Children who will be learning braille

Astrid K. Vik & Gro Aasen

Department of Visual Impairment, Statped, Norway

Nordisk kongress i synspedagogikk
20 April 2018
Statped

- Statped is a national agency managed by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training
- A provider of special education services
- Works in accordance with the Education Act and the Kindergarten Act: equivalent, adapted and inclusive education for everyone with special needs
- The agency is divided into 4 regions, led by a head office in Oslo
- Statped has Special Educational expertise within 6 designated disciplines
Early intervention regarding braille

• The Departments of Visual impairment in Statped works systematically on developing counselling and courses for children who will be learning braille, their parents and the educational staff in the kindergarten

• The early intervention team in Statped southeast, is working to develop its services related to stimulating reading and writing skills for children who will be learning braille

• Our experience shows us that it is necessary to enhance our methods regarding how to stimulate emergent literacy in kindergarten

• New approaches to stimulation and preparation for reading braille are being introduced, and we are constantly getting new digital aids and tools
Materials for tactile stimulation

- Tactile games
- Adjusted games for sighted in a tactile mode
- Basic pagage with material to make tactile symbols and braille symbols
- Tactile symbols and schedules
- Material to make individualized tactile books
- Tactile books
- Choosing boards
- Sorting boards
- «Bokstavkloss»
Examples of tactile symbols
Letter board with braille-letters on lego
Eltho tactile – an activity game
Braillers
Digital tools

- Digital tools, apps and other software for testing and use
- Flexiboard
- Ipad
- Braille displays
- Embossed printer
- Telephone (using VoiceOver on Iphones, recordings etc.)
- Audio-players and recordings (Daisy)
Flexiboard
Methods and materials in use

- Tactile (tangible) symbols and schedules
- Pre-braille activities
- Building a stimulating environment for braille
- Assessment material – Tactile profile (Withagen et al. 2005), video observations, observations
- Self-instructing course in braille (Rusten, 2017)
How to build new knowledge for braille stimulation, including digital competence

• A national project – 01.01.2018 – 31.12.2020
• Aims, organisation, data collection
• Digital tools – development of knowledge
The aims of the project

• To structure the work Statped is doing for children attending kindergarten who will be learning braille

• That future braille readers should receive equal stimulation of written language as sighted children in kindergarten

• To enhance competence in written language stimulation in the child’s network, within Statped and amongst other professionals working with the visually impaired
Measures to achieve the aims of the project

- Systematize experiences from courses and counselling (to parents and kindergartens employees) regarding written language stimulation for children who will be learning braille
- Evaluate existing materials and methods used to stimulate written language for children who will be learning braille
- Revise existing braille material and develop updated material in line with current knowledge about braille training
- Try out new approaches to written language stimulation
- Try out digital tools for reading and writing in braille
Project organisation

• Project management group from Statped southeast
• Project participants are counselors from all regions in Statped who work with children who will be learning braille and the kindergarten staff connected to these children. Individual projects will be enabled around these children who will comprise the sample of participating children, aged 2-6 years. One main issue is to promote an inclusive perspective.
• Participants from all over the country provide information about working methods, materials and experiences used for stimulating written language for children who will be learning braille
Data collection in the individual projects

• Introduction courses are held and followed up by four meetings with the staff around each child involved in the project during the project-year

• Data are collected through interviews, questionnaires, log writing during the year as well as observation, video recordings and guidance meetings

• Between each meeting:
  – Kindergarten staff working with the child are testing new tools and methods
  – Kindergarten staff obtain necessary skills to implement agreed measures

• New experiences provide supplementary data throughout the project
Status, April 2018

• The project received approval from the Norwegian Data Protection Authority (NSD), Jan.-18
• All four regions in Statped have confirmed participation
• Three children between 2-5 years from two regions in Statped have started
• The network around six children have received oral information about the project. Invitations are sent or will be sent during april-18
• Two individual projects are planned to start in June and another four in Aug/Sept.2018
The project group consists of

• The main project - project leaders, Statped southeast:
  – Astrid K. Vik (PhD) astrid.vik@statped.no
  – Gro Aasen (PhD) gro.aasen@statped.no
  – Silje Benonisen (MS) – silje.benonisen@statped.no

• Counselors from all regions in Statped who works with children who will be learning braille

• A resource group – will be enabled with professionals with competence in braille within and outside Statped
Financing

- The main part of the project is financed by Statped. We have also received financial support from Norges Blindeforbunds forskningsfond, The Research fund, the Norwegian Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted
Litteraturliste


• [http://www.statped.no/Tema/Syn/Publikasjoner/Taktile-symboler-og-planer/](http://www.statped.no/Tema/Syn/Publikasjoner/Taktile-symboler-og-planer/)