



Information Update

Winter Newsletter 2007-2008

Hand in Hand: A Partnership Serving Families, Educators, and Service Providers of Children and Youth Who Are Deafblind



LITERACY

Literacy is a critical skill for children and youth who are deafblind. It builds upon meaningful life experiences and content learned in all settings. I encourage you to share reading and writing experiences as early and as often as possible. For students who are deafblind, both communication and language form the basis for literacy skills. With a team approach, we can ensure that the world of literacy is accessible by using object symbols, print, large print, Braille, picture symbols and other forms of representation within systematic instruction. For more information on the Bureau of Special Education's supports and services for students who are deafblind, visit the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) site at: www.pattan.net/teachlead/Deafblind.aspx

John J. Tommasini
Director, Bureau of Special Education

PaTTAN

The Pennsylvania Deafblind Project is part of the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) under the Bureau of Special Education. Please visit the PaTTAN website at www.pattan.net to view upcoming events, training materials from past presentations, and other resources. On the PaTTAN homepage, look for the icon (on the left side) for these links: **Info for Parents** (<http://parent.pattan.net>) includes information about the special education process and how to find resources. **Special Education Forms** lists all of the forms required to be used in the Special Education Process, including an annotated description that explains items on each form. English language forms are available at <http://www.pattan.net/regsforms/EnglishSpecialEducationForms.aspx> and forms in several foreign languages are available at <http://www.pattan.net/regsforms/ForeignLanguageSpecialEducationForms.aspx>.

PRESIDENT'S AWARD FROM PA SOCIETY FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE DEAF

John J. Tommasini, director of the Bureau of Special Education, received the President's Award from the Pennsylvania Society for the Advancement of the Deaf (PSAD). Presented by Larry Brick, the award was for his "quiet support in respecting the Educational Resources for Children with Hearing Loss' (ERCHL) and PSAD's recommendations" and "contributing greatly to the quality of education for deaf children which included respect for the deaf child's preferred/primary communication style."



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TEACHING LITERACY TO CHILDREN WITH DEAFBLINDNESS

Written by Jackie Brennan (Jackie@obs.org)

Children and youth who are deafblind present unique learning styles and needs. Although typical students receive 80-95% of their information through vision and hearing, children and youth who are deafblind do not have access to this information or have limited or incomplete access. In fact, their access may be so limited that it does not extend beyond arm's reach. It is our responsibility to teach them to access information through a variety of means.

According to the National Consortium on Deaf-Blindness (NCDB), 90% of the children and youth, ages birth to 22, on the United States federal deafblind census have additional disabilities along with deafblindness, including cognitive challenges, physical impairment, health issues, and combinations of all of these conditions. This further increases our challenge to provide information in a means that our students can understand.

Language is the foundation for literacy, and reading involves the use of symbolic language (i.e., abstract symbols that stand for something else. Many children who are deafblind have limited use of symbolic language, but this should not exclude them from a literacy program. *Early literacy* involves many aspects and forms of communication, which in turn builds upon language skills.). To introduce communication in a meaningful way, it is critical to assess the child's level of communication. Students need to be in a language- rich environment that allows access to information through pictures, print, Braille, objects, textures, and assistive technology. To teach language to students and help them on the road to literacy, we must provide experiences that they find relevant, meaningful, and motivating. There are no prerequisites for a child to be involved in a literacy program. The challenge is to provide a language/literacy rich environment in an accessible medium.

Many of our children with significant language delays do not yet understand the concept that symbols have meaning. For these children, early literacy may take the form of early language development and exposure to symbols in a manner similar to the way we expose typical infants to storybooks and print, long before there is an understanding that the images on the page have any meaning.

As sighted children begin by looking at pictures, a child with a vision loss may need to begin with objects. When selecting objects or symbols, it is important to remember the factors that can influence a child's use/understanding of these objects. These factors include:

- Usefulness of the object to the learner
- Consistency of use
- Transparency/translucency of the object (how similar it is to what it represents)
- Frequency of use
- Cognitive and physical ability of the learner
- Motivation of the learner

When first introducing an object, begin by using the real object. Gradually this can be shaped to using a key part of the real object or a texture that feels like the real object or feels like the key part of the real object. When there is no real object, an arbitrary object or texture can be used. It is important to remember that objects should have distinctive characteristics that can be easily discriminated by touch. Generally, miniature representations of real objects do not feel like the object that they represent.

When creating storybooks, involve the child in the process. This includes having the child participate in gathering the materials for the book, using the child's own words when possible, and having the child physically make the book with you. Use predictable and repetitive phrases, use familiar and preferred activities in the content of the story, use rhyming words or phrases when possible, consider the "rhythm of the language", and insure that there is a good match between the pictures or objects/symbols used and the words. When providing print to go along with the object or pictures, have the print appear above so that the words are not hidden by the child's hands as he feels the object or points to the picture. When using Braille, place the Braille beneath the object so that the child can use the appropriate techniques to track/read the Braille as the size of the object can prevent correct finger placement to read the Braille.

continued on next page

It is important to remember that the development of literacy skills can be a very slow process as the child is learning to understand language and the use of symbols. Frequently we need to look at other outcomes during this process instead of traditional reading skills. So, what are we looking for? We are looking for the child to:

- Show an interest in books
- Attend for longer periods of time as the book is read to the child
- Predict/anticipate what will come next (identify the object/picture, make the sign for the object, reach for the object)
- Relate the story to another experience
- Follow along with you (track the Braille, point to words or pictures)
- Ask to have a book read
- Read along with you

Due to the many needs of our students, traditional materials are frequently not appropriate as they lack direct meaning to the child. For this reason, we need to create individual materials to support the child's personal experiences and preferences. This can be done through a variety of means.

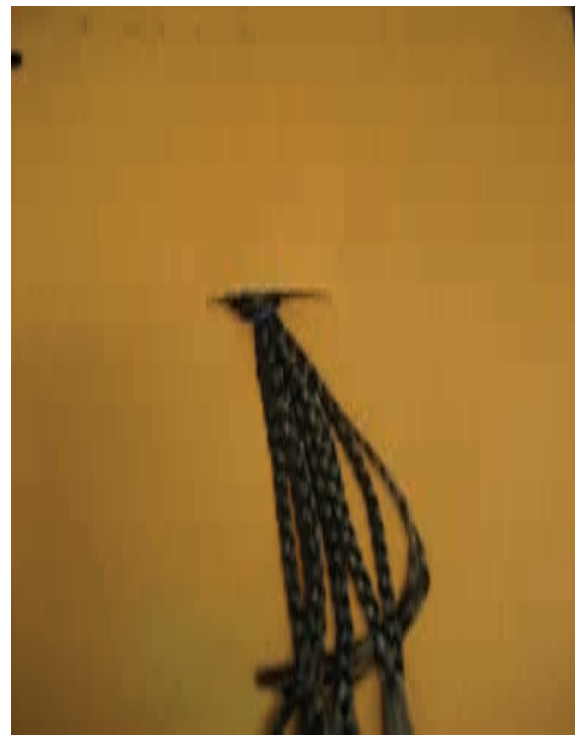
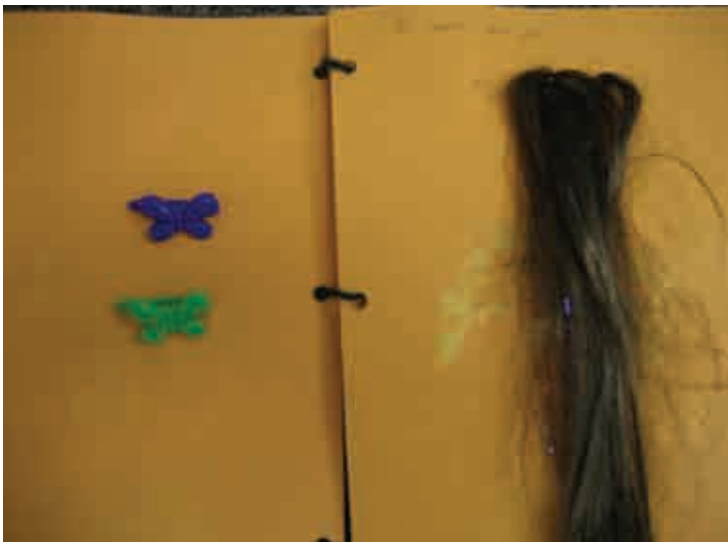
- Create a language rich environment: label items throughout the student's environments, as you would do for a sighted child. This can be done through pictures, print, Braille, objects, or tactile cues depending on your student's learning modes.
- Provide multiple daily opportunities for the student to be exposed to these labels and to "see" others using these labels as well. Comment on the student's use and expand his or her language by providing more information about what the student is touching.
- Use pictures, objects, etc., to alert the student to what is going to happen next.
- Create calendar or schedule boards and teach the student to "read" the schedule throughout the day.
- Create memory boxes or memory books using real objects taken from the student's experiences. For example, create a "snack" box or book that contains items that the child uses during snack time. This may contain a plate, spoon, napkin, cartoon of milk, packet of cookies, etc. Using a memory book or box teaches the child that the objects have meaning and that he or she can use them to share information with another person about preferences, accomplishments, experiences, etc.
- Create meaningful stories about the student using repetitive or predictable phrases and read and reread the story many times.
- Encourage the child to participate in the reading experience by following along as you read, turning the pages, exploring the objects, etc.
- Provide many opportunities for your student to experience the functional use of reading and writing in whatever mode he or she is using. Using hand under hand modeling, allow your student to feel your hands as you (and his or her classmates) engage in these experiences.
- Model the use of reading and writing in all environments and for various uses, e.g., to gain or give information, to organize (calendars), to review past experiences, to follow or give directions, to entertain and be entertained, etc.
- Develop a list of words that are highly motivating to the student and present these words in an accessible medium. Each word can be printed or Brailled on individual cards. Words can be identified by observing the student, asking the student what he or she likes, interviewing family and staff, etc.
- When using word cards, it can be helpful to keep these cards in a box or container so that the student can keep them in a known location and access them for instructional activities. When presenting the word in Braille on a flash card, it is helpful to use a lead-in line and a lead-away line to help with correct finger placement and tracking skills. As the student begins to identify each word, look at the components of the word. What sound/letter does it start with? What's the final sound? This is the beginning of phonemic awareness. When the student can identify the letters found in the word(s), begin using these same letters to create new words. These words can then be used in repetitive sentences and phrases to create a new story.

Just as we know that we cannot describe the typical child with deafblindness, the same holds true for early literacy. While we can use a similar approach, no two programs will look exactly the same as each child's words and stories are designed specifically to meet their needs and interests. As educators, we are responsible to develop a program that will be highly motivating and meaningful for each of the children we serve. Whether we use commercial products, develop our own, or use a combination of both, our challenge is the same, to make literacy accessible for all of our students.

Resources for this article can be found on page 5

TACTILE BOOKS

Here are samples of pages from books created for Brittany, a student who is deafblind. Maria Baldwin, Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments and Blindness at Bucks County Intermediate Unit 22, created these pages to bring meaningful experiences to literacy, to introduce Braille, to create a place for conversation, and to provide choices. The page showing hair barrettes and a pony-tail and the page showing braided hair were taken from a book with several choices for that day's hairstyle. Brittany used the book to make choices, to discuss what had taken place (i.e., getting her hair done), and to sequence events. The page showing Christmas ornaments documented Brittany's experience, provided a way to continue to discuss that experience, and established a tangible symbol for an event.



CONGRATULATIONS TO JACKIE BRENNAN

Jackie Brennan has served as an Educational Consultant on the Pennsylvania Deafblind Project for the past few years. Jackie recently was appointed to become the Interim Director at Overbrook School for the Blind in Philadelphia. She will serve in this capacity during this school year while a search is conducted to replace the current director. It is a tremendous benefit to the students and faculty of Overbrook School, but she will be greatly missed on the Deafblind Project. It has been a privilege to work with Jackie, and we will continue to enjoy her expertise as she will remain a member of the Deafblind Project Advisory Council and support the implementation of Deafblind Project training activities at Overbrook School for the Blind. Jackie's email at Overbrook is Jackie@OBS.org

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Resources:

- Downing, J. (2005). Teaching literacy to students with significant disabilities: strategies for the k-12 inclusive classroom. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Holbrook, C. & Koenig, A. (2005). Experiencing literacy: a parents' guide for fostering early literacy development of children with visual impairments. Philadelphia: Towers Press <http://www.obs.org/page.php?ITEM=78>
- Klein, M.D., Chen, D., & Haney, M. (2000). Promoting learning through active interaction. A guide to early communication with young children who have multiple disabilities. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes. www.brookespublishing.com
- Koenig, A. J. & Farrenkopf, C. (1994-1995). Assessment of Braille literary skills (ABLS). Region IV Education Service Center, Houston, TX
- Lewis, S. & Tolla, J. (Jan/Feb 2003). Creating and using tactile experience books for young children with visual impairments. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, Vol. 35, No. 3, pp. 22-28.
- Miles, B. (Revised, 2005). Literacy for persons who are deaf-blind. Monmouth, OR: DB-LINK, The National Information Clearinghouse of Children Who Are Deaf-Blind.
- Newbold, S. (2000). Emergent literacy for young children. Phoenix: The Foundation for Blind Children.
- Rex, E. J., Koenig, A. J., Wormsley, D. P. & Baker, R. L. (1994). Foundations of Braille literacy. American Foundation for the Blind, New York.
- Rowland, C. & Schweigert, P. (2000). Tangible symbol systems (rev.) Portland, OR: Center on Self-Determination, Oregon Health Sciences University, Design to Learn Products. www.designtolearn.com
- Swenson, A. M. (1998). Beginning with Braille: A balanced approach to literacy. American Foundation for the Blind: New York.
- Wormsley, D. (2004). Braille literacy: a functional approach. New York; AFB Press.
- Wormsley, D. (2000). Braille literacy curriculum. Philadelphia: Towers Press. <http://www.obs.org/page.php?ITEM=78>

Internet Resources:

- American Foundation for the Blind: www.afb.org
- American Printing House for the Blind: www.aph.org
- Creating and using tactile experience books for young children with visual impairments: <http://www.tsbvi.edu/Outreach/seehear/spring03/books.htm>
- DB-Link, website: www.dblink.org or www.nationaldb.org
- Emergent literacy for children who are deaf-blind: <http://www.projectsalute.net/Learned/Learnedhtml/EmergentLit.html>
- Literacy for persons who are deaf-blind by Barbara Miles: <http://www.dblink.org/lib/literacy.htm>
- Mini-Module Series on Deaf-Blindness; Literacy and deaf-Blindness module: <http://www.dblink.org/lib/topics/modules.htm>
- Object books: <http://www.tsbvi.edu/Education/vmi/objectbook.htm>
- Story Boxes: A hands-on literacy experience: www.e-advisor.us/storyboxes/index.htm
- Project Salute: www.projectsalute.net
- SKI*HI Institute: www.skihi.org



HAND IN HAND

A Partnership Serving Families, Educators, and Service Providers of Children and Youth Who Are Deafblind

If your child has both a vision and hearing loss, your family (parents/guardians, siblings and child with deafblindness) may be eligible to attend a weekend learning conference (at little or no cost).

NEW DATE!

JULY 18-20, 2008

FAMILY LEARNING CONFERENCE 2007

*Crowne Plaza Harrisburg
23 South Second Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101*



Sibling Activities



Parent Learning Session

If you would like to be part of the planning of the weekend content, child care, or publicity, or for more information, please contact Molly Black at mblack@pattan.net



Child Care Provided

COMING SOON: ANNUAL UPDATE OF THE PENNSYLVANIA DEAFBLIND CENSUS

Each year, the Deafblind Project sends out a request for team members to update information about children and youth who are deafblind, and to inform us about children and youth who are newly identified as deafblind. Team members also can notify the Deafblind Project at any time to provide updates or additions to the census.

The United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) requires an annual report about the number of children and youth who are deafblind (www.nationaldb.org/TChildCount.php). These data are used for national program planning (e.g., research needs, funding for state deafblind projects, funding for universities, funding for the national information clearing house on deafblindness, directions for needed products or resources).

In Pennsylvania, we use the data to guide and inform our training and technical assistance activities, to identify trends (e.g., age distribution, causes of deafblindness, type of visual impairment, use of assistive listening devices/amplification), and for many other purposes.

The census "form" that you will complete this year will appear to be a bit different, due to requirements from OSEP. These requirements arose from IDEA 2004 as well as current best practices. Some of the changes are questions that we in Pennsylvania already asked, such as whether a child has a cochlear implant(s). Please look for this form in early 2008, and contact us at any time if you have updates. We sincerely thank you for providing this information.

A child is identified as deafblind if the child has a combination of a vision and a hearing loss. Many children who are deafblind have some usable vision and/or hearing. The majority of children who are deafblind also have additional physical, medical and/or cognitive problems. Children are considered to be deafblind when the combination of their hearing and vision loss causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they require significant and unique adaptations in their educational programs.

Project SPARKLE

PROJECT SPARKLE (Supporting Parent Access to Resources, Knowledge, Linkages and Education) is a program of individualized learning for parents of children who are deafblind. Parents will have access to information, training, and resources in their homes via the Internet. The Sparkle training program is provided to parents utilizing DVD technology, supported with a Parent Guidebook and the Sparkle website. The DVD training program focuses on six units: 1) Deafblindness 2) Vision 2) Hearing 4) Touch 5) Concept Development and the newly released 6) Intervention.

Project Sparkle was originally funded by the US Department of Education at the SKI-HI Institute, and 21 states are currently participating in the project. Each participating state has a State Facilitator who can provide guidance, support, and resources to families as appropriate. The State Facilitator for Pennsylvania is Patti McGowan, who is also a Family Liaison for the Deafblind Project, as well as the parent of a child who is deafblind. Patti can be contacted by e-mail: pmcgowan@pattan.net or phone 724-864-2553.

The Pennsylvania Deafblind Project has sponsored 54 participants since 2004. We have just begun our sixth group of participants with Project Sparkle. This group has 13 families and 15 participants. We look forward to working with this group as they utilize the Project Sparkle material. We are now keeping a list of names of those interested in beginning Project Sparkle in the spring of 2008. For more information or to be added to the list, please contact the State Facilitator, Patti McGowan, at any time.

DB-FAMILIES-PA LISTSERV

Would you like to converse with other families, all over the state of Pennsylvania, who have deafblind children? Now you can! Join our PA Deafblind Listserv. This listserv is for families and guardians with children and youth who are deafblind and interested professionals, in hopes of sharing information and support with one another.

If you are interested in joining the listserv, please contact Patti McGowan pmcgowan@pattan.net Just send your name and e-mail address and you too will be a member.

LEADERSHIP NETWORK

Learned
Educated
Advocate
Determined
Expertise
Reasonable
Skilled
Honorable
Initiator
Passionate

Listed to the left are adjectives that describe the attributes of Leadership. Some individuals are natural leaders. However, some people can also be guided, trained and supported to become more confident and competent leaders. One of the goals of the PA Deafblind Project is to develop parent leaders. The third Leadership Network group commenced its training in October at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Harrisburg, PA. So far, 15 Parents/Guardians have completed the Leadership Training. Three new participants will complete this year's training, together with six members of Group One, who have returned to hear some updated information.

The instruction is divided into three separate trainings. These trainings include information and hands-on practice of: characteristics of a leader, becoming a change agent, communication skills, and advocacy through letter writing and public speaking. In addition to these trainings there is an expectation that the participants will create a LEAP, which is an acronym for Leadership Effectiveness Action Plan. This LEAP is a practical, detailed and organized plan of action to make a difference in the lives of children who are deafblind.

If you are interested in being a member of Group Four, please contact Molly Black at mblack@pattan.net

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR FAMILIES, EDUCATORS, AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

Part 1: Upcoming PaTTAN Events: For a complete list of PaTTAN training opportunities that includes a description of the trainings, time, location, and a link to register for events, please visit the PaTTAN website at: www.pattan.net.

December 6, 2007 from 2:30–4:30 PM; Webinar

Specific Skills Progress Monitoring for Students with Visual Impairment or Blindness

February 12, 2008 from 4:15–6:15 PM; Videoconference at multiple sites

Special Education Paraeducator Training: Individual Learning Differences

February 24-27, 2008; Hershey Lodge and Convention Center

Pennsylvania Department of Education Conference: Indicators for Success: Improvement, Performance and Results

March 6, 2008 from 2:30–4:30 PM; Webinar

Specific Skills Progress Monitoring for Students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing

March 18, 2008 from 4:15–6:15 PM; Videoconference at multiple sites

Special Education Paraeducator Training: Instructional Strategies

April 22, 2008 from 4:15–6:15 PM; Videoconference at multiple sites

Special Education Paraeducator Training: Learning Environments and Social Interactions

Part 2: Pennsylvania Deafblind Project Events: For more information about Pennsylvania Deafblind Project activities, please contact Juli Baumgarner at jbaumgarner@pattan.net or 800-446-5607, ext. 6845.

January 15, 2008; PaTTAN Harrisburg

Advisory Council to the Pennsylvania Deafblind Project:

January 25-26, 2008; Harrisburg Crowne Plaza Hotel

Deafblind Project Family Leadership Network Workshop

July 18-20, 2008 (please note the new date); Harrisburg Crowne Plaza Hotel

Pennsylvania Deafblind Project Family Learning Conference

May 2-3, 2008; Harrisburg Crowne Plaza Hotel

Deafblind Project Family Leadership Network Workshop

Part 3: Events Offered by Other Organizations

Parent Education and Advocacy Leadership Center (PEAL): March 11-12, 2008 2nd Annual Inclusion Conference. Featured Speaker: Paula Kluth. Sheraton, Cranberry, PA. Please visit the PEAL website at <http://pealcenter.org> or call toll free 866-950-1040/TDD 412-281-4409.

PENNSYLVANIA PARTNERSHIP FOR THE DEAFBLIND

Written by Betty Hane on behalf of the
Pennsylvania Partnership for the Deafblind Board

The Pennsylvania Partnership for the Deafblind (PPDB) is a new, up and coming, organization. We are for individuals and their families who are deafblind, and professionals (doctors, teachers, religious leaders) who work with, interact with, or are friends with a deafblind individual and their family.

Our focus is on support to the families and individuals who are deafblind. We are there from birth until death and beyond when we are needed. Questions on medical, educational and leisure activities can be addressed to any board member and we will do our best to connect you with the proper agency or persons to help with a problem or answer your question.

We are also there as a friend, when you need someone to hold your hand.

All are welcome to join and may contact Betty Hane, PPDB Vice President, at userha8039@aol.com for a membership form at anytime.

We are all experts on our children. Why not share what you know with us to help us grow and support our loved ones and the community with deafblindness? We work together with professionals to provide the best of our knowledge and abilities for the deafblind community.

You may contact Betty Hane anytime by email and she will then direct you to the appropriate party. She answers her email promptly everyday.

Have your friends and family become members. We can do more with greater numbers to help meet your challenges.

We wish you Happy Holidays and the best in the coming New Year from The Board of Pennsylvania Partnership for the Deafblind.

The World is Theirs



When buildings are built with doors extra wide,
So that all people can come inside,
When all children are welcome to come and play,
Not just those that look one way,
When those with braces and walkers and wheels,
Can join right in with typical peers,
Then all God's children will come to know,
The world is theirs, wherever they go.

When classrooms are made with room for all,
So none of our kids go to a room down the hall,
When all children are welcome to come and learn,
Not just those who can wait their turn,
When those whose behavior is sometimes bad,
Can be included and not made sad,
Then all God's children will come to know,
The world is theirs, wherever they go.

When hearts are open with love inside,
So that every child can live with pride,
When all children are welcome to come and share,
Not just those for whom we care,
When those in our block, our town, our state,
Can have enough to fill their plate,
Then all God's children will come to know,
The world is theirs, wherever they go.

Written by Linda Radzik

Linda Radzik and her husband Gabe live in York, PA with five of their nine children. Their youngest son Noah is deafblind due to Accutane Embryopathy. Both Linda and Gabe are very instrumental to the PA Deafblind Project. Both are a part of our Leadership Training Network and have served on various committees with our Family Learning Conference Weekend. Linda is an editorial advisor to Insights Magazine, the magazine of the National Spina Bifida Association. She is also a member of the National Church Conference of the Blind and a Peer Facilitator for Parent to Parent of PA. Linda's vision is heard loudly through her poem for those with deafblindness and all disabilities.

KID'S CORNER



BRITTANY'S FOUR RULES OF LIFE

By Gordon and Mary Boe

If you haven't met our granddaughter, Brittany Villano, you should know that she is now 14. She has lived with us for 11 years. She sees shapes and colors, and she hears some sounds. Brittany, like most children who are deafblind, also has health complications. She has hydrocephalus, scoliosis, asthma and allergies, and is tube-fed. She received a kidney transplant in 2003. She is developmentally delayed. She sleeps irregularly at night.

However, Brittany is also ambulatory, expressive (she knows over 100 signs), very determined (some might say stubborn) and incredibly strong for her size. She attends the Overbrook School for the Blind in Philadelphia.

During her 11 years with us, Brittany has interacted with many people on many different levels. As we have observed and participated in these interactions, we've learned that while **we** thought the adults set the rules, Brittany has figured out that **she** needs to call at least some of the shots! Four of **her** rules are:

1. **Everything has its place, so leave it where I put it!**

Brit has a fantastic memory for where her toys and possessions are located. When she puts something on a table, couch, floor, counter, or chair, she expects it to be there when she comes back to it. Now, "when she comes back to it" can mean in an hour, or after school, or in the middle of the night, or the next day. She knows where it's supposed to be; if it's not there, she searches until she finds it—literally.

So the first rule anyone has to learn is this—leave her stuff where she put it, or make darn sure you remember where **you** put it, so you know what she's looking for and can guide her to it.

2. The TV Remote is for sharing.

Until this past summer, we've been pretty successful in keeping the remote control in Grandpa's hands. Suddenly, Brit decided that Grandpa should share it. A lot of people would think that it's "inappropriate" to let a deafblind child play with a remote, but since Brit obtains much of her information through her sense of touch, we began giving it to her to see what she would do.

Brit already knew that the channel changes when she actually pushes a button, so we were a bit concerned that she might become a worse channel surfer than her Grandpa. But she surprised us—she lightly touched the buttons, felt the contours and edges and claimed the remote as hers by taking it into the kitchen and placing it on the table amidst some other electronic toys.

Over time, we've worked out an arrangement. If we're not using the remote and Brit reaches for it, she can have it. If we need it back, she returns it without a fuss. Of course, sometimes she hides it in a pile of her stuff and we have to dig for awhile, but both Grandpa and Brit have learned to share the remote.

3. You can never have too many keyboards or AA batteries!

As many of you know, Brittany is a keyboard freak. She loves them all, and it's fascinating to watch her work a new portable musical device. Within 30 seconds, she'll know how to turn it off and on, how to push the volume up, which songs or sounds she likes and the best way to hold it up to her ear so she can hear it.

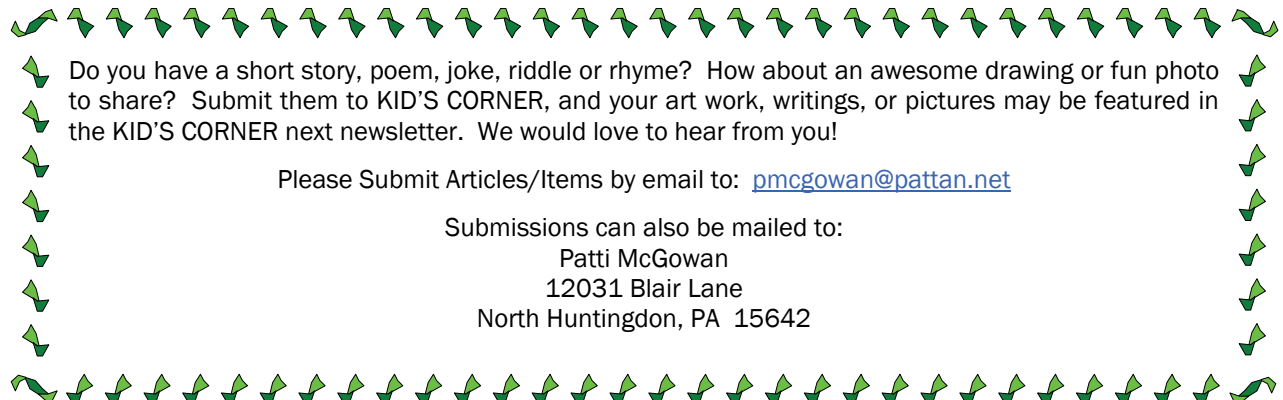
Just like everyone else, she often selects her music to match her mood at the moment. Although the Elmo guitar remains her most played, every time we go to Toys R Us, she can't wait to get to the "instrument" section to pick out a new one. When playing, she loves to repeatedly interrupt the song or phrase, always at exactly the same spot, over & over & over & OVER! Her timing is impeccable, which is kind of weird for a girl with limited hearing.

We go through at least 72 AA batteries a month, just to keep her instruments going.

4. Treasure the laughter!

Sometimes, when we're just sitting in the rocking chair, Brit gets the biggest smile on her face, then she bursts out laughing. It's not a snicker, or a chuckle, but a real belly-buster! We don't know what set her off, but before you know it, we're all laughing with her. These are the moments we've learned to treasure.

When Brittany, who has endured so much pain and discomfort in her short life, can find such joy, we know that for this moment, everything's wonderful. We will face tomorrow's struggles tomorrow, but tonight we'll laugh!



The Staff of Hand in Hand

Victor Rodriguez-Diaz
Project Director

Juli Baumgarner
Project Coordinator

Lauri Triulzi
Educational Consultant

Molly Black
Family Liaison

Patti McGowan
Family Liaison

If we can be of assistance, please contact Juli Baumgarner at 800-446-5607, ext. 6845 or jbaumgarner@pattan.net



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HAND IN HAND
PENNSYLVANIA TRAINING AND
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NETWORK

6340 Flank Drive
Harrisburg, PA 17112-2764