



# FOCUS FLYER

## ✦ THE MAIN FOCUS ✦

### GIVING GOOD GIFTS

This article was written based on *Santa Claus is Coming to Town*, which is an excellent article by Kate Moss of Texas Deafblind Outreach. It can be found at <http://www.tsbvi.edu/Outreach/seehear/fall04/santa.htm>

**G**ift giving can come at any time of the year and for seasons and occasions that are unique to a particular culture. Within these seasons and cultures, there are bound to be instances where you are going to want to find a gift for your child. They may not know what to look for or what is appropriate for your child. There may be a time when you have already exhausted all the familiar ideas for gifts and are stuck yourself. No matter what the season, or the culture, *if you are trying to think of unique and fun gifts for an individual with deafblindness there are some considerations to take into account:*

1. Think about your child's interests and make a list. What are the activities, items or people that make her smile and laugh? If it is lights, what kind of lights are most effective? If it is water, is it the feel of the water, or the pouring of water from one container into another? If it is a favorite Aunt that makes her smile, is it the type of attention she is able to focus on your child, or is it an activity they always do together? From this list you may be able to think of ways to branch off into other gifts.
2. Don't be afraid to give experiences. Experiences with you or with special family members or friends can be the best gift possible for both your child and yourself. Some examples may include an ice cream date with a family friend, a walk around the park with Mom or Dad, listening to a favorite cd with Grandma or Grandpa. If you or your child must have something tangible to open (other than an envelope describing the experience) pair it with something you know she would enjoy, such as a stuffed animal or flashlight.
3. Think outside the box. We are usually looking for toys as gifts, but think about things that are not necessarily toys. If your child is fascinated with paperclips, why not find several different types of paperclips and put them in a special box. Check out this link if you are going with traditional types of toys: <http://www.babyshopmagazine.com/spring01/toys.htm>

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Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope or confidence.

Helen Keller



## FUTURE FOCUS 2005

### January

**11-12:** *Train the Trainer* workshop on the provision of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) presented by Family Network on Disabilities, the PTI in MS for '04-'05 grant year. See insert for January 5 application deadline.

**27-28:** *Greenspan Institute* on Developmental, Individual Difference, Relationship-based Model of Intervention in Biloxi hosted by Mississippi's University Center for Excellence (UCE). For more info contact Theresa Pender at (601) 266-5163.

### February

**2-3:** Coalition Conference in Jackson with MS Protection & Advocacy and T.K. Martin Center. Some stipends will be offered to parents. Please call Denise at (601) 969-0601 for more info.

**8:** Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities "Greens & Thangs with a Pinch of the Blues" 2005 Legislative Reception at Hal & Mal's Restaurant. For more info call: 601-969-0601 or 1-800-721-7255

**9:** Disability Awareness Day - First Floor State Capitol - 10:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. For more info call and to display call 601-969-0601 or 1-800-721-7255

**11:** Low Vision Workshop Series for Early Intervention (Module 1 of 5) at USM. Contact Janet Salek at (800) 264-5135 for more info.

### March

**1st week (tentative):** Teresa May from the Arkan-

sas School for the Blind and UALR will present a 2 day workshop on Orientation and Mobility. For more info call (800) 264-5135.

**11:** Low Vision Workshop Series for Early Intervention (Module 2 of 5) at USM. Contact Janet Salek at (800) 264-5135 for more info.

### April

**4-5:** 3rd Annual Early Intervention Conference at Jackson Medical Mall. Contact Sonia Carr at (601) 266-4204 for more info.

**15:** Low Vision Workshop Series for Early Intervention (Module 3 of 5) at USM. Contact Janet Salek at (800) 264-5135 for more info.

### May

**13:** Low Vision Workshop Series for Early Intervention (Module 4 of 5) at USM. Contact Janet Salek at (800) 264-5135 for more info.

### June

**24:** Low Vision Workshop Series for Early Intervention (Module 5 of 5) at USM. Contact Janet Salek at (800) 264-5135 for more info.

### July

**TBA:** Deafblind training series presented in Mississippi by Linda Alsop of SKI-HI Institute. This will consist of a 3 day training with 2 or 3 follow-up training days during the school year. For more info call (800) 264-5135.

## GOOD GIFTS WEBSITES



### Lillian Vernon:

<http://www.lillianvernon.com>

### Dragonfly Toys:

<http://www.dftoys.com>

### Abilitations:

<http://www.abilitations.com>

### Constructive Playthings:

<http://www.cptoys.com>

### Beyond Play:

<http://www.beyondplay.com>

### Oriental Trading Company:

<http://www.orientaltrading.com>

### Leaps and Bounds:

<http://www.leapsandboundscatalog.com>

### Citi Kids (Wimmer Ferguson Cards):

<http://www.citikids.com/wimmferg.htm>

### The Toy Express:

<http://www.thetoyexpress.com>

### Kid Surplus:

<http://www.kidsurplus.com>

### Manhattan Toy:

<http://manhattantoy.com>

Thanks to a family listserv through Project SPARKLE, we have a list of possible gift ideas for individuals with deafblindness. These gifts could be categorized as “traditional toys” and “non-traditional toys”.

### Toys

- Leap Frog’s “Baby Tad”
- Shiny mylar balloons (empty or full) placed within his viewing area
- Bells (cold to the touch, can be swung, make noise)
- Camera with flash (no film necessary– the flash is enjoyable for some kids)
- Stuffed animals (soft and cuddly, some talk and play music, some have stitching that provides more texture)
- Thomas the Tank Engine Trains (the magnetic connectors have a neat feel, they are made of diecast metal with shapes and gadgets)
- Adaptive Tricycle
- Trampoline with legitimate safety net
- Blow-up toy with balls inside
- Scented markers
- Riding toys
- Bristle Blocks
- Busy book or Quiet book (teach child to zip, tie, Velcro, etc)
- WeeMote (Leaps and Bounds catalog)
- PlaySkool “noisy toys”
- Tag-along bike and bike helmet
- Games like Count-Down and Yahtzee (can swap dice for Braille dice)
- Play kitchen
- Chapter books for reading aloud
- Indoor/outdoor play tent
- Musical instruments
- Wiggly Giggly ball (makes noise as it rolls)
- Fisher Price dollhouse (makes noises)
- Tactominoes (large dominoes with different textures)
- Multi-sensory toys
- Toy that mimics the sound of the womb
- Projection toy for cribs
- V-Tech Phone
- The Winkel by Manhattan Toys
- Shape-O Ball

- Corolle Mini baby doll with hair
- Whoozit

### Non-traditional Toys

- Plastic “scrubbies” for washing dishes
- “Sponge on a stick” for cleaning drinking glasses
- A large mirror at floor level to look at himself
- Metal canning jar rings
- Small metal wind chimes (cold to the touch and enjoyable sound)
- Alarm clock (this child was soothed by the sound of the alarm)
- Pots and Pans and Muffin Tins
- Flashlights
- Box the toy came in
- Bingo dobbers (they are big and leave a mark with one touch)
- Lava lamps
- Disco balls
- Aquarium
- Brightly colored cookware
- Liter Coke bottles (with or without things inside– such as bells, light sticks, etc)
- Shoes
- Metal folding chairs (great for making noise)
- Empty gallon milk jugs
- Laundry baskets
- Described videos from DVS
- Walkie-Talkies
- Talking alarm clocks and watches
- Talking calculator
- White board and markers
- Recording of family members reading a favorite story
- Recording of family get-together
- Clothes (heavy socks for cold feet)
- Flashlights with different colors and shapes
- Flashing star necklace (Oriental Trading Co)
- Wimmer Ferguson cards
- Light box

### Activities

- Spending time with our child
- Swimming
- Recreation Parks
- Local Parks



No pessimist  
ever discovered  
the secret of the  
stars or sailed an  
uncharted land,  
or opened a new  
doorway for the  
human spirit.

Helen Keller





## MISSISSIPPI DEAF-BLIND PROJECT

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We're on the web!  
[www.usm.edu/msdb](http://www.usm.edu/msdb)



Supported by U.S. Department of Education Grant # H326C0014



# FOCUS ON SERVICES



## Toy Library and Technology Learning Center

This month we are focusing on a unique organization that loans out wonderful adaptive toys and adaptive equipment for free.

The **Toy Library and Technology Learning Center (TLC)** is located at the University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast campus in Long Beach, Mississippi.

Toys specially adapted for children with disabilities are available for play sessions or home use. Technology designed to assist persons with

disabilities for independence and mobility is also available.

We offer an impressive array of toys and technology in our **L**ibrary for at-home use and visits to TLC. Learning opportunities and training are available for individuals, families and professionals.

Professional **C**onsultations are available for any person with special needs, their teachers and families. Our Computers are modified to enhance every level of a child's development.

Our caring, trained teachers work with children and their parents to learn how to move past the *disability* and focus on the *ability*— and develop those abilities to their full potential. TLC is a place for parents and children to try out new technology. Our computers, adaptive devices, software and assistive technology are available for use by any family of a child with disabilities.

**The Toy Library & Technology  
Learning Center**  
(228) 867-2636