

KRISTEN PARSONS: Hello, my name is Kristen Parsons, and I'm the project coordinator of the Deaf-Blind Initiative at PaTTAN. Today, I'm going to talk to you about experience books. I recommend using experience books for all children. However, children with deaf-blindness can use experience books to learn to focus and read. All you need for this project is a three-ring binder, cardboard, or other starting material. Some students and teachers prefer using a flexible plastic that can be wrinkled in case you have a child that likes to grab things in the classroom.

This cardboard is covered with black for contrast, but some children prefer yellow or red. Pictures of the experience that you want to talk about or objects, the topic that you're talking about, and an option would be plastic protecting pages, and a pencil.

So to start this experience book, I am going to take the black page that I've already prepared. I've already used my glue and glued on my black paper. I'm going to glue on the picture and my sentence. Now some students might not have vision. The child that I'm working with does have vision. And so I have made this in 72 font. However, some children might just have it brailled. Some children might have the words and then brailled, and some might just have the object.

So what I'm going to do is put this in the plastic protective sheet and put it in my binder. And I have other pictures that I'm going to add. So what this experience book is about is feeling. Sometimes it's very hard to teach abstract things. I messed up. Sometimes it's very hard to teach concepts that are abstract. So for this, we're just focusing on feelings. So I have a picture of Mike that is tired, a picture of Mike that is sad, and a picture of Mike that is happy. When I place them in my book, because the child I'm working with has some fine motor issues, I have fastened a pencil, or you can use a ruler or popsicle stick, for the child to easily grab to turn the pages back and forth.

In my experience as a teacher with children with deaf-blindness, I have learned that sometimes it can be difficult to get them to read stories that are not about themselves. Everyone likes to learn and read about themselves. I think that you'll find experience books will work well in your classroom when trying to teach your child to focus on literacy.

If you have any questions about experience books and how to make them, please contact me at kparsons, P-A-R-S-O-N-S, at pattan.net. You can also find links and other website information at pattan.net. Thank you.