

VISability

Visually Impaired Preschool Services (VIPS)
Quarterly Community Newsletter

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Newsletter Highlights

A Legacy of Love: Laurie Roselle's Dedication Transformed VIPS Indiana

By Meredith Howell, Indiana Director of Community Outreach & Advocacy & Laurie's Friend

"In September 2016, I received an email that said, "I am the Director of Fundraising for the Indianapolis Alumnae of Delta Gamma and we'd like to sponsor a fundraiser for VIPS! We'd love to manage a Trivia Night on Friday, February 3, 2017..." Read more on [page 3](#)



GoBabyGo! Program Empowers Young Children with Disabilities

By Ashley Ross, Communications Coordinator

VIPS mother, Brooke Harrell, shared her experience with a life-changing initiative: The GoBabyGo! Program created through a unique partnership involving Purdue University engineering students in Columbus, Indiana! Recently, Brooke's daughter and VIPS child, Brynn, was selected as one of five children..." Read more on [page 5](#)



VIPS' 40th Anniversary in 2025

By Diane Nelson, VIPS Executive Director

"2025 is a momentous milestone for VIPS, as it marks 40 years of providing early intervention services to the youngest children with blindness and low vision. Back in 1985, when a child was diagnosed with blindness, families had no one to turn to for help, and schools for the blind didn't take children until kindergarten..." Read more on [page 7](#)



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Mark your calendar

*indicates an event for VIPS families only

All events are open to participants from any state.

[December 7, 2024 Storytime @ VIPS Family Resource Center*](#)

[December 14, 2024 VIPS Family Holiday Party @ VIPS Louisville Campus*](#) (RSVP to jcastenir@vips.org)

[January 11, 2025 Storytime @ VIPS Family Resource Center*](#)

[January 25, 2025 Storytime @ VIPS Family Resource Center*](#)

[February 8, 2025 Storytime @ VIPS Family Resource Center*](#)

[May 17, 2025 The Annual VIPS Gala](#)

[May 18, 2025 Walking for Dreams Family & Pet Walk](#)

In Memoriam

This issue of VISability is dedicated to the memory of:

Michael Thomas McMahon, age one, of Louisville, KY, passed away on September 6, 2024. Michael was a VIPS child and son to Andrew and Hannah McMahon. His VIPS teacher, Ms. Paige, stated that in her few visits with him, she always left his home with a smile on her face.

Our hearts go out to those who loved Michael.

A Legacy of Love: Laurie Roselle's Dedication Transformed VIPS Indiana

By Meredith Howell, Laurie's friend



In September 2016, I received an email that said, "I am the Director of Fundraising for the Indianapolis Alumnae of Delta Gamma and we'd like to sponsor a fundraiser for VIPS! We'd love to manage a Trivia Night on Friday, February 3, 2017, with all the proceeds going to VIPS. Would you allow us to do this with you?"

As someone responsible for raising money to support Indiana programming for kids and families, I had dreamed of emails like this and replied, "Yes!" to this woman I had never met. Little did I know that email would begin an agency-changing journey for VIPS in Indiana as it came from the most incredible woman—the late Laurie Roselle.

Laurie always had a philanthropic spirit as an alumna of

the Delta Gamma Fraternity at Purdue University and the former International President of Delta Gamma. She, along with her Indianapolis Alumnae of Delta Gamma sisters, Laurie's beloved husband, John, and family would host numerous Trivia Nights—raising thousands of dollars for VIPS. Laurie didn't stop with Trivia Night as she'd organize additional fundraisers such as Tables That Bloom and an Anchor Auction where she auctioned off her personal belongings—all to benefit VIPS. Laurie facilitated a monthly 'Lunch Bunch' group where she and fellow Delta Gammas made sensory exploration items for the VIPS children over lunch. When asked, Laurie eagerly joined the VIPS Indiana Advisory Board and dedicated every ounce of her energy to helping the stories of the kids be told. She began to truly understand the impact of the VIPS mission after volunteering at family events. Laurie was especially good with the VIPS kids who often have complex needs in addition to their vision diagnosis. Laurie didn't see a baby with challenges, she just saw a child.

In 2019, when it came time to launch a \$2.5M capital and operations campaign to build a Family Resource Center in Indianapolis—Laurie was all in. She knew the families needed a place to find community, resources, connectivity, and peace, and she became determined to make the dream a reality. Unfortunately,

Laurie was diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease, or ALS in September 2021. While it was devastating news, Laurie continued to



raise funds to see this project come to fruition. In April 2022, the Simon & Estelle Knoble VIPS Family Resource Center opened and Laurie was instrumental in helping us accomplish this monumental achievement. Later that year, Laurie was recognized with a VIPS Beacon Award as an outstanding Individual Volunteer because of her dedication, passion, and commitment to VIPS.

Sadly, Laurie lost her battle with ALS in August 2024 and the world lost a truly special human being. Laurie will forever be remembered as an unforgettable VIPS champion and our organization will never be the same because of her.

Spotlight on VIPS Children

Sharing updates from the amazing children served by VIPS!



Cannon has learned so much and gained new skills thanks to his family and team of interventionists! He has learned his numbers, colors, and animals, and is starting to recognize letters. We wish Cannon all the best as he heads into Pre-K and beyond!



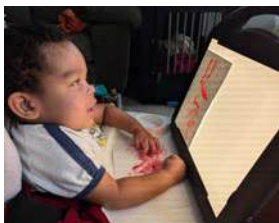
Nova had a wonderful time exploring a local park with her mom, her VIPS teacher, Ms. Sheila, and her occupational therapist. Nova used her vision to navigate in unfamiliar territory. She climbed, spun, ran, swung, walked, laughed, and smiled!



Jameson loved finding objects on his light board with his mom and intervention team. The backlighting helped him see and play with the items. He did a great job reaching for the toys!



Future Olympian, **Hailey**, is fully participating in and LOVING her new gymnastics class with her sighted peers! She scored a perfect “10” on her floor routine, beam, and bar!



Miles explored finger painting using his new lightbox. The glowing colors beneath his hands allowed him to engage with his artwork, enhancing both his creativity and sensory skills. It's exciting to see his progress and creativity in action!



Jesse is exercising his visual tracking and reaching muscles with his VIPS interventionist, Ashley! The dark room allows him to focus on the toy held in front of him, lit by the purple light above it. He is growing fast and his skills are growing along with him!



Stevie colored with sidewalk chalk for the first time! He did a great job using the chalk to draw marks on the ground while his Dad, Steven, also a VIPS grad, cheered him on!



Krisaya has been using her iPad to engage with vibrant colors and sounds, encouraging her to open her eyes and explore her vision more than ever before! Krisaya has made incredible strides in her eye/hand coordination, tapping pictures for sounds and boosting her fine and gross motor skills. She's also diving into cause-and-effect play!



Rohan is having a blast with his adaptive switch. He loves the gel texture and the fun light that he activates by pushing the button. When he presses it, his favorite toy Elmo comes to life and sings! Rohan's smiles say it all—he is one happy kiddo!



Noah is making great strides and recently enjoyed some time in his stander, exploring different textures. He loved listening to the sounds of the crinkling cloth toy!



Want to share about your child?

Send in your photos and updates to Ashley Ross at aross@vips.org or to your VIPS teacher/interventionist.

First Field Trip of the School Year



October was a blast as VIPS Kids Town Preschool students took their first field trip of the year! The amazing Hikes Lane Fire Department rolled in with a shiny fire truck for our little explorers to “Touch a Truck”! Students got up close and personal with the fire hose, ax, and all sorts of cool tools. Huge shoutout to the firefighters for being so patient and fun while the kids took it all in. They even got to hop inside the truck and feel like heroes! Thanks again to everyone at Hikes Lane Fire Department for making this possible.

GoBabyGo! Program Empowers Young Children with Disabilities

By Ashley Ross

VIPS mother, Brooke Harrell, shared her experience with a life-changing initiative: The GoBabyGo! Program created through a unique partnership involving Purdue University engineering students in Columbus, Indiana! Recently, Brooke’s daughter and VIPS child, Brynn, was selected as one of five children to receive specially adapted power wheels through this program.



From yourcpf.org

The Harrell family learned about the program when their First Steps physical therapist, Megan, shared information and provided an application. After submitting their details, they received a call just a few months later, bringing the promise of newfound independence for their daughter, Brynn!

The collaboration with Purdue engineering students is part of their class project, where they design and modify power wheels tailored to the specific needs of each child. A Zoom meeting allowed Brynn's family to connect with the students, alongside Rebecca, a physical therapist who moved to Indiana from Ohio and was eager to continue the GoBabyGo! initiative. Rebecca ended up partnering with engineers from Cummins to ensure the growth of this impactful program.

In those first meetings, Rebecca assessed Brynn’s physical capabilities and her preferences, including her favorite colors and adaptability options. Currently, Brynn is learning to activate toys using buttons, so for her new power wheel, the family has requested a large, brightly colored button for easy activation, as well as the option for joysticks. The anticipation is building as they prepare to visit Columbus in November to check on the progress of Brynn’s power wheel and make any necessary adjustments in person.

On December 4th, Brynn will receive her new car—a milestone the entire family is excited about! Brooke expressed her gratitude for the program and how it grants Brynn not just mobility but also a sense of independence. “I love that this program exists! It gives Brynnie so much freedom to have something as her very own,” she shared, noting the significance of allowing her daughter to explore the world on her terms.

A particularly heartwarming aspect of this process has been the students’ unwavering focus on Brynn's capabilities, rather than her visual challenges. “They didn’t even hesitate. Giving Brynnie a car and freedom was number one! It gifted my soul as a momma,” Brooke said. This innovative program is changing lives, giving children like Brynn the chance to simply be kids while enjoying the freedom of movement. We can’t wait to see how this new mobility device benefits Brynn and her family!

Info for VIPS Families

BrailleWorks: Letters from Santa

This holiday season, BrailleWorks is proud to assist Santa Claus by embossing letters in braille for children. Santa, of course, reads braille, and with no cost to parents, teachers, or friends, BrailleWorks ensures that every child, especially those who are blind or have low vision, can receive a personalized letter from Santa.

By simply providing the recipient's name, BrailleWorks will create a braille letter accompanied by a large print copy, and even postmark it from the North Pole. This initiative not only spreads Christmas cheer but also reinforces the idea that every child deserves to experience the magic of the season!

brailleworks.com/santa-reads-braille/

Special Collection Program: Encouraging Braille Literacy

VIPS is excited to share an awesome resource from the Braille Institute for families of children who are blind or have low vision! The Special Collection program is dedicated to promoting braille literacy and fostering a love of reading among children by providing free braille storybook kits.

Subscribers can order two storybook kits per cycle, with each order containing two kits. Best of all, these storybook kits are completely FREE while supplies last. Each kit includes a multi-sensory storybook that features a picture book with braille overlays, along with a learning tool that represents the story's characters or themes. This initiative offers a fun and engaging way for young readers to explore literature and develop their reading skills.

brailleinstitute.org/library/special-collection/

Storytime @ VIPS Family Resource (Indianapolis) Center on Select Saturdays

VIPS is excited to offer an adapted, accessible, and fun Storytime for VIPS children, siblings, and caregivers! Each themed session will be led by a VIPS Vision Specialist making it a wonderful early literacy opportunity for your children. After Storytime, there will be time for your kids to play in our Toddler Town, Sensory Room,

large activity room, and if it's warm enough outside—our adaptive playground! [Visit the link here for dates and details.](#)

Thank You to our Funders

The following foundations and organizations have granted or raised funds to cover programming, operations, technology, and more.

- Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile, Jr. Foundation, \$15,000
- Gheens Foundation, \$20,000
- Jacob C. Koch Charitable Trust, \$3,851.97
- John Chapman Kiwanis Club, \$1,000
- Karston A. and Ethelyn O. Osmondson Charitable Fund, Inc., \$60,000
- KSB Charitable Foundation, \$100,000
- Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust, \$40,000
- Snowy Owl Foundation, \$3,000

Upcoming Events

Party like it's 1985- The Annual VIPS Gala May 17, 2025

Join us for VIPS' 40th Anniversary Gala, "Birthday, Bourbon, and BBQ"—an evening of fun and philanthropy! Guests will enjoy an open bar, elevated Southern BBQ fare, and live music from Artie Dean Harris & Bourbontown. Participate in our exciting silent and live auctions and, if you buy tickets before March 1, you'll be entered into a drawing for a private Airstream rental for the night of the Gala. Additional Airstreams are available to rent for those seeking a unique experience at Progress Park. Don't miss this incredible event as we honor 40 years of changing lives across Kentucky and Indiana.

Purchase tickets at: one.bidpal.net/2025vipsgala

*Drawing will take place on Monday, March 3. We will notify winners via email.



Celebrating VIPS' 40th Anniversary in 2025

By Diane Nelson

2025 is a momentous milestone for VIPS, as it marks 40 years of providing early intervention services to the youngest children with blindness and low vision.



Back in 1985, when a child was diagnosed with blindness, families had no one to turn to for help, and schools for the blind didn't take children until kindergarten. Research indicates that 90% of what a child learns is through their vision, and 85% of the foundation of learning happens in the first five years of life. Therefore, these early years are critical for development.

Additionally, for many parents, their first encounter with a blind person is through their own child.



They need guidance on teaching essential skills such as eating, moving, and exploring their surroundings safely. Along came our hero, Sharon Bensinger, and her army of family, friends, peers, and collaborators who worked together to fill that critical need of providing early intervention services by founding VIPS. With a grant of \$10,000 from the WHAS Crusade for Children and \$10,000 from Metro United Way, Sharon began as the first employee and provided services to eight children locally. Fast forward forty years and VIPS' budget has grown to over \$3.5 million, serving 752 children across the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the State of Indiana in the 2023-2024 fiscal year.



As we celebrate VIPS' 40th birthday, we're reflecting on our past and looking forward to the future. We'd love to hear from you! Share your VIPS story, why you support our mission, and—if you're a VIPS graduate or family—

where are you today and any milestones you'd like to share.

Special Shoutouts

Thank You to the Volunteers from TWG



Shoutout to our neighbors at TWG Development, Management and Construction for volunteering at the VIPS Family Resource Center in Indianapolis, IN in September and October! Team members helped us create handmade welcome cards, thank you cards, and tactile books. We are so grateful to this group for donating their time to brighten a VIPS family's day! These cards go out to our new families and the books are great for little ones who are blind or have low vision as they can feel the different textures on the pages. Thank you, TWG!

Thank You to The Fillies, Inc.!



We are beyond grateful to The Fillies, Inc. for selecting VIPS as their outreach organization for September's meeting. It was a truly wonderful evening spent connecting with such an incredible group of women. The Fillies not only embraced our mission, but also generously fulfilled many items on our wishlist! A special thanks to former VIPS parent and Fillies member Brandi Hitzelberger for recommending VIPS for this outstanding opportunity. We are grateful!

Holy Cross High School Volunteers



A big thank you to the juniors and seniors from Holy Cross High School who visited the VIPS campus in Louisville on their Great Day of Service. The students participated in a simulation of vision loss, toured our Kids Town Preschool, and made 25 bead curtains for our youngest students to use with lightboxes. We appreciate the help and the interest in our VIPS mission. Thank you, Cougars!

Thank You to the United Way of Central Indiana Volunteers

A HUGE shoutout to the Community Impact Division of the United Way of Central Indiana for spending some time with us in October at the VIPS Family Resource Center in Indianapolis!



From crafting heartfelt cards to sprucing up our ball pit and washing windows, their energy and enthusiasm made such a difference! We truly appreciate their hard work and creativity in helping us keep our space welcoming and fun.



Girl Scout Goodies

We want to send a SWEET thank you to the Girl Scouts of Kentucky's Wilderness Road Council and all the incredible troops for their amazing donation of 64 cases (that's 768 boxes!) of delicious cookies! Your generosity has brought so much joy and sweetness to our staff, families, participants at the Cupcake Classic, and anyone else we could pass a box along to!

Forvis Mazars Group Presentation + Volunteers



We'd like to thank the team at Forvis Mazars Group in Indianapolis for dedicating part of a Friday in August to learn more about the important work we are doing at VIPS for Indiana's babies and toddlers who are blind or have low vision. VIPS Indiana Director of Community & Outreach Advocacy and former VIPS mom, Meredith Howell, spoke to the Forvis Mazars team about early intervention services for these children, how VIPS is helping families navigate the journey, and shared her personal experience with VIPS as Meredith's daughter, Lola, has low vision and was greatly impacted by the services VIPS provided.



After the event, we welcomed 10 Forvis Mazars employees to the VIPS Family Resource Center for an afternoon of volunteering. They started with a tour of the center and then went on to

create 60 tactile birthday cards with braille which are then mailed to VIPS children for their birthdays. This is so helpful because VIPS is serving more and more children across the state and we want the kids to feel the love from VIPS on their special day. We are grateful for the opportunity to partner with Forvis Mazars!



Want to volunteer with VIPS?

To help in the Kentucky offices, contact Kirsten at kschmidt@vips.org, and for the Indiana office contact Rita at rdevore@vips.org.

Some Good News!

Planned Giving Workshop with Judge Holton

We were honored to host a special Planned Giving Workshop for VIPS families and supporters, featuring Kentucky's first judge who is blind, Judge David Holton, of



David Holton Law. Judge Holton shared invaluable insights into the importance of estate planning and the lasting legacy you can leave through charitable provisions.

During National Estate Planning Awareness Week (October 17–21, 2024), we were reminded that it's never too early—or too late—to plan for the future. A heartfelt thank you to Judge Holton and to everyone who joined us both in person at VIPS Louisville and virtually. We're also deeply grateful to our Visionary Society members who have made a planned gift commitment—your support helps secure a brighter future for children with blindness and low vision.

Reach out to Justine Aycock at jaycock@vips.org for more information on estate planning with VIPS.

68th Annual St. James Art Fair



In honor of Blindness & Low Vision Awareness Month during October, VIPS proudly hosted a booth at the 68th Annual St. James Art Fair in Old Louisville! This beloved event has been a local favorite since 1957,

attracting vendors from across the U.S. to showcase and sell their art. We were fortunate to receive a booth free of charge, which gave us the opportunity to spread awareness about our work with children who are blind or have low vision. It was heartwarming to see so many visitors stop by to learn about our mission, explore braille books, and even try their hand at brailleing their names. A huge thank you to everyone who visited and engaged with us—we loved sharing our mission.

VIPS Mobility City Update

The Mobility City at VIPS Louisville is an essential space where children who are blind or have low vision learn critical orientation and mobility (O&M) skills, helping them navigate and safely interact with busy streets.



At our Gala every other year, we auction off the naming rights for this special space. This year, we are thrilled to announce that Bob and Leslie Bender won the honor! They chose to name it "Diane Nelson Way" in recognition of our incredible Executive Director, Diane Nelson, and her 16 years of leadership and dedication to

VIPS. Thank you, Bob and Leslie, for your generosity and for honoring Diane in such a meaningful way!

VIPS Level 5 Rating



We are thrilled to announce that VIPS Kids Town Preschool has proudly received a Level 5 rating in the Kentucky ALL STARS program! This prestigious achievement is a testament to our incredible staff and their unwavering commitment to excellence in early childhood education as we have maintained this rating since 2016.

The Kentucky ALL STARS rating system evaluates various aspects of our program, including staff credentials, ongoing professional development, instructional practices, family engagement, and administrative leadership. Our team has consistently gone above and beyond to meet these high standards, ensuring that every child receives the best possible start in their educational journey.

A special shoutout to our dedicated educators and staff members whose passion and hard work have made this achievement possible. Your expertise and commitment

to fostering a nurturing, enriching environment for our children shine through every day!

Thank you to our families for your support and trust in us. Together, we are building a brighter future for our children!

Halloween with VIPS



This October, VIPS brought the Halloween spirit to life for families in both Kentucky and Indiana, creating unforgettable experiences filled with fun, learning, and community connection!

On October 12, VIPS families gathered at the Kentucky Science Center in downtown Louisville for a thrilling day of exploration. With the museum all to themselves, kids dove into hands-on exhibits like the Noodle Forest and Be in a Bubble! It was a delight to see everyone enjoy the interactive exhibits at their own pace with curiosity and joy. We extend our thanks to UPS for providing goody bags that added an extra sprinkle of excitement to the day!



Then on October 19, our friends at Baptist Health Child Development Center in Lexington, KY hosted their annual Halloween event as a fundraiser for VIPS! We are so grateful for their support! Our families had an amazing time dressed up in costume and trick-or-treating from trunk to trunk.

Meanwhile, our annual Halloween Spooktacular event on October 26 at the Family Resource Center in Indianapolis was a fantastic success as we hosted 15 VIPS families! This year, we invited various Indiana organizations dedicated to supporting children with special healthcare needs, offering valuable resources, sensory toys, and, of course, plenty of candy! Kids were adorable in their costumes as they trick-or-treated at each organization's table, and many took advantage of a free dental screening provided by The Smile Mobile. They also had the chance to meet "Carmel" and "Kasey," the pups from Koorsen Fire & Security's "Kasey Program."



Halloween Event @ VIPS Family Resource Center

A huge thank you goes out to all our volunteers who helped make the event run smoothly, and to Nitoshka, our "good coffee" fairy, for donating delicious coffee to keep everyone energized! We also appreciate the contributions from the following organizations for creating such memorable experiences for our children: The Children's TherAplay Foundation, Easterseals Crossroads, Indiana Family to Family, Koorsen Fire & Security "Kacey Program," The Smile Mobile, and the Indiana Talking Book and Braille Library.

Together, we created wonderful Halloween memories that families will cherish for years to come. Thank you to everyone who participated and contributed to the success of these events!

Fit Body Boot Camp Fundraiser

Fit Body Boot Camp will be running a special 28-day trial offer for our VIPS friends & family!

The cost of this program is normally \$97 but you can register with our link and receive a special rate of \$47. Not only will this program help kickstart your fitness and health goals, Fit Body Boot Camp is donating 100% of the proceeds raised right back to VIPS!

Fit Body Boot Camp is a super-friendly environment regardless of your age or fitness level. This IS NOT a military-style boot camp, so don't let the name fool you. They are an indoor group fitness program, that helps hundreds of local community members transform their lives.

To learn more about Fit Body's trial offer and how you can register, [click here](#). You may also post the link on your social media so we can maximize the impact and support our mission. Thank you for your support!

louisvillebbc.com/jefferson-promo-sp

NEW ARRIVALS



We want to welcome these children to our program!

Abygail (KY)	Booker (KY)	Felix (KY)	Kysler (IN)	Micah (IN)	Ryland (KY)
Adryan (IN)	Charles (KY)	Georgia (KY)	Laiyla (IN)	Na'Mari (IN)	Samir (IN)
Alora (IN)	Charles (IN)	Gideon (IN)	Levi (IN)	Nadonis (IN)	Samuel (IN)
Amelia (IN)	Chloe (IN)	Harvey (IN)	Luana (KY)	Nechal (IN)	Sayler (KY)
Anthony (IN)	Christopher (IN)	Hunter (IN)	Luis (IN)	Oliver (IN)	Sincere (IN)
Ares (IN)	Claire (IN)	Jensen (KY)	Lynette Rose (KY)	Paislee (IN)	Sophia Maria (KY)
Armani (KY)	Cruz (IN)	Jiraiya (KY)	Maddilynn (IN)	Parker (KY)	Sutton (IN)
Asher (IN)	D'King (IN)	John (IN)	Makayla (IN)	Partrick Henry (KY)	Titus (IN)
Aurora (KY)	Daniel (IN)	Judah (IN)	Maris (IN)	Raef (IN)	Valery (IN)
Autumn (IN)	Elian (IN)	Karisma Lynn (KY)	Marshall (KY)	Raelynn (IN)	Vincent (KY)
Avery (IN)	Ellie (IN)	Kenlil (IN)	Maximus (IN)	Richard (IN)	Xander (IN)
Bailey (KY)	Everly (IN)	Kolson (KY)	Mia (KY)	Roairden (KY)	Xavier (IN)
				Roman (IN)	Yordan (KY)

2024 Toy Recommendations

Thank you to our teachers and interventionists for helping put together a list of awesome items suitable for children who are blind or have low vision!

VIPS Teacher, Trisha:

[Grabease Baby Silicone Spoon Set](#)- Available on Amazon

These utensils offer a great grip for little fingers and food sticks on them better than traditional plastic spoons. The color options also provide a nice contrast for using vision efficiently.



[Fisher-Price DJ Groovin' Go Interactive Baby and Toddler Learning Toy with Music, Lights & Sounds](#)- Available at Walmart

This toy plays music and has interactive buttons. You can also feel the toy bounce up and down as it makes a vibration on the floor when it's dancing. There is a fun recording and playback option, which provides lights for young kids with light perception and has a smaller version that's perfect for putting in the diaper bag and traveling in the car!



VIPS Teacher, Michelle:

[VTech Drop and Go Dump Truck](#)- Available on Amazon

A perfect gift for children to work on their fine motor skills. This toy has a string that allows a child to pull it and includes three balls for a child to put into the hole on top. There is also a lever allowing the child to dump the bed. The truck even makes sounds when the balls are added!



VIPS Teacher, David:

[Sratte 6.3 Inch Light Up Mini Maracas](#)- Available on Amazon

These light-up maracas have been a big hit with children who have varying degrees of low vision and visual processing challenges.



2024 Toy Recommendations

VIPS Teacher, Paige:

[Piggy Paint - Available at piggypaint.com](#)



Painting the fingernails and toenails of our little ones is a great strategy to support their visual attention to their hands and feet. This nail polish is advertised as non-toxic, which is great for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, who often put their hands in their mouths.

[Talking Products, Voice Recordable & MP3 Talking Photo Album- Available on Amazon](#)

Print photos of your child's favorite people and things and put them in this talking photo album, for an easily accessible book! Talk with your child's VIPS teacher about ways to best meet your child's early literacy needs.



[Positional Words Resource Box- Available at lakeshorelearning.com](#)

This game helps preschoolers learn and practice positional concepts, which are great for spatial awareness: "Children learn to recognize and understand positional words as they move cute manipulatives into one position after the next! With each move, kids boost their understanding of positional words and strengthen their ability to give and follow directions!"



VIPS Interventionist, Tammy:

[Rattlestar Foot and Hand Rattles- Available at kiddie-corner.com](#)

The bright colors of these rattles encourage children to use their vision. For children with no vision, the sounds of the rattles will help with spatial awareness. And the kids need to engage those fine motor skills to remove them!



[Mixing Bowl, 5 Quart, Stainless Steel- Available on Amazon](#)

A metal bowl is shiny to draw visual attention, and makes a great sound when objects are dropped inside! It promotes the exploration of space and the understanding of relationships between self and objects.



[Battat Education Bright Explorer Educational Light Box Playset- Available at Target](#)

This light box offers interactive, sensory-rich play, features a light-up surface with five color options, and includes translucent shapes and bugs. The light helps highlight the size, texture, and color of the pieces, supporting tactile exploration and observation skills. It also comes with a sensory bin to fill with materials like shredded paper, water, sand, or rice, adding more hands-on play opportunities.



[Battat Shine Bright Plastic Lightbox- Available at Walmart](#)

Similar to the light box above from Target, with this light box, children can learn, trace, and create with a color-changing light box that has translucent shapes and transparency sheets.



[Very Hungry Caterpillar Rattle Teether- Available at Walmart](#)

Ms. Tammy loves this because it is just right for little hands to grasp and has various textures. The links are removable so you can use them to hang other toys from a play gym. The bright colors are great for drawing the child's attention.



2024 Toy Recommendations

VIPS Teacher, Staci:

For the holidays this year, think about getting your child a book and supplies or toys that can make the text of the story more meaningful. For example, Ms. Staci recommends pairing the following books with toys available on Amazon.

Book #1: [Mouse Paint](#) by Ellen Stoll Walsh- Available at [seedlings.org](#)

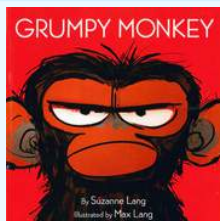


Experience for Book #1: [Blippi My First Science: Science Kit with Color Experiments](#)- Available on Amazon



To enhance the sensory experience of painting, you can add coffee, sand, or herbs and spices to paint to give it a scent and a tactile element!

Book #2: [Grumpy Monkey](#) by Suzanne Lane - Available at [shop.nbp.org](#)



Experience for Book #2: [Learning Resources Big Feelings Pineapple Deluxe Set](#)- Available on Amazon

Book #3: [The Going To Bed Book](#) by Sandra Boynton- Available at [shop.nbp.org](#)



Experience for Book #3: [Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood Good Night Daniel Tiger 7in tall Figure](#)- available on Amazon

VIPS Teacher, Ashley E:

[JOYIN 4-Pack Fidget Tubes for Kids](#)- Available on Amazon

These colorful fidget tubes help children develop social-emotional skills and improve focus through tactile interaction. They engage a variety of senses, making them perfect for a child who is blind or has low vision!



These recommendations are great for children of varying abilities!

VIPS Parents/Caregivers: Feel free to reach out to your VIPS teacher or interventionist if you need ideas on creating accessible experiences from a favorite book, how to create a story box for your child, or to get more ideas for what to buy for your child.

Happy Holidays from all of us at VIPS!



Follow Us



Make a difference this holiday season with .

Our annual holiday card is our largest fundraising appeal, reaching out to our incredible community of supporters. The funds raised are essential in sustaining our early childhood education program, empowering children with blindness or low vision to gain independence and confidence. Join us in making a difference this holiday season—your generosity will change lives!

vips.org/donate



[View a video message from the Deadwyler family.](#)

GROW

“Every child is a different kind of flower, and all together, they make this world a beautiful garden.”

-Brigette Barrager

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