

# E-CONNECTOR



## BULLETIN BOARD

Notes and Notices from Colorado Parents of Blind Children (CO-POBC)



Dear Reader:

Please contact us if you have an announcement you would like to tack up on our bulletin board, or if you would like to add a friend or family member to the e-mail list. Direct all communications to: [copobc.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:copobc.newsletter@gmail.com), attention Julie Hunter, editor.



### LEARNING ABOUT COLOR

(The following article is reprinted from the National Braille Press web site, [NBP.org](http://NBP.org). It was written by Deborah Kent Stein who is editor of [Future Reflections](#), the magazine for parents and educators of blind/visually impaired children.)

### SIX TIPS FOR EXPLAINING COLORS TO A BLIND CHILD

Because I have never seen colors, I don't think I really understand what they are. However, I do know the color of many things: crows are black, leaves are green, and hair may be blonde, brown,

red, black, gray, white - or dyed any color a person desires.

I also know colors are highly symbolic in our culture: "I was so angry, I saw red." Or, "I was tickled pink." Learning about color is one more way for your child to learn about the world.

Here are six ways to begin to talk about colors with your blind child or student.

**1. Never be afraid to talk about colors.** Talking about color is not upsetting to your child, even though it may be troubling to you at first. If your child has never seen color, he doesn't miss it-but he is bound to be curious. Encourage that curiosity!

**2. Refer to color in everyday conversation.** Help your child understand that color is an aspect of nearly every object and substance in the world. You can say: "Here's a nice red apple," or, "Put on your pretty

green wool mittens." When the teacher asks, "What color is your coat," your child will proudly say, "It's blue!"

**3. Think about color as information.** "Roses are red, violets are blue . . ." Even though a child who has never seen cannot understand color in the same way, they can learn what color objects are in the world. At Halloween, your child can easily learn that pumpkins are orange. But don't go crazy! Knowing what color every toy in his toy box is would be boring!

**4. Attach emotions and feelings to color.** Help your child understand color by relating it to her other senses. You might describe red as a hot, loud color; white as smooth and quiet; black as shiny; or blue as the notes of a saxophone. A blind blogger once wrote: Yellow is buttery and rich, like sunshine on your face.

**5. Save the subtleties of color for later.** Explain the subtleties of color when the child is older. Apples can be green as well as red; the sky can be blue or gray, depending on the weather; the water in a glass is colorless (clear), but the ocean "looks" blue.

**6. Explain that some colors look good together, others don't.** Help your child put together outfits that match,

and tell her what colors they are. This will become more important later, when she is picking out her own clothes.



[Click here](#) to watch sighted people at a convention try to describe colors to a blind guy.



#### **CCB RECEIVES GRANT FOR S.T.E.M.**

This in from the Colorado Center for the Blind: "We are pleased to announce that we have received a grant from the Verizon Foundation in order to teach and promote subjects in the STEM areas of **science, technology, engineering and mathematics** for blind youth. Too often, blind students do not have an opportunity to fully participate in STEM classes. They also do not realize that they can develop careers in these areas. We will work with blind students, educators and others to develop full inclusion in the STEM areas."

...Hooray! I think we can expect more exceptional STEM programs and activities from the CCB Youth Services Department in the months ahead!



#### **ACCESSIBLE GAME APPS FOR IPHONE, IPAD, and IPOD TOUCH**

Any kid with an "i" device from Apple will be interested in this book. A host of blind gamers have put together their favorite accessible game apps; they tell you how they work and what it takes to win! The book is divided into seven chapters: [Chapter One](#): Competitive Games (describes the Game Center that can be found on every iDevice and a few games that can be played against others through the Game Center) [Chapter Two](#): Card Games; [Chapter Three](#): Adventure Games (games where the player is presented with a scenario and can interact with the world by issuing commands or by making choices); [Chapter Four](#): Strategy Games (traditional puzzles and board games); [Chapter Five](#): Role-Playing Games and [Chapter Six](#): Sports Games; (action games. requiring a strategic approach to accomplish the object of the game. )

Available for \$12.00 from [National Braille Press](#).



### **PUT THAT HAND DOWN:**

Stopping the Use of Protective-Hand Techniques

Liz Wisecarver, MA, NOMC

(Reprinted from the Professional Development and Research Institute on Blindness at Louisiana Tech University e-news.)

Conventionally-trained orientation and mobility (O&M) instructors teach students to use protective-hand techniques, which consist of holding the arm in front of the face or belly, palm out, to locate obstacles. While there are a few appropriate times to temporarily use these techniques, such as holding the hand in front of the face when bending down under a table or while walking under hanging branches, protective techniques are rarely necessary on a daily basis while traveling with a long, white cane. Furthermore, they are inappropriate. Students walking with an outstretched hand may accidentally grab someone, get their hand caught in a door and will look awkward to others.

Both young and adult students who have been taught to use protective-hand techniques will need to be reminded why they should keep their hands down. During challenging situations

like crowded or unfamiliar places, you may notice that they begin to use these techniques without realizing it. Whether you are a cane travel instructor, teacher of blind students, or parent, you can show students more appropriate alternatives to holding the hand out that, over time, will help break the habit.

### **YOUNG CHILDREN MAY USE BOTH HANDS ON THE CANE:**

Little ones tend to experiment with using the cane with both hands, grasping the handle at the same time. This not only helps eliminate protective-hand techniques, but it also naturally brings the cane to the center of the body. As they mature and are better able to learn more aspects of proper cane technique, children can be transitioned to using only one hand on their cane and leaving the other at their side.

**HOLD A FAMILIAR TOY:** Young children may enjoy holding a favorite toy or item in the free hand. This helps keep the child from using outstretched arms, helps the child practice using the cane in one hand rather than switching between the two, and may serve as a comfort in stressful situations.

### **KEEP THE HAND IN A POCKET:**

Older children and adults won't walk with both hands on the cane or a plush toy in one hand, but they may feel like they have nowhere to put their free hand!

Encourage them to put the free hand into a pocket. This is much more socially acceptable than reaching forward, and will help students recognize when they begin to "unconsciously" lift up their hand.

The urge to use protective-hand techniques is a tough habit for students of any age to break. A gentle reminder goes a long way, but I hope that these alternative techniques will be successful for you and your students. As they gain more confidence and awareness, this tendency will decrease in frequency and lead toward a safer, more appropriate option.

### **JULY CALENDAR**

\*\*\*\*SATURDAY, JULY 25

#### **SUMMER PICNIC**

10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

The NFB Denver Chapter annual summer picnic will be held at the Colorado Center for the Blind  
2233 W. Sheppard Ave.  
Littleton, CO

Bring the family to enjoy an old fashioned picnic. Food and Fun! A detailed notice will be sent out prior to July 25, but for now SAVE THE DATE!!

