



Turning On The Light: Adapting Your Preschool Classroom for Students with Visual Impairments



A training provided by
Visually Impaired Preschool Services
with support from Kentucky School for the Blind Consultants

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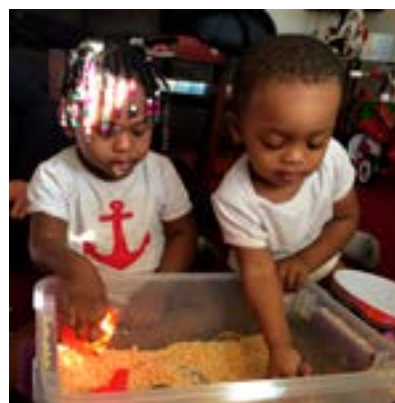
By Kathy Mullen, VIPS Director of Education

One of our most important and intentional tasks at VIPS is to educate our communities on the abilities of children who are blind or visually impaired. It is one of our favorite responsibilities as well. We have divided our community education into two pillars: (1) Presentations for raising funds and friends, directed to community groups and civic organizations, who want to learn more about VIPS and the families we serve and how they can help in our efforts; and (2) Trainings, which are educational in nature, designed to educate providers who serve our children and families and to prepare the next education team for the VIPS child's transition to a new educational setting. Trainings are also designed for university students – those who will be future educators of students who are blind or visually impaired.

For the past two school years, VIPS has partnered with the Kentucky Department of Education and the Kentucky Early Childhood Regional Training Centers in a new endeavor to provide trainings across the Commonwealth. Preschool teachers in public schools and the Teachers of the Visually Impaired serving local school systems have been invited to come together to brainstorm ways to strengthen their collaborative effort to serve students in preschool. Last year the collaboration included the Outreach Consultants from Kentucky School for the Blind. This spring semester 2018, VIPS has developed a new training to share with our partners in seven locations across Kentucky!

“First the education of the senses, then education of the intellect.”

Maria Montessori



During a VIPS Indiana home visit, Nyla and her cousin, Antonio, enjoy a tub filled with rice krispies. Great sensory fun --sound, texture, taste, smell -- and educational, too!



Mission Statement

VIPS empowers families by providing educational excellence to young children with visual impairments in order to build a strong foundation for reaching their highest potential.

This year's training, *"Turning on the Light: Adapting the Preschool Classroom for Your Students with Visual Impairments"*, allows teachers to experience a variety of visual impairments through a simulation activity, identify classroom behaviors that are associated with different visual diagnoses, and to acquire the strategies that can be put in place in preschool to eliminate or modify those behaviors before elementary and middle school. The Expanded Core Curriculum for Students with Visual Impairments is explored as it is embedded into standard preschool curriculum. The training ends with affording the teachers the opportunity to prepare simple materials and classroom adaptations to keep students with visual impairments engaged within a safe environment.

"Turning on the Light" has been very well received across the Commonwealth. Upon request, an alternate edition of the training will be developed for First Steps providers. VIPS will be offering this training during the upcoming summer months.

If you think of a training topic that meets our mission to serve young children across Kentucky and Indiana, please let us know! We would love to share our story and the story of our children's abilities – with their teachers, future teachers, family members and anyone else who loves celebrating children like the VIPS team likes to celebrate!

The remaining dates and locations for "Turning on the Light" are: March 16 in Floyd Co., KY; April 20 in Lawrenceburg, KY; and May 11 in London, KY. You may register at www.vips.org.



At a recent training in Ashland, participants attempted typical activities while wearing simulators for various visual impairments. Kathy Mullen, VIPS Education Coordinator, then led an exercise where they identified how they felt being visually impaired, what challenges they faced, and what would have helped them.



Teacher Tips: Fostering Early Literacy for Children Who May Need Braille

By Paige Maynard, VIPS TVI/DI

What would your first day of preschool be like if you observed your friends using a colorful rainbow of crayons to create art, while you had never had the opportunity to see or touch a crayon a day in your life?

Would you be astonished that people can actually make marks that convey a meaning? Would your curiosity about the tools themselves make you want to examine each one as you felt the difference between the waxy crayon and its smoothly soft paper wrapping? I daresay that no matter what your emotional reaction would be to this feat of mental magic called literacy, you wouldn't have the emergent literacy skills that your peers would. After all, every one of your friends had access to writing tools long before preschool, providing them several years of practice and learning. With no access to writing tools yourself, you wouldn't have had the chance to explore what your peers had already learned: that there is one end of the pencil that makes the best marks, that you can scribble with big marks or make teeny tiny ones that almost look like letters, that you can convey meaning with the marks of a crayon ("This is Mommy!" written in scribbles under a picture you drew of her).

I would guarantee that not having access to writing tools would mean that your literacy skills would be YEARS behind your peers.

Now think about your child who is blind. Because the marks made by tools for printing are so difficult to see, he or she will be entering preschool at a very similar starting place as a child who had never had access to writing tools at all. What a depressing thought – your perfectly capable and smart child enters preschool already behind, and through no fault of his own--until we think about the solution. One of the pieces of the solution, found in my recent self-published study, is the braille typewriter, the braille writer.

"Toward Writing Skills with a Toddler Who is Blind Using a Braille Writer" is the title of my Master's Thesis. This project added to our understanding about how emergent literacy skills developed in one toddler who is blind. Before this child, who

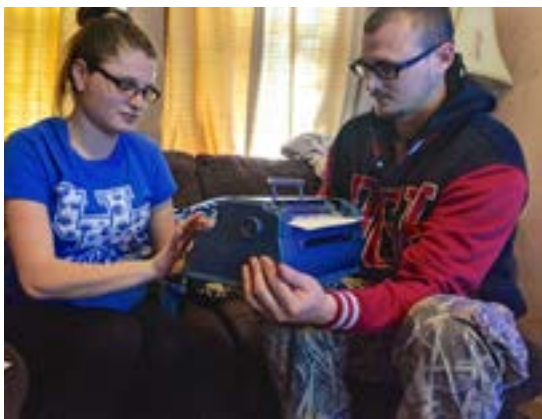


Aubree explores a muffin tin which is like a giant braille cell.

was 14 months at the beginning of the study, had a braille writer in her home, she did not make marks on paper or spontaneously scribble – both skills which are important for toddlers to begin developing, and that have a significant impact on the development of later skills. Once this child received the braille writer in her home and her family was given support in using it, she began to use it to make marks on paper and to scribble. As the study continued, the child learned more and more literacy skills, such as pressing different keys (equivalent to a print-writing child making different kinds of marks on paper) and imitating making marks. These skills are HUGE in the grand scheme of this child entering preschool on a level playing field with her peers! Isn't it remarkable that the simple presence and use of the right tool took this child from emergent literacy delays to being on track with literacy skills?! What magic the use of the braille writer can be for a child who needs one!

Not only did my study find that the child developed greater literacy skills,

it found that having a braille writer that stayed in the home was empowering to her family. At the beginning of the study, the child's mother was afraid of learning braille. Later on, she reported that



Kayla and Aaron, Aubree's parents, practice writing braille with a braille writer.

“once you start doing it (braille), you figure it out.” Her thoughts on braille had changed, and she reported saying that she thought it would be easy for her child to learn braille as she gets older. As many VIPS parents and family members can attest, attitude is everything! When you feel cool and confident about your child learning a new skill, that confidence rubs off on your child, giving even more success! What an empowering thought that your relationship with braille literacy can send your child on an amazing trajectory toward success in school and adult life!

If anyone ever tells you that your child who is blind should or could wait to have access to a braille writer when he starts preschool, just speak up! You can say that your child has important literacy skills to be practicing right now! And tell them that you need the braille writer for YOU! As you learn to use it, you will see that braille isn't scary – it's a powerful tool that helps people who are blind to read and write just like everyone else. Your good attitude fosters a lifelong love of literacy in your child.

If anyone ever tells you that a braille writer is too breakable to give to a toddler, just remind them how many pencils, crayons,

and markers that have been broken by sighted children. Also remind them that your child's lifelong literacy is worth the risk! Braille writers can be fixed, but it is much harder to make up for years of missed learning. Lastly, you can tell them my personal experience, including experience documented in the study: I have put braille writers in the homes of nearly 20 families and have NEVER had one get damaged. In fact, the only time that a braille writer has been damaged under my watch was by me! Even then, the repair was an easy one I was able to do myself for free.

I wish that there were enough pages in this newsletter to tell you all the knowledge that was gained from my study! However, the full study can be found in the VIPS Family Library, the M.C. Migel Library at the American Printing House for the Blind in Louisville, the library at Missouri State University, and online at https://bearworks.missouristate.edu/do/search/?q=author_iname%3A%22Maynard%22%20author_fname%3A%22Paige%22&start=0&context=8530833&facet=.

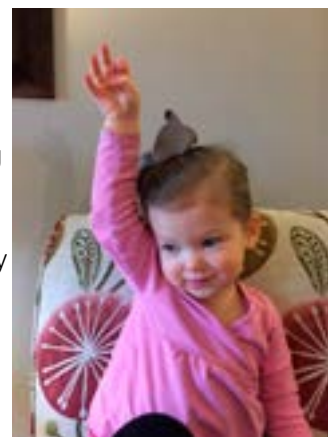
Reaching Milestones!

When you are the parent of a child with a disability, you may have to wait for your child to reach typical milestones, maybe even wait a very long time. Some milestones may never be reached. But what is certain, is that you will celebrate every bit of progress your child makes. And when you compare your child to himself or herself, instead of typically developing children, you will be able to see just how much he or she is growing and progressing!

In this issue of **visability**, VIPS TVI/DI, Paige Maynard, and VIPS Indiana Director, Annie Hughes, shine the spotlight on recent accomplishments of several of the children they serve through in-home intervention.

From Paige

Hooray for Emma! She has recently begun mastering identifying her left and right. Because our ultimate goal for every child is independence, learning directionality is a critical first step. Children with low vision must be able to orient themselves in space and position themselves and objects in relation to themselves. This enables them to achieve increasing levels of independence and to travel in their home, school and community following directions.



Emma demonstrates knowledge of left and right when asked to show the camera her right hand.

Yay for Aubree! She ate two containers of baby food during a recent visit! This is the same child who would not eat ANY foods at all, and would only touch paper and a cell phone when I started with her! This is HUGE for her!

Also, the food ALL over her face is significant too. It may just look like a picture of a messy baby, but I see a family who is beginning to embrace messiness as a part of the different way that a blind child needs to learn. The messy face helps Aubree be more aware of her mouth and how it moves. It also helps her begin to learn to accept more and more different kinds of foods.



Above: Accepting different foods and eating from a spoon are big milestones for Aubree.



Left: Gabriel and mom, Tiffani, place circles on pegs by their position.

Way to go, Gabriel! You are mastering the important positional concepts of top/ bottom/middle.

Good for you, Bailey! By practicing object permanence, you are developing an understanding that objects are still there (inside the coffee can) when they can't be seen. This is a very important visual processing skill and developmental milestone.



Above: Bailey, playing with mom, Megan, and twin, Blair, peeks in the coffee can.

Right: Ainsley enjoys ringing bells.

Hooray, Ainsley! You have learned how to hold an object in each hand and to bang them together!



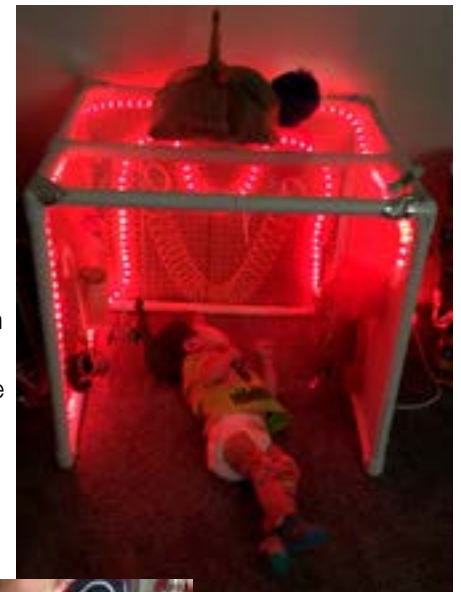
You did it, Maddie! Maddie's mother, Jessica said that Maddie had trouble finding a dropped spoon on the floor. During her home visit, we discussed how Maddie's CVI might make it difficult for her to recognize the spoon when it is on the floor. Therefore, we tried using the lightbox as Jessica and Maddie played with the spoons, telling Maddie the salient features of a spoon. By the end of the visit, Maddie was finding spoons on the floor all by herself, and even "hiding" them so she could practice finding them!



Maddie, with mom Jessica, peering at the spoon illuminated by the light box.

From Annie

Good looking, Eden! Eden was mesmerized when introduced to a sensory environment featuring red light during a home visit from Annie and VIPS Indiana DI, Melissa Barrick. They explained to Eden's mom how the objects will foster exploration and the light will encourage visual behavior.



Above: Eden loves the red lights in his sensory room.



Left: Teddy studies a ball before dropping it in the container.

Way to go, Teddy! During an initial home visit, Teddy explored a number of materials including balls with bells that he enjoyed putting into a container.



Above: Marjani uses a little grocery cart as a mobility device.

Right: Sawyer uses independent finger movements as he explores Annie's ukelele.

Below: Jordan and his sweet girl, Isla.



You've got the touch, Sawyer! Sawyer explores Miss Annie's infamous ukelele.

You've on your way, Isla! With a proud Daddy like Jordan, you've got many milestones in your future!

Parent Recommended!

Editor's Note: If you have an experience, or product, or tip you would like to recommend to other VIPS Parents, please share them with me, Jan Moseley, Newsletter Editor, jmoseley@vips.org.

A Sensory-Friendly Movie Experience

By Brittany Clarkson, VIPS Louisville Receptionist/Family Services Coordinator

As a mom of a blind child, family trips to the movies were not something I imagined my daughter and I would get to enjoy together. But just like all the other things I thought she would miss out on, time proved me wrong. Addy enjoys "watching TV" much like any other child. With the use of voice over, she can even grab the iPad, navigate Netflix and turn on her favorite cartoon independently.

Through a local family newsletter, I saw there was a "sensory friendly" showing of "*Paddington 2*" on January 20 at Cinemark Tinseltown Theatre and I jumped on the idea of taking Addy. Much to my surprise, she was excited to go. So, we got up Saturday morning and journeyed to the movie theatre. I was very anxious about the trip, anxious that Addy would get bored or not enjoy it. I was even more anxious that her senses would be overloaded with smells and sounds and she would have a mid-movie meltdown. I know from past experience that sometimes the simplest of events can quickly turn into disasters.

Upon arriving, we did not have to sit through previews. It was a small cozy theatre that was significantly less crowded than most movie theatres I have visited. The volume of the movie was turned down and the theatre was dimly lit as opposed to being completely dark. It was a very relaxed atmosphere; many children were standing up and moving around. Addy and I were able to talk quietly about the movie without disturbing anyone. It felt like we were enjoying a movie at home but in really cool and comfortable chairs. They also allow you to bring your own snacks to the showing. I'm happy to report my entire family enjoyed the movie. I especially treasure getting to enjoy these simple experiences as a family. If the typical theatre environment is uncomfortable for your child, I would definitely recommend trying one of the upcoming sensory friendly showings. Thank you, Tinseltown!

Tinseltown has another upcoming sensory-friendly movie experience. I expect they will schedule more after the spring.

"Sherlock Gnomes" on 3/31 at 10am.

Spirit of Celebration Was Plentiful At VIPS Holiday Events

VIPS Central Kentucky

Central Kentucky families had a great time at the **Annual Christmas Party** on December 7 held at the VIPS Central Kentucky offices. With support from the University of Kentucky Delta Gammas, VIPS children and their siblings enjoyed a winter wonderland of activities such as sensory snow, ornament sorting, potato stamping, felt board pajama party, cookie decorating, and pillowcase painting. Parents enjoyed



Patrick delighted in a bowl of sensory snow.



Above left: Harper was not happy to actually sit on Santa's lap. Above right: Gage seemed to think Santa was an okay guy!



meeting each other and sitting down to a meal of soup and sandwiches. The VIPS team loved seeing families make connections and build friendships. The highlight of the night was a visit from Santa; each child left with a gift-wrapped book from VIPS.



Above: Lavin decorated a cookie with great care. Right: Natalan sorted shiny red ornaments. Below left: Ariana created a tactile Christmas tree drawing. Below right: Michelle placed a lovely bow on a card she made with the help of her mom Stephanie.



VIPS Central Kentucky is so fortunate to have a wonderful relationship with Forcht Bank, which offered the **Third Annual Pancakes with Santa** at their Hamburg Banking Center this past December. This free event was open to everyone in the community, and donations to benefit VIPS were accepted. Children were able to make a variety of tactile winter crafts and enjoy fun "Reindeer Games" such as pin the nose on Rudolph, snowball toss, and a snowman photo booth. Elves were on hand to braille children's names on ornaments and to share the mission of VIPS, as children and adults tried on vision simulation goggles. Everyone enjoyed a delicious breakfast of pancakes, sausage, doughnuts, juice and coffee at tables decorated with

pictures and stories of VIPS children. Children were able to send their Christmas Wish List electronically to Santa's helpers at the North Pole before they sat with Santa and had their picture taken. This wonderful event had a great turnout and raised over \$700 for VIPS Central Kentucky!

VIPS Indiana

Ho, ho, ho! On Friday, December 8, Santa stopped by the Indiana Interchurch Center for a very special **Sensory-Friendly Santa Experience** exclusively offered for VIPS Indiana children and their families. The children were given an opportunity to approach Santa



Above: Jeremiah and Santa became fast friends! Left: Santa and Asaiah looked settled in for a "long winter's nap."



at their own pace and in their own way. Parents and caregivers snapped pictures while Santa gave them each a gift that was thoughtfully purchased for children with visual impairments.

In addition, we had holiday cookies and treats along with a hot chocolate

bar and coffee courtesy of Starbucks. This was a wonderful opportunity for families to capture those darling holiday photos of their VIPS children (siblings, too) with Santa without having to worry about the sensory overload of places like the mall.



VIPS Indiana held the **Winter Play and Learn (PAL)** on Saturday, January 27th and it was a morning filled with fun and meaningful conversations. After the music circle and introductions, wonderful volunteers and VIPS staff cared for the VIPS

Indiana DI, David Sterne, entertained the children with the LightAide™.

children while the parents participated in making tactile Valentine books or scratch mats during the Make & Take activity.

Then families adjourned to another room for “Parent Perspective” which provided an opportunity for parents to discuss challenges close to their hearts and to listen to parents of older children with visual impairment who are further along in their journey. Thank you to everyone who joined us for this special time!

VIPS Louisville

VIPS Louisville families enjoyed their favorite holiday tunes with an up close and personal performance by the wonderful University of Louisville Community Band on December 6. The Kosair Shrine Center graciously hosted our families and guests while they enjoyed the season’s most fun and loved music. An impressive collection of instruments played cheerful melodies until Santa made his arrival. Following the concert, families delighted in the opportunity for photos and time with Santa without the rush and crowds. The night was complete with dinner and take home tactual tree ornaments that the children decorated themselves. Thank you to all the past and current families who joined us! We loved kicking off the holiday season with all of you.



Left: Hannah and her sister shared a moment with Santa. Above: Maddie gave Santa a kiss. Below: The U of L Community Band made a joyous sound.



VIPS Louisville Wins \$5,000 Charity Giveaway

Thanks to everyone who voted online to help VIPS win \$5,000 in the *StyleBlueprint Louisville Charity Giveaway sponsored by Papa John’s*. The VIPS Facebook page was filled, day after day, during the voting period, with the faces of darling children encouraging readers to vote. And it worked! We were delighted to be named the winner and were most impressed with the indomitable Kathy Mullen, VIPS Education Director, who so beautifully represented VIPS as one of the FACES of Louisville in a fashion spread. To read more and to see Kathy’s turn at modeling Louisville fashions, go to <https://styleblueprint.com/louisville/everyday/styleblueprint-charity-giveaway-winner-kathy-mullen-of-vips-faces-of-louisville/>. And thank you, Papa John’s and StyleBlueprint!



Aiden reminded readers of the VIPS Facebook page to vote!

New VIPS Promotional Videos Star VIPS Children & Families

If you haven’t yet looked at the new VIPS website at <http://www.vips.org>, you must do so soon. And be sure to catch our new promotional videos for each office starring VIPS children and families.

To find the VIPS promotional videos, go to the website and scroll down to the “play” arrow that answers “How can VIPS help your child?”

To find the videos for VIPS Central Kentucky and VIPS Indiana, go to the website and click on “About” at the top of the page. Click on Office Locations and then select the office of your choice. Scroll to find the promotional videos.



New Arrivals

VIPS is pleased to welcome these new additions to the VIPS family:

Alexis - 11 months, Auburn, IN
Allianna – 6 months, Hopkinsville, KY
Angeline – 32 months, Independence, KY
Arcie – 15 months, Franklin, KY
Aryan – 7 months, Lexington, KY
Ashlyn – 15 months, Florence, KY
Cameron – 8 months, Verona, KY
Caroline – 9 months, Boonville, IN
Caroline - 14 months, Terre Haute, IN
Cayden – 8 months, Russell Springs, KY
Cohen - 25 months, Indianapolis, IN
Cora - 7 months, Indianapolis, IN
Dakota - 35 months, Indianapolis, IN
Eli - 32 months, Louisville, KY
Elijah – 32 months, Shelbyville, KY
Elliott – 23 months, Princeton, KY
Emerson – 22 months, Union, KY
Emily – 15 months, Colombia, KY
Gabriel - 30 months, Louisville, KY
Georgia – 15 months, Owensboro, KY
Henry - 15 months, Jasper, IN
Isla - 7 months, McCordsville, IN
Jacob - 8 months, LaPorte, IN
James - 17 months, Noblesville, IN
Jaycee - 20 months, Louisville, KY
Jesse - 20 months, Westport, IN
Joseph “Jojo” – 4 years, Louisville, KY
Joslin - 30 months, Seymour, IN
Kaily – 10 months, Louisville, KY
Kaleah - 10 months, Elkhart, IN
Mariana - 7 months, Oak Grove, KY
Mavlyud - 23 months, Louisville, KY
Mattex - 30 months, Seymour, IN
Noah – 13 months, Louisville, KY
Owen - 9 months, Lexington, KY
Royce – 10 months, Louisville, KY
Sage – 11 months, Louisville, KY
Sawyer - 26 months, Logansport, IN
Shiloh - 15 months, Owensboro, KY
Sophia - 18 months, Louisville, KY
Theo – 15 months, Clarksville, IN
Theodore - 30 months, Fort Wayne, IN
Vasilije - 9 months, Merrillville, IN
Vienna – 28 months, Independence, KY
Vivaan – 3 years, Louisville, KY

Staff News

Best wishes for long, happy lives together to *Dixie Miller*, VIPS Central Kentucky TVI/Developmental Interventionist, and her husband, Chuck Marz, who were married in December.

We are sorry to say goodbye to *Elizabeth Underwood*, VIPS Kids Town Preschool Teacher, who recently left. We wish her much happiness in the future.

Gifts of Time, Talent and Treasure

VIPS Louisville

We continue to be blessed with fantastic volunteers who love working with our children and who return week after week to generously offer their time and talents. Thanks to *Fran Woodward* for her help with the Two-Day 2's, *Ashley Reynolds Linson* for her help in the classroom and with the music program, and to *Deanna Scoggins* for her help with braille reading.

Thanks also to *Anne Proffitt* for volunteering her time to straighten and maintain the parent library as well as undertake any and every other office task she is asked to do.

Thanks to members of *Delta Sigma Theta* who read to the preschoolers as their way of ensuring a new generation of readers. We appreciate the efforts of *Monica Echols, Kimberly*



Bell Foster, Sherlonda Gray, Dorothy Jenkins, Jamie Izlar, Undrail Izlar, Dionna Slemmons, Angela Thompson and Vanessa Whitfield.

The local *Delta Gamma Alumnae* have become a fixture in assisting us by writing brief notes on hundreds of cards for our Holiday Campaign, one of our largest fund raisers. We appreciate the handwriting expertise of *Melissa Anderson, Lisa Bajorinas, Julie Campbell, Katie Daly, Judy Davenport, Angela Feldman-Harkins, Ginny Fuller, Martha Hemminger, Gerri Huff, June King, Mary Frances Pack and Tessa Young.*

We appreciate *Sharon Bensinger, Bill Jessee, and Ellen Prizant* from the VIPS Board of Directors as they followed up on the holiday cards.

Thank you to *Anthony Brettnacher and mom, Cierra,* for donating a bag full of braille books that Anthony has outgrown so that other VIPS children can learn to read braille.

VIPS Indiana

Thank you to the *Lebanon Senior High School Key Club* for hosting their fifth annual "Dinner in the Dark" to benefit the children we serve. The wonderful group of students raised \$500 that will be used for direct services.



Kat and Fred Imhausen with Pete Apostolou, owner of Lincoln Square Pancake House.

VIPS Indiana is grateful for *Indy Santa-Fred and Mrs.*

Claus this past holiday season! *Fred and Kat Imhausen* hosted a Santa event at Lincoln Square Pancake House in Historic Irvington and spread their holiday cheer and their proceeds to VIPS Indiana. We'd like to send a huge thank you to these folks for putting on this great event!

We'd also like to thank *Indy Santa-Fred* for donating his time and talent for our Sensory-Friendly Santa Experience, along with *Wendy Vivirito of Vivirito Realty* for purchasing gifts and to *Laurie Roselle* for securing and assisting with the festive decorations.

Thank you to *Ossip Optometry + Ophthalmology* for their generous match of #GivingTuesday funds on Tuesday, November 28. You made a huge difference on the global day of giving and we simply cannot thank you enough!

Thank you to *Eric Bruun* for purchasing two Dot Watches for VIPS Indiana.

Thank you to everyone who helped make our January Play and Learn a success, especially the ladies from the *Indianapolis Alumnae Chapter of Delta Gamma*, our *VIPS Indiana Advisory Board Members* and our interns, *Jancyn Hill and Ashley Romine.* A heartfelt thanks goes to *Starbucks* for the wonderful refreshments.

We are grateful for the members from the Indianapolis chapter of the *Young Nonprofit Professionals Network (YNPN)* for helping make World Braille Day cards that were given to legislators at the Indiana Statehouse in January.



Thank you to *Laura Wilson, Jennifer Silverstein, Andy Castaneda, and Jacanda Glenn* for hosting Facebook fundraisers for VIPS Indiana. We are so appreciative of the support!

A special thank you to *David Sterne*, VIPS Indiana Developmental Interventionist, for facilitating the opportunity for VIPS to participate in the *Northview Church of Brethren Alternative Christmas Fair.* VIPS staff and volunteers manned the booth as VIPS sold ornaments lovingly made by *Rita and Steve DeVore.*

Many thanks to *Kara Booth*, VIPS Indiana mama, for donating developmental materials to the VIPS Indiana staff.

Thank you to *Brittany Garrett* for allowing Assistant Director, Meredith Howell, into her home to take photographs and videos of her darling son, *Cole*, for #GivingTuesday promotional material.

Many thanks to *Thyrealynn and Trystan Pettit, Petra and November Felder, and Myriam and Annalise Serrano* for taking time out of their busy schedules to participate in a promotional video session. You were truly stars!!

VIPS Central Kentucky

We are blessed to have such generous Advisory Board members who make the holidays brighter for our families and VIPS staff. We are so thankful to *Scott Duncan and George Hocker* for adopting one of our VIPS families in Fleming County this holiday season. Another generous Board Member made many of our teachers' dreams come true when he funded the purchase of their wish list items! Thanks so much to *Jack Brown* for his thoughtfulness.

Our annual Christmas party is so successful because we have such generous and supportive families. Many thanks to *Nina Vail* for providing delicious treats for our dessert table and to *Charlotte Burton* for providing cookies and decorating supplies for a Cookie Decorating station.



Thanks to our Delta Gamma volunteers for helping our kids have a great time at our annual Christmas Party and Forcht Bank Pancakes with Santa! Christmas Party helpers were *Taylor Arnett, Caroline Butto, Hannah Ciro, Naomi Dennison, Katie Dicello, Sara Edgett, Cali Fannin, Abby Faurote, Maggie Gallagher, Brianna Gill, Allison Hegner, Kaylee Hilpp, Sara Ignoffo, Anna Johnson, Morgan McVey, Madi Sydnor, Ellie Vaughn, Kelly Williamson and Olivia Wilson*. Forcht Bank Pancakes with Santa volunteers included *Claire O'Neill, Paige Richards, Mia Rose, Mary Shetler and Reagan Thornton*.

Thanks to *Pam Durall*, grandmother of VIPS volunteer, Madison Johnson, for making two fidget quilts for our Little Learners' classroom. There are things that squeak, things that crinkle, things to snap and buckle, and lots of pockets in which children can place items. We are so excited to use these quilts with our students!



Little Learners staff Katie Dick and Jamee Adkins with volunteer Madison Johnson.

One of Radio Eye's cohorts (*Georgia Radio Reading Service*) sent VIPS Central KY three boxes of brailled books! They will be used to help teach pre-braille skills to children in our Little Learners and Direct Services programs.

Thanks to Our Donors!

Thanks to the following for their generous contributions:

VIPS Louisville

Fred B. & Opal S. Woosley Foundation donated \$25,000 for the family services program.

Irvin F. & Alice S. Etscorn Foundation provided \$17,000 for preschool classroom expansion and conference room technology.

Ashima Gupta, MD, Pediatric Ophthalmologist and VIPS Board Member, raised over \$19,000 for VIPS as a participant in Dancing with the Prospect Stars!



Dr. Gupta, center, did a Bollywood inspired Samba as her dance for Dancing with the Prospect Stars. She is shown with her daughter, Anisa, Heather Benson, VIPS Development Director (left), and Diane Nelson, VIPS Executive Director (right).

King's Daughters & Sons Foundation of KY donated \$3,057 for conference room technology.

VIPS Indiana

3Rivers Credit Union Foundation notified VIPS Indiana of a second-year grant in the amount of \$4,000 that will be used for direct services.

The Dr. Scholl Foundation awarded \$3,000 to VIPS Indiana for early intervention services.

VIPS Central KY

The Linda Neville Trust donated \$25,000 for direct services and \$10,000 for newsletter expenses.

Lexington Lions Club donated \$10,000 for general programming.

George Weeks Trust donated \$3,000 for direct services.

Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Kentucky (TMMK) donated \$3,000 for direct services.

King's Daughters & Sons donated \$1,034 for two (2) vision simulation kits.

Dot-to-Dot, We Write Braille



























This is a braille cell 

It is made up of six dots, numbered 1,2,3 in descending order on the left and 4,5,6 in descending order on the right.

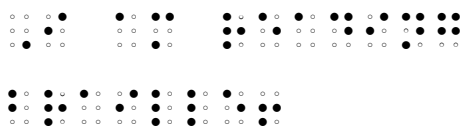
Each letter of the alphabet in braille is made up of a different combination of these six dots. Upper case (capital) letters are made by putting a dot six in front of a letter.

 Capital sign

This is the braille alphabet. Look over the alphabet and then try reading the sentence below.

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j
									
k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t
									
u	v	w	x	y	z				
									

Braille Brain Teaser



Hint: The first sign is to make the next letter a capital. The last sign is an exclamation point.

.answre: l am reading braille!

In Memorium

This issue of VISability is dedicated to the memories of

Stella Padgett-Berger

daughter of Kyle Berger and Kyleigh Padgett-Berger of Hometown, IN who passed away August 24, 2017 at the age of two years

~ and ~

Crew Long

son of Scott and Mandy Long of Carmel, IN who passed away September 18, 2017 at the age of three years

Our hearts go out to all of those who loved Stella and Crew.

Wish Lists

We would be so grateful for any help with Wish List items!

VIPS Louisville

- Fat tip sharpies
- Hypoallergenic dryer sheets (such as Bounce Free & Gentle™ or All's Free Clear™)
- Standard size paper clips
- Size D batteries
- Paper towels
- Bleach

VIPS Indiana

- Red and yellow slinkies
- White computer paper
- Two (2) two-hole punches
- Grocery store gift cards

VIPS Central Kentucky

- Cylinder toothbrush holders (from dollar store)
- Plastic bottle caps (for our local Lions Club to make into benches)
- Slinky toys (regular or mini size)
- Scotch brand thermal laminating pouches
- Tempera paints (gallon bottles of any color)
- Crayola washable children's paints (any color)
- Play Doh
- Large black flat "cafeteria style" trays (without dividers)



1906 Goldsmith Lane
Louisville, KY 40218

Visually Impaired
Preschool Services

Change Service Requested



VISability is made possible through grants from the Linda Neville Foundation and the Fred B. and Opal S. Woosley Foundation.

Upcoming Events

VIPS Kentucky

Friday, March 16

Turning on the Light will be presented in Floyd County, KY (see front page). For info contact kmullen@vips.org; register at www.vips.org.

Saturday, March 17

VIPS Louisville will have a *sensory-friendly Easter Egg Hunt*, 10:30 a.m. RSVP to khorlander@vips.org.

Monday, April 2 – Friday, April 6

VIPS Louisville Kids Town Preschool will be on *Spring Break*. No childcare will be available.

Friday, April 13

Donuts with Dad will be held at VIPS Kids Town Preschool, 8 – 9:30 a.m. RSVP to khorlander@vips.org.

Friday, April 20

Turning on the Light will be presented in Lawrenceburg, KY (see front page). Contact kmullen@vips.org; register at www.vips.org.

Tuesday, May 8

VIPS Central Kentucky will hold the *15th Annual Central Kentucky Golf Outing* at Keene Trace Golf Club. For info, contact keaston@vips.org; register at www.vips.org.

Thursday, May 10

Muffins with Mom will be held at VIPS Kids Town Preschool, 8 – 9:30 a.m. RSVP to khorlander@vips.org.

Friday, May 11

Turning on the Light will be presented in London, KY (see front page). For info contact kmullen@vips.org; register at www.vips.org.

Saturday, May 19

The *VIPS Tennis Ball* will be held at the Louisville Boat Club. For more information, contact dharper@vips.org.

Sunday, May 20

The *VIPS Tennis Tournament* will be held at the Louisville Boat Club. For more information, contact dharper@vips.org.

Monday, May 21

The *YUM! Brands Corporate Cup Golf Tournament* will be held at Persimmon Ridge Golf & Country Club in Louisville. Contact hbenson@vips.org.

VIPS Indiana

Friday, March 9 thru Friday, April 27

reVISION, an art exhibit specifically curated for individuals with blindness/low vision, is being held at the Indiana Interchurch Center Art Gallery in Indianapolis. Contact mhowell@vips.org or (317) 902-0931.

Tuesday, April 10

Tables That Bloom, sponsored by Indianapolis Alumnae of Delta Gamma and benefitting VIPS Indiana, will be held at Woodland Country Club. Contact Laurie Roselle at laurie.roselle@sbcglobal.net for tickets.

Saturday, April 14

VIPS Indiana will hold a *Spring Play and Learn (PAL)* at the Indiana Interchurch Center. For more info, contact mhowell@vips.org or (317) 902-0931.

Sunday, May 20

VIPS Indiana will participate in *Walking for Dreams Family & Pet Walk*. To walk, donate or be a sponsor, visit: www.walkingfordreams.org or contact mhowell@vips.org or (317) 902-0931.

VISability is a quarterly publication of Visually Impaired Preschool Services, Jan Moseley, Editor.

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