JANUARY 2022

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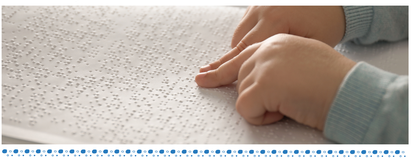
BEST NEWS

Blind Early Services TN - Newsletter for Caregivers and Providers



January is Braille Literacy Month!

January 4th is recognized internationally as World Braille Day in honor of the birthday of Louis Braille, the inventor of the braille code. In addition to the annual worldwide celebration, here in the U.S. January is Braille Literacy Month, which is used to raise awareness. Below are some fun and important facts about braille:

- Louis Braille was just 15-years-old when he invented braille.
- Braille is a tactile code, not a language. Many languages including English, Spanish, Chinese, and Arabic can all be written and read in braille.
- A braille cell is made up of just 6 dots that can be used to represent letters, numbers, words, punctuation, symbols and even musical notes.
- There are two "levels" of braille: uncontracted braille, where each letter is represented by braille cell dots, and contracted braille, a "shorthand" version of braille, where common letter combinations or words are represented by one or more cells and dot combinations.
- There's a special version of braille just for math called the Nemeth Code. The code was invented by Dr. Abraham Nemeth and can be used to transcribe math, algebra and calculus.
- When writing about the braille code, the name should be lowercase. When referring to the proper name of Louis Braille, it should be capitalized.
- Braille takes up more space than the traditional alphabet, which is why braille books are much larger than their print counterparts. For example, "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire" is 10 volumes in braille.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 2
6:30PM-7:30PM CT
PARENT CONNECT
VIRTUAL SUPPORT GROUP
MONTHLY MEETING

FEBRUARY 25
11:00 AM-1:00PM CT
BEST ADVOCATE
QUARTERLY PARENT
TRANSITION TRAINING

MARCH 11
TN DISABILITY DAY
ON THE HILL 2022

2022 NFB Bell Academy Now Open for Applications

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

The National Federation of the Blind is offering a three-week virtual program as part of its Bell Academy this year. Bell Academy is a summer program aimed at helping blind and low vision children enhance their education in the summer months. This is an annual summer program for any blind or low vision student age 4-12 who may need extra braille support or exposure, and who would enjoy connecting with other blind students and adult role models. In-person locations will be announced soon as well. Limited spaces are available. Apply now at the link below. Options are available for beginner, intermediate and advanced students and the program will run from July 18th to August 5th, 2022.

National Braille Press Offering Braille Classroom Kits and Valentines

In honor of Braille Literacy Month and Louis Braille's 213th birthday, National Braille Press is offering two great products for both teachers and students of braille. The Louis Braille Classroom Set includes Six Dots: A Story of Young Louis Braille, Louis Braille: A Touch of Genius, 35 braille alphabet cards, a UEB braille symbols chart, and a Louis Braille poster. The set is $40 and available at the link below.

Additionally, NFP is also offering print/braille valentines -- a set of 32 for $15. The cards feature a puppy and kitten next to each other with the words, "Valentine, you're paw-some!" on a red heart. Dog and cat paw prints dot the edges of the design. On the back of the card is a "braille decoder" to help friends and family read the message in braille. The print/braille valentines are a great way to promote braille among family, friends, and classmates. Order by visiting the link below.

Seedlings Book Angel Program

Seedlings BRAILLE BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

Seedlings Braille Books for Children is a non-profit organization dedicated to increasing the opportunity for literacy by providing free and low-cost braille books for children. Seedlings reaches braille readers in all 50 states and over 75 countries. As a parent or teacher of a child with blindness or low vision (ages 0-21), you are eligible to receive 4 free braille books every year from Seedlings through their Books Angel Program. All children must be registered every calendar year. Please visit the link below to sign your child or student up now for the 2022 program. You can request specific books for your child based on age and interest, and Seedlings will ship them directly to you.

Australian Braille Assessment Tool Now Available to Download for Free

The Queensland, Australia Statewide Vision Impairment Services team has announced that the Queensland Braille Learning Progression and Assessment Tool is now available online to download for free. This extensive assessment tool can be very useful to Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVIs), parents and other team members who are working with a braille learner. The assessment tool provides a guide for developmental steps in braille as well as assessment charts for data collection that can be used to accurately evaluate braille users. Visit the link below to download your copy or share with any TVI's who may be interested.

BEST Advocate Program Launches Quarterly Parent Training - Register Now for "What Happens After Early Intervention?"

The BEST Advocate program is excited to officially launch our new parent training series with our first webinar next month. We know how overwhelming transitions can be and how many questions come with them. As you prepare for your child to age out of early intervention and into the school system or other environment, we invite you to join our training led by Disability Policy Advocate and parent, Erin Richardson. We will cover the IFSP to IEP process, program options specific to Tennessee, as well as a special section for parents of children with blindness or low vision. All parents of children in early intervention are welcome!

WHAT WE'RE LOVING THIS MONTH!

The raised line and braille watercolor art set by PlayAbility Toys is a great way to allow pre-braille and braille readers a way to participate in art! The book includes 12 raised line drawings so a child with vision loss can feel the outline of the image. The image name is listed in both print and braille. The paint tray also notes the colors in braille. Ages 3+ and available on Amazon. Don't forget to shop Smile.Amazon.com with BEST as your selected charity!