



Braille Literacy for Transition Success

Charting the Cs
Conference 2025:
*To Literacy and
Beyond*

Cooperation
Communication
Collaboration

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Goals and Objectives

- Understand the importance of braille instruction in the classroom
- Encourage braille learning for all students with vision loss
- Dispel braille myths
- Recognize the direct correlation between braille literacy and success

Why Braille Literacy Matters

- Braille literacy provides access to education, employment and independence
- Functional braille skills go beyond reading textbooks and articles
- Essential for success in higher education and the workforce
- Prepares students for a lifetime of literacy
- ACCESS = SUCCESS

Benefits of Braille

- Independent learning
- Critical thinking
- Social inclusion
- Literacy Development: Punctuation, grammar and spelling
- Understand text format

Quote

"Just like with a sighted person, listening to something is not the same as reading it. When you read with your eyes, or in my case my fingers, you pick up grammar and spelling. Before learning braille I was a really bad speller and used a lot of punctuation incorrectly. Through learning braille, I picked up on this and started correcting them on my own. Without braille I would still be making those same mistakes. Most importantly, it gives me back my independence. I can read a menu, signs for a building, buttons in an elevator, or connecting a braille display to my phone to communicate in private again." Meranda Walter, World Services for the Blind Braille Instructor

Statistics

- According to the National Braille Press, braille literacy rates for school-age blind children have declined from greater than 50% 40 years ago to only 12% today
- Though statistics have historically cited that only 10% of blind people read braille, a study in 2022 found that statistic lacked solid evidence and concluded that data is not available to determine how many braille readers there are.
- One study showed that only 30% of blind people are employed, and of that group, 90% read braille.

Types and Versions of Braille

- Grade 1 or uncontracted braille
- Grade 2 or contracted braille
- Grade 3 – shorthand used for personal use (notes, letters, etc.)
- Nemeth Code for math and science notation
- Music braille

Myths About Braille

- Braille is a language
- Technology replaces braille
- It takes a long time to read braille
- Braille is hard to learn
- Braille is only for those who are totally blind
- Braille is only useful for lengthy readings

Auditory vs Tactile Learning

- Difference between auditory and tactile learning
- Meeting the needs of those with auditory processing delays
- Working with visual learners

Progressive Vision Loss

- Calls for important discussions about the future
 - Introduction to braille and its use
 - Proficiency isn't always the goal
- Once it is learned, the skill is easier to come back to
- Eye fatigue and posture
- How to be proactive as a student preparing for success

Braille Beyond the Classroom

- Labeling and organization
- Uses around the home
- Public signage and accessing the environment
- Recreation and leisure activities
- Notes

Braille Assistive Technology

- Braille notetakers
 - Stand-alone devices
 - Don't need to know a screen reader to use
- Braille displays
 - Primary use is to connect to a device to read content on that device
- eReaders

Braille in the Toolbox

- Braille is a supplemental tool to be used in conjunction with other skills
 - Computer skills are still critical and can further braille use
 - Audio
 - Touch typing
 - Various assistive technologies
 - Advocacy

Braille in the Workplace

- 2024 survey of 304 blind workers
 - 66.1% used braille at work
 - 52.6% used refreshable braille at work
- Common work tasks reported
 - Taking notes in meetings
 - Making presentations
 - Using the internet
 - Using the computer for various work tasks

Supporting Braille in Transition

- Ensure the student and team have the education and tools to succeed
- Promote early braille exposure
- Prompt access when materials are needed
- Support technology in conjunction with braille
- Integrate braille into both instruction and leisure activities
- Raise awareness – students, families, peers, teachers

SSB Resources

- Braille Transcription
 - Students: Provide braille and other educational materials per federal and state laws, as requested by teachers for eligible Minnesota K-12 students and special non-graded students with print impairments attending school in participating school districts.
 - Community members
- Braille instruction
 - Employment, independent living, seniors

Online Braille Learning Resources

- Hadley Workshops: hadleyhelps.org
- Braille Brain: braillebrain.aphtech.org
- Braille Zoomers: brailleliteracycanada.ca/en/programs
- Braillists Foundation: braillists.org
- UEB Online: uebonline.org

- Braille Tutor: iOS and Google Play Store

Thank you!

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