

MARCH 2026

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Blind Early Services TN - Newsletter for Caregivers and Providers

## Highlighting Vision in Cerebral Palsy & Developmental Disabilities

March is both **Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month** and **Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month**—a time to recognize the many ways children experience and interact with the world, and the importance of supporting their development early and holistically.

For many children with developmental disabilities, vision plays a critical role in how they learn and connect. Research from the Perkins CVI Center highlights that up to 70% of children with cerebral palsy (CP) are also estimated to have cortical visual impairment (CVI)—the leading cause of pediatric vision loss, which is brain-based rather than an issue with the eyes themselves. Similarly, children with Down syndrome frequently experience vision challenges, with eye conditions reported in 60–80% of individuals—ranging from tear duct differences to more serious diagnoses like early-onset cataracts.

These connections underscore just how essential early intervention and collaboration between providers can be. When therapists, educators, medical professionals, and families work together, we can better identify vision needs early, tailor supports, and create more accessible, responsive environments where every child has the opportunity

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

March 26 (12:00 PM - 1:00 PM)

Special Education 101 Virtual Series for Families

Presented by *The Arc TN & Family Engagement in Special Education*

March 31 (5:30 PM - 7:30 PM)

Parent Night: An Overview of IEP with Metro Nashville Public Schools

Presented in collaboration with *The Arc TN*

April 9

*High Hopes Touch a Truck*

April 11 (8:45)

FREE Mini MOVES Open House! with Move Inclusive Dance

April 16 (11:00 AM - 12:00 PM)

*TRIAD* Webinar: Partnering with TEIS to Support Success for Children with Developmental Delays

to thrive.

Read Anne’s story about raising a child with  
CP and CVI.



# Support the Downtown Nashville's Lions Club at their Jason's Deli Spirit Night! This Thursday!

Save the date for an easy weeknight dinner for a good cause! The Downtown Nashville Lions Club is hosting a spirit night fundraiser at Jason's Deli in Brentwood on Thursday, March 26th 4:00 - 8:00 PM- just mention the club when ordering!

The Lions Club is a global service organization committed to improving lives through community service, including programs focused on vision and hearing, youth initiatives, and local outreach. **They even were one of our community sponsors for 2025 Camp BEST!**

If you’re not in the Middle Tennessee area, you can still get involved—look for your local Lions Club to find events and volunteer opportunities near you!



## A Hollywood Search for Accurate Representation

A powerful new casting call is creating buzz—and for good reason. The independent film *Family Trip* is conducting a nationwide search for a young girl (ages 8–11) who is blind or has low vision to play a blind character. **No acting experience is required, opening the door to authentic, lived representation on screen.**

This moment reflects a meaningful shift in an industry that has historically cast non-disabled actors in disability roles. Choosing an actor with lived experience not only brings greater authenticity to storytelling, but also expands opportunities and visibility for the blind community.

For families, it’s more than a casting call—it’s a chance for children to see themselves reflected as full,

complex individuals on screen. And for the broader community, it's a reminder that representation isn't just about who is portrayed, but who gets to tell the story

Read More on Dr. Kirk Adam's Blog, *Leading the Way to Accessible Innovation*

Would your child be a good fit?  
Email casting here!



# HuffPost Introduces New Section Dedicated Exclusively to Individuals with Disabilities



A major step forward in disability representation is happening in media. HuffPost has launched a new section, *Voices of Disabled People*, dedicated entirely to stories by and about people with disabilities.

The section centers first-person narratives and aims to move beyond outdated or one-dimensional portrayals—creating space for honest, nuanced storytelling from within the community itself. With more than 1 in 4 U.S. adults living with a disability, this initiative recognizes the need for disability voices to be part of mainstream conversations, not an afterthought.

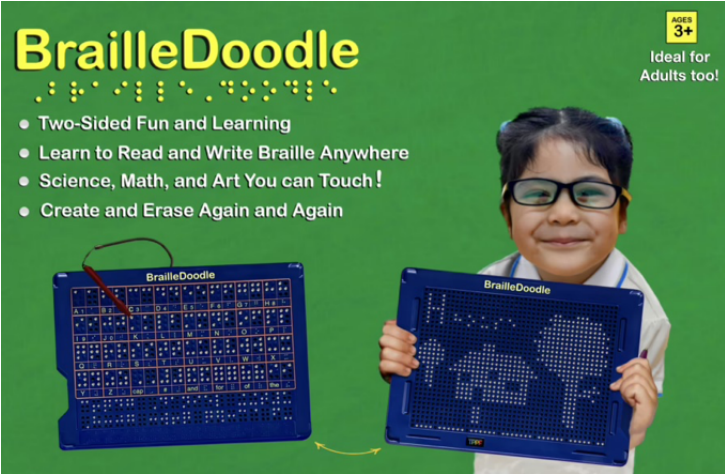
For those interested in exploring these stories, many Tennesseans can access news content for free through resources like digital newsstand services. Check with your library to see what subscriptions you can access!

[Read the letter from the editor here](#)



## What We're Loving This Month

In celebration of tools that make learning more accessible and creative, we're highlighting the



BrailleDoodle this month!

This affordable, refreshable tactile tablet allows users to create, write, and explore through touch—using a simple magnetic stylus to raise and feel each dot instantly, then erase and start again with ease. Designed for Braille learning as well as tactile exploration of science, math, and art concepts, it offers a hands-on, screen-free experience that supports both literacy and creativity.

After an early production setback, efforts are underway to bring BrailleDoodle back to learners everywhere through a new GoFundMe campaign to restart manufacturing—helping ensure this impactful tool continues reaching those who need it most.

Contribute to BrailleDoodle's campaign!

### About Us

*BEST ensures that families are empowered and equipped to provide children with blindness or low vision their BEST start.*

### Links

- The Best Story
- Get Involved
- Donate

Corporate Partnership

### Let's be BEST friends



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