

American Printing House for the Blind Individual Calendar Kit

Constructing a Calendar from the Kit

At the beginning of each month, a new calendar will need to be constructed from the Individual Calendar Kit. First, a grid sheet will be needed. Grid sheets come in an assortment of colors to add interest for those students with vision. Individuals may select their own colors each month or the teacher may assign a color appropriate for the month; for example, green might be chosen for March with both St. Patrick's Day and the beginning of spring. If a child has difficulty working with the grid, the teacher can cut the sheet into strips and the child can work with one week at a time. For most months, room for only five rows of numbers will be required on the grid. However, about two times a year, a month will have 31 days and begin on a Friday or 30 or 31 days and begin on a Saturday, so the sixth row of the grid will be needed. If a child finds this extra row confusing on months when it is not needed, put a strip of tape or paper over it, decorate it with stickers, or cut it off.

Next, the label for the month will need to be located. It is on a white sheet containing print/braille labels for each of the twelve months of the year. Before the label is taken from this sheet, it is important to know that it is the one desired and where it will be placed on the grid. Note that the top right corner has been cut off of this and other calendar labels for easier orientation. When the label for the month is in place, be sure the sheet with the rest of the labels is put away for safekeeping until next month.

Each calendar also needs labels from a sheet with letters standing for the days of the week and the numerals 1-31 for the days of the month. There are twelve such sheets in the kit when you begin using it. After carefully labeling the days of the week, young children may add a numeral to the grid each day until the month is complete. Older students may put all the numbers on the calendar at the beginning of the month and then use the calendar as a reference throughout the month. Since each sheet contains 31 numerals, there will be numerals to discard at the ends of months with less than 31 days.

A re-stickable glue stick has been provided for putting labels on the grid. At first, the teacher may want to organize the calendar numbers and attach them to a separate sheet using the re-stickable glue stick. The student can take the day's number from this sheet and attach it to the grid. Later, the children should be able to do this process independently. Putting the labels on the calendar can also be used as an opportunity for children to learn to use other types of adhesives, such as double-stick tape, liquid glue, or paste. Older students could practice braille placement on a braillewriter by brailleing labels themselves directly on the grid squares.

The Individual Calendar Kit is meant to be consumable. At the end of each month, calendars may be taken home or perhaps saved in a notebook as a reference until the end of the year.

Observing Special Days

No special symbols are included for the Individual Calendar Kit. Teachers may, however, wish to make their own from commercially available stickers and tape. For example, a scratch and sniff, puff, glitter, or other interesting sticker could be used for major holidays, such as Thanksgiving or Christmas; stars, colored circles, or even notebook hole reinforcers could stand for birthdays or other special events; and narrow tape could be used across vacation days when there is no school. Children can be allowed to choose symbols which are meaningful to them, thus introducing some creativity and problem-solving. If young children use symbols to substitute for numbers on holidays with the Classroom Calendar Kit, the Individual Calendar Kit used without symbols may help reinforce the idea that St. Patrick's Day is still the 17th since one calendar has a symbol and the other just a number for the same day. Older children can list special dates for a month on a separate piece of paper. An example of such a list for March might read like this:

- March 6, Mike's birthday
- March 17, St. Patrick's Day
- March 21, 1st day of Spring
- March 31, Crystal's birthday

Educational Objectives

Objectives Requiring a Calendar

- To become familiar with the calendar as a tool for measuring time
- To learn how many days are in a week, a month, and a year; how many weeks are in a month; and how many months are in a year
- To locate months, days, and numbers on a calendar
- To use the calendar to answer questions such as
 - How many Wednesdays are in this month?
 - What day of the week is the 10th?
- To use the calendar to plan for future events and remember past events

Objectives Which Can Be Reinforced Using a Calendar

Reading Readiness Objectives

- To identify rows
- To track from left to right
- To move from top to bottom
- To track left to right and back and drop down to find the next row
- To relate print of braille on a calendar to numbers and words
- To associate beginning sounds with letters
- To recognize words and letters

Language Objectives

- To name the days of the week
- To sequence the days of the week in order
- To identify months of the year
- To use the date in a complete sentence
- To describe a day and things associated with it in sentences
- To identify weekdays versus weekend days
- To use terms yesterday, today, and tomorrow
- To listen as others share their descriptions
- To state what the calendar tells

Social Studies Objectives

- To build an awareness of coming holidays, birthdays, and other special events
- To develop an awareness of current events
- To celebrate past events

Science Objectives

- To record weather observations
- To learn about the seasons and their characteristics
- To learn about natural phenomena upon which the calendar is based: phases of the moon (months), the earth's rotation (day and night), and revolutions of the earth around the sun (years)

Arithmetic Objectives

- To develop one-to-one correspondence
- To count from one to thirty-one
- To recognize the numerals 1-31
- To sequence numbers
- To use ordinal numbers 1st to 31st
- To develop an awareness of time
- To recognize multiples of seven beginning with numerals from 1-7
- To calculate from a known date by adding or subtracting

Activity Suggestions

Children can...

- put the date on the calendar, guided in tracking and identification as appropriate. (Very young children who find this difficult might prepare for it by building a calendar one week at a time using strips cut from grids in the Individual Calendar Kit.)
- sequence numbers for the week.
- count the days on the calendar and add today's number.
- locate and identify the letters in the name of the month, etc.
- spell the name of the month, etc.

- recite the days of the week.
- match the numbers on the Individual Calendar with the numbers on the Classroom Calendar and the letters for the days with the names of the days.
- learn the correct abbreviations as well as the full spellings for the days of the week.
- identify the number of the year.
- repeat after the teacher in unison and then individually, "Today is Thursday, June 3, 2021."
- give a complete sentence of their own describing the date.
- name yesterday and tomorrow as well as today.
- answer more complex questions requiring use of the calendar.
- use ordinal numbers correctly. For example, if yesterday was the 1st, what is today?
- discuss regularly scheduled activities and upcoming events.
- put symbols for holidays, birthdays, and vacations on the calendar and/or make a list of special dates on separate paper.
- make a chain to represent the number of days until the next vacation, count the links, and remove one each day until the big day arrives.
- describe the weather each day and use appropriate symbols to indicate it.
- discuss outdoor activities and appropriate dress for the weather.
- compare the weather today with the weather yesterday and/or the prediction for tomorrow.
- discuss news heard on the radio or TV each day.
- receive recognition for good behavior or outstanding achievement by having a sticker or star put on the calendar each day or naming student of the day, week, or month.
- compare this monthly calendar to a yearly braille or print calendar.
- find the beginning letter of the day and talk about other words that begin with the same sound.

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