

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

Topic of the Month: Learning Disabilities

Upcoming Statewide Events

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction: Two Day Autism Trainings:

Registration Now Open

- **Autism Essentials Across the School Day**
Jan. 26 & 27, 2016, Oshkosh
- **Teaching and Supporting New Behaviors**
Nov. 3 & 4, 2015, Wausau or
Feb. 23 & 24, 2016, Oshkosh
- **Early Childhood Autism Essentials Across the Day**
Oct. 20 & 21, 2015,
Johnson Creek
- **Addressing Social Understanding Needs of Students with Autism**
Mar. 8 & 9, 2016, WI Dells
- **Supporting Visual Learners and Their Neurology**
Jun. 21 & 22, 2016,
Johnson Creek

[Information & Registration Link](#)

Motivating Children and Teens to Achieve in School

For parents and teachers, this free presentation, will provide a road map for channeling your child's motivation in a positive way. Pre-registration is required. Adult only program, child care is not offered.

Presenter: Dr. M. Langley, Clinical Psychology Assoc.

Date: Dec. 1, 2015 6-7:30 pm

Location: Aurora Wellness, Burlington

Contact: [Lori Radtke](#) (262) 763-0180 ext. 2224

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IMPACT

Teen Takes Beginning Steps Toward Self-Advocacy

By Wendy Overturf

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004) states that a child should attend his or her individualized education program (IEP) conference, if appropriate. Each family must decide if the child should attend, based on individual circumstances. Families who include their child in the IEP meetings have often reported that the child's presence puts the focus on the child. The school must invite the child when transition services are being discussed. Transition planning is used to identify and develop goals which need to be accomplished to assist the student in meeting his or her post-high school goals. In Wisconsin, it is required that transition be included in the IEP that will be in effect when the child is 14 and updated annually thereafter.

Schools know how important self-advocacy will be to the child after he or she finishes high school. Self-advocacy refers to the ability to speak and act on behalf of one's self and is an important skill for students in school settings, including IEP meetings, and in post-school adult life. That is one reason many school districts in Wisconsin encourage student participation at the IEP meeting. Some districts are also providing students with appropriate training so that they are better able to understand and participate in their IEP meeting.

One student, who has epilepsy, shared her positive experience as a participant at her IEP meeting. As she told her parents and special education teacher, she was embarrassed when she had a seizure in class. It didn't happen often, but when it did, she felt that the students in her class treated her differently and tended to avoid her. Some students even made disparaging and cruel remarks. The teacher and her parents helped her put these thoughts in writing as well as develop some possible solutions.

At the IEP meeting, the student shared her concerns. She asked that the school take a more proactive approach and take an active role in helping other students understand her disability. She requested that students in the school be given information regarding epilepsy. She suggested that perhaps an appropriate place for this would be in the required health class. The student went on to show a brief video from the Epilepsy Foundation that explains the disability. The video also has clips from actual students who have epilepsy describing how they feel and how they are often treated. The student also suggested that in order to not single out students with epilepsy that perhaps there could be information about other disabilities.

The IEP team took the student's remarks seriously. No specific plan was developed at the IEP meeting to provide disability related information to all students in the school. However, the team did agree that a plan would be put in place that would address the student's concerns. The student's advocacy resulted in positive results not just for this student but for other students as well!



Upcoming Statewide Events

Technology Conference for Special Education

Conference offers more than 20 sessions on educational, instructional and assistive technology for beginning, intermediate and advanced level learners. Participants have the opportunity to attend sessions and visit the Exhibit Hall to learn more about technology services and products.

Date: November 16-17, 2015

Location: Kalahari Resort and Convention Center, WI Dells

[Information & Registration Link](#)

Across the Lifespan Conference

Learn about special education, transition, higher education, assistive technology and employment. Targets all age groups: PK-12, post-secondary education, adulthood and seniors. Attendees represent the fields of education, case management, AT, OT, PT, speech and language pathology and rehabilitation counselors. Students of these professions, consumers and family members also attend.

Date: December 3-4, 2015

Location: Chula Vista, WI Dells

[Information & Registration Link](#)

WI State Reading Association: Engaging the Many Facets of Literacy

Register by January 10, 2016 to qualify for early registration discount.

Date: February 4, 5, 6, 2016

Location: Wisconsin Center, Milwaukee

[Information & Registration Link](#)

RESEARCH TO READ

Accommodating Students with Epilepsy or Seizure Disorders: Effective Strategies for Teachers

Barnett, Juliet E. Hart and Gay, Catherine
Physical Disabilities: Education and
Related Services, 2015, 34(1), 1-13.

[Article Link](#)

Abstract:

The most common chronic neurological condition in children is epilepsy. Because it often occurs in childhood, epilepsy is likely the most common neurological condition encountered by school professionals including teachers. Given the impact that epilepsy can have on academic functioning and specifically on the day-to-day performance of a student in the classroom, it is important for teachers to be aware not only of the presence of the disorder but also of the potential consequences and appropriate ways to handle these consequences should they arise. Herein we synthesize recommendations from several scientific sources to provide specific, evidence-based strategies that teachers of students with epilepsy can employ in the classroom as part of their naturally occurring

application for both general and special education teachers.

Dysgraphia as a Mild Expression of Dystonia in Children with Absence Epilepsy

Renzo Guerrini, Federico Melani, Claudia Brancati, Anna Rita Ferrari, Paola Brovedani, Annibale Biggeri, Laura Grisotto, Simona Pellacani
PLoS ONE 10(7): e0130883.

doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0130883

[Article Link](#)

Abstract Background

Absence epilepsy (AE) is etiologically heterogeneous and has at times been associated with idiopathic dystonia.

Objectives

Based on the clinical observation that children with AE often exhibit, interictally, a disorder resembling writer's cramp but fully definable as dysgraphia, we tested the hypothesis that in this particular population dysgraphia would represent a subtle expression of dystonia

Methods

We ascertained the prevalence of dysgraphia in 82 children



with AE (mean age 9.7) and average intelligence and compared them with 89 age-, gender- and class-matched healthy children (mean age 10.57) using tests for handwriting fluency and quality, based on which we divided patients and controls into four subgroups: AE/dysgraphia, AE without dysgraphia, controls with dysgraphia and healthy controls. We compared the blink reflex recovery cycle in children belonging to all four subgroups.

Results

The study found that children with absence epilepsy had a 3.4-times higher risk of dysgraphia compared to the control group; age and gender were not a factor. The dysgraphia affected handwriting fluency and quality in the children with absence epilepsy.

Conclusions

In children with AE, dysgraphia is highly prevalent and has a homogeneous, distinctive pathophysiological substrate

STATEWIDE PARTNERSHIP

The Epilepsy Foundation Heart of Wisconsin has been serving people with epilepsy since 1981. They have offices in Janesville, Madison, and Stevens Point, with outreach offices throughout the state. Their programs are dedicated to improving how people with epilepsy are perceived, accepted and valued in society while ensuring that people with seizures are able to participate in all life experiences. Services include social opportunities, one-on-one counseling to develop daily living skills, and informing individuals to understand more about the condition in order to maintain a healthy lifestyle and positive outlook.

Epilepsy affects 3 million Americans and 50 million people worldwide, but the lives of family members, friends and co-workers are also deeply affected. The organization offers services for families, schools, employers and public health workers that engage and educate individuals in order to raise awareness and reduce the stigmas and myths associated with seizures and epilepsy.

The organization offers school nurse training, a training for teachers, staff & bus drivers to increase awareness, and a classroom presentation tailored by age group to inform a student's classmates about seizures. They also offer quarterly educational opportunities for both English and Spanish speaking parents of children with all types of disabilities.

The [Epilepsy Foundation of Wisconsin website](#) has contact information as well as many resources related to epilepsy. The Heart of Wisconsin affiliate serves 43 Wisconsin counties. The Madison office address is 1302 Mendota Street, Suite 100, Madison, WI 53714. Phone: (800) 693-2287. Email: info@epilepsywisconsin.org.



ONLINE RESOURCES



Center for Parent Information and Resources (CPIR)

This website has links to information related to incidence, characteristics, diagnosis and treatment, and school services related to children who have epilepsy.

[CPIR website](#)

Epilepsy Foundation

This website has information for parents and professionals related to epilepsy disorders. It has a link to an "Epilepsy 101" module that provides basic information related to diagnosis and treatment. It also has a link to a "toolbox" and provides information on forms and information parents may want to have available in case of an emergency. Information about other support groups and services is also on this site.

[Epilepsy Foundation website](#)

National Seizure Disorder Foundation (NSDF)

The mission of NSDF is to bridge the gap between diagnosis and cure by providing online and offline resources for positive seizure management that increase the quality of daily life for individuals with epilepsy. The organization believes there is no higher purpose than to help people with Epilepsy/Seizure Disorders to be more than a diagnosis. Links are provided to online community blogs as well as a Facebook group.

[NSDF website](#)

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Information related to medications and health care plans for students with epilepsy and seizure disorders can be found on this website.

[WI DPI website](#)

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS)

The "NINDS Epilepsy Information Page" has an extensive list of resources related to epilepsy. Includes information on diagnosis, treatment, as well as links to other agencies that provide support and information to individuals with epilepsy.

[NINDS website](#)

National Association of Special Education Teachers (NASET)

The website has several brief fact sheets related to epilepsy and seizure disorders. The site also has links to numerous other resources for both parents and professionals.

[NASET website](#)

Did You Know?

November is National Epilepsy Awareness Month. Increase your awareness of epilepsy by reading some of the included online resources!

Upcoming Statewide Events

Wisconsin Transition Conference 2016

Sessions will be appropriate for beginning, intermediate and advanced level learners. Participants have the opportunity to attend sessions and visit the Exhibit Hall to learn more about transition services and products, meet our entrepreneurs with disabilities and network during conference breaks!

Date: February 18-19, 2016

Location: Kalahari Resort and Convention Center, WI Dells

[Information & Registration Link](#)

23rd Annual Institute on Educating Children with Emotional and Behavioral Disabilities

Brochures and registration will be available early January.

Date: February 24, 25, 26, 2016

Location: Westwood Conference Center, Wausau

[Information & Registration Link](#)

27th Annual Autism Conference Early Bird Registration Now Open

Date: April 7-9, 2016

Location: Kalahari, WI Dells

[Information & Registration Link](#)

Save the Date! 2016 Summit for Addressing Disproportionality

Date: April 21-22, 2016

Location: Green Bay, WI

[Information Link](#)

Learning
Opportunities

WI FACETS Telephone Workshops & Webinars

Registration for all FREE phone workshops: www.wifacets.org/events
Contact Sandra McFarland at 877-374-0511, smcfarland@wifacets.org

Getting & Keeping Your First Job

Date: November 17, 2015, 12-1 pm
Presenter: Matthew Zellmer, WI FACETS

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Date: November 18, 2015, 12-1 pm
Presenter: Jolene Troia, Consultant, DPI

Serving on Groups That Make Decisions (Sections 7 & 8) Webinar

Date: November 19, 2015, 12-1 pm
Presenter: Emilie Braunel, WI FACETS

Intellectual Disabilities Eligibility

Criteria: What Parents and Professionals Need to Know
Date: December 2, 2015, 12-1 pm
Presenter: Eva Kubinski, WI DPI

Programa de Educación

Individualizado (IEP) Parte I
Date: December 4, 2015, 12-1 pm
Presenter: Martha Lechuga,
WIFACETS Staff

Wisconsin Special Education Mediation System (WSEMS): Mediation

Date: December 9, 2015, 12-1 pm
Presenter: Jan Serak, Founder/CEO
WI FACETS & Nissan Bar-Lev, CESA
#7 Director of Special Education

Programa de Educación

Individualizado (IEP) Parte II
Date: December 11, 2015, 12-1 pm
Presenter: Martha Lechuga,
WIFACETS Staff

Taking the "Mis" Out of Misunderstood Kids

Date: December 16, 2015, 12-1 pm
Presenter: Joe Overturf, WIFACETS
VPL, retired teacher, counselor and
Director of Special Education



HOME-BASED INTERVENTIONS

Reading Strategies: Reading on the Go



On a daily basis, most of us ride in a car, or on a bus as part of our routine. This time together can be a great time to talk, sing, and play reading games. Here are a few ideas to try:

- **Reading signs** – As you ride, point out signs along the way. Signs could include road signs, street signs, business signs, billboards – you name it. Help your child sound out the words, spell the words, or look for clues in the pictures that may surround the words.
- **License Plates** – License plates contain letters and numbers. Ask your child to identify the letter and what word begins with that letter.
- **Read and Ride** – Keep a variety of picture books and story books in the care for your child to look at and / or read while in the car. Ask your child to “read” the book to you or ask your child questions about the book.

For more fun reading ideas at home, on the go, and out in the community, check out the

[PBS Parents website.](#)

Math Strategies: Weigh More or Weigh Less



Learning how to observe, weigh, and compare things is an important math skill. Gather a variety of items such as toys, boxes and containers of food (onions, flour, cereal, soup, etc.), books, etc. Then grab a bathroom or kitchen scale and let's have some fun.

- Give your child a small item to weigh to learn and practice using the scale. Show him/her how to zero the scale if necessary.
- Pick two items and have your child guess which item weighs more. Have them weigh both items to check if they were right.
- Have your child guess or estimate how much one of his family members weighs. Weigh members of the family to see if he/she was close. Have your child figure out how far off they were in their guess.
- Put some items in identical sized bags or containers. Have your child guess which one weighs more and compare the results.

More ideas for learning math at home can be found on U.S. Department of Education website [Parent / My Child's Academic Success: Helping Your Child Learn Mathematics](#). Activities found here are for children in preschool through grade 5.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER

Upcoming newsletter topic:

December: [Assistive Technology](#) January: [Intellectual Disabilities](#) February: [Transition](#)

To submit contributions, you may use either the [online form](#) or the attached fillable PDF form for contributing articles, events, and resources. Send the PDF form submissions to woverturf@wifacets.org.

Deadline for submitting contributions to each month's issue is by the **1st of each month**. For time sensitive training advertisements, the information should be sent a minimum of two weeks prior to the event date; ideally a month ahead of time. 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. Family engagement success or impact stories can be written at an individual or family level, classroom level, school building level, district level, county level, CESA level, etc. Your submittal may not be in the final copy of the upcoming month's newsletter if it was in a previous month's email, the event date has passed, the web link doesn't work, or there is already an article in place. Articles and resources will be saved to be used for later newsletters. We reserve the right to edit contributions as needed.

This monthly update is provided by Wisconsin Family Assistance Center for Education, Training & Support (WI FACETS) to share statewide information regarding parent leadership and family involvement.

DISCLAIMER: Inclusion of information in this newsletter does not constitute an endorsement by Wisconsin Family Assistance Center for Education, Training, and Support (WI FACETS), the Department of Public Instruction, the U.S. Department of Education, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

NOTE: If you would like to receive this monthly update or if you would like to have your name removed from the distribution list, please go to <http://www.servingongroups.org/newsletter-signup> or contact: Wendy Overturf at woverturf@wifacets.org.



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