

BEST NEWS

Blind Early Services TN - Newsletter for Caregivers and Providers

BEST Advocate Program Can Help You Navigate Transitions

Ensuring your child with a profound sensory impairment, and in many cases, additional disabilities, is getting the best combination of care and education can be very overwhelming for parents and family members. We at BEST want you to feel confident that you have the most accurate information available to advocate for your child's needs throughout their many developmental and educational transitions. Our BEST Advocate program offers the following services for families:

- Attendance at IEP meetings by a BEST TVI, O&M, Developmental Therapist and/or Child Advocate
- Quarterly trainings about the transition process out of early intervention and into the school system or other educational program
- Assistance in the educational planning for your child and suggestions for your child's IEP (Individualized Education Program) or IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan) goals and services
- Guidance on the most appropriate educational environment, modifications, accommodations and tools to help your child thrive in an academic setting
- Direct consultation with teachers, therapists, paraprofessionals and other members of your child's developmental and educational team

If you are new to IFSP/IEP meetings and want to learn more, or if you would like an advocate to attend a meeting as part of your child's team and support system, don't hesitate to reach out to BEST. For more information about our BEST Advocate program, email info@blindearlyservices.org.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

APRIL RELEASE
TERESE PAWLETKO,
SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST,
VI AND AUTISM SPECIALIST
BEST TOGETHER PODCAST

APRIL 30
SOUND: MUSIC AND
SENSORY PLAY DAY
NASHVILLE, TN

MAY 1
NFB BELL ACADEMY
DEADLINE TO APPLY FOR
2022 SUMMER PROGRAMS

MAY 4
6:30PM-7:30PM CT
PARENT CONNECT
VIRTUAL SUPPORT GROUP
MONTHLY MEETING

It's Summer Camp Time!

As soon as the weather starts to warm up with the arrival of Spring, parents begin thinking about summer camp options for their children. Perkins School for the Blind has compiled a list of options for children with blindness or low vision across the country. For families in Tennessee, the Tennessee School for the Blind (TSB) offers several programs for children starting at age 7. Finally, the National Federation of the Blind offers its Bell Academy that focuses on braille instruction both virtually and in-person at various locations. Links below!

- <https://nfb.org/programs-services/nfb-bell-academy>
- <https://www.perkinselearning.org/scout/topics/camps>
- <https://www.tsbttigers.org/apps/news/article/1416368>



Middle Tennessee Families, Don't Forget! SOUND: Music and Sensory Play Day April 30

Music therapy uses music to address a multitude of nonmusical goals for both children and adults. At BEST, we have seen the profound positive impact music therapy has had for many of the families and children we serve, including our own! We want to spread the word about the power of using music in therapeutic ways so we have partnered with Empower Music Therapy, also based here in Nashville, to create a music- and sensory-focused play day for local families. Join us at the Tennessee State Library and Archives on April 30th from 9am-11am. We will offer families the opportunity to explore the brand new Early Literacy Center at the library, engage in free group music therapy sessions, and explore a variety of sensory activities including an instrument petting zoo! [Register now](#) for SOUND: Music and Sensory Play Day below.

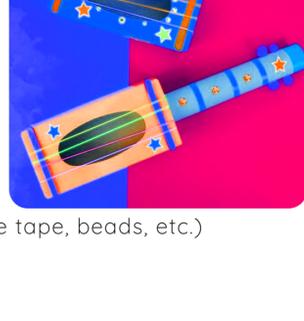


BEST Activity Corner: Tissue Box Guitar

A fun sensory activity we love doing with young children is this easy-to-make homemade guitar! Engage all the senses by using bright or high contrast colors, tactile stickers and other decorations, scented glue, and of course, making musical sounds! Little musicians will love making and having their own instrument to play at home.

Items needed:

- Empty tissue box
- Cardboard paper towel tube
- Different sizes of rubber bands (for different sounds)
- Scissors and/or craft knife
- Popsicle sticks
- Glue
- Markers, crayons or paint
- Decorations (pom poms, stickers, decorative tape, beads, etc.)



Instructions:

1. Color or paint your tissue box and/or paper towel tube any colors you like!
2. Using scissors or a craft knife cut a rectangle on the short side of one side of the tissue box
3. Insert the paper towel tube into the cut hole -- if necessary, use glue to secure
4. Stretch 4-6 rubber bands around the outside of the tissue box (the long way as shown in the photo above)
5. Slide popsicle sticks under the rubber bands on either end of the box (two glued on top of each other works well!)
6. Decorate! Colored tape make great frets around the arm and pom poms make great tuning pegs. Rock on!

Promise Park Opens at Nashville Zoo



The Nashville Zoo has partnered with nonprofit Thisbe & Noah to create Promise Park, a new section within its existing Jungle Gym space that allows kids of all abilities and disabilities to play side-by-side. This section of the playground includes modified swings, slides, zip lines, climbing structures and plenty of shaded areas for parents and caretakers. "With the new addition of Promise Park, the Zoo hopes to foster empathy, compassion, and philanthropy within the Nashville community and so much more." To learn more, visit www.promisepark.org.

TVI Partners with Jack Hartmann to Create Videos About Braille for Kids

Jack Hartmann is a very popular children's song writer whose fun, educational songs are often featured in early learning classrooms across the country. After listening to his "See It, Say It, Sign It" video recently which features sign language, TVI Jessica Hayes reached out to Mr. Hartmann to see if he'd be interested in making a fun, educational braille video as well.

Jack Hartmann was open to learning more about braille and with Jessica's assistance, created four braille videos for children learning the code: the Braille Alphabet Song, the Braille Alphabet Word Sign song, the Braille Numbers Song and the Nemeth Braille Numbers Song. In an article for Pathways to Literacy, Jessica says, "I wanted the songs to have a fun beat as well as state the dot numbers in a slow manner allowing the student, and/or caregiver, time to place their fingers on the Braille writer while the song was playing...My hope is that young children and their families will enjoy learning more about the braille alphabet through these fun, educational songs." Jessica's goals for the songs were:

- That the dot numbers be stated in a purposeful manner, giving time to either create on a braille cell or place fingers correctly on a braille writer
- To emphasize the sound each letter makes
- That the items/objects stated in the songs be easily accessible and tangible



Watch and listen on YouTube now!

WHAT WE'RE LOVING THIS MONTH!

This colorful wooden geometric peg board by PlanToys is a great way to work on shape recognition, fine motor skills and sorting with young children. The 16 geometric pegs (4 different sizes, shapes and colors) can be sorted, counted and stacked on a sturdy base to make for an educational play experience. The bright colors are great for children with CVI.

