**Literacy Links and Resources**

Literacy has commonly been defined as the ability to read and write. However, that definition has placed literacy beyond the scope of possibility for some individuals who have complex sensory, physical or developmental challenges. Communication and literacy develop concurrently and cannot be considered in isolation. It’s important to recognize and consider this inter-relatedness. Many of the resources below are taken from the fields of visual impairment and deaf-blindness, but can be effective when used with other populations. They provide strategies and tools that demonstrate the relationship between communication and literacy. While many of the tools, such as story boxes and experience books are used for exposure to literacy materials in Levels I - IV, once individuals have become symbolic communicators, these same tools can be as ways for the individual to respond to questions about stories, to request stories, to share in reading, and produce a “written” product.

**Websites:**

**NCDB Literacy website:** <http://literacy.nationaldb.org/> A website with wonderful guidelines and examples of literacy instruction for individuals with vision and hearing loss at all levels of literacy. A [Literacy Checklist](http://literacy.nationaldb.org/files/7914/7672/3022/Literacy_Skills_Checklist_English.pdf) guides you to resources at the individual’s level.

· [Building a Foundation for Literacy](http://literacy.nationaldb.org/index.php/building-foundation/)

· [Early Emergent Literacy](http://literacy.nationaldb.org/index.php/early-emergent-literacy/)

· [Emergent Literacy](http://literacy.nationaldb.org/index.php/emergent-literacy/)

**Paths to Literacy**: <https://www.pathstoliteracy.org/> A website collaboration between the Perkins School for the Blind and the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired with loads of great ideas from teachers on all topics literacy.

**Tar Heel Reader** <https://tarheelreader.org/> Tar Heel Reader is a collection of free, easy-to-read, and accessible books on a wide range of topics. Each book can be speech enabled and accessed using multiple interfaces, including touch screens, the IntelliKeys with custom overlays, and 1 to 3 switches.

**Articles and Presentations**

**The Development of Tactile Skills**: from the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired <https://www.tsbvi.edu/tx-senseabilities/issues/fall-winter-2016/the-development-of-tactile-skills> This article provides information on the development of tactile skills in students with visual impairments, including those with low vision. It explains the importance of the Hierarchy of Tactile Skills and includes suggestions for activities and resources

**Early Literacy for Students with Multiple Disabilities or Deafblindness** <https://www.perkins.org/resource/early-literacy-students-multiple-disabilities-or-deafblindness/> A 20-minute presentation by Deidre Leech from the Perkins School for the Blind on the challenges addressing literacy for students with multiple disabilities, and some early literacy strategies.

**Literacy Materials for individuals with complex communication needs**

* **Literacy and deaf-blindness:**  From the Washington Deaf-Blind Project- (11 minute video) Examples of literacy materials for students with dual sensory impairments. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V6CacrK353o&t=6s>
* **Story Buckets**- Maximizing Literacy Opportunities in Everyday Experiences - an article by Gwen McCormack with ideas for using real materials to help individuals access stories. <https://www.tsbvi.edu/tx-senseabilities/issues/spring-2018/maximizing-literacy-opportunities-in-everyday-experiences>
* **Experience Books:** A great introductory article to explain the how and why of experience books. <https://www.pathstoliteracy.org/language-experience-books>

Tips on creating and using experience books: <https://wsds.wa.gov/experience-books-faqs/>

* **Story Boxes:** A Hands-On Literacy Experience: A tip-sheet from the Nevada Dual Sensory <https://www.unr.edu/ndsip/english/resources/tips/story-boxes-a-hands-on-literacy-experience>
* **Talking Photo Albums:** A short tip sheet from the Nevada Dual Sensory Impairment Project with ideas for using talking photo albums in literacy activities. <https://www.unr.edu/ndsip/english/resources/tips/talking-photo-albums>
* **Social Stories:** This is a page on a website- PBIS.com that has links to lots of social stories that can give you great ideas about creating books to go along with daily routines, emotions, and problematic behaviors. The website is focused on students with autism, and how to design social stories.<https://www.pbisworld.com/tier-2/social-stories/>
* **The Tell Me Program:** A classroom-wide approach for preschool children starting to use augmentative and alternative communication with core vocabulary. Available from Attainment Company. <https://www.attainmentcompany.com/tell-me-program>

Modules for more intensive literacy study

* **Literacy for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities**

Modules developed by the Center for Literacy and Disability Studies at the University of North Carolina that provide introductory information on various instructional research-based practices and how they can be applied with students with cognitive, communication, physical, and sensory challenges. <https://www.livebinders.com/play/play?present=true&id=959405#anchor>

* **Literacy for Children Who are Deaf-Blind: Building a Foundation**  A module developed to go with the NCDB Literacy Website. The module has four learning activities, one of which discusses the link between communication and literacy. <https://www.nationaldb.org/products/modules/literacy/>