How to improve tactile pictures in storybooks for children with visual impairment?

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Shared reading activities with illustrated books enhanced early literacy development. While typical children are exposed to the richness of written language at a very early age and have a variety of materials at their disposal, the situation is quite different for children with visual disabilities. Even when they have access to adapted tactile books, there is no guarantee that they can easily understand the images. Indeed the direct transposition of a visual image to a tactile image is not necessarily sufficient for the child to understand the image and to support comprehension of the story effectively. In different studies we assessed the effects of different kinds of illustration (3D tactile objects, figurative pictures, simplified pictures with different textures, adding of sounds…) on image recognition and story comprehension among visually impaired children from 5 to 10 years-old. Our results showed that simplified pictures efficiently support image and story comprehension. Adding sounds or manipulating 3D objects also have beneficial effects.