Ideas
 - Word Playhouse
 - Teacher made-sheets in the classroom
- To adapt visual concepts in the classroom
 - Need a TVI or a trained para to provide the braille equivalent
 - Word games, adapt with braille labels
 - Everything the sighted child has in print the braille reader needs it in braille!

When Teaching Braille

- Avoid the use of braille dot numbers when teaching reading
- Talk about the shape of the contractions (not dot numbers) for reading. Talk about the feel.
- Encourage them to say what it feels like (and avoid the “reverse” or “similar to” comparisons)
- Ok to use dot numbers for braille writing.

Resource Materials for Kindergarten

- Resource Materials
 - Building on Patterns
 - Mangold
 - Word Playhouse and similar
 - Abacus



Mangold Basic Braille Program Kit Units 1 & 2



Rhyming Dust Bunnies

Expand on this book! Now you add the literacy principle of rhyming words and actually reading the words.

Working with the Kindergarten Classroom Teacher

- Adapting Classroom Materials
- Why, When, and How to Push-in
- Why and When to Pull-out
- Struggles
- Successes



Tips for the Classroom Materials

- Typically, do not order reading textbooks in braille until the student can fluently read words. Too many distractions in the book until the child is reading.
- Materials are made in-house, including the contractions the child knows.
- Follow the contraction sequence in Building on Patterns.

Adapt Materials Based on the Needs of the Student!

- Braille labels in actual books and workbooks for students with useable vision
- Stand alone for braille sheets for worksheets if braille only.
- Create books in braille. If possible, use the binding machine so it is “book-like”.
- Prefer Duxbury for transcribing and to create tactile drawings on the page.

First Grade and Beginning Readers

Building the Walls

Building Literacy with Beginning Readers:

- Foundational Ideas:
 1. Letter and sound recognition
 2. Sight words
 3. Increasing speed and fluency

Other Activity Ideas for Building Literacy Skills with Beginning Readers

- Activity Ideas
 - Experience Books

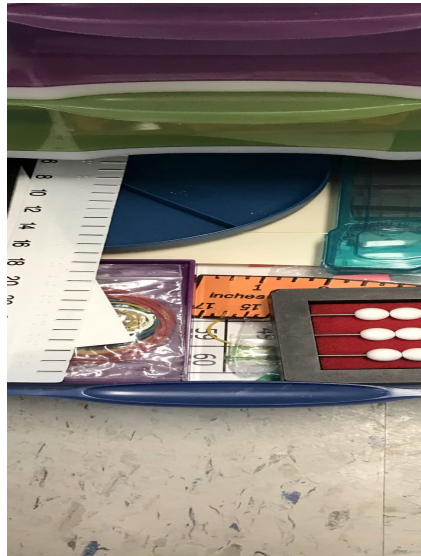
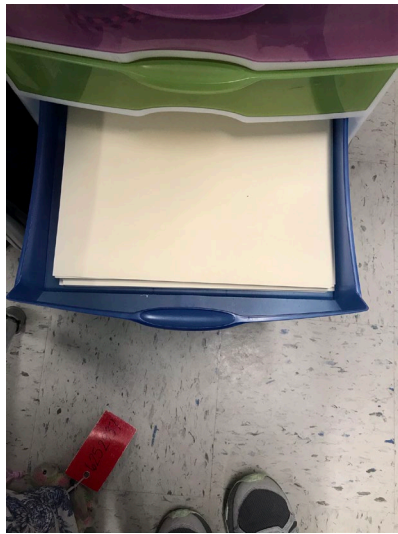
Resource Materials for First Grade

- Resource Materials
 - Building on Patterns
 - Drill-like worksheets created by the teacher (similar to Mangold and Braille FUNdamentals)



Classroom Set-Up

- From Kindergarten to 3rd grade keep a rolling cart next to their desk. Drawers contain braille paper, sticky braille paper to braille on, stickers, glue, scissors, sticky notes, math manipulatives, and parts from the tactile graphics kit. This gives the child the opportunity to independently decide what tools they need.
- Has items for the para or classroom teacher to use as the need arises.



Classroom cart with supplies.

Working with the First Grade Classroom Teacher

- Adapting Classroom Materials
- Why, When, and How to Push-in
- Why and When to Pull-out
- Struggles
- Successes



Photo credit: [Mrs. Wills Kindergarten](#)

Second Grade Beginning Fluent Readers

Finishing Touches

Building Literacy Skills with Second Graders:

Foundational Ideas:

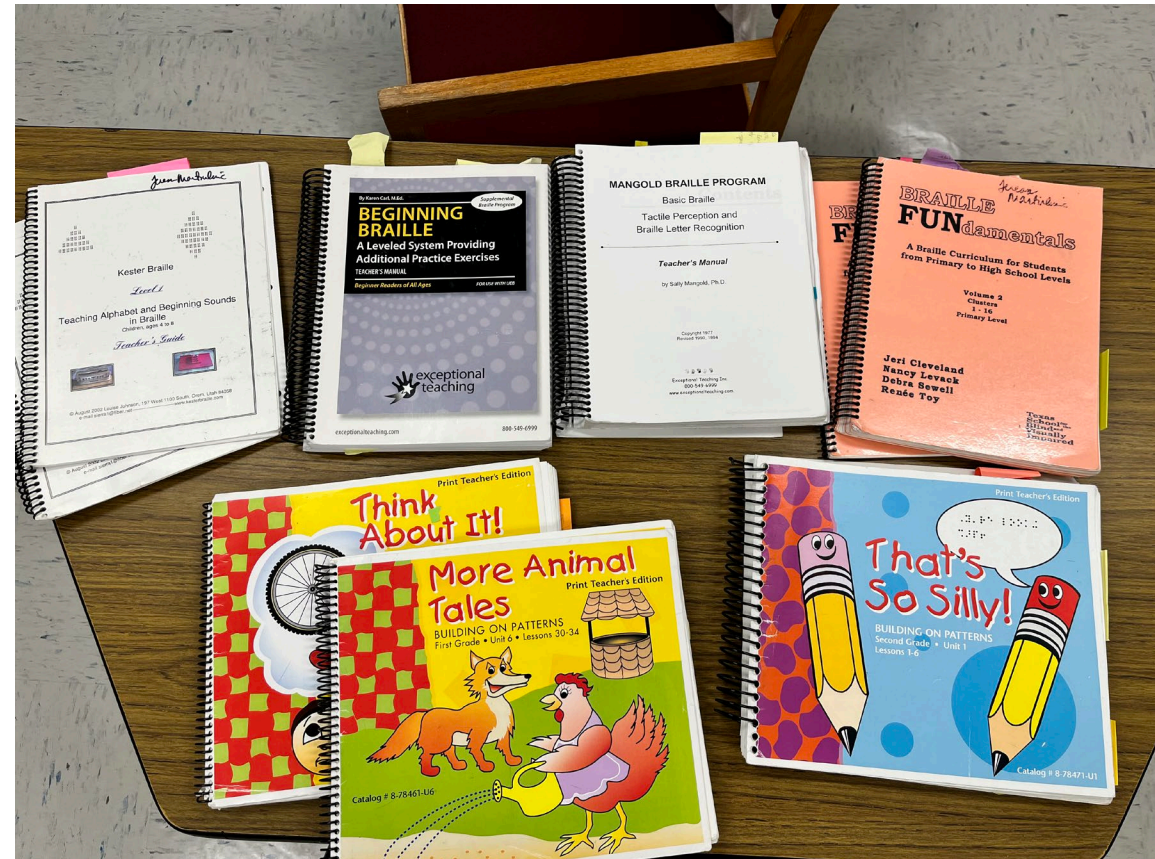
1. Letter and sound recognition
2. Sight words
3. Be able to read the special symbols (print indicators, bold, yellow highlights, etc.)
4. Phonics curriculum adaptations

Begin to Infuse Literacy in Other Areas of the ECC

- Braille class with peers
- Writing independent stories
- Responding to text
- Start using technology and refreshable braille display
- Bookshare, Victor Stream, and digital text skills
- Voice over and iPads

Resource Materials for Second Grade

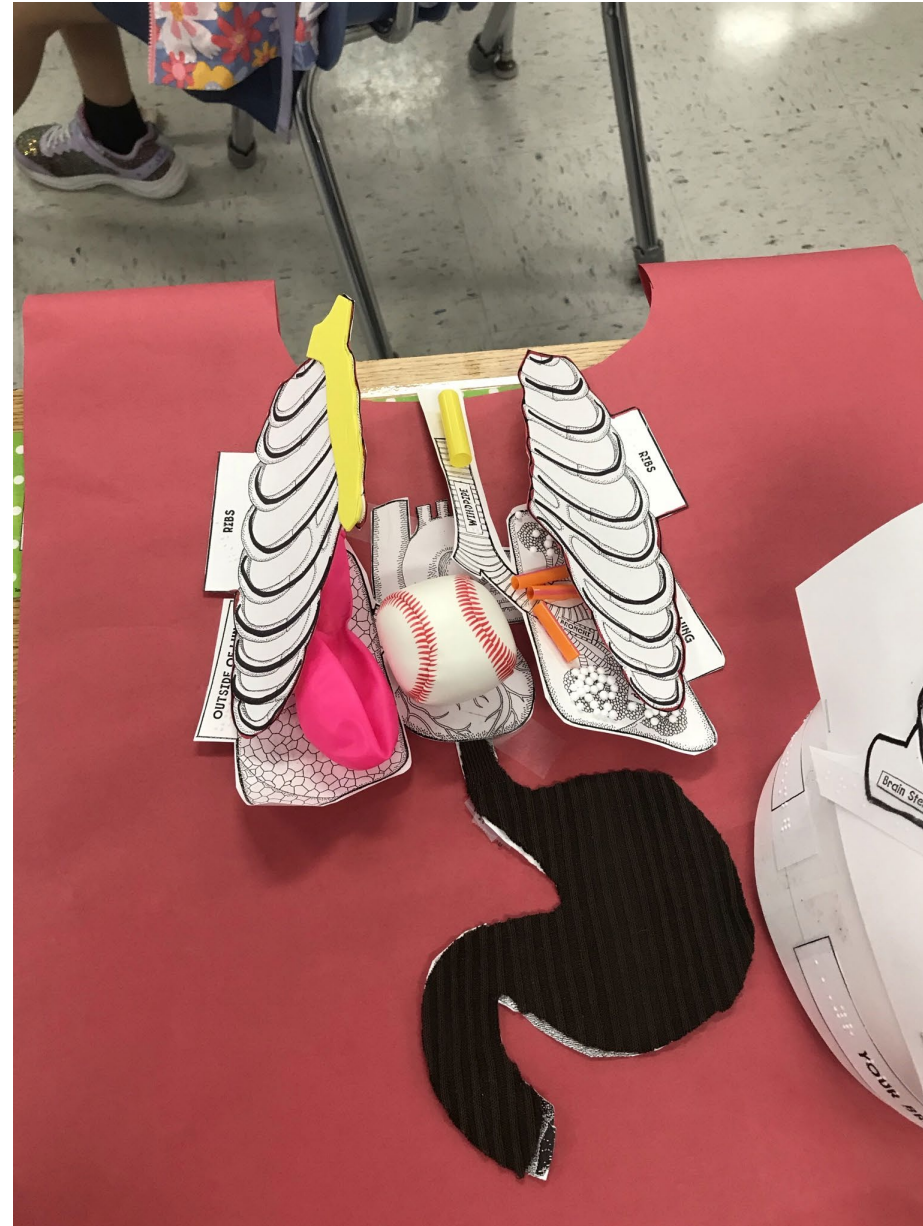
- Resource Materials
 - Building on Patterns
 - Beginning Braille
 - Braille FUNdamentals
 - Mangold
 - Abacus
 - Math Windows



Working with the Second-Grade Classroom Teacher

- Adapting Classroom Materials
- Why, When, and How to Push-in
- Why and When to Pull-out
- Struggles
- Successes

Tactile Science Activity with Print and Braille



Mid and Upper Elementary

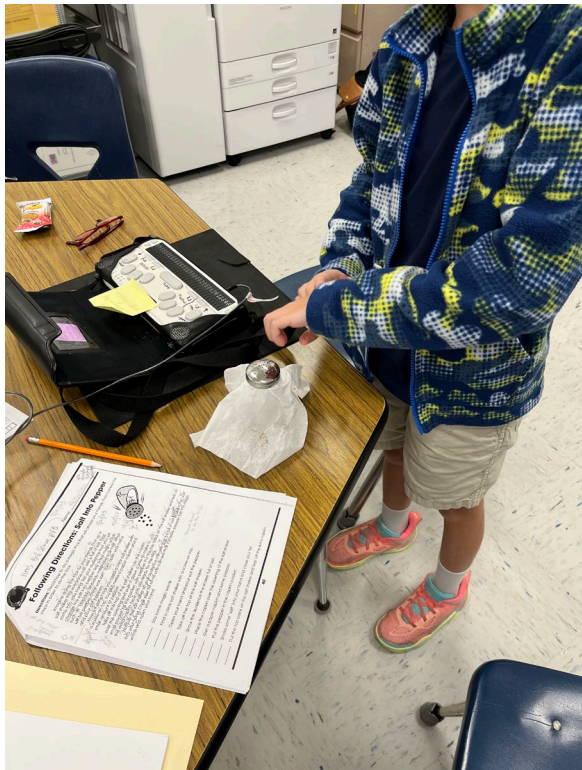
Putting on the finishing
touches!

Older Elementary Students - Moving into Intermediate Braille Skills

- Teaching keyboarding
- Use of screen readers
- Use of the internet for research about a topic
- Continue braille instruction depending on the needs of the student (expand to music, etc.)
- Participating in the Braille Challenge to create excitement about braille.

Dual Media Student – Reading and Writing

Interesting, exciting, and based on student interest!



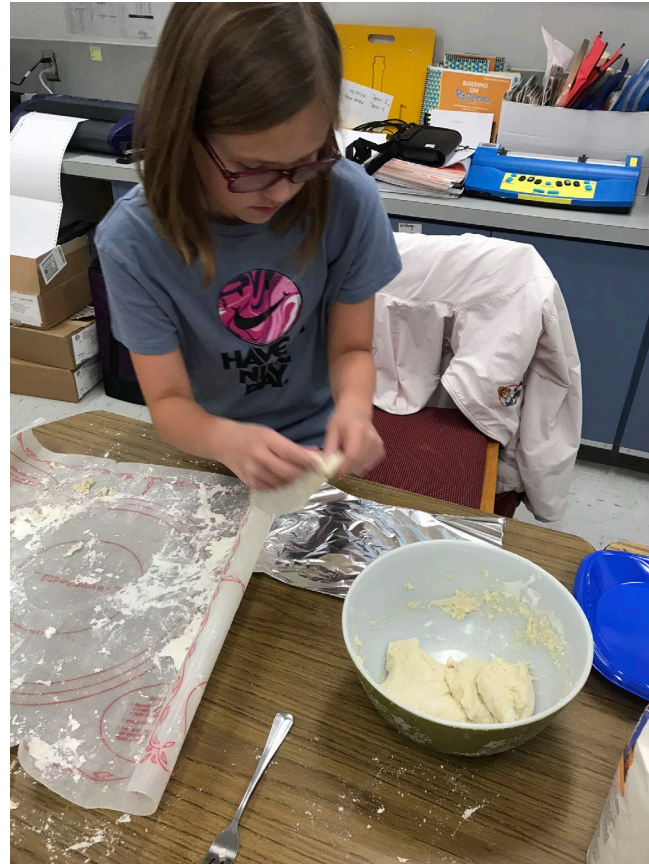
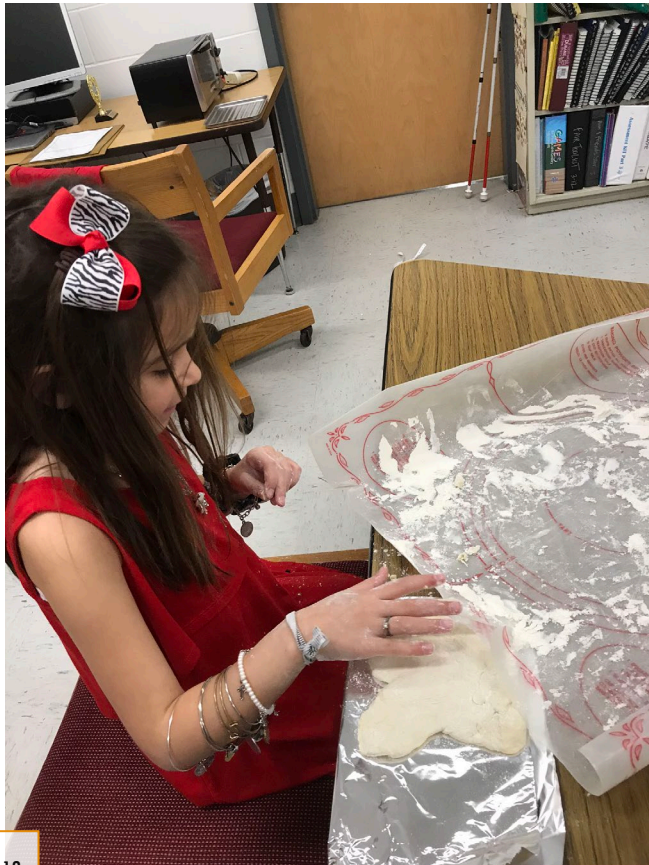
Integrating Literacy Activities into ECC Skills for Older Elementary/Intermediate Braille Readers

- Making bread after reading about it
- Making Animal Crackers to share with classmates
- Braille Displays (posters, Black History Month, science fairs, symbols of America, etc.)

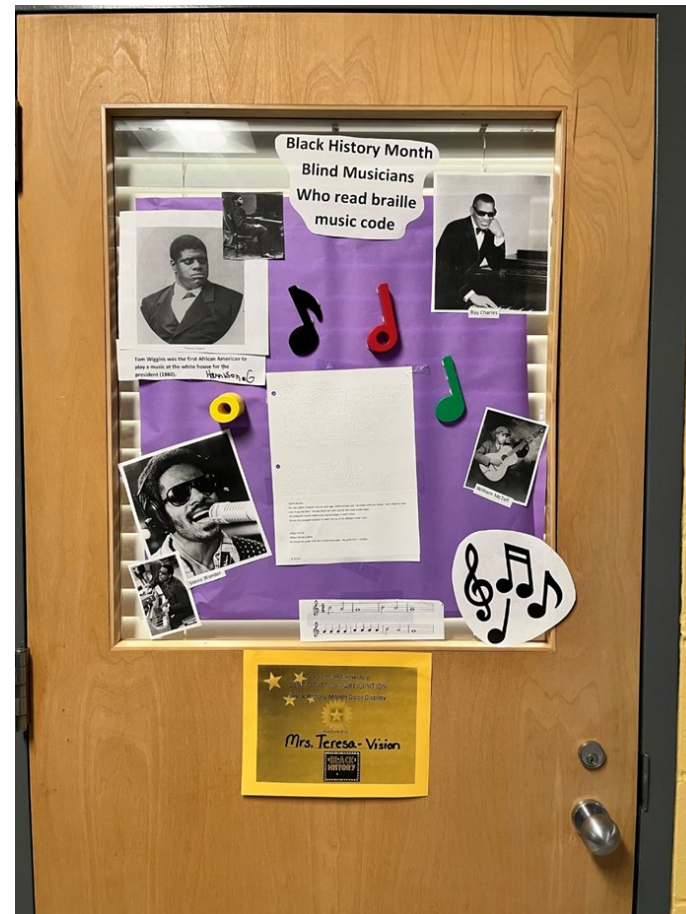


Infusing Literacy into ECC!

Pizza Making



Examples of Braille Posters and Displays



Expanded Core Curriculum Activities

- Speedy fingers – daily braille fluency drills.
- Students earn real money for their work. This helps with learning money skills and math skills.
 - Tens and ones
 - Mental math
 - Trading coins for bills
 - Abacus skills

ECC Activities

- Holiday gifts for their families
 - Using the money they have earned, we go shopping for gifts.
 - We have a Saturday Fun Day with things like getting our nails done and going shopping at Dollar Tree (or similar stores).
 - Students have written their list of gifts to use when shopping.
 - Lunch is then at a restaurant. Always try to go where they will have a braille menu.

Eating at a restaurant and using the braille menus.





Trip to the Nail Salon

Holiday Gifts cont.

- Back at school the next week we:
 - Gift wrap the presents
 - Make braille name tags for each gift

Building a Team at the School

- Be a valuable part of the team
 - Bring the teachers gifts at the beginning of the year. Things like tissues, wipes, dry-erase markers, stickers, and braille stickers.
 - Talk to the teachers at least every week. Help them understand the importance of planning together.
 - Get the subject curriculum calendars ahead of time.
 - Sit in on planning meetings.
 - Make the secretaries and the custodians your friends!

Building a Community at the School

- Have the students be cheerleaders for braille!
- Braille ambassadors
- Celebrate Braille Challenge wins with their classrooms.
- Get them on the morning show for short videos, especially around Louis Braille's birthday, Braille Challenge, and White Cane Day.
- If your school has a LEGO wall, add the LEGO Braille Bricks to it.

Building the Community at School (2)

- Birthday party for their friends – make braille and tactile cards. Make Rice Krispie treats for friends and include the recipe in print and braille.
- Friday Breakfast Club – with a toaster oven, toaster, microwave, and griddle, you can fix frozen waffles, scrambled eggs, hot chocolate, etc. Have the students do as much of the cooking as possible and have them invite a friend.

**Add the Braille
Lego Bricks to
your school's Lego
wall.**



Building Community at the School (3)

Create a Braille Club

- Meet during lunchtime one time a week.
- The students set the table, cut up fruit, make Nutella sandwiches, etc.



Braille Club Pictures



Braille Club

- Student with a visual impairment is the “teacher” for her peers
- Students take 20 minutes to prepare and eat their lunch before the lesson
- Ten-minute braille lesson

Building Family Ties and Expectations

- **Mother's Day or Spring Tea Party**
 - Students determine the menu, create invitations, make a placemat for mom, make a list, shop for the ingredients at the local grocery store (requires social interactions with workers), and make the food.
 - We decorate the room and the tables.
 - We decide if the serving of the food will be in a buffet line or family style depending on the abilities of the students.
 - We have also created entertainment for the moms (songs, plays, games).



Tea Party Pictures



Making the Tea Party Happen



Making the Juice



Fruit Skewers



Sandwiches



Fruit Pizza

**Strawberry
Soup**

Tea Biscuits

And ... the Entertainment

What's Up With That Retina written by the students and staff and performed by the students!



Insert Video

Building Your Skills

- Keep attending workshops and conferences.
- In addition to vision-specific workshops, go to workshops in the school and district.
- Attend curriculum workshops in reading and math.
- Be aware of how things are being taught in the classroom.

Other Successful Strategies??

What has worked in
your setting?

What is ONE
thing you will
take from this
session and
use?



Thank You!

**What you do
matters!**



Resources

- *Ensuring High-Quality Instruction for Students in Braille Literacy Programs*; Alan J Koenig and M. Cay Holbrook: <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ616385>
- The ABC Braille Study: Results and Implications for Teachers:
<https://www.pathstoliteracy.org/resource/abc-braille-study-results-and-implications-teachers/>