

Making Simple Books

Read All About It!

Gretchen Hanser

Do you have students who are unable to read words? Who rip and throw books? Who have difficulty physically manipulating books? Do you have trouble finding age-appropriate books for kids who are older, but are very beginning readers? Regardless of the degree of disability, in order to learn to read books, such students need access to good books—and lots of them. Beginning readers need to be exposed to a wide range of text types, including those that are predictable and simple in nature.

Occupational therapy practitioners need to find meaningful ways for students to access and engage with books. Sometimes the fastest, best way to get books that will be engaging for such students is simply to make them. With some quick pointers and tips, making these types of books can be easy and fun. Although these literacy tips are for very emergent readers, these books are also appropriate for students who are just beginning to read actual words.

Students who have difficulty with different aspects of book handling, such as holding the book and turning the pages, need to have easy ways to physically engage with books so that their focus can be on the print rather than on the motor aspects of the activity. To create alternatives to traditional adaptations such as book easels and lamination, the following are some suggestions on making books with ease, and what to include in them.

GENERAL FABRICATION TIPS

- Use adhesive-backed furniture bumpers (either rubber or felt

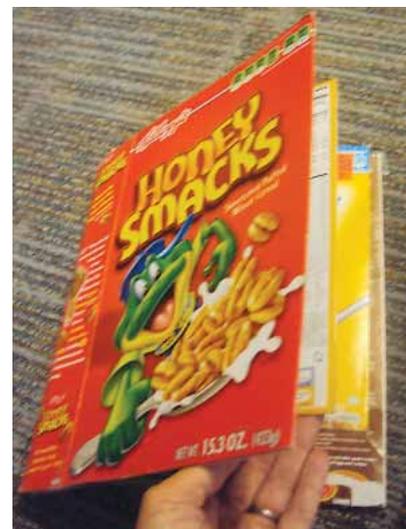
Occupational therapy practitioners need to find meaningful ways for students to access and engage with books. Sometimes the fastest, best way to get books that will be engaging for such students is simply to make them.

circles) or adhesive-backed hook-and-loop fasteners to make page turning easier. These can be attached to the lower corners of pages and work more effectively on thicker pages. Because of the adhesive, these may not be appropriate for library books.

- Make temporary foam page “fluffers.” These get paper clipped to the corners of pages and create a small space between pages. Page fluffers can be made out of cardstock and foam scraps and paper clips.¹ For fabrication directions, go to www.creativecommunicating.com/tips-pf.html.
- Do a “board book makeover.” Take an old board book and cover it with black construction paper and then add book content.
- Reconstruct books with clear packing tape. Packing tape is your new best friend! Clear packing tape is quite sturdy and a great alternative to spiral binding or comb binding. Use long strips to bind book pages and/or to laminate ripped pages on the fly.

FOOD BOX BOOKS

Save the boxes from students’ favorite foods, such as cereal, cookies, crackers, and candy. Turn them into book pages by flattening the boxes. Use packing tape strips to bind pages



Food Box Book

together to make a book. These are inexpensive and easy to make!

Tips for making food box books:

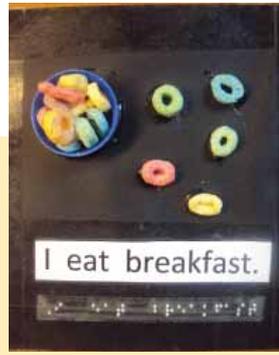
- Ask parents to send in students’ favorite food boxes.
- Make the books as part of a class recycling unit.

ZIPLOCK BAGGY “SQUISHY” BOOKS²

Baggy books are great for emergent readers, especially those who like sensory exploration, whether they are sighted or blind. Use six or seven resealable freezer bags to make the book “pages.” Fill each page about halfway with something, push out



Baggy Book



"My Day" Book—Breakfast

Occupational therapy practitioners can make books that not only meet students' sensorimotor needs, but also their literacy needs.

excess air, zip up, and then seal the bag tight with a strip of packing tape. Bind the pages together using more strips of packing tape. Add text and/or braille.

Tips for baggy book content include:

- Create theme-based baggy books such as food books (i.e., uncooked macaroni, oatmeal, cereal, split peas, flour, salt); pet food books (i.e., dried cat food, dried dog food, birdseed, fish food); bug books (i.e., dirt, different plastic bugs, worms, seeds, fake grass) and "nature walk" books (i.e., sticks, leaves, dirt, rocks).
- Promote interest, exploration, and fine motor skills by adding small manipulatives in the bags such as letters, numbers, and bugs.
- Repeat lines to foster interaction and add some fun, then add a twist at the end. Sample text from a food baggy book: "Macaroni. Do you like it? Oatmeal. Do you like it? Peas. Do you like them? Ick!"

CALENDAR BOOKS

Old theme calendars are a nice source for making large books. Many calendars have large clear photos that are helpful for students with vision impairments, or useful for simply catching students' attention. Cut apart the calendar and mount the pictures on poster board. Write short simple text in a large font, then laminate and bind the pages using clear packing tape.

Tips for theme calendar books include:

- Use calendar themes that are interesting to students, such as cars, boats, music groups, cats, dogs, cars, and foods—all of which are appropriate for older students. At the end of the year, ask families to send in their old calendars.

- Save the last page of the calendar with the small pictures of all of the calendar pages; these can be used for writing activities or as communication symbols.³
- Place print on the page opposite the picture; this may make it easier for students to attend to text and it may help you know where they are looking.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE BOOKS

Make a "My Day" book that chronicles the key events of the student's day. This type of book is great for all kids, but especially for students with blindness or deaf-blindness who may have little knowledge of the world. Using this approach allows you to teach students about literacy starting with what they know best—their daily experiences.

Take pictures of the events or identify tactuals that represent the key activities of the student's day. Mount items in a small photo album or a board book. If using tactuals, you can affix them with hot glue and then make more secure by using small strips of packing tape to hold down the edges of the tactual.

Tips for developing specific My Day books:

- Involve the student in selecting the picture or tactual and writing the text. This will give students more of an understanding of what the book is because they helped make it, rather than using a pre-made book.
- When choosing tactuals for students who are blind, consider the surfaces that they touch, such as a piece of terry cloth to represent washing or a piece of folded aluminum foil to represent their school bus. Consult with a teacher of students with visual impairments for suggestions.

CONCLUSION

Students with disabilities need access to a wealth of books—no different than students without disabilities. Occupational therapy practitioners can make books that not only meet students' sensorimotor needs, but also their literacy needs. Happy bookmaking and stay tuned for more tips about making computer-based books for beginning readers! ■

References

1. Musselwhite, C., & King-DeBaun, P. (1997). *Emergent literacy success: Merging technology and whole language for students with disabilities*. Park City, UT: Creative Communicating.
2. Pierce, P., Huston, C., & Franklin, J. (2007). *Fun books for shared reading*. Chapel Hill, NC: Center for Literacy and Disability Studies, University of North Carolina. Retrieved August 9, 2010, from <http://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds/resources/early-childhood-resources-1/additional-materials>
3. Musselwhite, C. (2009, October). *Creating balanced literacy classrooms*. Presentation at Closing the Gap Conference, Bloomington, MN.

Gretchen Hanser, PhD, OTR, is the associate director of school-aged services at the Center for Literacy & Disability Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She has worked in the field of assistive technology and literacy for students with significant disabilities for more than 15 years.

Authors Wanted!



Are you interested in writing for OT Practice?

See our guidelines at <http://www.aota.org/Pubs/Publish/40400.aspx>

For almost four decades, "Made Simple books have set the standard for continuing education and home study. This book is written as if the writers were really concerned with making the subject understood by EVERYBODY, with the result that one actually understands everything clearly and actually comes out learning something. Imagine that! This is not to say that the book is written in a simplistic way. JAIIB MADE SIMPLE ACCOUNTING AND FINANCE FOR BANKERS (JAIIB PAPER -2) Version 1.0 (A Very useful J Accounting Made Simple. 196 Pages 1967 22.72 MB 818 Downloads New! Microeconomics Made Simple: Basic Microeconomic Principles Explained in 100 Pages or Less , the possibilities are endless. iPad 2 Made Simple clarifies all of the key features on the iPad, int Accounting Made Simple: Accounting Explained in 100 Pages or Less. 119 Pages 2010 574 KB 0 Downloads New! Posted in Startups Made Simple Book | No Comments ». The 16 Startup Founder Superpowers. Tuesday, June 4th, 2019. This was an excerpt from our book Startups Made Simple: How to Start, Grow and Systemize Your Dream Business. Learn more about the book here or see our previous excerpts here. » ¿ Posted in Small Biz Management, Starting A Business, Startups Made Simple Book | No Comments ». Introducing Our Book: Startups Made Simple. Thursday, March 28th, 2019.