The BEE: Early Literacy and Movement for Young Blind Children

NFB Braille Reading Pals Club & NFB Early Explorers

January 2016

## What’s Buzzing with the National Federation of the Blind?

## It's a new year for the National Federation of the Blind. Many federationists will be attending our annual Washington Seminar from January 25 through January 28. It’s a great opportunity to meet with Congress to make them aware of important issues that we, as a blindness community, need them to take action on. You can find more information about these issues at <https://nfb.org/washington-seminar>. It is also a chance for the National Organization of Parents of Blind Children to hold an informational seminar and for many parents and children to meet each other. It is a perfect way to network and reenergize for the year ahead. Let's go build the Federation so we can all live the lives we want in 2016!

## Literacy Hints from the Hive

## As we enter the New Year, our lives show no sign of slowing down. Many of us rely on a calendar to help us keep track of appointments, school functions, birthdays, and holidays. For most of us the calendar is on our smartphone, but some people still want and need to use other accessible types of calendars that include Braille. Blind children need to learn about calendars, the technical and the non-technical versions. There is still value in the Braille calendar. It allows a person to recognize the layout of a calendar and makes learning the days of the week and month names in Braille much easier. Many children will learn about calendars in school, so it is important that a blind child have a copy of this important tool in Braille. You can make one at home and put important dates, such as family birthdays, anniversaries, and dates for upcoming trips on it. This way, it will give your child something to look forward to. Your child can enjoy counting down days by making a mark next to each date with a crayon or marker. The American Action Fund for Blind Children and Adults provides free Braille calendars to any blind person, school, or rehabilitation facility. You can request a calendar by sending an email to calendars@actionfund.org. If you prefer, you can buy a Braille desk calendar from the Braille Bookstore for $13.95 or a daily planner for $19.95. The website address is <http://www.braillebookstore.com/>. So have fun with calendars of all shapes and sizes throughout the year.

## Travel Tales

## Standing in line is something we endure almost every day. Whether we are at the grocery store, pharmacy, amusement park, or some other location, we most likely will have to wait in a line. Often as blind people, we are told that it's okay to go ahead to the front of the line, but there is no reason we cannot stand in line like everyone else, provided we know where the line is. Once your child knows where the end of the line is, he can use his cane to find the heel of the person in front of him. Then, when that person moves up, he will keep the cane at their heel and he can move up also. Using the cane in this way provides that he is not touching anyone inappropriately. He can also use guides such as ropes at airports, banks, or in some stores. These can be followed with his cane so that he knows which way a line is moving. These “mazes” can sometimes be a bit confusing. They turn this way and that, and sometimes the sound of the line is deceiving. Show your child that there is a corner and if he follows the ropes and turns with the line, that eventually it will be his turn. It is important to teach your child that he must wait his turn just like we all do. Blindness does not give him special privileges to be first. His turn will be worth the wait when he has used the techniques he has learned to follow the line.

## A Taste of Honey

## The Value of Quiet Entertainment

## In this day and age, with the constant bombardment of electronics and other technology, it's easy to forget about quiet entertainment. I was recently reminded of this when my son’s school required him to read a certain number of pages each day. This has been a great reminder to our family to sit down and read each day. You can get free Braille books from the American Action Fund for Blind Children and Adults. They have a selection for children in grades K-2 each month, and a selection for grades 3-6 every other month. You can find out more information about this wonderful service at <https://www.actionfund.org/free-braille-books>. National Braille Press has a book club that you can join. The January selection is *Houndsley and Catina and the Quiet Time* by James Howe. It is a book about two friends who enjoy a quiet snowy day together. This is another reminder about the fact that quiet time can be enjoyed during the hustle and bustle of our busy lives. Too often we are over-scheduled, rushing from one place to another. It is very important that children learn to entertain themselves with their imagination, a book, or other activities quietly when others are not available or when electronics are not an option.

## Show your child fun games such as solitaire or dominoes which can be played alone. Your child can also write stories or poems, either with a slate and stylus or on a braillewriter. Writing things down will allow your child and you to read these stories over and over.

## Your child might also enjoy a hobby such as some type of craft. Creating art from clay, scented markers, crayons with a screen board, craft sticks, or any other type of art materials can all be enjoyable. As your child grows older, she may enjoy learning to knit or crochet. It is fun and important to have a hobby or a way of entertaining yourself. It leads her to be a happy, creative person later in life.

## Being a social butterfly and being entertained by others is great; entertainment with technology is also a great thing. But, knowing there are also fun and creative ways to enjoy quiet times will help your child be a more well-rounded, thoughtful, and engaging person. So enjoy a quieter new year in 2016. We hope to hear from you about ways you've found to keep entertained!

## Buzzes and Tweets

Follow [@NFB\_Voice](https://nfb.org/sites/all/modules/civicrm/extern/url.php?u=3730&qid=568205) on Twitter to get news and information from the NFB.

Follow [@BrailleLiteracy](https://nfb.org/sites/all/modules/civicrm/extern/url.php?u=3731&qid=568205) on Twitter to get timely Braille news, information, and tips. Like the [National Federation of the Blind on Facebook](https://nfb.org/sites/all/modules/civicrm/extern/url.php?u=3732&qid=568205) to stay current with all of the new things happening at the NFB Jernigan Institute.

## Books for Busy Bees

If you are looking to expand your child’s Braille library, check out the [Braille storybook resources webpage](https://nfb.org/sites/all/modules/civicrm/extern/url.php?u=3733&qid=568205) for information on free books, lending libraries, and Braille book retailers.

[The NFB Braille Reading Pals Club](https://nfb.org/sites/all/modules/civicrm/extern/url.php?u=3734&qid=568205) **and** [NFB Early Explorers](https://nfb.org/sites/all/modules/civicrm/extern/url.php?u=3735&qid=568205) programs are sponsored in part by the National Organization of Parents of Blind Children and the American Action Fund for Blind Children and Adults. For more information please contact:

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