

Making Your Child's Books Identifiable By Touch

"Ashley, what would you like to read tonight?" asks Miss Markem, preparing her daughter for bed.

"*If You Were My Bunny, Mommy.*"

"OK. Go find it on the shelf."

Ashley scampers to the bookshelf, roots through several books — knocking some to the floor — before seeing the telltale blue cover, with two bunnies on the front.

Sighted children identify books by their attractive and interesting covers, but the same cover to a blind child is boring, smooth and flat, each the same as the next. They don't stimulate exploring fingers or fire the imagination.

What can we do to make books more interesting and easy to identify to a child who can't see?

With some scissors, glue, scraps and an imagination, you can make your blind child's books interesting to touch and easy to identify. The idea is to glue something to the cover that is interesting to touch and has some relation to the story, but keep it simple by selecting one or two items to represent.

Tactile pictures help children develop the skills needed for braille. They entice the child to move inquiring hands over the surface of the book to discover important information. Here are some helpful tips:

A piece of fake fur could represent the soft fur of a dog. You can make it the shape of a dog if you want to, but a fur oval will do.

A piece of sandpaper could be the scratchy tongue of a cat.

On the cover of "The Little Engine That Could", glue on string for railroad tracks. Slant them up and then down to show how the train goes up the mountain and then down again

with its precious load of goodies for the children.

Try a doll hat for "The Cat in the Hat."

Early Independence

This course suggests ways to approach some of the challenges that arise when raising a visually impaired child. It is recommended for parents of a 3 to 6 year-old blind child. Course D-PC-251. Large print or audiocassette.

Using Raised Markers

This course will instruct you on how to label household items; foods, medicines and dials on appliances in a variety of methods, which can be interpreted through touch. E-BR-601. Audiocassette