**Braille Literacy Canada: Literacy in the Living Room**

**Ideas for promoting early braille skills**

**BRAILLING WRITING**

Name Writing:

Know the letters of your name. Learn the sequence while singing to the tune of BINGO song. “I know a boy his name is Tyler, Tyler is his name-o, T-Y-L-E-R, T-Y-L-E-R…etc

Braille the letters of your name. Don’t forget to start with dot 6 and sing your song.

Now that you can write your first name, learn how to spell your last name.

Parents can braille your name too, or take turns with you.

Practice Interactive Writing:

Share your ideas for stories with an adult and have the adult take your hands for a ride, as you tell the adult what it is you want to write. Ride on their brailling hands to create your words.

HINT: Remember the power of a repeated line. It helps when ‘re-reading’.

Independent Writing:

Know that it is important to put a space between each word. Count the spaces on a brailled line. Now count the words.

Know that we need a capital sign, dot 6, to make a lowercase letter into a capital letter.

Practice writing letters you know.

Learn how to put in a comma, dot 2. Learn how to put in a period, dots 2-5-6

Practice writing ‘whole word’ contractions you know. Such as “Tyler can go. Go go go.

Go Tyler go.

BRAILLE READING

Reading of Familiar Text:

Know how to read your name and find it even when it is hidden on a page of brailled letters.

Find a special ‘named’ braille letter in a line and call out the letter name.

Find that sentences have a beginning and an end. Look for dot 6, look for the period sign.

Find out how to match one spoken word to each braille word. Read with a buddy or parent,

Finger and Hand Movements- Tracking:

Track across a single line of double spaced familiar text using both hands. Make sure both hands are active.

Know how to use an across-back-down pattern. Start a fluid line moving left to right, at the end of the line return sweep back to the left, go down to the next line and repeat the motion.

Book and Page Orientation:

Know how to find braille on the front cover of a book. Now look inside the book and …

Find page numbers.

Find the top line of text on the reading pages.

Find the last word on a braille page.

Count the lines of braille on a page.

Learning how to explore and ‘read’ tactile diagrams and pictures, using a systematic search; top to bottom, left to right. Follow the tactile lines and talk about the shapes they create.

BRAILLE KNOWLEDGE

Alphabet Letter and Number Identification (reading)

Track and sing the alphabet song in order.

Match each braille character to the spoken letter in the song.

Know that numbers need a special number sign, dots 3-4-5-6

Sing and track the number song (1-2, buckle your shoe).

Read numbers in sequence: 1-10.

Read numbers including 1, 2 in random order.

Alphabet Letter and Number Identification (writing)

Know that different braille letters use different keys on the brailler.

Write (braille) a line of full cells, and hide a braille letter characters.

Braille lines of ‘same or like’ characters.

Braille patterns. (such as letter ‘l’, letter ‘a’, letter ‘l’, letter ‘a’…)

Proofreading

Know that it is important to proof read your braille as you produce it on the brailler.

Use your right hand to do the proof reading (while the paper is still in the brailler).

Proof read your finished work using 2 hands together

Read your work out loud with or without parent help

BRAILLEWRITER SKILLS

Know how to braille on a Perkins (manual) braille writer.

Understand most of the mechanisms on this equipment, including the space bar, backspace, line down.

Name the keys by braille dot number.

 3-2-1 SPACE BAR 4-5-6

Know how to set margins, using the back squeeze knobs

Inserting and Removing Paper:

Get help (verbal and occasional physical assistance) with inserting the paper, and how to remove it.

Know how to turn the paper in.

Remember to insert the paper before using the ‘locking’ lever.

Hint: watch a youtube video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s-mA3LaJN2w>

Hand and Finger Movements- Character Production:

Know your six brailling fingers and demonstrate individual finger isolation. (see finger warm ups)

Remember to use the correct finger position on the braille keys

Focus your attention on finger strength to make sure all the braille characters are easy to read

Develop sufficient finger pressure to produce legible characters

Know when you haven’t push hard enough, as you can’t feel the braille characters. No ghost braille.

SYMBOLS AND SOUNDS

I Hear with My Ear

Practice listening for sounds in letters, words and all around us.

Instead of playing I spy, have a game of I hear with my ear.

GETTING READY FOR READING: BUILDING FINGER STRENGTH AND ISOLATION

Getting Ready For READING

* table / chair height may need to be balanced or adjusted
* sitting squarely to the table, feet may need to be supported (no swinging ankles)
* braille book or paper needs to be on a solid surface
* child have hands supported by table, not having to reach up to read or braille
* be comfortable

Finger Warm Ups

Play some finger warm up games

Songs such as ‘Open Them, Shut Them’ or ‘Fingers, Fingers, Flit and Fly’

 (check out the internet for the words to these popular finger rhymes)

Specific finger isolations, tapping each finger as you sing the number song”

* number 1, number 1 is so much fun (left pointer)
* number 2, number 2 how do you do (left middle)
* number 3, number 3 come play with me (left ring)
* number 4, number 4 knock the door (right pointer)
* number 5, number 5 doing a little jive (right middle)
* number 6, number 6 picking up some sticks (right ring)

Remember that breaks while reading are important, go back to these finger plays to help the child refocus and relax

Proper Finger Position

Each finger has a "job" - lead finger (pointer finger), detective fingers

Curve fingers over the edge of pencil or ruler

A nice light touch…work on whole body relaxation - if your body is tense, your fingers will be unable to touch lightly

Learn to "tickle" the dots

Tracking

Tracking across lines of lines made from a sewing tracing wheel or dot 2-5 on a brailler, or glued down wikki stix, yarn, or popsicle sticks

Tracking across pipe cleaners/straws glued to paper

Tracking on paper with puffy paint trails.

Both hands together, pointer fingers on the braille, begin on the left side of the line

Track to the right to the end of the line and back again on the same line

Both hands move down to the next line together with smooth, coordinated movements, track to the end of the line and back again

Learn the Alphabet Song of whole word contractions.

Sung to the tune of the ABC song…

A is a, and B is but,

C is can, and D is do,

E is every, and F is from

G is go, and H is have,

I is I, and J is just… etc