

C O N S U L T A N T S'

O R N E R



SD School for the Blind
and Visually Impaired

SPRING 2009
Volume 11 Issue 3
Editor: Riki Nitz

SPRING HAS SPRUNG!! BUT IT'S TIME TO PLAN AHEAD FOR SUMMER TOO. CHECK OUT THE DATES OF OUR SUMMER PROGRAMS BELOW AND IF YOU HAVE NOT REGISTERED YET, NOW IS THE TIME!



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SUMMER PROGRAMS 2009

Dates for the Summer Programs offered at SDSBVI in June and July 2009 are:

Session I

- Week 1: June 8-12
- Week 2: June 15-19
- Week 3: June 22-26

Session II

- Week 4: July 13-17
- Week 5: July 20-24
- Week 6: July 27-31

SDSBVI Summer Programs specifically address and provide opportunities for students to focus on the **EXPANDED CORE CURRICULUM (ECC)** for Students with Visual Impairments.

Areas addressed include:

- Compensatory Academic Skills, including Communication Modes (Braille)
- Orientation and Mobility (Cane and Travel Skills)
- Social Interaction Skills
- Independent Living Skills
- Recreation and Leisure Skills
- Career Education
- Assistive Technology
- Sensory Efficiency Skills (Auditory/Tactile/Visual)
- Self-Determination (Advocating for Self)

For more information, please contact SDSBVI at 626-2580 or 1-888-275-3814.

SEE YOU THIS SUMMER!

APH Educational Materials

<http://www.aph.org>

Setting the Stage for Tactile Understanding: "Making Tactile Pictures Make Sense" is a set of tangible items and activities that assists young tactile readers in making the transition from the exploration of real objects to the interpretation of two-dimensional representations, both in thermoformed formats and simple raised-line illustrations. A three-dimensional house model aids with advanced understanding of scale and perspective.

Recommended Ages: 5 years and older

Tangle Toy® – With its infinite knot shapes and variety of colors and textures, the Tangle Toy® can be used in various forms to encourage a child to explore, move, and play. It includes segments that feature bright colors, each color with its own unique texture. The curved segments can be combined to create a high-contrast toy that can be twisted into an infinite number of shapes. This provides a visually and tactually interesting object to help catch a child's attention.

Because each colored segment has its own texture, activities that are focused on using specific colors are easily adapted for the child who is blind.

The activities and games in the Tangle Book help sighted and visually impaired peers refine motor skills, color discrimination, and tactile discrimination.

These products are available from the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) for purchase and can also be borrowed from your area Outreach Vision Consultant. For more information on these products or other APH products, please contact your area Outreach Vision Consultant.

YouTube and Facebook

APH has recently created YouTube and Facebook sites. On YouTube, you can see a short version of the new video "Gateway to Knowledge," which gives a general overview of APH. Videos that show Braille production and Talking Books production are also posted there.

Visit these sites, add your comments, become a subscriber, and find out what's going on at APH.

<http://youtube.com/user/aphftb>

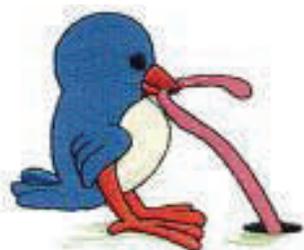
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/American-Printing-House-for-the-Blind/18541793028>

2009 Sports Camp Resource

Do you like swimming, goalball, judo, skiing, canoeing, or horseback riding? Camp is a great way to meet new friends and try new sports. Find the camp nearest you and register early. Each camp offers a variety of sports and recreation activities to keep you happy and healthy.

Check out the 2009 sports camp list on the APH PE Website at:

www.aph.org/pe/camps/html



The only way to avoid mistakes is to gain experience. The only way to gain experience is to make mistakes.

FAMILY SUPPORT GROUPS

ABERDEEN

The SD NAPVI / Aberdeen Family Support Group met several times during this school year. One of the first meetings of the year involved the Special Olympics bowling tournament. Parents were invited to volunteer at this fun event—and many thanks to those parents that attended and helped out! In November, Dawn Brush, a former SDSBVI student and employee, shared experiences of her life growing up blind. Then in January, parents had the opportunity to have some hands-on learning with assistive technology devices, displayed by Dakota Link. Jane Mundschenk, Orientation & Mobility Specialist for SDSBVI, did a "mobility lesson" with parents in February in which they experienced cane skills first-hand. And in April, a group of parents ate lunch under blindfolds and simulators, encountering the challenges of this "simple" task!

The group is currently planning *Dinner in the Dark*. This special fundraising event will take place Friday, June 12, 2009 from 6-8 p.m. in the SDSBVI gym. Guests will enjoy a three-course dinner under blindfold, and a guest speaker will be presenting. There will also be an auction following dinner. Tickets are \$15.00 per person and proceeds will go to support families of children with visual impairments. If you would like tickets to this fun event, contact Amy Scepaniak, Julie Van Dover, or SDSBVI at 626-2580 or 1-888-275-3814. We hope to see you there! So mark your calendar now to come experience a unique activity of fun and laughter!



Kelli Meister



Rhiannon Zahm
Karla Schlosser

SIOUX FALLS

Families in the Sioux Falls area have had the opportunity to meet during the school year also. In October, Sandy Ellenbolt from South Dakota Parent Connection informed parents about SD Parent Connection. Families enjoyed visiting with Sandy and with each other. In April, families met once again to share a meal and enjoy another guest speaker, Keith Bundy. Keith spoke of his experiences growing up without vision and the importance of promoting independence. Parents really enjoyed Keith's presentation and spending time with him!



Participants Listening to Keith



Keith Bundy



Participants Listening to Keith

For parents who have not had the opportunity to take part in either one of these groups, please consider joining us. We all enjoy the time together learning about visual impairments as well as sharing our own life experiences! And if you have any suggestions for speakers or topics for upcoming meetings, please share those ideas with your Outreach Vision Consultant.

CLASSROOM ADAPTATIONS FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

TECHNIQUES

- Know the functional visual needs of each student.
- Plan the daily program with alternating periods of near vision tasks and less demanding visual tasks.
- Be aware that vision may fluctuate due to:
 - visual condition or disease
 - fatigue
 - lighting conditions
 - amount of contrast available
 - environmental conditions
 - medications
- Make all board writing large and clear and place it in the line of vision of the student.
- Verbalize all board writing.
- Minimize copying. The student should use his/her vision to work the problem, learn the concepts, and read the material – not copy great amounts of material.
- Minimize clutter in pictures and materials. For more detailed pictures, verbally describe the details, as many students with visual impairments miss details that others see.
- Provide lists of assignments/notes in advance.
- Provide copies of overheads in advance.
- Be aware of color and contrast in materials – provide good contrast.
- Use concrete rather than abstract objects as much as possible.
- Allow students to tactilely handle materials being shown or demonstrated.
- Allow extra time to complete assignments and tests.

WEBSITES TO EXPLORE

Interactive Developmental Milestones Checklist

The *Interactive Developmental Milestones Checklist* is a free online resource for families on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website, available in both English and Spanish. Selecting the age of your child (3 months to 5 years) and then filling out this checklist is a great way to record the milestones your child is reaching or as a way to share your child's development with the doctor or nurse at the next checkup. Find lots of other information and free resources also that will help you "Learn the Signs and Act Early" on childhood developmental disorders. Visit and explore at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/ActEarly/interactive/index.html>

Do2Learn:

Educational Resources for Special Needs

This website is a source for a variety of writing paper for beginning writers. It also has a variety of other activities and games to explore, such as art projects, card games, shape recognition, sorting/matching, and songs.

Visit and explore at:

<http://www.do2learn.com/activities/writingtools/index.htm>

SD B&TBL 2009 Summer Reading Program

"Be Creative @ Your Library"

Parents and Teachers—Encourage your child/student to read books of their choice during the summer by participating in the Governor's Summer Reading Program, sponsored by the SD Braille & Talking Book Library, with the support of the SD Lion's Foundation. The program is offered for all registered students ages 7-15 and runs from June 8—July 17, 2009. Age divisions for both braille and recorded format are: 7-9, 10-12, and 13-15. This year's theme is "Be Creative @ Your Library."

Participants can only read recorded or Braille books for the program. No regular print or large print books are allowed.

Participants are required to submit an oral or written book report. Students submitting the most book reports, with or without assistance in writing, will be the winner in their age division. Incentives are mailed throughout the program. The more book reports returned, the more prizes given!

Plaques will be awarded to the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners in both divisions. First place winners receive their plaques at an awards program held in August.

A registration form is available from the Braille & Talking Book Library. For more information, call the B&TBL @ 1-800-423-6665 and ask for Mary Sjerven, Summer Reading Program Coordinator.

SPEAKABOOS

Classic Stories for Children

Looking for a great way to incorporate technology with reading stories while building speaking and listening abilities?

Check out Speakaboos!

This is an accessible and fun website where children can go to listen to classic fables, nursery rhymes, fairy tales, folk tales, and lullabies that are narrated by several talented celebrities. They can also play games, write in a diary, and even record their own voices reading or singing.

Visit today at:

<http://www.speakaboos.com>



Books Featuring Characters with Blindness and Visual Impairment

A Cane in Her Hand by Ada B. Litchfield

Grades 1-4

Valerie learns new skills and techniques from a vision specialist as her sight changes.

Shark Shock by Donna Jo Napoli

Grades 3-6

Eleven-year-old Adam makes friends with a boy who is blind during his family's vacation at the beach.

Belonging by Deborah Kent

Grades 7-12

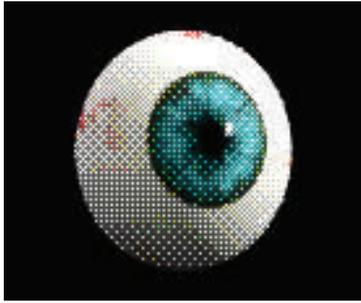
Longing to be like everyone else, fifteen-year-old Meg decides to enroll in public school instead of returning to a school for the blind.

DAKOTAS AER CONFERENCE— "ADVENTURES IN VISION"

The annual Dakotas AER Conference was held April 30-May 1, 2009, in Fargo, ND. The featured speaker was Tom Sullivan. Blind from birth due to retinopathy of prematurity (ROP), Tom is a singer and composer, author, former ABC correspondent, and motivational speaker. His presentation, "Adventures in the Dark," and his humor and positive attitude towards life were very inspiring and uplifting.

BOOKS BY TOM SULLIVAN

- ◆ "If You Could See What I Hear"
- ◆ "Adventures in Darkness: Memoirs of an Eleven-Year-Old Blind Boy"
- ◆ "Seeing Lessons: 14 Life Secrets I've Learned Along the Way"



FOCUS ON THE EYE

ANOPHTHALMIA / ANOPHTHALMOS

Description

Anophthalmia/Anophthalmos, also known as Microphthalmia (small eye), is the congenital absence of one or both eyes. These terms are often used interchangeably since CT scans or MRI's show some remnants of either the globe or surrounding tissue in most cases. Anophthalmia/Microphthalmia (A/M) may affect one eye with the other eye being normal, or both eyes,

resulting in blindness in the affected eye(s).

Children born with anophthalmia should be seen by a geneticist as soon as possible. The geneticist and genetic counselor can help the family coordinate the special care and early intervention the child may need. They will also discuss the possibility of this happening again in the family. Genetic tests may help make a diagnosis, but it is important to realize that a normal chromosome test does not rule out a genetic cause. It only means the cause is unknown for the time being.

Classifications

There are three classifications for this condition:

- Primary anophthalmia: a complete absence of eye tissue due to a failure of the part of the brain that forms the eye.
- Secondary anophthalmia: the eye starts to develop and for some reason stops, leaving the infant with only residual eye tissue or extremely small eyes which can only be seen under close examination.
- Degenerative anophthalmia: the eye started to form and, for some reason, degenerated. One reason for this occurring could be a lack of blood supply to the eye.

Causes

Anophthalmia can be congenital (present at birth) or acquired later in life. Congenital anophthalmia can occur alone or along with other birth defects. Researchers are currently working on locating the gene or genes involved with the developing eye. Finding these genes may lead to many answers about anophthalmia and enable genetic professionals to provide more accurate counseling and recurrence risks. Causes of these conditions may include genetic mutations and abnormal chromosomes. Researchers also believe that environmental factors, such as exposure to X-rays, chemicals, drugs, pesticides, toxins, radiation, or viruses, increase the risk of anophthalmia and microphthalmia, but research is not conclusive. Sometimes the cause in an individual patient cannot be determined.

Treatment

A newborn with anophthalmia will need to see an ophthalmologist and ocularist immediately. The ocular orbits are very important in facial development. If the orbital globe is missing or too small, the face will not grow properly. Conformers, which are plastic structures made by an ocularist, help support the growth of the eye socket and the bones in the face. As the face develops, new conformers will need to be made. A child with anophthalmia may also need to use expanders in addition to conformers to further enlarge the eye socket. Once the face is fully developed, prosthetic eyes can be made and placed in the eye sockets. Prosthetic eyes will not restore vision. The ocularist works closely with the ophthalmologist and oculoplastic surgeon to make conformers and prosthetic eyes that are best for the child.

Educational Implications

- If anophthalmia affects both eyes, resulting in total blindness, the student will need to be taught the skills of blindness as addressed in the Expanded Core Curriculum, such as Braille and Orientation and Mobility (cane travel).
- If the student is blind in one eye only, depth perception is affected. Caution should be used in fast moving activities (such as basketball) and safety should be a priority. Preferential seating should also be considered.

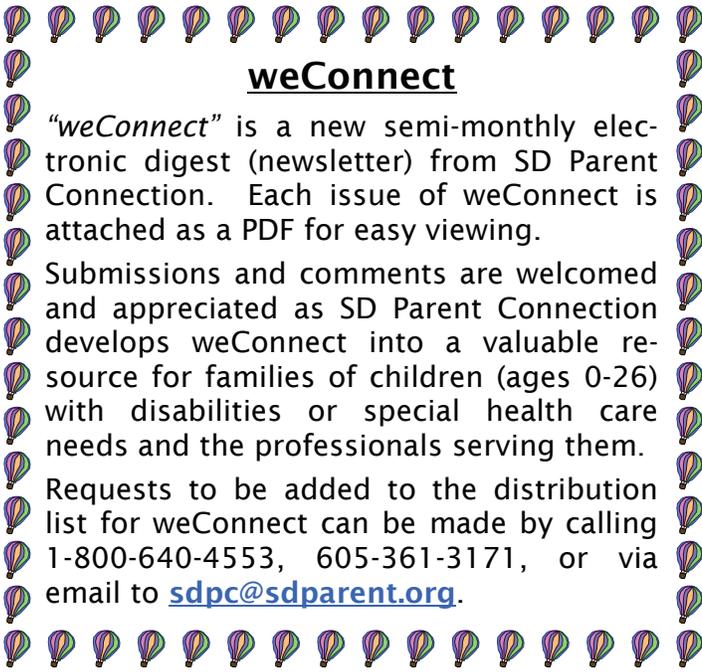
Teaching Strategies

- For a totally blind student:
 - Use a multi-sensory approach to teaching
 - Allow extra time to explore his/her environment
 - Verbalize what is happening in his/her environment
 - Use a hand-over-hand or a hand-under-hand approach in teaching concepts
 - Allow student to tactilely handle materials being shown or demonstrated
 - Use concrete rather than abstract objects as much as possible
- For students with vision in one eye:
 - Preferential seating
 - Be aware of depth perception issues, such as misjudging heights of stairs or curbs, having difficulty catching a ball, and reading, which may become fatiguing
 - Provide visual breaks



Sources

www.wikipedia.org / www.anophthalmia.org / www.nei.nih.gov



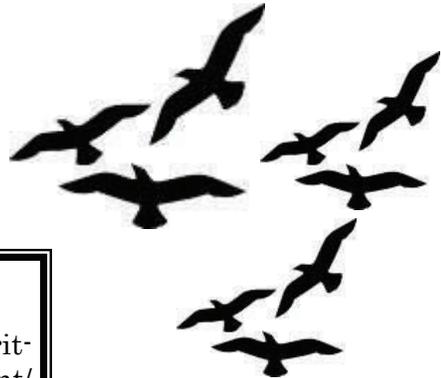
weConnect

"weConnect" is a new semi-monthly electronic digest (newsletter) from SD Parent Connection. Each issue of weConnect is attached as a PDF for easy viewing.

Submissions and comments are welcomed and appreciated as SD Parent Connection develops weConnect into a valuable resource for families of children (ages 0-26) with disabilities or special health care needs and the professionals serving them.

Requests to be added to the distribution list for weConnect can be made by calling 1-800-640-4553, 605-361-3171, or via email to sdpc@sdparent.org.

* In order to maintain a *
* well-balanced perspec- *
* tive, the person who *
* has a dog to worship *
* him should also have a *
* cat to ignore him. *



STUDENT CORNER

We welcome any and all special presentations, awards, writings, etc. achieved by our outreach students. If your student/child has such a contribution and would like to be featured in our Student Corner, please contact your area Outreach Vision Consultant or email the contribution directly to Riki Nitz, Editor, at riki.nitz@sdsbvi.northern.edu.

*"The wind is a blind man's fog."
Virginia Miller*

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