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Looking Back As We Plan Ahead

By Kathy Mullen, Director of Education

Last month, I sat with Kristin, Assistant Director of Kids Town Preschool at VIPS, and Brittany, VIPS Family Services Coordinator, to plan the monthly family events for the upcoming 2018-19 school year. It promises to be an exciting one – it's always exciting around Kids Town Preschool!

As we looked ahead to secure the dates for each gathering, we were reminded of the joyful celebrations of our past school year. While we had incredible times at Muffins with Mom, the adaptive Egg Hunt and Halloween parties, Doughnuts with Dad, and the U of L Band Christmas concert, to name but a few of our gatherings in 2017-18, we all agreed that Graduation 2018 was the best way to cap off our school year of successes!

On the evening of Thursday, May 24, we had parents, grandparents, cousins, classmates, aunts, uncles, friends, and even a bus driver, join us in recognizing our eleven impressive graduates before they head off to the next stop in their educational journey. We gave tribute to the Class of 2018 for being leaders, encouragers, and great helpers to each other and to their teachers. The graduates were also praised for knowing when to ask for help with a challenge they are unable to tackle on their own. This is a lesson we teach to our Kids Town preschoolers throughout their time at VIPS; it is one we want our graduates to take with them. Help others when you can. Ask for help when you need it.

The amazing gifts of our teachers and classroom assistants were also acknowledged during the graduation ceremony. In turn, our teachers gave special and individualized anecdotes to best describe the personalities of their students. Children were recognized for their senses of humor, their love of reading, their performance on classroom tasks, and their incredible art skills. The teachers' smiles were so big; the children's smiles were even bigger; the smiles on the faces of the parents and grandparents were the biggest of all.

But this is only one part of the VIPS graduations we celebrate throughout the year. Each month, we have children graduating from VIPS services upon their third birthday to enter in preschool programs across Kentucky and Indiana. These children have stories of successes of their own. They are shared by their family members; stories are brought back to the friendly confines of the three VIPS offices so the joy continues with VIPS team members. We celebrate the children's accomplishments with tasks that once seemed



Photo above is of TVI Paige Maynard with Delaney. Delaney had her last visit with Paige, which was a special graduation visit where she could pick anything she wanted to play. Most VIPS kids are seen in their homes or community childcare/ preschool facilities; they graduate from our services differently than the Kids Town students do.

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.

impossible. We celebrate their parents' ingenuity in solving problems they encounter in raising a child with a visual impairment. We celebrate our VIPS teachers and the hope they bring to each family.

The children bidding farewell to VIPS will take the foundation they have received while at VIPS with them to public and private school preschool classrooms, to community events, and to family gatherings. The celebrations will continue to grow in number. Our children graduating from Kids Town Preschool will take their preschool education with them as they enter public and private school kindergarten classes, special education classes, and home schooling programs. It is always our goal at VIPS to prepare our students for success in their next educational setting. If the stories told during graduation last May and throughout every month of the year are any indication, the future is looking bright!

Congratulations Kids Town Preschool Class of 2018

A celebration of accomplishments was held in the Kosair Shrine Ballroom on May 24 as 11 children graduated from VIPS Kids Town Preschool. Aiden, Aubrey, Carter, Eli, Hadley Jo, Harper, Jimmy, Johnathan, Louisa Mae, Lucas and Maddie were celebrated as teachers and other VIPS staff members described each child's achievements in video and live presentations. Proud family members took photos and brushed away tears of joy as the graduates filed into the ballroom.

The Dartmouth Club of Kentucky presented each graduate with a print/braille copy of "Oh, the Places You Will Go" written by Dr. Suess, one of Dartmouth's most famous graduates. The Fincastle Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution gave a brailled American flag to every child.

We think it is marvelous that these groups help honor our graduates each year and we appreciate their involvement along with the Kosair Shriners for allowing VIPS the use of their ballroom. The cake graciously provided by Sullivan University was enjoyed by the graduates and their families in the reception that followed the ceremony.



Kids Town Preschool Class of 2018 Graduates!

Top (L-R) -- Aubrey, Aiden, Carter, Eli;

Bottom -- Hadley Jo and Harper



Kids Town Preschool Class of 2018 Graduates!

(L-R) Jimmy, Johnathan, Louisa Mae, Lucas and Maddie



PEP Empowers!

By Sarah Bertram, Summer Intern, VIPS Louisville

Editor's Note: VIPS Kentucky has been holding a PEP (Parent Empowerment Program) -- formerly PAL (Play and Learn) classes -- throughout the summer for VIPS families. The name was changed to better reflect the parent education and support aspects of this valuable program.

Playing is an important part of any child's summer. Playing inside or out on a playground releases the child's energy. However, many consider learning to be even more important. VIPS has a way for kids to have both necessary components -- through PEP. Because VIPS considers parents to be their child's first and best teachers, parents participate with their children as they play and learn together.

Programs like PEP are vital to a child's development that includes making new friends, learning new skills, and playing with other kids. By participating in PEP, children experience a day packed full of fun. And parents learn new ways to teach and interact with their children, as well as gain valuable support and insight from other parents.

The first PEP that VIPS Louisville offered this year was held on Friday, June 8 and was a fun learning experience for the children and grown-ups. PEP is open to all current VIPS kids along with their siblings and parents.

Brittany Clarkson, VIPS Louisville Family Services Coordinator, Tracy Webb, Developmental Interventionist, and Ashley May, VIPS parent and Instructional Assistant, led the activities and provided entertaining crafts and games. They prepared a story that was fun for both VIPS kids and their siblings. To make the story more tactual, Ashley brought her pet bunny for the children to pet while they listened to the story about bunnies jumping in bowls of paint. This story went along with the craft that was prepared--mixing paint colors in a Ziploc baggie.

PEP was held in Kids Town, which is the focal point of the VIPS Louisville campus. While all the inside activities were very

enjoyable for the children, the outside playground drew them even more. A sing-along of favorite kids' songs brought the class to an end.

Parents helped their children during craft time, joined them on the playground, and watched them play with friends. Seven-year-old Addy said, "PEP is about playing with new friends and learning together. . . . My favorite thing about PEP is playing outside on the playground and swinging with my friends and mom."

PEP's purpose is to offer fun and educational activities for the whole family that address children's need for skills development and parents' needs for knowledge and support in parenting their child with special needs.



Left: Nicholas rides a trike along the Kids Town bike path with help from his Mom, Ashley, who chats with other parents as she as she guides him. Above: Abraham mixes paint colors with Mom Ashley.



PEP Goes on the Road!

We were so excited to offer our very first Parent Empowerment Program (PEP) in Kenton County and Garrard County this summer! Parents were thrilled that we brought this program outside of our office walls to locations that were convenient to them, and we hope to offer PEP in more areas in the coming months. Parents and their children enjoyed a circle time with songs and getting to know each other, hearing about what VIPS resources are available to them, and creating a magnetic song/storyboard to take home and use with their

Harper shows her "aquarium in a baggie" that she made during PEP and got to take home.



child. New friends from Northern Kentucky University's Zeta Sigma chapter of the Delta Gamma sorority joined us to volunteer at our Kenton County event, and we look forward to them joining us at future events.

There were lots of great items that parents and kids could take home to make a magnetic storyboard.



Fun, Fun, and More Fun During VIPS CK Summer Sensations Program!

Summer is our favorite time of year at the Central Kentucky office, because that means it's time for Summer Sensations Camp! We had a blast this summer celebrating with our fun themes of Carnival, Stars & Stripes, and Camp Out.

Campers were able to get up close and personal with a pair of sweet sheep named Johnny and June, as well as Sweetness, the goat, and Charlie, the rabbit, from Rosie's Ponies during our morning session of Carnival Camp. In the afternoon, we learned a lot about our new reptile and amphibian friends from the Kentucky Reptile Zoo, and our bravest campers and volunteers even held a few! At both sessions, campers had fun with face painting, carnival games, sensory bins and crafts.



Gavin got to meet Sweetness, the goat, with a bit of encouragement from his dad, Steven.

At Stars and Stripes Camp, we celebrated our nation's birthday with the Lexington Philharmonic Instrument Petting Zoo and making lots of star spangled slime and sparkle bottles.

For our Camp Out Day, we went on a bear hunt, made s'mores, and enjoyed songs and stories from our guests: singer/guitarist, Ronnie Dick, and author, Kayla Jones. We couldn't have had as much fun without our volunteers from the University of Kentucky Teacher Preparation program in Visual Impairments and from Midway College Nursing program. A special thank you also goes out to the Keeneland Foundation for their support of our camp programming this year.



Michelle felt the shell of a turtle with a bit of assistance from her mom Stephanie.



Connor, with mom Christina, enjoyed some tactual play with his friend Gavin and his dad Steven.



VIPS CK Developmental Interventionist, Katie Dick, guided little William in creating a sparkler bottle for the 4th.

Kids Town Preschool Summer Camp

The summer camp kids of Kids Town Preschool at VIPS were treated to a nice surprise when our friends at the WHAS Crusade for Children brought over the firefighters from Louisville Division of Fire's Engine 8! The wonderful crew from



Engine 8 helped us create a multi-sensory experience for our campers who were invited to explore inside and outside the fire truck, try on helmets and gloves, and even help spray the fire hose! VIPS campers also got to listen and learn about the sounds of a smoke detector and a fire truck siren. Thanks to the Crusade and our local Fire Department for making this day possible!



Left: Bradley explores the fire engine tire, which is bigger than he is! Right: Alex with cane, and friend, check out the huge fire hose connectors.



Making Dramatic Play Meaningful and Effective

By Staci Maynard, Provisional TVI/Preschool Teacher

Dramatic play is the favorite center in my classroom this year. In a VIPS classroom, this area consists of materials such as dress-up clothes, dolls, props, and a kid-size kitchen. While playing with these toys may just seem like fun, there are a lot of beneficial skills that are built through dramatic play. Children learn how to use their imaginations and how to think like another

person (empathize). They learn about how their language can be used to act out a story or to work with others interactively. It further gives the students a chance to solve problems together and make compromises.

Dramatic play is an entertaining way to work on practical living skills, such as dressing, using utensils, pouring, and stirring. Math and literacy practice can easily be incorporated into pretend play, and it is also a beneficial way for children to learn about workers in their community and about tasks that must be done around the house.

That being said, some additional thought must be put into making dramatic play effective and entertaining for children who have visual impairments, since they do not observe many of the

daily tasks that are going on around them. The following are some examples of the type of skill-building activities that you can include in your dramatic play at home. The types of play listed are especially related to the expanded core curriculum, which includes skills needed for success in life beyond the academic subjects. They are divided into three age groups: infant (0-1 year old), toddlers (1-3 years old), and preschool (3-5 years old). However, please realize that these developmental levels are fluid and may be different for each child. Think about what your child would be able to do now and start there.

Dramatic Play Skills for Infants

There are useful skills you can build with your child during dramatic playtime before he or she is even one year old. Give your child empty containers (coffee cans, butter tubs, big metal bowls) to practice taking objects in and out of or to bang with various spoons to listen for different sounds. Let your child openly explore real and play objects relating to eating, dressing, and other practical living activities. For example, use empty bottles, cups, and spoons during play. Sometimes, include real foods when playing.

Dramatic Play Skills for Young Toddlers

To encourage communication, cognitive and social skills, work on directional words and body parts by naming them as you play. For example, "Let's put the hat on your head." Describe three play objects to your child, and have him or her choose which two are the same. Use dramatic play time to work on identifying and matching textures. Ask your child to name a commonly used item with which she is playing. Encourage side-by-side play with another child in which you describe what the sighted child is doing. ("Suzie is stirring the food with her spoon.") Practice good manners in dramatic play time (greeting people, saying "please" and "thank you").

To develop practical living skills, have your child work on retrieving a desired object and putting it away when finished. Practice step-by-step how to use specific items while verbalizing what you are doing so that your child can begin to learn how to use objects independently.

For example, act out together the steps of brushing teeth either on yourself, a doll, or your child. Play role playing games like talking on the telephone, how to stir "soup" in a pot, and fixing a chair with a hammer or mallet. Use scoops, spoons, and cups of different sizes to practice scooping materials (like cereal,



Gabriel and Grayson play side-by-side with a doll house.

rice, or cornmeal). Let your child "wash" dishes in a dishpan. Take turns dropping cereal or raisins into a bowl or muffin tin, and then try to get them out one at a time. Push items in a stroller or grocery cart.

Practice removing clothes (hats, shoes, coats, socks) when playing, including unzipping zippers. Practice putting on large sized dress-up clothes. It's easier to put on larger clothes when learning this skill. Use clothes with large buttons or snaps if possible and practice attaching them top to bottom. Use a washcloth and towel to practice washing and drying a doll or a table.



Aubrey and Lucas bathe a baby doll.

Dramatic Play Skills for Preschoolers

To work on literacy skills, practice identifying print or braille letters that are found on dramatic play center toys, on packaging, etc. Use dramatic play time to build measurable vocabulary, such as which bowl is heavy, which cup is empty, or which plate has more food on it, as well as to learn size, shape, and texture words. Have your child try to follow 2-3 step directions when pretending to cook something.

In kitchen play, pour and stir dry and wet materials. Let your child spoon materials from one bowl to another. Use cooking utensils to stir or mash real food. While pretending, use items that can be squeezed (sponges, basters, etc.). Have your child work on screwing lids onto condiment containers after pretending to make a sandwich or salad. Rehearse counting by moving items one at a time from a bowl to an egg carton (1 item in each divider). Pinch clothespins to "hang" doll clothes.

Dramatic play situations can lead naturally to identifying emotions that might be felt in certain situations. Practice taking turns. Let your child pretend to do tasks that you are really doing around the house. Practice social skills such as facing the person to whom you are speaking and asking for help appropriately during play times.



Aiden makes "coffee."

Here are some useful tips for making the most of dramatic play with your child at any age:

- *It is helpful for children to have an initial first-hand experience that they can then reenact during play.* For example, go to a grocery store together and talk through what you do there. When you get home, use a toy shopping cart to pretend to buy food. Visit a fire station before trying to pretend to be firefighters.
- *Dramatic play will be more meaningful to your child if you include as many real-life materials as possible.* It is fine to purchase kitchen play sets and pre-packaged dress-up costumes, but it is also important to expose children to different kinds of real materials (metal spoons, wooden tongs, plastic bowls, pots, clothes in different sizes, etc.).
- *Many real kitchen items can be found at dollar stores.* (Just be sure all items are either safe for child use or that your child is closely supervised when exploring.)
- *You can create a useful, cheap dress-up box from items the family does not use anymore or from cheap finds from thrift stores or clearance racks.*
- *When storing dramatic play toys, group like items in the same area, tote, or basket, so your child will be able to more easily locate desired objects and put them away when finished.* All toys should have a designated place where they can always be found.
- *Whenever possible, add a braille label to all print found on dramatic play toys to provide access to literacy.* For example, our classroom kitchen has menus in print and braille and the microwave includes braille numbers and a tactile symbol for “start.” (Ask a VIPS teacher if you have braille questions.)
- *Use the play time as an opportunity to discuss topics like counting, size, texture, amounts, directional words, and how things are similar or different.*

If you would like to supplement your child’s pretend play with other toys that have been popular with our population, especially since Christmas is coming, here are some of our favorite options:

Kid-Safe Appliances from Lakeshore (lakeshorelearning.com) : These battery-operated appliances come as a set of 3 for \$49.99 or individually for \$16.99 each. The blender and stand mixer will move play food around, and the coffee maker makes a percolating sound. You can mix/brew water with these “appliances.” Kids love the sounds and movement.



Little Hands Tool Tote

from Lakeshore (\$24.99 on lakeshorelearning.com): This tool box contains several tools that make noise, which really engages children and motivates them to explore how tools are really used.

New Sprouts Stir Fry Set by Learning Resources (\$16.29 on walmart.com): This cute set provides fine motor practice when the scoop and tongs are used. You can purchase a set of child-sized beginning chopsticks (\$5.99 and up on Walmart or Amazon) to add a note of authenticity and an additional fine motor challenge.



Fruit & Vegetable Cut-Ups

from Lakeshore (\$16.99 or \$29.99 on lakeshorelearning.com, depending on the size of the set): This classroom favorite allows children to practice cutting and gets them thinking about math concepts, such as parts making up a whole.

VIPS Parents Recommend

Kathleen Means, mother of Amelia, recommends the Lamaze Rainbow Glow Rattle. In addition to being designed for little hands, the bug on top changes color with only a slight shake. The eyes are soft for teething and the motion-activated illumination helps stimulate visual perception and grasping while shaking it promotes fine motor skill development. And as Katie Dick, Amelia’s VIPS Developmental Interventionist points out, it is great for promoting a visually guided reach and for children with Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI). The rattle is available at Amazon and other online retailers for under \$12.



Shirley Davis, foster mother of a VIPS child, recommends Paint Sticks, available from creativekidstuff.com. This art medium is great because its shape and outer plastic covering



allows for easy use for those with motor difficulties. The color is as vibrant as a marker, with the mess factor of a crayon -- a win-win for preschoolers with visual impairment.

Marvelous Milestones!!

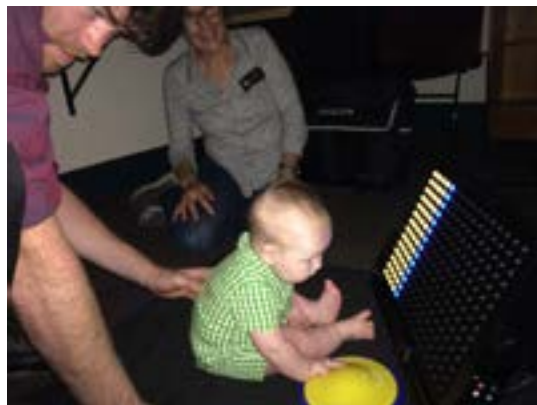
When a child is faced with developmental challenges due to visual impairment and possibly other issues, each achievement of a milestone is celebrated! VIPS teachers share the accomplishments of some of their students below.

On the left (below), Dmitri is enjoying the Little Gym with his dad, Alex. He is getting stronger and more coordinated every day. On the right, Jackson, with his foster mom Jessica, has just started walking and is loving this new perspective of the world!

Shared by Lesley Lusher, DI, VIPS Central KY



At right, Daphne is using a "bug eye magnifier" to look at big and little things in a *Wheels on the Bus* book during a recent home visit. *Shared by Early Interventionist in Visual Impairment Melissa Barrick, VIPS Indiana*



Little Dakota loves pressing the switch plate to light up the LightAide during a home visit. *Shared by VIPS Indiana TBLV, Amy Nichols*



Hannah, at left, is engaging in imaginative play with other children and also thinking creatively by mixing elements to make a new costume. *Shared by Staci Maynard, TVI, VIPS Kids Town Preschool*



Paige Maynard, TVI, VIPS Louisville shares several photos of kids making strides. Above, Aubree is learning that a straw is a tool, so that she can soon learn to use one for drinking. She is putting her hand out to feel the air that her mom, Kayla, is blowing on her hand. At left, Jalen is bringing a spoon to his mouth all by himself. Below, on the left, Mikaela is pushing a shopping cart, a precane mobility device, at her home. Below right, Eli looks toward Dexter from Dexter's Laboratory during a home visit.



Hunter, on the right, is using his vision with this lighted spoon to anticipate bites by opening his mouth when the spoon gets close. The light helps him visually attend.





At left, Judah works on snapping large pop beads together with Ms. Juanita. *Shared by Twos Class Volunteer, Fran Woodward.*



Maddie's Milestone

Maddie made it through the whole week of kindergarten camp, a huge milestone for us! Tears the first and third day but came out smiling every afternoon!!! She was super nervous because VIPS is the only place she's been, but we assured her that things were going to be great!! And she did great!! VIPS has given her the tools to succeed and the love and support to make her a stronger Maddie!!! (Above right: Maddie is ready for Kindergarten Camp.) *Shared by Kristen Horlander, Kids Town Preschool Asst. Director and Maddie's proud mom.*

You can teach a student a lesson for a day; but if you can teach him to learn by creating curiosity, he will continue the learning process as long as he lives. ~ Clay P. Bedford

Help for Santa's Helpers: Toy Recommendations from VIPS Teachers



The Holidays are just a few months away! Our teachers have put on their thinking Santa Caps to come up with a slew of wonderful toy recommendations that are sure to please your children without breaking your bank. They are readily available from local merchants or to purchase online. So read on for some great ideas for your child, that will be loads of fun and full of therapeutic value, too!

Ashley Emmons, Teacher of the Visually Impaired/Preschool Teacher, Orientation and Mobility Teacher, VIPS Louisville

Hape Rainbow Wooden Push and Pull Toddler Walking Toy

These toys encourage pre-cane skills, posture and gait, body awareness, spatial awareness, independent exploration, and gross motor skills. They are geared toward children who are just beginning to walk (12+ months) and are available online from www.hape.com and also available at Amazon, Target, and more for \$20-\$30.



Dr. Toy's Hide & Seek Plush Toy Cat with Book

This toy builds auditory skills, receptive/expressive language, independent exploration, positional and directional concepts, and spatial awareness for children 3 years and older. It's available from amazon.com for \$19.99.

Briarpatch Scavenger Hunt for Kids Board Game

This game helps develop receptive/expressive language, turn taking, independent exploration, positional and direction concepts, spatial awareness, landmark and clues, and room familiarization. It's recommended for ages 6 and older and is available at target.com for \$18.59.



Leslie Lusher, Developmental Interventionist, VIPS Central Kentucky

Teachable Touchables Texture Squares ®

This kit includes ten different pairs of textured squares. These are great for building tactile discrimination, increasing vocabulary, and developing matching skills for children ages 3-5. There is an activity included. These can be found online at www.reallygoodstuff.com for \$29.99.



Little Tikes Light n' Sounds Stacker --Green/Orange ®

These brightly colored stacking rings have lights and sounds to help build visual and auditory skills as well as keep the child engaged. Manipulating the rings onto the stack also helps develop fine motor skills. Available at Amazon (\$19.99) and on clearance at walmart.com for \$11.60.



INNOCHEER Toddler Musical Instruments ®

Children will love to make music with 17 wooden musical instruments! Using these instruments helps build auditory and visual skills; they are appealing with a variety of sounds, shapes, and colors. All instruments can be stored in the included backpack. This set (\$27.99) and many others (varied prices) are available from [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com); other sites also sell similar wooden instrument sets.



Paige Maynard, TVI, Developmental Interventionist

Santa's Workshop has Assistive Technology!

What is assistive technology, or AT? AT includes any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of a person with a disability.

Why does AT make a good gift for your child? AT makes a good gift because it enables gifts to be purchased that meet your child's interests (read: gifts that don't end up collecting dust!). As you shop for Christmas gifts, you can ask yourself what your child's interests are. Then you can ask yourself how those interests can be met in a meaningful, accessible and age appropriate way. If you would like an adaptive solution as part of the answer, read on!

Here are my top three countdown picks for commercially available assistive technology, straight from Santa's workshop:

Food Dispensing Spoon

Do you or your child want to increase his participation in mealtimes? The important skill of watching the spoon is foundational in helping your child learn independent mealtime skills. When you place a flashlight inside the food reservoir of a food-dispensing spoon, you have created a glowing spoon, the perfect gift that can immediately be put to use for Christmas family meals! This glowing piece of AT will assist your child in watching the spoon and anticipating bites, opening his mouth as the spoon approaches. You might even start to get him to turn his head toward it, lean forward for more bite of mashed fruit cake, and reach out to help guide the spoon to his mouth. (See Hunter's picture on the top of page 7 using his lighted spoon.) Available online from Amazon, Target and Walmart from \$4.99.

Resource: Sheline, D. Recommended Products. Retrieved from <https://strategytosee.com/recommended-products/>.



SensoryMoon Jellyfish Lamp Aquarium Mood Light ®



If your child wants to find his bedroom (or any specific location in your home or the community), but has trouble, the Sensory Moon Jellyfish Lamp Aquarium Mood Light could make an excellent gift! You can place this jellyfish lamp in his bedroom.

Its glow can assist him by providing a visual cue to navigate to the desired location -- back to the bedroom instead of sneaking out to catch a glimpse of the man in the red suit. This lamp's color is programmable, allowing you to cater to your kiddo's favorite color. Available from [SensoryMoon.com](https://www.sensorymoon.com) or Amazon from \$29.95. *For safety reasons, I recommend adult supervision when touching or handling this lamp.

Aqueduck Faucet Extender ® Handle

If your child's interest include "I want to do it by myself", the Aqueduck Faucet Extender may be a perfect stocking stuffer! This piece of assistive technology promotes independence by allowing your child to work a bathroom or kitchen faucet. It fits most two handle faucets. Not only will it give little hands the ability to use the sink with independence, it can provide little eyes with more visual contrast, so that the sink handles can be more easily visually located. I can just imagine your child turning on the water all by himself to wash Christmas cookie crumbs off his hands! Available from Walmart, Amazon, Bed Bath and Beyond and other retailers for around \$16.



Happy shopping!

Staci Maynard, Provisional TVI/Preschool Teacher, VIPS Louisville

As I was thinking about what toys to recommend for Christmas shopping this year, I settled on two toys that have many uses. These items can be used by children of different ages and levels of development for fun and skill-building.

Balls with Bells/Rattles

Balls are one of the best gross motor toys, because they can be used to practice a number of different skills. However, when a child is visually impaired, playing with a ball can be frightening and demotivating. Thus, ball skills like kicking, catching, rolling, and throwing may come late or not at all. To make ball play more fun and accessible for your child, purchase balls that make sounds. (A side tip: If you need a quick way to make a ball accessible, you can wrap it tightly in a plastic grocery bag so that it makes a crinkling sound as it rolls.)

Two of my favorite options include:

Jingle Ball ®

This medium sized ball feels like foam rubber, has holes for easier grasping, and contains bells that ring when the ball is moved. In my opinion, the sound made by this ball is more pleasant than that of many other sound balls. The only thing that would make this ball better is if it came in brighter colors for people with low vision. (\$11.50 on flaghouse.com)

**Sound Adapted Tangle Ball ® Kit**

These small balls use bright, contrasting colors that are easier to see. They also rattle when moved and have ridges that make them easier to grasp. The main drawback of these balls is the price (\$44.00 on shop.aph.org). If you have a more limited budget, you can find out how to make a similar kind of ball on a budget at <http://yourtherapysource.blogspot.com/2012/06/do-it-yourself-sound-ball.html>.

**Wading Pool (to fill with ball pit balls or other sensory materials)**

One of the easiest ways to introduce your child to some entertaining sensory exploration is to fill a kiddie pool with various materials. Some examples of materials include water, ball pit balls, sand, rice, noodles (raw or cooked), shredded paper, oats, cotton balls, or leaves. You wouldn't use all of the materials at once, but it is a good idea to alternate them, or maybe, if your child is up to it, put a couple of textures in at a time. Your child may need multiple exposures before she or he is ready to engage much with some of these textures. Don't force the issue. You want this to be fun and empowering for your child, not frightening. Your child should be able to sit outside of or in the pool as he or she decides.



Other items you can add to the sensory pool to add a fun way to work on skills: cups, bowls, and scoops or spoons to work on scooping and pouring; favorite toys or seasonal items that can be "hidden" in the pool for your child to find; a less favored texture to discover among a preferred texture (for example, if your child does not like soft textures very much, you might place some craft pom-poms in the pool along with ball pit balls). Pool is usually \$10-\$30 depending on size and place purchased; balls are about \$13 and up, depending on the quantity.

I also have recommended toys to use for dramatic play in the article, "Making Dramatic Play Meaningful and Effective," (See page 4) for additional ideas.

Juanita Miles, Twos Teacher, VIPS Louisville**Little People Sounds & Surprise Home ®**

This toy for children age one and above has been a favorite in the Twos classroom. The furniture and people are safe for little hands and little mouths. The house gives children the opportunity to pretend play and learn about cause and effect. The door bell rings when pushed, the toilet makes a flushing sound and the alarm clock rings when the little people are placed in the bed. It is available for around \$25.



Theo playing with the doll house in the Twos class.

Fischer-Price Little People Caring for Animals Farm ®

This is also a class favorite. When children open the barn door or gate, it makes animal sounds or plays a farm tune. Children develop language skills by repeating the animal sounds or singing along with the tune. Children use their cognitive and fine motor skills when they match the animals to the pictures in the barn. In addition, the barn gives children the opportunity to pretend play. It is available for under \$40.

**Jan Moseley,
Visual Impairment Specialist,
VIPS Louisville****Faucet Extenders (Pt. 2)**

Along with Paige's recommendation for the faucet extender handle, I'd like to suggest a faucet spout extension product; many brands are available online. They hook over your existing faucet so that water pours further out into the sink, again helping little hands become more independent. As one ad reports, they bring water to the child rather than an adult having to lift the child to the water! Several different brands are available from Amazon.com, including Aqueduck, for a range of prices. The picture shows the Rustark 3-piece Cartoon Faucet Extender ® set, that runs about \$10.

**Amy Nichols, Teacher of the Blind/
Low Vision Early Interventionist,
VIPS Indiana****Baby Einstein Ocean Glow Sensory Shaker**

This colorful baby rattle plays classical music, lights up, and glows with a slight shake. The handle is small and easy for little ones to grasp

and hold. For young ones with visual impairments, this toy is especially appealing as it has lights and music. It helps babies develop their fine motor skills while teaching cause and effect. It's one of the favorites among my little ones in Indiana. It can be found at Target for \$9.99.

Fisher Price Laugh & Learn Sing-with-Me CD Player ®

This toy is an “oldie, but a goodie”. Unfortunately, it is no longer produced. You can find it on eBay or sometimes in children's consignment shops. It's one of the favorites of my toddlers with visual impairments. It lights up and plays music. The “CD player” comes with three “CDs” which fit in the slot at the top of the player. This helps develop visual motor skills. The door of the CD player also opens and says, “open/close” which helps develop this concept. It has a handle making it easy for toddlers to carry around with them. *No photo available.*

I also recommend the book described below and the story box for our families, and I wrote up the information based on using the book and story box with one of my families last December. The little guy I used it with has multiple impairments, but really responded to the different scents associated with the book. I left the book and the box with the family and they read it together several times during the month of December. He has a sister in Kindergarten and his mom is a teacher, so they love reading together.

The holidays have so many wonderful scents associated with them. The book, **“The Sweet Smell of Christmas” by Patricia M. Scarry** is a scratch and sniff book that includes many of those smells. It talks about real things that are easy to collect for a story box. By having objects to go with the book, it makes the book “come alive” for your young child with a visual impairment. The items allow your child to use other senses (smell, taste, touch) while listening to the story.

To make the story box, collect the following items:

- Apple (or snack size apple pie)
- A package of hot cocoa
- An orange
- A branch from a pine tree and a pine cone
- A candy cane
- A gingerbread cookie

Then when reading this book with your child you will have a multi-sensory experience for the whole family. You can smell and feel all of the items, then taste some of them. You can even connect the objects to experiences your family has over the holidays. For example, if you decorate a tree as a family, you can let your child feel and smell the branch from the pine tree and relate it to the tree in your own home.



If you want to take it a step further, you could even start a new tradition with your child of making apple pie or gingerbread cookies together every Christmas. Cooking together is a sensory rich experience that involves all of the senses.

If you're not quite ready to have your child help you in the kitchen, then you could make candy cane scented playdough and make “cookies” using the dough. The recipe is below.

Enjoy the season with all the scents of Christmas!

Candy Cane Play Dough

- 1 cup Flour
- 1/4 cup Salt
- 2 tsp. Cream of Tartar
- 1 cup Water
- 2 Tbsp. Vegetable Oil
- 6 - 8 drops of Peppermint Oil
- White Glitter (optional)
- 4 - 5 drops of Red Food Color



Mix all the ingredients together in a medium saucepan and cook on medium heat. Stir constantly until it forms a thick ball that is no longer sticky. The play dough will peel off the sides of the pan when it is all done. Let dough cool to the touch and knead till soft and supple. Divide the dough in half and add red food coloring to half of the dough. Should last several months in a clean, airtight container.

David Sterne, Visual Impairment Early Interventionist, VIPS Indiana

CVI Range Complexity Sequences Kit ®

Developed by Christine Roman, these cards help children with CVI learn to find request-

ed pictures of familiar objects against simple and then increasingly complex backgrounds. They are available from the American Printing House for the Blind at aph.org and cost \$58.



Gel-Bead Sensory Shapes ®

These squeezable shapes are fun and colorful and are great for



light box activities or simple matching games. Recommended for those three and up, they can be used during supervised play for young children. They are available from Lakeshore Learning at one of their stores or at

Brittany Williamson, Teacher of the Visually Impaired/Preschool Teacher, VIPS Louisville

Battat Sound Puzzle ®

The Battat Sound Puzzle has only three shapes but each shape makes its own unique sound as it slides to the bottom of the puzzle. This sound provides reinforcing feedback for students with visual impairments so that they know they have placed it in the correct position. Also, the big, chunky pieces are perfect for little hands to grab for fine motor practice. This toy can be ordered from Amazon and other online sites, beginning at \$49.99.



Fisher Price Laugh and Learn Magical Lights Fishbowl ®

The Magical Lights Fishbowl is a great cause and effect toy. Children can also work on the fine motor skills of "putting in" and "taking out." The wide mouth makes it easy for students with visual impairments to place the objects in more accurately. It has catchy songs and lights that reinforce play. It is available at numerous online sites including K-Mart (\$16.09), Bed Bath and Beyond (\$19.99), buybuy Baby (\$19.99) and others.



Crayola My First Color Me a Song ®

Color Me a Song is a fun and interactive way for children with visual impairments to actively participate in art projects. The drawing board plays musical feedback as it is colored on. With large and easily distinguishable buttons, children can choose between four instruments: piano, banjo, trumpet and drum. The drawing board can be used with a variety of crayons and markers. This toy is available at amazon.com for \$11.19 and perhaps at other online sites.



VIPS Staff News

Amy Nichols is a licensed Teacher of Blind/Low Vision, who became a full-time employee at the VIPS Indiana office in November 2017. Prior to that, she had been working as a VIPS contractor in Indiana. She provides in-home early intervention services for birth-to-three year olds in Marion County. Before

joining the VIPS team, Amy taught at the Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired and also in Fort Wayne, Indiana. She has taught both general education and special education and has a Master's Degree in Special Education from Indiana University. She has a special interest in early literacy and cortical visual impairment. Amy is married and has one daughter. She enjoys reading, gardening, and spending time outdoors. Since she lives in the country, she sometimes sends beautiful photographs of sunrises to her Indiana team members and they love it when she does!



Brittany Williamson is the newest teacher on the VIPS Louisville staff. She will be teaching in Kids Town Preschool. Brittany graduated from the University of Kentucky in 2014 with a degree in Special Education -- Moderate to Severe Disabilities. She taught for a year in Russell County in a self-contained special education classroom of third to fifth graders. During her student teaching experience, Brittany had the opportunity to work with a student who had a visual impairment. This student sparked her interest and started her path into the field of

teaching students with visual impairments. Brittany graduated from UK in 2017 with her certificate as a TVI. She has worked for the last 3 years in Fayette County as an itinerant Teacher of the Visually Impaired. Brittany recently moved to Louisville with her basset hound, Beau. She is happy to be back in the classroom and excited to be at KidsTown Preschool!

A Special Home Visit

By Paige Maynard, TVI/Developmental Interventionist, VIPS Louisville

I had the pleasure of connecting a VIPS graduate who is an adult, Ashley Linson, and Mary Arellano Gonzales, mother of Kaily Ceja Arellano, during a recent home visit. Mary had expressed that she would like to meet a

Ashley played with Kaily (who was fascinated with Ashley's cane) while she chatted with Kaily's mom, Mary.



blind adult, and Ashley graciously accepted my invitation to talk about how daily life for her as a blind person is fulfilling and full of independence. Mary had a list of questions for Ashley, and they spoke for the whole hour. The interpreter, Vivienne, was also very interested, and had many questions herself. It warms my heart to have been given the opportunity to play a small part in empowering a family!!

Gifts of Time, Talent & Treasure

VIPS Indiana

Walking for Dreams

They say it takes a village to raise a child—well, at VIPS, it takes a community to support the education of Indiana's youngest children with blindness/low vision. VIPS Indiana is so proud of everyone in the community who came together to raise money and walk on behalf of the children and families we serve.

Rain was in the forecast, but it ended up being a beautiful day for the Walking for Dreams Family & Pet Walk that took place on Sunday, May 20 in downtown Indy along the canal.

We thank all who came out to walk, those who donated, and our amazing board members who helped make the day a smashing success! We also owe our gratitude to our wonderful sponsors **Mr. Eric Bruun, Visionworks: Dr. Mark Lynn & Associates PLLC, The Spectacle Shoppe, Jennil Salazar Private Client Group, Bosma Enterprises for the Blind, Delta Gamma – Theta Chapter at Indiana University, Republic National Distributing Company, Ossip Optometry + Ophthalmology, Washington Township Lions Club, Riley Ophthalmology, Gordon Homes of MassMutual: Special Care, Vivirito Realty, Eye Can See, Vision Wholesale Club, ALLIED Electrical Supply Co., and Papa John's Pizza. Thanks to your support, VIPS Indiana won two awards at Walking for Dreams; Most Sponsors and Most Sponsor Funds Raised!**



Most of the photos were taken by VIPS Indiana intern and house photographer, **Ashley Romine**.



Thank you

Many thanks to **Libby Buck** for donating office supplies.

Thank you to **Gary and Nancy Bingham of Diversified Mail Services** for donating postage for an extremely large family mailing!

A hearty thanks to the wonderful ladies of the **Junior League of Indianapolis** who donated 96 hours of service and made texture blocks for Welcome Bags for new kiddos coming into the program.

VIPS Central Kentucky

A heartfelt thanks goes to the wonderful Delta Gammas helping with the Northern KY PEP Class held in June, including: **Jayda Collins, Erin Mogus, Cayley Potter, Olivia Sketch, and Jullia Stephenson**.



VIPS Louisville

For the wonderful helping hands at the VIPS Yum! Brands Corporate Cup Golf Tournament, thanks to: **Larry Birchler, Addy Clarkson, Nathan Clarkson, Leigh Cosby, Jessica Curry, Bonnie Helm, Cheryl Hostetler, Jim Jury, Laurie Schock, Kelly Steward, Laura Tino, Patti Wallace, and Jason Wallin**.

A heartfelt thanks goes to all of those whose assistance made the Tennis Ball a resounding success, including: **Brittany Clarkson, Nathan Clarkson, Kitty Drake, Kelly Easton, Ashley Emmons, Brandi Hitzelberger, Kristin Horlander, Ashley May-Hunter, Eric Hunter, Beth Krebs, Mary Lesousky, Paige Maynard, Staci Maynard, Jan Moseley, Kathy Mullen, Diane Nelson, Ellen Prizant, and Tracy Webb.** Special thanks to **Bill Campbell** who took photos!

For assisting with the Tennis Tournament, thanks to: **Addy Clarkson, Brittany Clarkson, Nathan Clarkson, Terri Connolly, Marchelle Hampton, Beth Owens, and Mary Smyth.**

Our deepest thanks to the **volunteers from the Texas Roadhouse** who purchased supplies and worked in the Sensory Garden, including **Gretchen Allred, Amanda Calhoun, Diania Cires, Vickie Elder, Laurie Hobbs, Drew McFarland, Matt McMahan, Carrie Mucker, Rebecca Scholl, Katie Vincent and Megan Wood.** The Sensory Garden looks great, thanks to their labors.

Current and past VIPS Board members helped “man” the Crusade Cookout which draws customers from surrounding office buildings and businesses, with proceeds benefitting the Crusade. Our appreciation goes to **Jerry Bizer, Terri Connolly, Mike Johnson, Daultan Smith, Mark Steibling and VIPS mom Alyssa Wines and VIPS grandpa Bob Bracy for donating ice.**

We appreciate the assistance of **Anne Proffitt** who gave her time to help gather teaching materials for assessing preschoolers, infants and toddlers. Thanks so much!

Staff from Dr. Frank Burns’ office performed an amazing variety of volunteer tasks from washing windows, to cleaning Kids Town and classrooms, to administrative filing. We are very thankful for the help of **Amanda Erwin, Lynne C. Fannin, Jordan Haberty, Debbie Oharp, Tara Sanders and L.C. Tarin.**



Fran Woodward’s incredible assistance is a marvelous help in the 2s’ classroom. We greatly appreciate her gracious sharing of her time and talents.

Fran, at left, works with Elom in the Twos class.

Speaking of talents, **Deanna Scoggins** again shared her piano skills with the Kids Town Preschool children. She also demonstrated her rather considerable braille skills by reading

to the children. We think it is wonderful that she is willing to serve as a terrific role model to our students and that she is also wonderful for giving up her time to do so!

Julie Streble from Humana volunteered by washing the windows in the classrooms. We value the time she spent improving the looks of our building.

Volunteers from UPS Brokerage performed multiple cleaning tasks for us: they power washed cement, cleaned the playground equipment, cleaned up the Sensory Garden and wiped down our event tables. We are most appreciative of the efforts of **Willie Dempsey, Debbie Gahater, Mike Galacte and Bruce Petcock.**

We appreciate **Ella Springer**, a volunteer from Assumption High School, who assisted with a play group.

Thankful praise goes to **Jon and Michael Daniels**, both from Male Traditional High School, who assisted with classroom duties and weeded the Sensory Garden and landscape beds.

Sarah Bertram from Pensacola Christian College served as an intern during June helping with various projects. We value the time she spent with us! To see some of Sarah’s work product, check out the article on PEP class she authored on page 2.

Terri King, from the Newburg Library, visited the Twos class twice this summer for story time. We loved her stories and the backpacks she brought for each of the children.



Call for Volunteers!

Volunteers are needed for the Stampede for VIPS on Saturday, Sept. 29. Contact Dani Harper at dkharper@vips.org or 502-498-2926.

It’s not too early to start thinking about the holidays! VIPS sends holiday cards to our families and friends, a herculean effort only completed with the help of volunteers. Call Angela Billings at 502-498-2933 or e-mail her at abillings@vips.org if you’d like to help personalize and stuff envelopes October 1 - 12.

Helping hands are needed for children’s activities during the VIPS Family Retreat Weekend, Nov. 9 & 10 (must be 18 or older). Contact Paige Maynard at pmaynard@vips.org.

Upcoming Events Offer Opportunities for Learning and Fun

ALL VIPS families from throughout Kentucky and Indiana are invited to attend any VIPS event at any location! We are one big VIPS family, and borders do not define us!

VIPS Indiana

Toddler Art Group

VIPS Indiana is once again partnering with the Newfields (previously known as the Indianapolis Museum of Art) for a program called the Toddler Art Group (TAG). The TAG program engages preschools (or in our case --younger current or former VIPS children and their siblings, accompanied by their parents) in the Indianapolis area through a multi-visit early learning program. The IMA has created a TAG program exclusively for our children with vision loss and the families we serve. There is no expectation except for you and your child to explore, learn and do your own version of creating.

The five sessions are scheduled from 10 to 11 a.m. on the following Thursdays: August 8th, September 13th, October 18th, November 1st and December 13th. All are held at Newfields, 4000 Michigan Road, Indianapolis 46208-3326. You are not obligated to come to every session although we recommend it since it is such a unique experience and the art teacher will get to know your child.

If you want your child to participate, please contact Meredith Howell (888- 824-2197 or mhowell@vips.org). Availability is limited so reserve your spot soon. Don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions!

Spook-tacular PEP

On Saturday, October 20, VIPS Indiana will host a "Spook-tacular" Halloween-inspired Parent Empowerment Program (PEP) event for VIPS families and their children at the IICC. As in past years, parents will Trick-or-Treat for resources and their children will Trick-or-Treat for small sensory toys. This will be a wonderful opportunity to "practice" before the big night! Don't forget to dress your little ones up in costumes for this fun event. We will have fall treats and refreshments for your family to enjoy!

VIPS Central Kentucky

Eye Opening Symposium

On Thursday, Oct. 18, the 4th Biennial Eye Opening Symposium will be held at the Fayette County Extension Office, 1140 Harry Sykes Way, in Lexington. The Blind Services Coalition of Kentucky (BSCK), the VA Medical Center, and the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government Division of Aging and Disability Services are hosting this informative event. Speakers include Dr. Padmaja Sudhakar, neuro-ophthalmologist with the University of Kentucky, presenting on Cortical Visual Impairment; Dr. Belinda Shirkey with Retina Associates of KY addressing the top 3 retinal disorders and treatments; and Sam Seavey, Assistant Technology Coordinator with Bluegrass Council of the Blind, sharing the latest Assistive Technology. There will also be a panel of speakers representing KY blindness agencies and programs. The symposium is free and includes lunch. CEUs are pending for ACVREP, CRC, social work, and nursing. Online registration at the BSCK's website <http://bscky.net>.

5K For The 5 Senses

On Saturday, Oct. 20, VIPS Central KY will hold the 2nd Annual VIPS 5K For The 5 Senses Family Run/Walk at The Club at UK's Spindletop Hall. This unique family friendly event will invigorate all of your senses as you run or walk throughout the beautiful grounds of Spindletop Hall and the Legacy Trail. Sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch....your senses will come alive as you help support a great cause! Plan to stay and join us for the SENSEsational Spot, where there will be hands-on activities for kids and adults to explore using their 5 Senses. Register today for this unique 5k family run/walk that invigorates all of your senses! <https://runsignup.com/Race/KY/Lexington/VIPS5KForThe5Senses>.

VIPS Louisville

Halloween Trunk-n-Treat

On Saturday, October 27, VIPS Louisville Trunk-N-Treat will be held at the Louisville Campus from 10:30 until noon, featuring crafts, snacks and safe trick-or-treating. VIPS children, their siblings and friends are welcome when accompanied by an adult. Contact Brittany Clarkson at bclarkson@vips.org or 502-636-3207 with number attending or register online at vips.org.

28th Annual VIPS Family Retreat

On Friday and Saturday, Nov. 9 & 10, the 28th Annual VIPS Family Retreat will be held in Louisville. This year, there will be an Olympic theme -- "Go For Your Gold." There will be early registration and check in on Friday evening, along with some festivities. Families traveling a great distance will be provided a

room overnight at the Holiday Inn on Bishop Lane. Child care featuring lots of fun and stimulating activities for children will be held all day at the VIPS Louisville office, under the direction of VIPS staff and mature volunteers, including special educators. Parents will be nearby enjoying a wonderful day of learning and support through a parent conference full of inspirational and meaningful topics and activities. For more information, please contact Brittany Clarkson at bclarkson@vips.org or 502-636-3207.

A Call to Parents: Tell Us Your Stories!!

by Mary Smyth, VIPS Central KY Assistant Director

Every parent has a story to tell and we'd like to share it during October for Blindness and Visual Impairment Awareness Month.

"Do I have a story?" you may ask. Yes! You most certainly do. *"What's my story?"* you may inquire. Your story is about raising a remarkable and wonderful child who just happens to be blind or visually impaired. *"Why should I tell it?"* To celebrate your child, to inspire other parents and receive their encouragement as they respond to your story, and to bring awareness to the community of what it's like to raise a child who is blind or visually impaired.

"You're braver than you believe, and stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think" (A. A. Milne). *"Okay. I'd like to tell my story. What should I write?"* Write whatever you'd like to share about your child. It could be a sweet moment between you and your child. A success or challenge he/she has had to face. An incident or situation that positively or negatively impacted your child and family. A day-in-the-life-of your child and family, or whatever you feel inspired from your heart to write. You may write a few sentences or a few paragraphs. It's all up to you.

VIPS will be sharing your story on Facebook throughout the month of October for Blindness & Visual Impairment Awareness month. Stories may

also be published in the next edition of the VISability newsletter. If you have a picture or short video (less than 2 minutes in length) of your sweet child please send that along with your story. Please email your story and picture/video to Mary Smyth at vipslex@vips.org.



Share Your Story

VIPS Wish List

VIPS Indiana

- Giantsuper Tummy Time Playboards + Art Cards (available at Amazon, Giantsuper.com, etc.)
- Vinyl fabric yardage -- prefer solid black or gray (to be used for texture mats, etc., so a background that is not visually stimulating back is preferred)
- Glasses: a Board Book (available at Amazon, glassesboard book.com, goodreads.com, etc.)
- Small traffic cones for Orientation and Mobility
- Printer paper
- Large plastic storage containers (tubs) with lids

VIPS Louisville

- Paper towels
- Baby Wipes
- Wet Ones
- Velcro Strips- any size to use on varied objects and materials, by the yard preferred
- Construction Paper
- Tempera paint – yellow, blue, black gallon jars

VIPS Central KY

- Folders/portfolios with two pockets
- Disinfectant wipes
- Baby wipes
- Black and white card stock
- Slinky toys (preferably red, yellow or metallic)
- Sturdy metal open shelving units
- Glue sticks

In Memoriam

This issue of VISability is dedicated to the memories of

Jacob Sharpe

son of Dave and Kristen Sharpe of LaPorte, IN,
who passed away on June 4
at the age of 10 months.

~ and ~

Michaela Powell

daughter of Michael Powell and Phyllis Brown
of Indianapolis, IN, who passed away on June 20
at the age of 22 months.

*Our hearts go out to all of those
who loved Jacob and Michaela.*



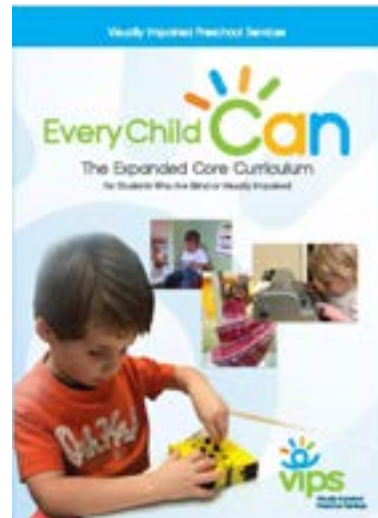
New Arrivals

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

Amelia - 11 months, Fishers, IN
 Aneesa - 3 years, Louisville, KY
 Anthony - 9 months, Owingsville, KY
 Apphia - 4 months, Louisville, KY
 Ava - 2 years, Elkhart, IN
 Bella - 6 months, Louisville, KY
 Brenda - 1 year, Mooresville, IN
 Caroline - 9 months, Fishers, IN
 Ella - 9 months, Waddy, KY
 Emma - 1 year, Greenfield, IN
 Harper - 9 months, Bloomington, IN
 Hayes - 1 year, Louisville, KY
 Isaac - 7 months, South Whitley, IN
 Isaiah - 1 year, Indianapolis, IN
 Ivori - 1 year, Michigan City, IN
 Jaxon - 2 years, Georgetown, KY
 Jayden - 1 year, Daleville, IN
 Kame - 7 months, Bowling Green, KY
 Kenzi - 2 years, Brooksville, KY
 Kevin - 2 years, Georgetown, KY
 Leo - 1 year, Elkhart, IN
 Merrick - 1 year, Greenwood, IN
 Michael - 3 years, Indianapolis, IN
 Miciah - 1 year, Barbourville, KY
 Olin - 2 years, Belfry, KY
 Peyton - 9 months, Jackson, KY
 Raine - 2 years, Lafayette, IN
 Rowen - 2 years, Fort Wayne, IN
 Sai - 2 years, Indianapolis, IN
 Theodore - 1 year, Rockport, IN
 Wyatt - 2 years, Danville, IN
 Zoey - 1 year, Harold, KY



Rowen knows what he likes, and he liked all of the slinkies, shiny pom poms, lights, bells, maracas, and sensory toys he got to play with during an initial visit. His Dad asked, "Did you call his Mom to find out what he like?" No, VIPS just knows what our VIPS kids love!



Every Child Can!

The Expanded Core Curriculum in the Preschool Classroom

VIPS is pleased to announce that we have produced a new video* with your needs in mind! *Every Child Can* introduces viewers to the Expanded Core Curriculum for Students Who Are Visually Impaired (ECC) from a preschool perspective. The ECC addresses nine critical skill areas these students must learn in order to find success in school and in life. However, they can be difficult to learn with limited or no vision.

The objective of the video is to demystify the ECC for parents of young children who are visually impaired and for their general education teachers who may have limited expertise and experience teaching children with vision loss. The video also encourages parents and professionals to advocate for use of the ECC, and to implement it at home, in the classroom, and in the community.

Every Child Can offers a joyful journey through the ECC as it is implemented in the everyday activities of a working preschool. The video also shares the inspirational perspectives of adults who are visually impaired as they talk about how learning ECC skills has enhanced their lives and careers. (Some of them are the grown "stars" of the original VIPS *Can Do!* Video series!)

The 27-minute video is available from <https://vips.org/store/> for \$50 (\$79.99 for both English and Spanish versions). It is available in DVD, USB Drive, and soon will be available for streaming.

"I love it! You've given meaning to the ECC at its most basic level, and most importantly shown parents how they can translate this educational jargon into their family life at home."

Kay Alicyn Ferrell, PhD
 Professor Emerita, Special Education
 A.M. & Jo Winchester Distinguished Professor
 UNC | University of Northern Colorado

"I truly enjoyed watching this video and found it engaging. The tone was educational, realistic, and inspirational. It is of high quality and will be a benefit to the field for many years to come."

I look forward to the use of this video in our work training scholars and our work with families.”

Mindy Ely

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign and
Assistant Professor, Blindness/Low Vision Programs
EL VISTA Project Coordinator and Instructor
Illinois State University
Department of Special Education

“This video kept me smiling from beginning to end! It is very interesting to see how children who are visually impaired confidently interact in their environment because of the skills they learn through the Expanded Core Curriculum. The video helped me to understand how I could easily adapt these skills into my classroom and even use them with sighted kids as well!”

Joyce Wall, MS, MSD/Moderate Severe Disabilities

Jefferson County Public Schools

Louisville, KY

The Expanded Core Curriculum for Students Who Are Visually Impaired (ECC) has been developed to meet the specific educational needs of students who are visually impaired. It is made up of nine skill areas that help mitigate the impacts of vision loss on learning and teach skills that are crucial to success – success in school, in the workplace, and in life. These include:

- Compensatory Skills
- Sensory Efficiency Skills
- Orientation & Mobility Skills
- Independent Living Skills
- Assistive Technology Skills
- Social Interaction Skills
- Self-Determination Skills
- Recreation & Leisure Skills
- Career Education Skills

** This video is available in English and Spanish and features audio description for the visually impaired and closed captioning.*

Recent Grants and Donations

VIPS All Offices

VIPS had a wonderful surprise from the **WHAS Crusade for Children**. We received a grant of \$160,746 -- 19.1 percent increase from last year! This grant will go toward teachers' salaries agency-wide and to Kids Town Preschool Program in Louisville :

\$85,746 to VIPS Louisville,

\$40,000 to VIPS Central Kentucky and

\$35,000 to VIPS Indiana

VIPS Indiana

VIPS Indiana is so grateful for the following grants that have been received over the past few months:

- \$8,850 from the **Hoover Family Foundation** to fund early intervention for children living in Marion County
- \$5,000 from **NineStar Community Trust** for early intervention home visits (up \$4,000 from 2016)
- \$3,000 from **Sertoma Club of Broad Ripple** for the Orientation and Mobility (O & M) Program
- \$2,500 from the **Indiana Members Foundation and the Joan Wolfe Legacy Grant** which will go toward the Orientation and Mobility (O & M) Program

VIPS Kentucky

VIPS Central Kentucky was one of 37 local charities to receive funding from **Children's Charity Fund of the Bluegrass** in 2018. The mission of the Children's Charity Fund of the Bluegrass, Inc. is to establish and maintain an ongoing concerted fund-raising effort to benefit local charitable organizations which have as their primary goal the betterment of children of the Commonwealth. **Regional Director Kelly Easton, Assistant Director Mary Smyth, and Advisory Board member Charlie Sword** were happy to volunteer at this year's annual Golf Tournament, helping golfers and celebrity guests to get checked in for a beautiful day on the course. The funds will be used to support VIPS early intervention.

Kosair Charities thrilled VIPS by awarding a grant of \$175,000 this fiscal year (16.7 percent increase from last fiscal year!). This grant is used to fund the Kosair Charities KidsTown Preschool Program.

Another long term supporter that deserves our appreciation is **Metro United Way**. The annual grant to VIPS from MUW was also increased to \$83,491 (up of 8.6 percent!) for our early childhood intervention programs.

VIPS is incredibly grateful for the generosity of **Mr. Ron Wibbels and his team at Irving Materials Incorporated** who hosted their inaugural golf tournament with E&B Paving, Inc. at Audubon Country Club, Louisville, on July 9. VIPS was



chosen as their charity partner and has been gifted with \$23,500! This gift will allow VIPS to fund teachers' salaries. Thank you, Ron, IMI, E&B Paving and all the sponsors who made this gift possible! IMI has already secured Audubon for July 8, 2019 for their next tournament and VIPS has already been named as the recipient of those proceeds!

A huge thanks goes to **Hilliard & Lyons** for a \$5,000 donation to support the renovation to create the new Purple Classroom in Kids Town Preschool.

The **Jacob C. Koch Charitable Trust** provided \$3489 for a SMARTboard for our new classroom in Kids Town Preschool, which enables our teachers to more effectively adapt instruction for children with low vision

Give for Good Louisville!

Give for Good Louisville is September 13 and is a unique opportunity to make a contribution to VIPS on Louisville's biggest day of online giving! Last year we raised over \$23,000 and we need your help to meet and exceed this goal! Please be sure to follow VIPS on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram & Twitter for more information about Give for Good and don't forget to LIKE & SHARE VIPS' posts!

Get in the STAMPEDE Spirit!

By Dani Harper, Development Coordinator

One of the biggest fundraisers for VIPS every year is our Dr. Mark Lynn & Associates Stampede for VIPS 5K Run/Walk. This event is a great opportunity to bring VIPS families together with the community to raise funds and awareness for VIPS. Last year's Stampede raised nearly \$70,000 towards the education of children who are blind or visually impaired, and, as always, featured a special category of race winners who were blind or visually impaired!

At VIPS we encourage all families to get involved in any way they can, and Stampede is a great opportunity to get your friends and family involved in a fun way. As a VIPS Parent or Caregiver you have the ability to create your very own fundraising page to encourage your supporters to join you at the Stampede. The VIPS family who raises the most money or brings the most participants wins a great prize!

For years, VIPS families have used this as an opportunity to raise awareness. Kristin Horlander, mom of Maddie Horlander, is

the leader of the team **Maddie's Minions**. "The stampede is not only to give back to a great cause that has given so much to us, but to rally all our friends and family to stand beside Maddie to show their support for her. She declares it Maddie's Minion Race day every year!"

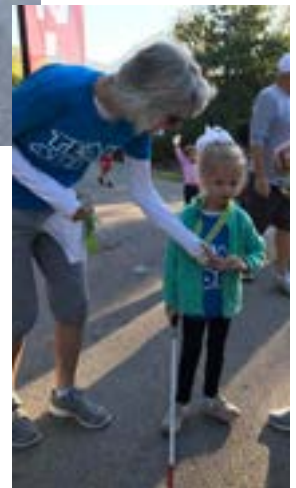
And you don't have to be a current VIPS family to participate! As we often say at VIPS "Once a VIPS family, always a VIPS family." Brittany Clarkson is the creator of **Team Addy** which always brings out a huge group of friends and family for VIPS graduate Addy Clarkson. "My family looks forward to Stampede every year. We are blessed with so many who love and support our daughter and it is amazing to see them get together to support a cause so close to our hearts. We always have team shirts made -- it's not only a fun way to promote your team at Stampede but a great way to raise awareness about blindness all year long."

Please contact VIPS Development Coordinator Dani Harper -- (dharp@vips.org, phone (502) 498-2926) -- to get started on creating your very own family fundraising team for this year's Stampede. She will get you set up with your own individualized fundraising page that will have its own unique link that you can share on social media to get the word out.

We hope to see you all at this year's stampede on September 29th for our 2nd year at The Louisville Zoo!



Left: VIPS Instructional Assistant Shelby Birchler serves as a sighted guide for Dawn Wilkinson of APH as they walk with VIPS friends Pyper and Maddie. Below: Former Kids Town Preschool Asst. Director Beth Krebs helps Addy checkout her medal.





Visually Impaired
Preschool Services

1906 Goldsmith Lane
Louisville, KY 40218

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

Upcoming Events

VIPS Louisville

Thursday, Sept. 13

Give for Good Louisville online day of giving.
Details on pg. 19.

Saturday, October 6th, 10 a.m.

PEP (Parent EmPowerment Program) will meet on the Campus of VIPS Louisville.
Open at no cost to VIPS families in KY and IN. Contact bclarkson@vips.org.
Remaining dates for 2018 are:

- Saturday, November 3
- Saturday, December 1

PEP program details on pg. 3.

Saturday, September 29, 8 a.m.

Dr. Mark Lynn & Associates Stampede for VIPS 5K Run/Walk at the Louisville Zoo,
8 a.m. Race Start, 9 a.m., Kids Corral.
Details on pg. 19.

Saturday, October 27, 10:30 a.m.

The annual Trunk-N-Treat will be held at VIPS Louisville for any family in KY or IN wishing to attend. Contact Brittany Clarkson at bclarkson@vips.org or 502-636-3207 with number attending. Details on pg 15.

Friday & Saturday, November 9 & 10

28th Annual VIPS Family Retreat will be held in Louisville for ALL VIPS families in KY and IN. Register NOW by contacting bclarkson@vips.org or 502-636-3207. Details on pg 15.

Sunday, December 16

Annual holiday party with Santa at VIPS Louisville. For more information or to register, contact bclarkson@vips.org.

VIPS Central KY

Thursday, October 18, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

4th Biennial Eye Opening Symposium at the Fayette County Extension Office, 1140 Harry Sykes Way, Lexington, KY 40504.
Online registration at the BSCK's website <http://bscky.net>. Details on pg 15.

Saturday, October 20, 2018, 9 a.m.

2nd Annual VIPS 5K For The 5 Senses Family Run/Walk at The Club at UK's Spindletop Hall. To Register go to: <https://runsignup.com/Race/KY/Lexington/VIPS5KForThe5Senses>. Details on pg 15.

Watch for news of December Holiday Events to come.

VIPS Indiana

Thursday, Oct. 18, 10 a.m.

VIPS Indiana Toddler Art Group will meet at the Newfields (previously known as Indianapolis Museum of Art). Contact mhowell@vips.org. Remaining dates for 2018 are:

- Thursday, Nov. 1
- Thursday, Dec. 13

Details on pg 15.

Saturday, Oct. 20, 10 a.m.

VIPS Indiana will host a "Spook-tacular" Halloween-inspired Parent Empowerment Program (PEP). Contact mhowell@vips.org. Details on pg 15.

Watch for information on our Sensory Santa Experience! This is not a Parent Empowerment Program (PEP), just a quiet opportunity for your little one to hear Santa's laugh, sit on his lap, and for you to snap those darling holiday photos. We will have a hot chocolate bar and holiday treats.

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

VIPS-Louisville

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Brittany Clarkson, Welcome & Family Support
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Ashley Emmons, TV/COMS/Preschool Teacher
Pauletta Feldman, Special Projects
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