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An Annotated Bibliography of Readings for Parents of Visually Impaired Children

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An Annotated Bibliography of Readings
for Parents of Visually Impaired Children

A Research Paper
Presented to the
Faculty of the Library Science Department

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

This research project provides an annotated list of recommended readings for parents of visually impaired children. Selection for the list was determined by a) copyright date of 1980 or later, b) two or more recommendations from professionals working with VI children or organizations supporting the VI population, and c) availability from Iowa Commission for the Blind or Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School. Forty-seven responses were received from the 101 educational settings and organizations asked to recommend readings for parents of the visually impaired. Thirty-six titles compose the final annotated list. It is divided into six categories: autobiography, child development, coping, education for the child, education for the parent, and parent/child activities. Annotations range from 30-60 words.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Parental influence on the success of children is a well-documented fact. "Even though a child grows up under a variety of conditions, he will survive very well if he has a good healthy relationship with his parents" (Webster, 1977, p. 22). This is true for any parent-child relationship. For the visually impaired child the importance is magnified. "The symbiotic relationship between the primary caretaker and the congenitally blind child is more intense than any other human bond" (Eldridge, 1985, p. 109).

It may seem that parent-child bonding could be assumed. However, most parents must struggle for acceptance of their handicapped child. They face the loss of a dream. Many sources describe situations similar to those experienced by Webster when he states, "I have even had parents of children who I have worked with confess that they wished their baby had died at birth" (p. 22). He goes on to explain that their attitudes usually change, but this was the initial reaction.

This researcher developed an interest in this subject in the initial weeks of her employment as librarian at Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School (IBSSS). IBSSS is a state residential school for the visually impaired with students ranging in age from 4-21 years. As a result of discussions with other professionals at the school, the state vision consultant, and the liaison teachers who work directly with parents on a regular basis, the monumental task of parenting a visually impaired child became apparent.

It is often asserted that blind children are just like other children, only that they cannot see. But it is this 'only that they cannot see' which upsets parents emotionally and makes their task of bringing up a visually handicapped child

more difficult and at the same time more challenging.
(Scott, Jan, and Freeman, 1977, p. vii)

Meeting and conversing with families of visually impaired children visiting the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School campus reaffirmed this early observation. Lois Harrell, a home counselor, states, "Parents of blind children are devastated by their recognition of vulnerability and by the loss of a dream" (Eldridge, 1983, p. 109).

Further study also supported this observation. In an attempt to take a small part in reducing parental frustration, a letter from the library was composed every two weeks to be sent home with each student. It described additions to the library collection which might be helpful to parents or, most often, included excerpted articles of interest to parents from professional periodicals. The researcher began to question how parents became aware of available services and resources. Liaison personnel do their best, but materials listings for parents are limited as a review of the literature disclosed. Plus,

Just as children exhibit readiness to learn certain skills at certain times, parents also can be seen at different readiness levels for involvement in special education programs. (Somers, 1982, p. 19)

Purpose and Problem Statement

Because blindness is one of the oldest recognized handicaps, it has had the attention of professionals for many years. In Iowa the school for the visually impaired is the second oldest educational institution in the state. For these reasons the researcher believes a wide variety of pertinent and helpful materials exist for parents of visually impaired children. A categorized, annotated listing of them is what is unavailable. One purpose of this study is to satisfy this need for an annotated list of recommended materials for parents.

Another purpose of this study is to "accept, support, and encourage parents at all levels and provide an environment that promotes growth in parents, just as we do for children" (Somer, 1982, p. 19).

In order to achieve this end, what readings could be recommended to parents of visually impaired children? What do parents want to know and need to know?

The results of this study will provide answers to these parental concerns:

What are children with little or no sight really like? Can they grow and develop like other children? Where do they go to school? Do blind people ever get married? Can they work and earn a living? Do they live in a world of darkness? Can they be happy? (Scott, Jan, and Freeman, 1977, p. ix)

A list of readings has been produced which a counselor can recommend and a parent can easily use when needed.

Significance of the Study

The difficulty of parenting a visually handicapped child can be lessened considerably by knowledge of legal rights and services and resources available to both the child and the family. Parents must be aware of the importance of their role, especially in the child's first years, and this study will help them develop that awareness. Parents need to realize that "eighty-seven percent of the information we absorb in our average daily routine is visual" (Floyd, 1981, p. 513). This does not mean visually impaired children learn eighty-seven percent less; it simply means they must acquire this information through senses other than sight.

Information for parents of visually handicapped children can be difficult to locate. This is not because the services are inadequate, but rather the problem involves the lines of communication that get

information to the parents. The information the parent receives may also be outdated or worded in highly technical language.

Iowa State Vision Consultant, Dr. Alan Koenig, works directly with parents of visually impaired children. His office and staff at Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School respond to requests throughout the state for vision screening. In questioning Dr. Koenig about services to parents one of his first remarks concerned the list of readings now available. He said even though it is comprehensive, "without annotations how can a parent know where to begin on this list or which items are written in language a parent can understand?" His question underscored the need for an annotated list of readings for parents. Vision professionals can use it themselves and offer it to parents along with other information on services available in Iowa.

The listing of readings for parents should aid a counselor in guiding parents, and the categories of topics and annotations of sources should enable the parents to select desirable readings. Ultimately, this report should support every parent's goal for the child "to learn courage and independence, to be curious about the world around him, to be friendly to people, and to be happy within himself" (Scott, Jan, and Freeman, 1977, p. ix).

Definitions

Some terms which have been used thus far and will be used throughout this study need defining. "Parent" refers to a child's primary caregiver whether that is the child's biological parent, another relative, or someone else who has assumed that responsibility. The terms "visual impairment" and "visual handicap" will be used interchangeably by the researcher to mean limited vision that interferes with educational or

developmental progress, or both. The common abbreviation, "VI", may be substituted for either of these terms. "Blind" means a visual limitation which requires dependence on tactile and auditory media for learning. "Transition" is defined as that period when the child moves beyond the educational setting into the working world.

Limitations

This bibliography is limited to printed materials available from the Iowa Commission for the Blind or Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School, published in 1980 or later. It includes books and pamphlets which have been recommended by two professionals currently working with the VI population or by at least two organizations or institutions dealing with visual impairments or handicaps.

Assumptions

Preparation of this list assumes parents want to know how best to help their handicapped child. It also assumes parents are willing to take an active part in the educational process of that child. Encouragement by professionals in the VI field can help reluctant parents toward this end. The researcher believes the list created by this study will be valuable to parents initially curious about their child's handicap and valuable also to those parents needing encouragement.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

A variety of literature was reviewed to discover concerns of parents of visually impaired children and to ascertain what was currently available in terms of an annotated list of readings for these parents. Procedures vary from one state to another. In Iowa once a child is diagnosed as visually impaired, notification should be sent to the Iowa Commission for the Blind. Counseling would then be available. A mother in New Jersey whose counselor also came from the Commission for the Blind says,

The children's adjustment, my adjustment, my learning to work with the kids and with the educational system and the library - all depended on the help the counselor gave me. Ignorant parents walking around feeling guilty about their handicapped child had better find a good counselor, because the counselor is the all-important source of information for parents and children. (Eldridge, 1985, p. 13)

Such counselors should inform the parent of available services, resources, and legal rights. They will also direct parents to appropriate support groups.

Perhaps initially the parent feels competent to handle the necessary procedures. But at some point in traversing the special education maze most parents need help. This help may come from the original counselor, from the state vision consultant, from an itinerant teacher of the visually impaired at an Area Educational Agency, or from a teacher at Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School. Because each situation is unique, the parent needs information in a written form to have at hand as questions arise. Parents need listings of agencies which serve visually impaired children, listings of organizations which supply information and support, and a listing of readings by which to learn how best to handle their special child. As one mother describes it:

When Jason lost his sight...there was so much that we had to learn. We didn't know where to go, who to turn to, what to do about so many things. No one should ever have to find information the way I have had to. (Eldridge, 1985, p. 45)

This annotated bibliography addresses part of the needs of parents.

Nousanen and Robinson state it clearly by saying, "Remember that as the parent you are the most important person in your child's life...It takes work, but it is worth it" (p. ix).

Parents of VI children have many concerns and needs. Scott, Jan, and Freeman address these concerns in Can't Your Child See? Written directly to parents of VI children the chapter titles enumerate the major concerns and needs. Chapter 1 covers the initial diagnosis and parental reactions to that. Chapter 2 discusses various eye conditions. Chapter 3 and 4 cover infant and toddler development. Day-to-day family life is addressed in Chapter 5 and the next chapter concerns multiply handicapped children, "whose preponderance among the visually handicapped is increasing" (Scott, Jan and Freeman, 1977, p. vii). Chapter 7 covers play and playthings and Chapter 8 discusses nursery school and kindergarten, the early educational setting. Chapters 9 and 10 cover later schooling and transition. These chapters encompass the major parental concerns. As one mother recalls,

When Mary was first born and we were told that she was blind, I experienced that first feeling of despair and defeat which I am sure confronts all mothers when they are made aware of the baby's blindness. First of all, I hated people for their thoughtlessness, their unkind stares, and whispered remarks. This was overcome by facing and realizing that Mary was blind, and it was a matter of ridding myself of my own self-consciousness. Having a blind child, I felt at first, was something to hide, rather than face the endless questions of unthinking strangers. When I finally faced it, it wasn't half so bad. I decided to concentrate on the development of Mary into a happy, contented, and good-natured child." (Scott, Jan, and Freeman, 1977, p. 11)

This statement capsulizes the major parental concerns: initial feelings

of despair and defeat, facing the sighted public, learning to overcome the self-consciousness, learning how best to help the child develop which would include exploring educational options and practicing special parent/child activities, and finally, helping the happy, contented, good-natured child become a happy, contented, good-natured adult.

Besides studying general concerns of parents of VI children, ten bibliographies of materials for parents and educators of blind/visually handicapped children were reviewed by the researcher. Three of these were simple alphabetical listings of literature. One listed toys and records and six were annotated listings.

Each of the three with straight alphabetical listings had a different focus or intended audience. None of them included the criteria for selection. American Printing House for the Blind (1987) compiled a selected bibliography of recent early childhood literature on blind/visually handicapped children. It is intended for professionals. While many titles were complete enough to be self-explanatory, a parent beginning a search for information in such a list would be confused and possibly overwhelmed. A brief bibliography, Parental Attitudes, compiled in 1970, listed books and periodical articles which examined the effect of parental attitudes on the success of the child. It included articles about all ages of visually impaired children from preschool through adolescence. It could have been helpful to a parent, but without annotations the parent would have to guess in making selections.

The third one reviewed, produced by Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School (n.d.), is intended for parents. It lists materials available from Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School which parents, teachers, and professionals can borrow. The focus is on parental concerns. The divisions or categories are:

parents' resources
 mainstreaming/Public Law 94-142
 education
 child development
 parent/child activities
 coping
 toys/aids to make
 parenting
 autobiographies
 orientation and mobility/daily living skills

Here again personal knowledge of many of these materials reassured the researcher of their merit. However, annotations would add a great deal of direction for a parent struggling toward knowledge and acceptance of a child's visual impairment.

The one bibliography reviewed which listed toys and records was compiled specifically for families of the visually impaired. It was intended to guide the parents and grandparents or other interested persons in their selection and purchase of toys. The list begins with a key to category abbreviations for purpose (i.e., FM - Fine Motor Coordination, RR - Reading Readiness, SM - Shape Matching, etc.) and a numbered list of manufacturers and addresses. Then toys are listed in table format with categories for recommended age, manufacturer, description and cost, and purpose (using the abbreviations listed earlier). The recommended records are simply listed by title with cost, and a brief description of the activities on the record is also provided. This list would be helpful for parents and provides much information in a clear manner.

The six annotated bibliographies of resources and readings reviewed can be separated by those intended for parents and those intended for professionals working with VI children. The professional bibliographies are listed in the Yearbooks of the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (1984, 1985, 1987). Annotations vary in length from 25-250 words. Language is technical and

listings are alphabetical by author. The intent is to provide a complete list of professional literature related to serious visual impairment. These have limited application to this research project.

Take Charge! (1980), a small, yellow, spiral-bound volume, is the most inviting in appearance of the items intended for parents. The cover shows a clever sketch of a woman in an apron, with a telephone receiver to her ear, reading a paper presumably drawn from an open file drawer marked "My Child". Information within this volume is down-to-earth basics for parents and is limited to national level organizations and resources. The contents are divided into 16 categories, and chapter titles are phrased in the questioning format a parent might use. The categories used by Nousanen and Robinson (1980) are:

- services
- medical and eye care
- legal rights
- benefits
- book and recorded materials sources
- special educational materials and equipment
- organizations
- journals concerning VI
- history of education and vision
- VI curricula
- books for parents of VI children
- books about educating VI children
- recreational activities
- films about blindness
- coping
- other sources of information

Annotations for organizations include their purpose and special functions and publications. Annotations for books contain one or two sentences describing the subject matter, the language level (simple to technical) and the intended audience. It concludes with a title index and a name index. Light-hearted sketches introduce each chapter and blank pages for notes are sprinkled throughout the text. It is a readable, useable resource for parents. Not surprisingly, it was produced by parents with

support from the National Association for Parents of the Visually Impaired.

In the opening remarks of her annotated bibliography Kathleen Craver (1983) acknowledges the change in the last ten years from primarily considering the vocational concerns to addressing the personal counseling needs of the handicapped. She divides her information by types of media: online bibliographic resources; print bibliographies for children, parents, and professionals; audio-visual materials, monographs, and pamphlets; and articles. All listings meet her criteria of viewing the handicapped as "strong, independent people...needing acceptance and the complete range of services counselors and professionals can offer" (Craver, 1983, p. 25).

"Selected Readings for Parents of Preschool Handicapped Children" (1986) presents a representative selection of books and periodical articles for parents. The emphasis is on publications appearing since 1979, works currently in print, and covering all major issues and concerns of parents. One section directly addresses parental issues and concerns; a second section deals with activities for skill development; the final section describes recommended periodicals for parents and preschoolers and related bibliographies.

One category not addressed in any research reviewed is that of transition or career planning. It is one the researcher planned to include. A parent must be constantly considering the child's future. By the time the child reaches the teen years a definite plan must be formulated with a transition counselor for further education or career training after high school.

In summary the most helpful bibliographies for parents contain annotations to guide the users in their selection of items. "Parenting,

at its best, is not a simple task; it is easy to become confused and uncertain at times" (Schuch, 1980, p. 42). Categorizing the list also aids a confused and uncertain parent in finding the specific information needed.

The Nousanan and Robinson (1980) book is probably the closest in intended purpose to this research project of any materials studied. It was published in 1980 and is the best parental resource the researcher located. It covers the major areas of concern for parents: legal and educational services, specialized materials sources, personal and family coping resources, educational needs of the child, and educational needs of the parent and family. It does this in a nonthreatening manner. The sketches and simplicity of the book encourage confidence in the parent that help is available and the child can live a happy, well-adjusted, meaningful life.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Data was gathered initially by sending a letter requesting bibliographies of recommended readings for parents from each state school for the visually impaired. Organizations supplying information, resources, or support for the visually impaired were also contacted by letter for listings of this nature. The source for the state schools and other organizations was the 22nd edition of the Directory of Agencies Serving the Visually Handicapped in the United States, published by the American Foundation for the Blind. It lists the organizations and educational settings in each of the fifty states. One hundred and one letters of request were sent. Appendix A lists the schools and agencies contacted. The letters not only asked for recommended readings for parents, but also noted that this research study will include only materials published since 1980.

From these lists the population was determined by the following criteria:

1. Print material available from the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School or Iowa Commission for the Blind
2. Publishing date of 1980 or later
3. Recommended by two or more professionals (persons currently working with the VI population) or organizations dealing with the VI population
4. May be either fiction or nonfiction concerning VI persons or families with a handicapped member

Once the population was determined the researcher began collecting the items to be analyzed. All were available from the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School professional collection. Another source for some of these items could have been the Iowa Commission for the Blind. Items unavailable from these sources were not included in this study.

The data gathering instrument, found in Appendix B, included categories for:

1. Bibliographic citation
2. Fiction, nonfiction, or autobiography
3. Major emphasis
4. Brief description/annotation of content
5. Where the item is available for loan

These categories provide the information a parent needs to distinguish between various items. The citation definitely identifies the item; fiction, nonfiction, or autobiography tells whether the information is factual or otherwise; the major emphasis designation categorizes the materials by the dominant concern of each item; the description/annotation area provides an overview of the content of each item; and the availability area informs the user where to find the item.

As the researcher reviewed each item in the population, the information was recorded on the data gathering instrument. The description/annotation segment was reviewed by Jill Roberts, an educator on the staff at Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School, to verify its relevance for parents of visually impaired children.

The final data is presented as an annotated bibliography. It is divided into the six categories used in the major emphasis section of the data gathering instrument: autobiographies, child development, coping with a handicap, educational materials for the child, educational materials for the parent, and parent/child activities. These six categories are a condensation of the major parental concerns outlined by Nousanan and Robinson (1980). These are not distinct and totally separate categories, but rather overlapping and interdependent areas of parental concern. The researcher determined the major emphasis of the item to place it in the appropriate category in the

bibliography. The researcher anticipated that some items would cover several areas of parental concern, but chose the area that seemed of major dominance.

Because autobiographies usually include some information about each of the other areas, they are listed separately. Materials whose dominant theme is how a visually impaired child develops concepts and learns about his world appear under the category of child development. Materials which deal with the stress and strain of raising a handicapped child fall into the coping category. This also includes materials for siblings of a handicapped child and other materials addressing family and marital stress caused by the presence of a handicapped child. The educational materials for children category includes those items describing educational settings and materials for VI children. The educational materials for parents category contains those items intended to teach parents about visual impairments and the learning needs of visually impaired children. For an intended legal information category the focus of the item had to be on special education laws and the legal rights of the handicapped. The parent/child activities category lists items detailing actual activities parents might share with their child. A transition category was intended to contain those items directing parents in their planning and preparation for their child's adult life.

CHAPTER 4

Annotated Bibliography

Autobiography

Wagner, Sally. How Do You Kiss a Blind Girl? Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1986.

Personal account of woman in her thirties who gradually lost her sight from complications of diabetes. Light-hearted and humorous, realistic but not pessimistic. Ms. Wagner learns minimal braille, never masters cane travel. She uses a dog guide and covers details of her adjustment. Readable and entertaining. 115 p.

Child Development

Ferrell, Kay Alicyn. Reach Out and Teach: Meeting the Training Needs of Parents of Visually and Multiply Handicapped Young Children. New York: American Foundation for the Blind, 1985.

Manual for parents based on input from over 500 parents. Provides at-home training. Reach Out and Teach series includes (1) Parent Handbook covering early childhood development, ideas and activities; (2) Reachbook, a workbook to record child's growth and development; (3) slide set or videotape which introduces the Parent Handbook; (4) Teacher's Manual for teachers. Handbook and Reachbook refer back and forth to one another. Parents can use all or part of suggested activities. Extensive bibliography. 257 p.

Harrell, Lois, and Nancy Akeson. Preschool Vision Stimulation: It's More than a Flashlight! New York: American Foundation for the Blind, 1987.

Explains implications of visual impairment on early childhood development. Covers many low vision situations. Charts describe sequence of visual development, considerations, stimulation techniques. Photographs. Extensive glossary. Bibliography. 49 p.

Hug, Doris, Nancy Chernus-Mansfield, and Dori Hayashi. Move with Me. Los Angeles: Blind Children's Center, n.d.

Explains why visually impaired babies need assistance in movement development. Suggests positions for infant which promote movement with the newborn, the premature baby, and the toddler. Emphasizes the importance of the child learning to explore. Photographs. 13 p.

Kastein, Shulamith, Isabelle Spaulding, and Battia Scharf. Raising the Young Blind Child. New York: Human Sciences, 1980.

Describes how parents and other family members can help the blind child overcome developmental hazards of a visual deficit. Details

developmental stages for the infant, the toddler, and the 3-5 year-old. Realistic description of the blind child. Index. 208 p.

Maloney, Patricia L. Practical Guidance for Parents of the Visually Handicapped Preschooler. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1981.

Clear, concise information written by the mother of a blind child. Two basic problem areas addressed: how to cope with the emotion of having a blind child and how to train and care for a blind child. Much practical advice. Lists agencies in all 50 states plus some organizations. Index. 79 p.

Moore, Sheri. Beginnings: A Practical Guide for Parents and Teachers of Visually Impaired Babies. Louisville, KY: American Printing House for the Blind, 1985.

Covers birth to 24 months of age. Begins with emotional reaction to child who is blind. Clear, practical advice about what to ask the doctor, how to handle the infant and toddler, using common household items to teach concepts. Lists games appropriate for each 3-month level. Concludes with honest and open letters from parents. Glossary. 71 p.

Recchia, Susan L. Learning to Play: Common Concerns for the Visually Impaired Preschool Child. Los Angeles: Blind Children's Center, n.d.

Covers three play situations which are often difficult for children who do not see. First is exploring toys and materials; second is making transitions from one activity to another; third is playing with other children. 12 p.

Tuttle, Dean W. Self-Esteem and Adjusting with Blindness: The Process of Responding to Life's Demands. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1984.

Studies relationship of self-esteem and ability to cope with life's complexities. Gives background information on blindness; describes a general model for development of self-esteem; analyzes the process of coping with trauma or crises and how self-esteem is affected; concludes with suggestions for climate which encourages positive self-esteem in the blind. Quotes many blind individuals. Bibliography. Index. 316 p.

Warren, David H. Blindness and Early Childhood Development. 2nd rev. ed. New York: American Foundation for the Blind, 1984.

Reviews available knowledge about the effects of visual impairment on child development. Intended for professionals, using technical language; contains much information on the status quo of research in the vision field. Index. 377 p.

Coping

Heart to Heart: Parents of Blind and Partially Sighted Children Talk About Their Feelings. Los Angeles: Blind Children's Center, n.d.

Brief pamphlet describes feelings of parents upon learning of child's visual impairment. Many quotes from parents. 12 p.

Kupfer, Fern. Before and After Zachariah. New York: Delacourte, 1982.

Personal account of life with a severely brain-damaged child. Details the decision to place him in a residential facility. 241 p.

Education for the Child

Barraga, Natalie. Visual Handicaps and Learning. Rev. ed. Austin, TX: Exceptional Resources, 1983.

Addresses the relationship between vision and learning. Covers facts, issues, and current practices in education for children with visual handicaps. Provides insight into the world of the child. 166 p.

Buell, Charles E. Physical Education for Blind Children. 2nd ed. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1983.

Specific guidelines for physical education for the blind written by a man who taught it for 40 years. Includes the historical development of physical education for the blind and evaluation techniques for fitness and motor performance. Appendices of track and field records. Bibliography. Index. 226 p.

Guidelines for Public School Programs Serving Visually Handicapped Children. New York: American Foundation for the Blind, 1981.

Outlines a complete educational curriculum for visually impaired children from appropriate identification and assessment procedures to specific program requirements. Developed as a guide for educators in planning and evaluating individual programs. 61 p.

Program Guidelines for Visually Impaired Individuals. Sacramento, CA: California State Department of Education, 1986.

A resource for parents and teachers in assessing, planning, and evaluating the quality of educational programming. Focus is on unique educational needs of the visually impaired student. 80 p.

Recreation Programming for Visually Impaired Children and Youth. New York: American Foundation for the Blind, 1981.

Aimed at the recreation consultant, all recreation planning is covered. Illustrations and photographs augment the specific ideas presented. Glossary. Bibliography. Index. 160 p.

"Simon Says" Is Not the Only Game. New York: American Foundation for the Blind, 1982.

Collection of successful concept development activities gathered from educators of the visually impaired. Each entry includes objective, players needed, materials needed, instructions, and variations. Includes activities for concepts sometimes overlooked. Cross-referenced index. Some technical terms. 139 p.

Smith, Audrey, and Karen Shane Cote. Look at Me: A Resource Manual for the Development of Residual Vision in Multiply Impaired Children. Philadelphia, PA: Pennsylvania College of Optometry, 1982.

Comprehensive resource for educators. Emphasizes the interdisciplinary approach. Lists and explains many learning activities to develop residual vision. 160 p.

Vanderkolk, Charles J. Assessment and Planning with the Visually Impaired. Baltimore, MD: University Park Press, 1981.

Directed to professionals who assess and recommend educational programs for the visually impaired. Chapters cover background information on blindness, assessment of children, intelligence, vocational skills, career development, and personality. Technical language. Bibliography. Index. 224 p.

Education for Parent

Chernus-Mansfield, Nancy, Dori Hayashi, and Linda Kekelis. Talk to Me II. Los Angeles: Blind Children's Center, 1984.

Addresses language development of totally blind children in these areas: repetitions, questions, and pronouns. Pinpoints areas of concern for parents to monitor. Offers examples of responses parents may use and explains the motivation for some language stages. Clear and direct. 15 p.

Featherstone, Helen. A Difference in the Family: Life with a Disabled Child. New York: Basic Books, 1980.

Written by a professional educator who is also the mother of a seriously disabled child, this volume contains chapters on fear, anger, loneliness, guilt, marital stress, siblings, getting help, and acceptance. Includes stories from other families with a difference. Bibliography. Index. 262 p.

Ferrell, Kay Alicyn. Parenting Preschoolers: Suggestions for Raising Young Blind and Visually Impaired Children. New York: American Foundation for the Blind, 1984.

Initial pages affirm the emotional reaction to learning of a child's visual impairment. Remaining pages contain answers to most common concerns of parents about early childhood behavior and development. Photographs. 28 p.

Harrell, Lois. Touch the Baby. New York: American Foundation for the Blind, 1985.

Pamphlet covering tactics to use when blind or visually impaired children are patients. Gives ideas for preparing for a routine medical examination or hospital visit. Covers the newborn infant, preschool-age child, and the newly blind child. Clear, simple language. Unpaged.

"Help Me Become Everything I Can Be". New York: American Foundation for the Blind, 1983.

Collection of presentations from 1978 North American Conference on Visually Handicapped Infants and Preschool Children. Arranged in four parts: Setting the Scene, Developmental Needs, Parenting, and Programs and Projects. Presenters have varied backgrounds and viewpoints. Articles vary in technicality of language. 128 p.

Kekelis, Linda, and Nancy Chernus-Mansfield. Talk to Me: A Language Guide for Parents of Blind Children. Los Angeles: Blind Children's Center, n.d.

Offers concrete suggestions to encourage language development. Emphasizes the need to describe verbally for a visually impaired child what sighted children observe visually. Simple, straight-forward approach. Practical suggestions. 11 p.

Mellor, E. Michael. Aids for the 80's: What They Are and What They Do. New York: American Foundation for the Blind, 1981.

Explains and describes the features of various sensory aid devices currently available. Provides some background on the development of such devices. Covers travel aids, reading aids, low vision aids, and braille. Clear explanations which point out the benefits to the user of each device. 36 p.

Nousanen, Diane, and Lee W. Robinson. Take Charge! A Guide to Resources for Parents of the Visually Impaired. Austin, TX: National Association for Parents of the Visually Impaired, 1980.

Lists agencies and resources needed by parents of the visually impaired. The introduction offers practical advice about being persistent and specific in seeking help and emphasizes the importance of maintaining a file of the child's health information, medical examinations, doctors seen, school records, etc. Well-organized by chapters. Humorous illustrations. Title index. Name index. 94 p.

Scheiber, Barbara. One Step at a Time. Washington, DC: GPO, 1981.

Provides information for parents of handicapped children. Suggests steps to follow upon diagnosis of the handicap. Gives concrete ideas for dealing with medical professionals and educational professionals. Organizations list. 35 p.

Schuch, Jeanette. Get Ready, Get Set, Go: A Guide for Parents of Visually Impaired Children. East Lansing, MI: International Institute for Visually Impaired, 0-7, 1980.

Insights and guidelines for parents to prepare the visually impaired child for school. Includes very specific suggestions for self-care skills, learning to play, and self-image. 38 p.

Scott, Eileen P., James E. Jan, and Roger D. Freeman. Can't Your Child See? a Guide for Parents of Visually Impaired Children. 2nd ed. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed, 1985.

Guidebook for parents which covers eye terminology, coping, infant and toddler stages, daily life, multiply handicapped children, play and playthings, school, and planning for the future. Suggests other readings. Index. 238 p.

Tannenbaum, Robin L. A Different Way of Seeing. New York: American Foundation for the Blind, 1984.

Booklet directed to children to explain visual handicaps. Describes methods of handling money, eating, reading with braille, canes and dog guides, low vision aids, etc. Good photographs. Simple language. Unpaged.

Parent/Child Activities

How to Thrive, Not Just Survive. New York: American Foundation for the Blind, 1987.

Guidelines and strategies to help blind and visually impaired children develop, acquire, and apply skills for independence. Excellent resource for self-help skills, orientation and mobility, and recreation. Lists sequences of routine daily activities to aid in teaching those skills; i.e., hand washing, dressing, undressing, toileting, etc. Photographs. Bibliography. 93 p.

Naughton, Franziska, and Sharon Sacks. Hey! What's Cooking? A Kitchen Curriculum for the Parents of Visually Impaired Children. Harvey, IL: South Metropolitan Association for Low Incidence Handicapped, 1983.

Contains guidelines for introduction of food and taste experiences at 0-3 months, 3-6 months, 6-9 months, etc., up to over 12 years of age. Describes how to introduce cooking equipment and how to teach child to use it. Practical suggestions for learning kitchen chores and routines, an area often off-limits to a blind child. 14 p.

Preschool Learning Activities for the Visually Impaired Child: A Guide for Parents. Austin, TX: National Association for Parents of the Visually Impaired, 1985.

Lists numerous developmental skills and accompanying parent/child activities to teach each skill. Detailed explanations of how to teach each skill and what level of success to expect. Each activity detailed for the 3-year-old, 4-year-old, and 5-year-old. Chapters include What Do I Touch?, I Use My Body, I Can Do It, the Child Looks at Himself, etc. Activities require inexpensive materials or common household items. Illustrations. Photographs. 91 p.

Yates, Virginia. Tune In! 2nd ed. St. Louis, MO: Delta Gamma Foundation, 1981.

Specific activities for parents to help the visually impaired infant develop listening skills. Activities call for common items found in the home. Bibliography. 49 p.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions, Recommendations, and Summary

Conclusions

The list of readings produced by this research project contains some unique characteristics which the researcher feels indicate certain conclusions. These are discussed in the order they appear on the data gathering instrument.

The first designation applied to each item was fiction, nonfiction, or autobiography. None of the recommended items is works of fiction. Parents of visually impaired (VI) children probably need facts to apply to their concerns about their child. Fiction would only provide an imaginary view of blindness or visual impairment. At some time that may be appropriate to read, but most parents probably need substantiated, factual information to apply to their situation.

Only one autobiography fits the criteria for this list. Several well-written autobiographies of blind persons have been published in the last thirty years, but only one since 1980. This may indicate a hesitancy by visually impaired persons to share their personal experiences. Or, it may indicate that blindness is not high on the list of handicaps that currently interest the reading public. If publishers believe they will not sell well, few autobiographies concerning visual impairment will appear on the market.

Of the five remaining categories on the list, the three containing the highest number of items are child development with nine, education for the child with eight, and education for the parents with twelve entries. This result is not surprising considering the needs of parents for whom this list was created. Each item contains factual information the parents

can apply or use with the visually impaired child within their care. How the visually impaired child develops is unique because of the lack of eye contact to communicate. Most child development materials propose methods to motivate exploration, an activity requiring parental encouragement. The entries related to education for the child include special information to assist the blind or visually impaired child to learn mobility in the sighted world. Independence is a legitimate concern for parents and these materials address it. The largest category, the education of the parent, is a logical result when preparing a list intended to inform parents. Another important fact is that almost every item contains some information about each of the other categories. The strongest emphasis of the items determined in which category they were placed.

The coping category contains only two items and the parent/child activities category contains four entries. Parent/child activities are often directed toward the school-age child. The vast preponderance of recommended readings from any source dealt with the infant and preschool age child. Because of the emphasis within the vision field on that developmental stage, large numbers of materials concerning activities for school age children would not be expected. Most parents would have access to professionals through the child's educational program from whom to receive information and suggestions about activities to address their child's specific developmental needs. The coping category may appear surprisingly low in number. However, every item reviewed made some mention of the emotional aspect of handling the visually impaired child or the reaction to the first diagnosis of the visual impairment. Perhaps experience has shown that a brief acknowledgement of the legitimacy of

these feelings on the part of the parent is adequate to help the parent accept reality and move on to helping the child.

The planned legal and transition categories had no recommended sources. Most of the bibliographies examined in the literature review contained some items dealing primarily with Public Law 94-142, which resulted in the mainstreaming of many VI students. That law has been implemented for over ten years. Perhaps there has been no need since 1980 to devote whole works to explaining it. Most parents learn from professional counselors of their child's educational options. The system is much more organized today in terms of responding to this legal requirement than it was prior to 1980.

The absence of materials on transition is disappointing. Transition was an area the researcher had hoped to address. Apparently it is still being overlooked in favor of the emphasis on early childhood concerns. Early childhood is important; however, complete care of the child must include planning for the adult years.

The items on this list range in length from 11 to 377 pages. Eight items contain less than 20 pages which is pamphlet size. Short works meet a particular need in materials of this kind. They are brief, cover a single theme, usually have a colorful, appealing appearance, and are relatively inexpensive to produce. With all the emotion involved in the diagnosis of the visual impairment, a parent may only be ready to absorb the limited amount of information a pamphlet can convey.

The final conclusion drawn by the researcher in compiling this annotated list has been the importance of maintaining a current collection of parent materials in the state of Iowa. The professional collection at Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School should include all current,

recommended parent materials. The responsibility of the school is to educate the VI children of Iowa. This necessarily involves interaction with the parents. The Iowa Commission for the Blind could be another parental resource within the state, but their primary mission is the adult VI population. To meet the needs of the parents of visually impaired children within this state, a carefully selected and maintained professional collection is a necessity. The information from this project will be an important component for achieving that goal at Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School.

Recommendations

Several variations in this project are recommended by the researcher if it were to be repeated: a) the data gathering instrument could be more detailed, b) categories might be reconsidered, c) another approach could be used to solicit recommendations, and d) possibly the transition category could be specifically mentioned in the letter of request.

The data gathering instrument proved adequate; however, experience leads the researcher to recommend an improved form. The bibliographic citation area could be divided into specific segments for entering the author, title, place of publication, publisher, and copyright date. Many of the lists received by the researcher contained only partial bibliographic citations. Having each segment of the complete record listed separately would have made identification of incomplete records immediately apparent. Another addition which would be helpful would be an entry for the number of pages in an item. This information indicates whether the entry is pamphlet-length or book-length. This distinction could be important when a parent searches the list for a given topic. A

book could cover a topic in greater detail. A pamphlet would be more succinct and quicker to read.

The categories for the annotated list could be reconsidered. The planned eight categories were generalized from the Nousanen and Robinson (1980) list of resources. The researcher felt categories would be helpful to segment the list for the final consumer, the parents. The challenge in categorizing involved the comprehensive nature of many of the items. Specifying one of the eight categories was difficult in some instances. Another study of this kind might omit the categories or rephrase them.

The method of gathering recommendations could also be varied to produce another list such as this. The researcher could prepare a proposed list of readings for parents. This list could be sent to various professionals, asking for their response to the items listed. They could also be asked for additional recommendations. Some responses to the letters of request issued for this study included all materials available for loan from the respondent. The researcher interpreted this as a recommendation of all materials. It may, on the other hand, have been the only kind of list available to send. A prepared list may have resulted in more recommendations rather than lists of availability.

The lack of recommended items concerning transition indicates the strong emphasis on early childhood assessment and education within the vision field. One method of encouraging a response covering this area could be a specific request in the letter of request for recommendations concerning transition planning.

These recommendations could aid the researcher preparing a list of readings for parents of the visually impaired. Recording the data would be easier, and producing and categorizing the final bibliography would be improved.

Summary

This research project developed from the need for an annotated list of readings to recommend to parents of visually impaired children. Professionals need such a list to offer to parents, and parents need such a list to help meet the challenge of raising a VI child.

This study was designed to include only reading materials published in 1980 or later and recommended by two or more professionals working with VI children or organizations supporting the VI population. The final list was also limited to materials available for borrowing from the Iowa Commission for the Blind or Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School.

The initial list of recommendations was developed by contacting 101 educational settings and organizations for the visually impaired. Appendix A lists all sources contacted. Each was sent a letter requesting recommended readings for parents. Forty-seven responses were received. Responding sources are marked with an asterisk in Appendix A. Compiling these responses produced an initial list of 55 titles which had two or more recommendations. This initial list was then searched in the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School professional collection. Thirty-six items were available. The remaining titles were requested from the Iowa Commission for the Blind. None of the remaining items was in that collection. Therefore, the final population of thirty-six items is available for loan from the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School. The remaining nineteen items which received at least two recommendations, but were not available from either source for review, are listed in Appendix C. Each item in the final population was reviewed, and the data gathering instrument, outlined in Appendix B, was completed.

Thirty-five items were nonfiction, one was an autobiography, and none was fiction. Items were categorized to guide parents in using this annotated list. The eight categories developed by the researcher after a review of the literature were: autobiography, child development, coping, education for the child, education for the parent, legal, parent/child activities, and transition. The autobiography category contains only one item; child development has nine entries; coping contains two; education for the child includes eight entries; education for the parents has twelve items; the legal category has none; parent/child activities contains four readings; and the transition category also has none.

Annotations range from 30-60 words. All recommended titles on the list are either books or pamphlets.

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IA: Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School, n.d.
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Visually Impaired Children. Bethesda, MD: ERIC Document
Reproduction Service, ED 198 664, 1980.
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See? Baltimore, MD: University Park, 1977.
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Blind/Visually Handicapped Children. Louisville, KY: American
Printing House for the Blind, 1987.

Selected Readings for Parents of Preschool Handicapped Children.

Bethesda, MD: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 277 210, 1986.

Somers, Adele, ed. We Can Do It Together! Bethesda, MD: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 220 998, 1982.

Webster, Richard. The Road to Freedom: A Parent's Guide to Prepare the Blind Child to Travel Independently. Jacksonville, IL: Katan, 1977.

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APPENDIX A

Sources of Recommendations

- *Alabama Regional Library for the Blind/Physically Handicapped
 - Alabama School for the Blind
 - Alaska Resources for Moderately/Severely Impaired Blind/VI Program
 - Alliance for the Blind and Visually Impaired
- *American Brotherhood for the Blind
- *Arizona State School for the Deaf and Blind
- *Arkansas School for the Blind
- *Armstrong-Indiana Association for the Blind
 - Association for the Blind and for Sight Conservation
- *Blind Children's Center
 - Boston Center for Blind Children
 - Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services
 - California Services for the Blind
 - California School for the Blind
 - Center for Blind Children, Inc.
 - Center for the Blind, Inc.
 - Children's Center for the Visually Impaired
- *Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind
 - Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind
- *Dallas Services for Visually Impaired Children
- *Delta Gamma Foundation for Visually Impaired Children
 - Family Service Society
- *Florida Instructional Materials Center for the Visually Handicapped
- *Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind
- *Foundation for Blind Children

*Foundation for the Junior Blind

*Georgia Academy for the Blind

Governor Morehead School

Greater Pittsburgh Guild for the Blind

*Hadley School for the Blind

Hawaii School for the Deaf and the Blind

Hazleton Blind Association

Hope School for Blind Multiply Handicapped

Idaho State School for the Deaf and the Blind

*Illinois Deaf-Blind Services Center and School

*Illinois School for the Visually Impaired

Indiana School for Blind

Industrial Home for the Blind

*International Institute for Visually Impaired, 0-7, Inc.

Iowa Commission for the Blind

Iowa Exceptional Parent Center

*Iowa State Vision Consultant, Dr. Alan Koenig

*Kansas Foundation for the Blind

Kansas State School for Visually Handicapped

Kentucky Department for the Blind

*Kentucky School for the Blind

Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired

Lavelle School for the Blind

Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

Maine Division of Eye Care

Maryland School for the Blind

*Massachusetts Association for the Blind

Matheny School

Michigan School for the Blind

*Minnesota Braille and Sight Saving School

*Mississippi School for the Blind

Missouri School for the Blind

Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind

*National Association for Parents of the Visually Impaired

*National Federation of the Blind

National Federation of the Blind of Iowa

Nebraska Division of Rehabilitation

Nebraska School for the Visually Handicapped

Nevil Children's Center for Sensory Deficits

*New Hampshire Association for the Blind

*New Mexico School for the Visually Handicapped

*New York Institute for the Education of the Blind

*New York State School for the Blind

North Dakota School for the Blind

Oak Hill School, Connecticut Institute for the Blind

*Ohio State School for the Blind

*Oregon State School for the Blind

*Overbrook School for the Blind

*Parents of Visually Handicapped Children

*Parkview School of Oklahoma

*Penrickton Center for Blind Children

*Perkins School for the Blind

Pinellas Center for the Visually Impaired, Inc.

Rhode Island State Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired

*Royer-Greaves School for the Blind

*South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind

*South Dakota School for the Visually Handicapped

St. Joseph's School for the Blind

Tennessee School for the Blind

*Texas School for the Blind

United Blind of Iowa

*Utah School for the Blind

Variety Club Blind Babies Foundation

Vermont Division for the Blind and Visually Handicapped

VIK Parent Support Group

*Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind

Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind at Hampton

*Vision Services—An Agency for the Visually Impaired

Washington State School for the Blind

*West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind

*Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children

*Wisconsin School for the Visually Handicapped

Wyoming State Department of Education—Services for Visually Handicapped

Youngstown Society for the Blind and Disabled

* indicates response received

APPENDIX B

Data Gathering Instrument

Bibliographic Citation:

Fiction _____ Nonfiction _____ Autobiography _____

Major Emphasis:

Autobiography _____ Child Development _____ Coping _____

Education for Child _____ Education for Parent _____

Legal _____ Parent/Child Activities _____ Transition _____

Brief Description/Annotation:

Available for Loan:

APPENDIX C

Recommended Items Not Available

- Batshaw, Mark L., and Yvonne Perret. Children with Handicaps, a Medical Primer. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes, 1981.
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