



Royal Society for Blind Children

How can I help my child learn braille?

If you are not familiar with braille yourself, you might be wondering how you can help your child to learn braille. Not all children who have a vision impairment will be braille users. Your child's Qualified Teacher for Vision Impairment (QTVI) can advise you as to whether they think braille is suitable for your child.

What is braille?

Braille is a tactile code which is read through the finger pads/tips. It is formed of cells which comprise of 6 dots. The dots within a cell are raised in various combinations to make letters, numbers, punctuation, groups of letters or words. Braille comes in different languages. In the UK, we use Unified English Braille (UEB). Braille comes in two grades; grade 1, which is uncontracted and grade 2, which is contracted. Contracted braille words or parts of words are shortened to save space. Numbers, maths and music can also be produced in braille.

Preparing for braille

Even if you aren't sure if your child is going to be a braille user, these activities are fun, and will build strength in the fingers and hands! Perfect for developing other skills in the future!

Lots of play activities will help build the strength your child needs to become a future braille user! Tactile activities, or activities that involve using the hands, fingers or wrists will all be great for building strength.

- Encourage tactile play: explore lots of different textures with fingers and fingertips.
- Build strong fingers: pop bubble wrap, play with poppits. Can you do one finger at a time, two fingers together or three fingers together? Try doing both hands at the same time too!
- Have a hand workout: Squeeze some playdoh, or a stress ball!

- Work those wrists: Twist on and off some lids, practice waving or maybe do some yoga poses – anything that involves putting some weight through hands and wrists!
- Cook up a storm: practice all your skills by adding a pinch of sugar, cracking an egg, and stirring it all together with a spoon. Make something tasty and work out your fingers, hands, and wrists in the process.
- Practice using your fingers: keyboards are great for isolating some finger movement for a purpose.
- Experience braille: Feel braille: on signs or in books, talk about it, what it says or its purpose.

Learning braille

When it comes to your child beginning to learn braille, their QTVI will be there to provide advice and support. They will also provide the right equipment to help your child. Although this may only be in school to start with. You may decide that you also want to learn braille, you can ask your QTVI for advice or there are courses you can take online like this [UEB Online Course](#).

Braille equipment

Before you buy any expensive equipment for your child, it is worth asking their QTVI about what they might need and what can be provided by the school and the service.

Braille books

You can borrow braille books from your local library service, the [RNIB Library](#) or from the [Clearvision Project](#) postal library which contain both the print and braille, for free, so you can read with them and support them to learn!

Our Families First team of family practitioners are here to support you through your child's early years and into the future.

RSBC can help you with:

- practical advice about your child's development
- support when you feel overwhelmed.
- understanding your child's vision impairment better
- living as a family and being supportive of each other

Call 020 3198 0225 or email connections@rsbc.org.uk

