

Factors Associated with Proficient Braille Skills in Adults

What Were We Trying to Learn?

In this study, we investigated factors associated with having proficient braille skills among adults who are legally blind. We considered a variety of personal characteristics, age at vision loss, assistive technology (AT) skills, and employment status. We also wanted to know whether employment was more strongly associated with braille proficiency for people who are totally blind compared to all legally blind participants.

How Was This Project Carried Out?

We collected survey responses from 449 adults in 2021 and 2022, including both employed and unemployed people who were legally blind and lived in the United States or Canada. The surveys were completed online or by phone. Participants answered questions about their braille skills, age, sex, education, when they experienced vision loss, their vision level, other disabilities, and AT skills. We used logistic regression to analyze the data and identify factors associated with braille proficiency.

Research Takeaway

Strong braille skills were more common among people who are younger, female, have higher AT skills, and are employed. Experiencing early blindness and having less functional vision was also associated with the likelihood of being proficient in braille.

What Are the Most Important Things We Learned?

The study found that people who became blind before age 5; were totally blind, younger in age, or female; had better AT skills; or were employed were more likely to have strong braille skills. People who were totally blind and working were almost four times more likely to have strong braille skills than those who were unemployed. Younger adults, especially those between ages 21–30, had the highest rates of braille proficiency.

How Do These Findings Relate to Me?

If you are a person who is blind or has low vision, these findings suggest that developing proficient braille skills at any time in life may be valuable and offer an employment advantage, especially if you are totally blind. Strong braille skills can help with independence, access to information, and success in the workplace. Individuals who are proficient in braille are more likely to utilize braille-related tools, such as refreshable braille displays, which can increase efficiency. Even though learning braille may take longer later in life, support, tools, and training are available to help. Whether you're a student, job seeker, or adult adapting to vision loss, braille could be a powerful tool for your independence and success.

Learn More

Findings were taken from the following article:

McDonnall, M. C., Steverson, A., Boydstun, J., & D'Andrea, F. M. (2025). [Factors associated with proficient braille skills in adults](#). *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness*, 119(2), 97-108.

For more information about this project, visit the [project overview page](#).

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