

# Beginning with Braille



An Advisory Teacher's perspective on teaching braille to young children with severe vision impairment in a mainstream school.

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# Introduction & Format

- \* Introduction of the SA School for Vision Impaired and the Statewide Support Service
- \* Introduction of students: Kodi and Timeea
- \* Creating Individualised Functional Braille program
- \* Processes involved
- \* Show and tell - resources
- \* Conclusion – things we have learnt

# South Australian School for Vision Impaired (SASVI)



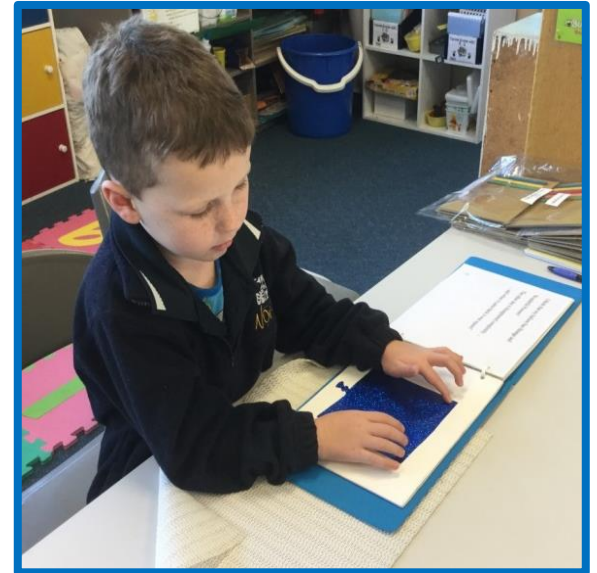
- \* Specialist school for students with vision impairment  
Located in Park Holme, Adelaide. SA
- \* R-7 classes
- \* 2 Units at local high schools
- \* Australian Curriculum and the Expanded Core Curriculum

# Statewide Support Service(SSS)

- \* Currently support 200 students with vision impairment across the state of South Australia
  - \* The aim of the service is “to ensure students with vision impairments:
    - Access, participate and succeed in all curriculum areas.
    - Develop independence
    - Are supported in partnership with school and parents”
- Reference: [www.sasvi.sa.edu.au/Support\\_service.htm](http://www.sasvi.sa.edu.au/Support_service.htm)

# Kodi

- \* Bilateral microphthalmia and colobomas, no light perception
- \* Diagnosed Global Developmental Delay
- \* Limited life experiences
- \* Walked at 3 ½ years with the aid of walkers
- \* Complex family circumstances



# Kodi – School Setting

- \* Supported by SASVI SSS through Inclusive Pre-school Program
- \* Enrolled at the Special Class in the mainstream primary school, country area SA
- \* Currently in year 1 with learners with multiple disabilities
- \* Difficulties with consistency of the braille program

# Timeea

- \* Loving family
- \* 4<sup>th</sup> child in a family of 7 children
- \* Mother knew soon after birth that something was different about Timeea's eyes

## Eye Conditions

- \* Bilateral chorioretinal coloboma, iris coloboma, pendular nystagmus and microphthalmic eyes

## Visual Acuities

- \* 6/114



# Key factors in creating individual braille programs for Kodi and Timeea

## Determining literacy medium

- \* Braille – when a child has no vision it is assumed braille will be an option
- \* Print – family may wish for their child to use large print
- \* Dual - value in dual medium, if appropriate (Guerette 2014)
- \* Learning Media Assessment (Koenig and Holbrook, 1995) is recognised as a useful way to identify an individuals learning medium (Wormsley and D'Andrea 2004)





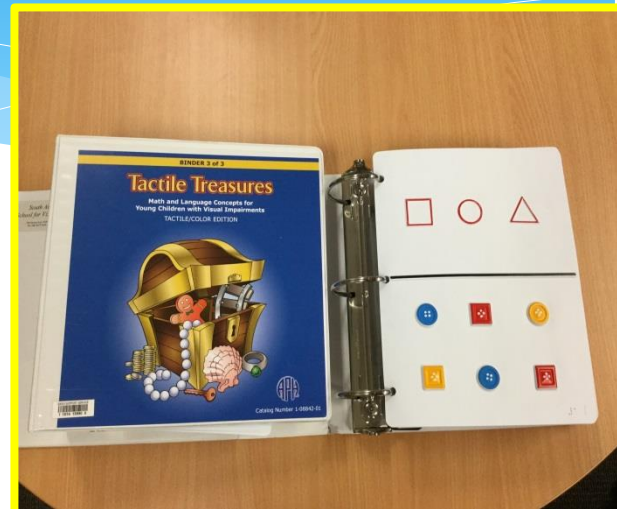
# Emergent Literacy

- \* When working with students who need braille instruction a flexible approach is needed to select a balance of skill-oriented and meaning-oriented activities that are most appropriate for a particular student at a particular time (Wormsley, 2004 and Guerette, 2014)
- \* The primary aspects of designing literacy programs are:
  - Learning remains functional and meaningful
  - Specific skills taught are integrated into an authentic reading and writing activities as soon as possible
  - Meaningful context enhances learning for all students
  - Recognition of the uniqueness of teaching and learning braille

# Concept Development

- \* With well-formed concepts and vocabulary based upon meaningful experiences children bring more knowledge to the reading process and consequently they will have more to learn from reading (Wormsley, 2004)
- \* Critical strategies to support concept knowledge development:
  - Providing concrete experiences – real, direct experiences and encourage the use of all the senses to explore
  - Opportunities for learning by doing – ‘hands-on’ activities
  - Exposure to unifying experiences – provide ‘the big picture’ to prevent partial understanding of a concept or task (Guerette, 2014 and Roe, Rogers et. al. 2014)

# Concept Development



# Jolly Phonics & Braille

- \* Not a question of IF but HOW as the need to mirror what was being taught to the class was paramount (Guerette 2014)
- \* Idea of 'aligning' the two programs became one of 'blending'
- \* Tricky scenarios did occur and were met with an explanation
- \* Result - Individual program with numerous positive outcomes



# Embedding Braille Literacy in the Class

- \* Braille learners benefit from opportunity to use braille across the curriculum throughout the day (Roe, Rogers et. al. 2014)
- \* Wormsley & D'Andrea (2004) advocate it is extremely important that the child's environment is modified to include the medium in which he or she will read and write
- \* Braille immersion must be intentionally orchestrated by the Advisory Teacher and Class Teacher

# Creating an Individualised Functional Braille Program

1. Creating a braille rich environment
  2. Selecting an individualised reading and writing vocabulary
  3. Creating functional uses for reading and writing
  4. Using the functional braille literacy approach with different kinds of learners
- (Swenson, 1999; Wormsley, 2004; Lewis and Allman, 2014)

# Working with the Mainstream Curriculum

Brown & Glaser (2014) affirm the following is required to ensure meaningful and inclusive opportunities:

- \* Advance planning
- \* Quality input & instruction from the Advisory Teacher
- \* Effective team work
- \* Preparation time

A supportive environment with a collegial approach is imperative for the most successful outcomes

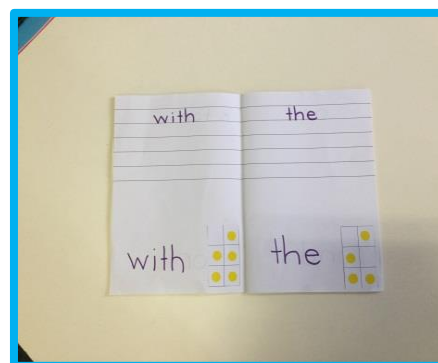
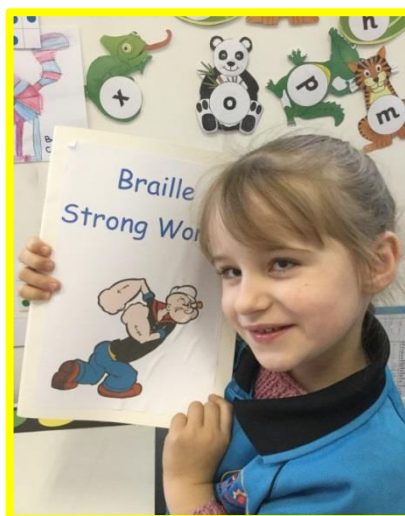
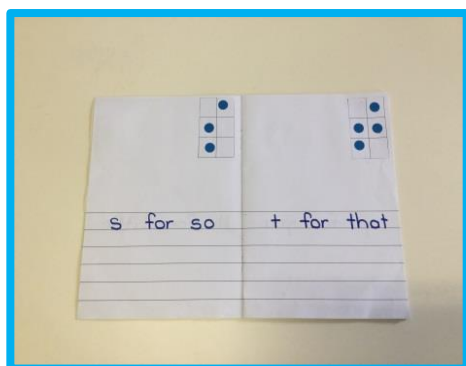
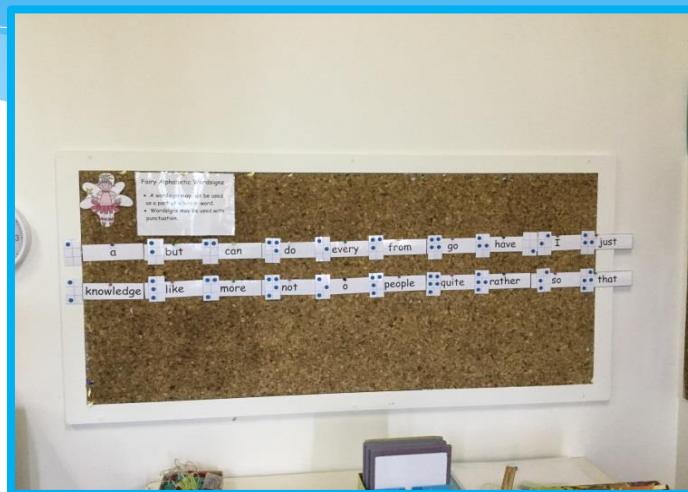
# Balancing the Mainstream Curriculum with Specialized Instruction

## Challenges

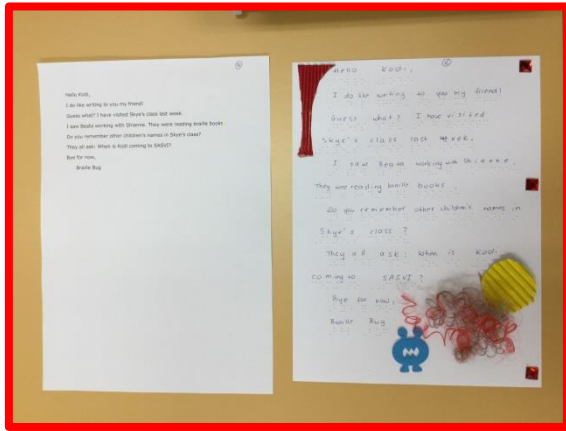
- \* Organise time so students have access to dedicated individual instruction required (Roe, Rogers et. al. 2014)
- \* Find balance between individual instruction and activities with class or small group
- \* Braille literacy skills of staff working with student on a daily basis
- \* Amount of input from Advisory Teacher



# Practical Ideas Which Have Worked 😊

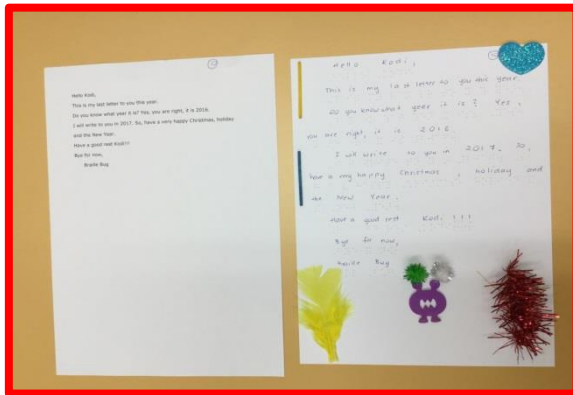


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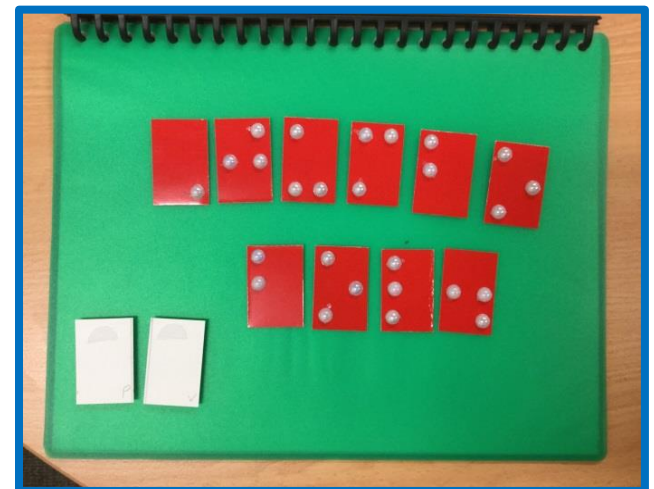
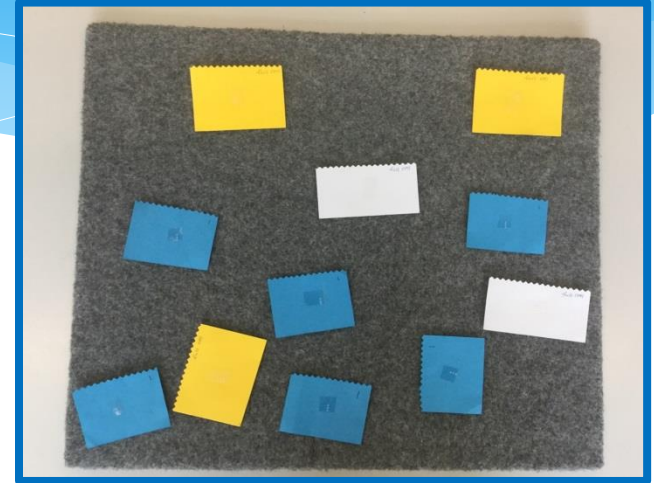


Braille Fairy and  
Braille Bug –  
effective  
motivators

Letters and  
surprise parcels  
(new games  
/resources)  
created positive  
anticipation  
about new  
learning

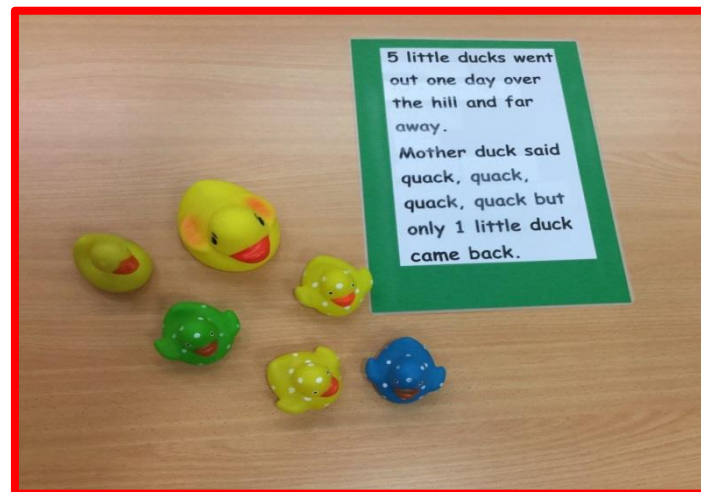


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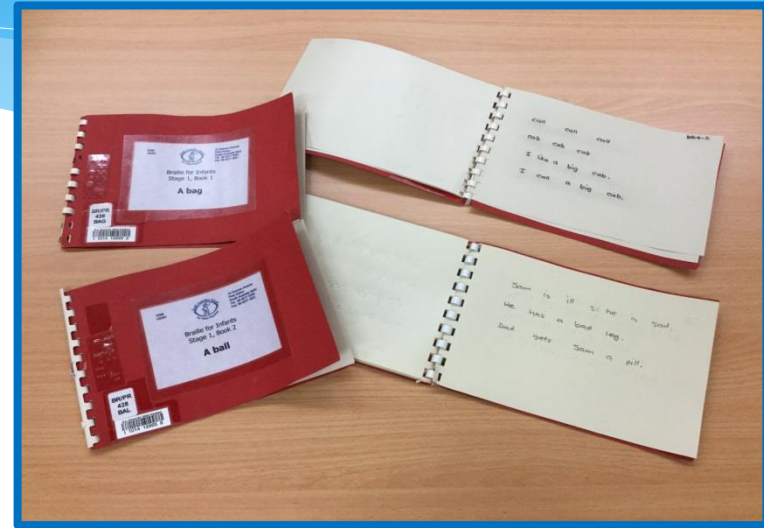
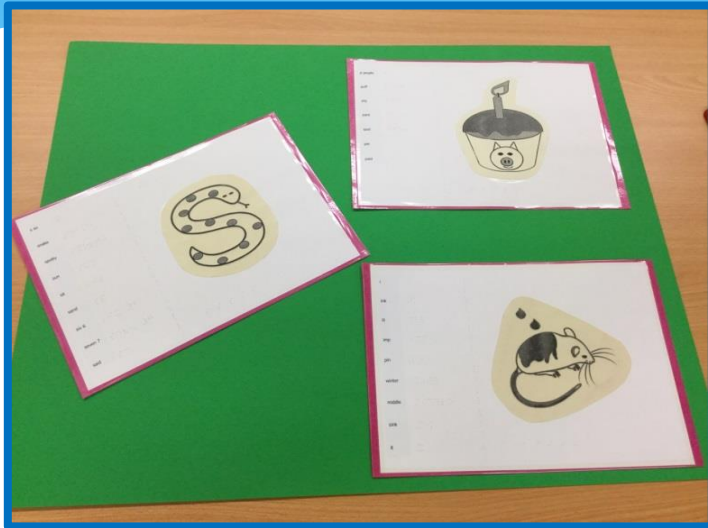




# Practical Ideas Which Have Worked 😊



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# Overview of the Process

- \* Getting to know the family and student
- \* Getting to know the school community and staff
- \* Decide who will learn braille and resume responsibility for the day to day implementation of the program
- \* Uncontracted or contracted braille
- \* Research and decision on resources to be used
- \* Mode of delivery – frequency, intensity
- \* Communication with staff, family and other stakeholders
- \* Planning and review process (SSO and student)

# Program Sample

Student

Tactile Discrimination and Braille Weekly Program

Term 2 2016

Week 1	Programs / Concepts	Lessons /Activities	Observations / Comments / Assessments
	<p><b>ALL WEEK – REVISION OF LETTERS AND WORDSIGNS</b></p> <p><b>Tactile Discrimination / Fine Motor:</b> Finger Dexterity / Strength / Isolation</p> <p><b>Tracking Skills:</b> Use of light touch Mangold</p> <p><b>Perkins Brailier:</b> Explore the brailier Opportunities to braille</p> <p><b>Braille Skills:</b> Reinforce letters: a, g, b, l, I, c, t, h Wordsign: like, little, can, that, have, and, 'Braille for Infants' Readers</p>	<p>Offer a selection of activities from Term 1</p> <p>Experimentation with trays with sections. Counting activities – tactile maths cards with pop sticks. Play dough – making shapes and counting, threading activities using different materials.</p> <p>Identify beginning / end of line; follow different length lines. Tactile books with different length / thickness lines. Mangold, p: 12 – 15 – repeat: use one sheet per day for tracking practice.</p> <p>Identify parts of brailier: keys, space bar, knobs, embossing head. Turn knobs load / remove paper. Continue – load paper with support; lock in line, new line, Focus on numbering keys 1-6 correctly. Braille – 'scribbling' a sentence or a short story. Read letters from SASVI Rec class, encourage Student to write back.</p> <p>Use 'ABC' readers to reinforce the letters' names and sounds. Discuss examples of words found at school &amp; home. Follow 'Braille for Infants' to practise reading. Use a range of cards to reinforce the letters and wordsigns.</p>	

# Program Sample

Spelling List	Day	Activity	Done	
it on in is went pin tin bin chin thin	Monday	Adult to review and introduce contraction/short forms.		
		Timeea to read spelling list. This is a combination of words from the class sight word list and words in Braille for Infants readers.		
		Timeea to braille the list using contracted braille. This is not a test. She should independently read the word on her list and then independently write it before independently checking to find her mistakes, if any.		
		Timeea to independently braille a sentence for 1 of her spelling words.		
		Timeea to read Braille for Infants Stage 1, Book 3 – I like Big Bill.		
Punctuation	Tuesday	Timeea to braille the list using contracted braille.		
Capital letter Capital word sign Full stop Comma Question mark		Timeea to independently braille a sentences for 1 of her spelling words (different words to yesterday).		
		Timeea to read Braille for Infants Stage 1, Book 3 – I like Big Bill.		
		Adult to introduce new family group ‘in’		
		Timeea to read family group flip book and complete activity.		
	Wednesday	Timeea to braille the list using contracted braille.		
Timeea to orally spell the contracted and uncontracted form of each word.				
Timeea to read Braille for Infants Stage 1, Book 4 – I can call a cab.				
Readers	Thursday	Timeea to work with Advisory Teacher <b>Advisory teacher to introduce contractions for in, ch &amp; th during explicit instruction in Wk 6</b>		
Braille for Infants Stage 1, Book 1 Stage 1, Book 2	Friday	Timeea to complete a spelling test and braille two dictated sentences which incorporate spelling words.		
		Timeea to Read Braille for Infants Stage 1, Book 4 – I can call a cab.		



# Self-Reflection

- \* Is the program effective?
- \* Are the student's needs being met? Is the student making progress?  
If not why not?
- \* Are resources appropriate and motivating?
- \* Welcome input from teaching staff who work with the student
- \* Conversation with colleagues
- \* Keeping up to date with current best practice

# Conclusion

Critical factors to ensure success

- \* Parent expectations and awareness
- \* Communication with family and school
- \* Working relationship with all stakeholders

# Video 1



# Video 2



# Reference List

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