



Family Engagement Newsletter

Wisconsin's Informational Guidebook on Dyslexia and Related Conditions

By Wendy Overturf

Wisconsin now has its first [dyslexia-specific law](#) on the books — giving hope to those who have been advocating for greater recognition of the common learning disability. On February 5, 2020, Governor Tony Evers signed into law a bill that required the creation of a guidebook for Wisconsin schools when it comes to dyslexia. Prior to the law, the state had no guidelines in place for the learning disorder that can impact reading and schoolwork.

Required by 2019 Wisconsin Act 86, an informational dyslexia guidebook was created through collaboration between an advisory committee created by Act 86 and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI). Feedback was solicited from advisory committee members at several points in the drafting process. In addition, the guidebook was available for 30 days of public comment. Wisconsin's new informational guidebook on dyslexia and related conditions was published in July 2021 and is available [on the DPI website](#). This is an informational guidebook. Other than where statutory requirements are clearly stated, this guidebook shares information rather than making recommendations or mandates.

The guidebook highlights the need for early comprehensive assessments that lead to responsive instruction and intervention with the goal of preventing further reading difficulties. This is important for students with dyslexia because studies have shown that providing early intervention can “help prevent severe and persistent reading difficulties” (Catts and Hogan 2020, 11). Since reading becomes progressively more complex and because reading difficulties may persist despite expert teaching, students’ reading should continue to be assessed with both formative and summative assessments that lead to responsive instruction and interventions when needed K-12. The audience for the information is broad and includes but is not limited to parents and families, educators, interventionists or reading teachers, and educational leaders.

As outlined in the [one-page summary document](#), the guidebook can be used to:

- help learners, families, and educators understand the characteristics of dyslexia and related conditions and how they can be identified;
- share characteristics of instruction that can effectively serve students with dyslexia and related conditions so that all Wisconsin students get the instruction/interventions they need when they need it;
- help families understand what information to request and questions to ask to better understand their child’s strengths and needs as a learner;
- help families understand how their child’s needs as a reader are, or can be, addressed;
- help families understand educational language related to reading, including common terms related to assessment, instruction, and intervention;
- help families understand the universal instruction and/or interventions educators and educational systems use and how to effectively meet the needs of readers with dyslexia or related conditions; and
- support educational systems in considering how their system addresses assessment, screening, instruction, and intervention for all readers, including those with dyslexia and related conditions and those who struggle for other reasons.

Each school district also needs to include a link on their website to the informational guidebook. The school district link must be available no later than December 1, 2021.

Wisconsin DPI believes that the Guidebook can be included as one part of district conversations-including family members and community members- about meeting students’ needs as readers. Specifically, the Guidebook can support conversations about how a local equitable multi-level system of supports (E-MLSS) serves learners when they struggle with reading, including those with characteristics of dyslexia and related conditions. [Click here to access a guidance document](#) about planning and engaging in conversations using the Guidebook.

Statewide Events

[UDL: A Principled Approach to Educational Justice](#)

Date: October 7-8, 2021

This is a [no cost virtual conference](#). Join the Wisconsin conversation with national experts talking about educational justice, putting learning as the featured narrative to address equity, and research-based practices that matter.

[Youth in Partnership with Parents for Empowerment \(YiPPE\)](#)

YiPPE will take place in person at two different locations beginning this fall (Green Bay and Milwaukee). Catch up on what you need to know for transitioning your youth from school to postsecondary options while having the opportunity to connect with other families. YiPPE is an opportunity for youth with disabilities and their parents to learn about the transition process in a unique way while building real life skills in the areas of employment, education, living, and health.

[New to Autism Virtual Parent Support Group](#)

A monthly virtual group for parents of children newly diagnosed with autism. Join us to connect with other parents for a casual discussion about shared experiences, community resources, and to learn more about the Autism Society. The group will be facilitated by Kelly Brodhagen, Resource Specialist, and mother to three sons, two of whom are on the autism spectrum.

Date: October 21, 2021, 6:30 pm-7:30 pm

[State Superintendent's Conference on Special Education and Pupil Services Leadership Conference-Save the Dates](#)

The WI DPI will be hosting two half-day virtual events featuring live and pre-recorded sessions. No cost to attend.

Dates: [November 8, 2021](#): Featuring sessions on various topics related to Special Education and Pupil Services and [February 10, 2022](#): Featuring sessions on state and national legal updates

[Children Come First Conference](#)

A conference for those caring for, working with, or concerned with the well-being of children and young adults with social, emotional, behavioral, or mental health challenges. This event brings together professionals, educators, and families, with national experts in the field of children's mental health. There will also be a virtual option for this conference.

Date: November 15-16, 2021

Location: Kalahari Resort, WI DELLS



At Home Learning Strategies

[Daily Literacy Activities to Share with Your Child: October 2021](#)

This calendar is packed with suggested actions you can take with the small children in your life to develop their early literacy skills.

[Children's Activity Calendar: October 2021](#)

Learn about some of earth's marvelous beasts — like cats, bats, and reptiles. See how food is grown and how it makes its way to the International Space Station (did you know astronauts have pizza parties?). Plus, find new books, music, and crafts that will keep kids engaged every day.

[Indigenous Peoples' Day-October 11, 2021](#)



Indigenous Peoples' Day is celebrated on the second Monday of October to honor the cultures and histories of the Native American people. The day is centered around reflecting on their tribal roots and the tragic stories that hurt but strengthened their communities.

- [Reading list](#) categorized by age group. Some of these may be available in your local library
- Enjoy with your family the video read aloud [Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story](#) read by Kevin Noble Maillard, an enrolled member of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma.
- This [youtube episode](#) explores a part of the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington D.C. and looks at some of the artifacts, customs, and cultures of the American Indian.
- Find out about the [WI DPI American Indian Studies Program](#).

[National Farmer's Day-October 12, 2021](#)

National Farmers Day is observed on October 12th each year. In the midst of harvest season, National Farmer's Day is a day of important celebration, to give thanks to farmers past and present. From early on, a farmer's hard work and dedication has benefited our nation in terms of commodities for our livelihood along with their immense contributions to the national and local economies.



- Nancy Castaldo, author of The Farm That Feeds Us, describes in this [video](#) a year in the life of a farm and discusses the importance of eating sustainably and naturally. She also talks about items that might be found in your pantry that initially started from farm products.
- Kids love puzzles. Challenge their reading and vocabulary skills with our fun [Farmer's Market word search puzzle](#).

[Fire Prevention Week-October 3-9, 2021](#)

This year's Fire Prevention Week™ theme, "Learn the Sounds of Fire Safety™," puts the focus on educating children and adults about smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) alarms, their necessity, and how the sounds they make help save lives. Check out these activities.



- Sparky the Fire Dog is the official mascot for the [National Fire Protection Association \(NFPA\)](#). Have fun and practice reading and measuring skills with [Sparky's Recipes for Cooking with Kids](#). Be sure to check out these [tips](#) first.
- [Sparky's Connect the Dots with Math](#) (using early addition and subtraction facts)
- Practice putting words in alphabetical order with this [fire safety maze](#).
- Review the [Family Fire Safety Plan for Parents](#). (in English and Spanish)



Reading to children is a great way to improve your child's reading skills. Enjoy watching and listening to read alouds about pumpkins: [The Runaway Pumpkin](#), [From Seed to Pumpkin](#), and [We're Going on a Pumpkin Hunt](#). Be sure to ask your child questions about the book appropriate to their age and understanding. This helps children build comprehension skills.

Pumpkins can be so much fun during the fall season and kids love a trip to the pumpkin patch or store to pick out their favorite pumpkin. They can also enjoy hands-on learning with these simple to set up [pumpkin measuring activities](#). Try this kid-friendly recipe: [No Bake Pumpkin Pie using Ice Cream Cones](#)

Online Resources: Learning Disabilities

[Center for Parent Information and Resources \(CPIR\)](#)

This website has a variety links to resources related to learning disabilities. It includes information about potential signs of a learning disability, information about the evaluation process and tips for parents and teachers.

[Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction](#)

This website provides guidance for implementing Wisconsin Criteria for Specific Learning Disabilities as well as links to other information related to learning disabilities.

[The National Center for Learning Disabilities \(NCLD\)](#)

The mission of the NCLD is to improve the lives of all people with learning difficulties and disabilities by empowering parents, enabling young adults, transforming schools, and creating policy and advocacy impact. The website has information on learning disabilities, resources, as well as a [link](#) to sign up for their newsletter.

[Learning Disabilities Association of America \(LDA\)](#)

LDA provides support to people with learning disabilities, their parents, teachers and other professionals with cutting edge information on learning disabilities, practical solutions, and a comprehensive network of resources. These services make LDA the leading resource for information on learning disabilities.

[Understood.org](#)

The goal of the website is to help parents whose children, ages 3–20, are struggling with learning and attention issues. It provides information to empower parents to understand their children's issues and relate to their experiences. With this knowledge, parents can make effective choices that propel their children from simply coping to truly thriving. The website is very parent-friendly and offers links to information related to learning difficulties. Archived webinars are also available.

[AdLit](#)

AdLit.org is a national multimedia project offering information and resources to the parents and educators of struggling adolescent readers and writers. AdLit.org offers articles that provide research-based and best-practice information for educators, parents, and others interested in helping young people become better readers and writers.

[Bookshare](#)

Bookshare is an ebook library that makes reading easier. Members can access a huge collection of ebooks and read their way with the most customizable ebooks for people with reading barriers. The library has 751,624 titles and is the most extensive collection of accessible ebooks in the world. It includes books for school, career, and reading pleasure, as well as titles in over 34 languages. Thanks to funding from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), Bookshare is free for all qualified U.S. students and schools.

[Dyscalculia.org](#)

Dyscalculia is a math learning disorder that makes mathematical reasoning and computation difficult, despite adequate education, average or greater intelligence, and proper motivation. Check this website for a multitude of resources related to this learning disability.

[The International Dyslexia Association \(IDA\)](#)

IDA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, scientific, and educational organization dedicated to the study and treatment of learning disabilities, dyslexia and related language-based learning differences. The purpose of IDA is to pursue and provide the most comprehensive range of information and services that address the full scope of dyslexia and related difficulties in learning to read and write.

[ReadingRockets.org](#)

Reading Rockets provides detailed information about learning to read and strategies for supporting struggling readers at home, at school, and in the community. It offers news, practical information, expert advice, and resources for parents, teachers, tutors, childcare providers, and policy makers.

Hello Fall



[Wisconsin Fall Color Report](#)



[13 Easy Autumn Crafts](#)

[Fall Crafts—Playing with Leaves & Twigs](#)



[5 Scenic Fall Train Rides in Wisconsin](#)

Wind your way through a forest of fall color with a ride on one of Wisconsin's historic trains. Each season, rail lines around the state show Wisconsin dressed in its autumn best on scenic tours and themed rides, like [Mid-Continent Railway's Pumpkin Special](#), where riders hop off to pick pumpkins halfway through their journey.



[Mosaic Pumpkins](#)

[37 Amazing Craft Ideas from Scholastic](#)

WI FACETS



Event title links to information & registration for WI FACETS FREE workshops & webinars:

To register by phone: 877-374-0511

All webinars 12:00—1:00 PM
(unless otherwise noted)

[Speech & Language and Related Services in a Virtual World](#)

Presenter: Carlynn Higbie, WI DPI

Date: October 6, 2021

[Serving on Groups: Processes Groups Use \(Sec 3\)](#)

Presenter: Jan Serak, Serak Consulting

Date: October 7, 2021

[IEP 5: Writing the IEP \(Part 1\)](#)

Presenter: Wendy Overturf, WI FACETS

Date: October 12, 2021, 12pm-12:30pm

[IEP Revisions and Extended School Year \(Spanish\)](#)

Presenter: Nelsinia Ramos, WI FACETS

Date: October 14, 2021

To register: nramos@wifacets.org

[Dyslexia Updates: What's New in 2021](#)

Presenter: Katie Kasubaski, Decoding Dyslexia WI

Date: October 20, 2021

[Self Advocacy: Branding Yourself for Employment](#)

Presenter: Megan Rindal, Creative Employment Opportunities

Date: October 20, 2021, 6-7 pm

[Serving on Groups: Tools & Tips \(Sec 4&5\)](#)

Presenter: Jan Serak, Serak Consulting

Date: October 21, 2021

[IEP 6: Writing the IEP \(Part 2\)](#)

Presenter: Wendy Overturf, WI FACETS

Date: October 26, 2021, 12pm-12:30pm

[Temper Tantrums](#)

Presenter: Heather Rotolo, Penfield Children's Center

Date: October 27, 2021

[Serving on Groups: Understanding & Using Data \(Sec 6\)](#)

Presenter: Jan Serak, Serak Consulting

Date: October 28, 2021



[Developing Accessible and Inclusive Social-Emotional Learning Approaches for Students with Disabilities](#)

From the National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD)

When thinking about learning in school, most people's minds jump to reading, writing, history, math, and science. For students who have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or 504 plans, conversations typically focus on academics. A parent might ask their child's teacher how they are doing in reading, or the child's teacher might mention which math skills a child is struggling with.

But learning and developing as a student is about more than just memorizing facts, being able to read and write, or solving math problems. Research shows that students learn best when they actively engage with content and with others in positive and meaningful ways. Students must also grow in areas of social and emotional development. Therefore, this [parent toolkit](#) has been developed by the NCLD. This toolkit can help parents understand more about the importance of social, emotional, and academic development for students with disabilities.



[A GUIDE FOR K-12 SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES FOR THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR](#)

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a tremendous toll on America's students, families, educators, and schools. But with increased access to vaccinations for school staff and students 12 and older, proven virus prevention strategies, and unprecedented resources from the American Rescue Plan and other federal pandemic relief funds, America's public schools have been steadily reopening for in-person learning, and students are returning to classrooms.

As stated in the guide, "We must continue that progress and provide every student, from every community and background, the opportunity to return to in-person learning full-time this fall. We must keep opening school doors and welcoming students back into classrooms. We must re-engage parents and families as they return to school and return to work, following more than a year of the pandemic. We must welcome families back in authentically, listen and seek to understand their concerns, and respond to their needs, so that all families feel comfortable sending their students to school this fall. As we start the 2021-2022 school year, schools and communities must address gaps that were exacerbated by the pandemic and build our education system back better than before."

[Research to Read](#)

[Early Signs of Specific Learning Disabilities in Early Childhood](#)

Ballicki, O. S. & Melekoglu, M. A., (2020). Early signs of specific learning disabilities in early childhood. *International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education*, 12(1), 84-95. doi: 10.20489/intjecse.722383

[Article Link](#)

Since comprehensive evaluation of academic skills cannot be extensively conducted in early childhood, specific learning disabilities cannot be diagnosed in preschool-aged children. To evaluate academic skills, children must be school-aged and interventions cannot begin in the preschool period. However, specific learning disabilities in children may also be noticed during preschool. Preschool teachers need to determine which kids are at risk of having specific learning disabilities so that they can be detected early and an intervention provided. Preschool teachers need to be aware of the early signs of specific learning disabilities to distinguish between typically developing children and those at risk of having specific learning disabilities. In this review, studies describing the preschool characteristics of students at risk of having specific learning disabilities are examined and the early signs of specific learning disabilities and early intervention processes are described based on the literature. Research suggests that the signs of specific learning disabilities can be seen in early childhood. The need for preschool teachers and families to be sensitive to the characteristics of children at risk of specific learning disabilities in the context of early intervention is discussed.

This monthly update is provided by the Wisconsin Family Assistance Center for Education, Training & Support (WI FACETS) to share statewide information regarding parent leadership and family involvement. *If you would like to receive this monthly update or if you would like to have your name removed from the distribution list, contact: Wendy Overturf at woverturf@wifacets.org.*



Contributions to the Newsletter

Upcoming newsletter topics: **November: Emotional Behavioral Disabilities**
December: Communication
January: Transition

To submit contributions of articles, events, or resources, you may use the attached word document. Send submissions to woverturf@wifacets.org. If you are unable to access the form, you may send the information in an email.

Material appropriate for the monthly newsletter include web links to sources of family involvement/parent leadership resources, advertisements for statewide trainings for parents, youth or parent/educator audiences, information about statewide parent agencies, recent research pertaining to family engagement, and family engagement success articles.

***The WI FACETS Family Engagement E-Newsletter
can be found online at:***

[Newsletter | Serving Groups \(servingongroups.org\)](https://www.servingongroups.org)



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