

# FAMILY ENGAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

Topic of the Month: Assistive Technology



## 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**  
Feb. 23 & 24, 2016, Oshkosh
- **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](#)

### 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](#)

### 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](#)

## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IMPACT

### Assistive Technology at the Post-Secondary Level

*By Wendy Overturf*

Transitioning from high school into college for any student can present challenges. However, students with disabilities can face even more significant ones. Federal law says that public schools (PreK-12) are required to consider assistive technology (AT) when designing Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for students with disabilities. However, different laws apply to colleges and universities. "The process is very different for getting services in K-12 compared with higher education," said Sam Johnston, a research scientist for CAST, a nonprofit organization that works to expand learning opportunities for all students. "At the K-12 level, the onus for providing the right kinds of support is on the school or district. When students move on to college, the responsibility shifts over to them, and "it often falls apart somewhere along the line," Johnston said.

Both Section 504 and the ADA require that all schools provide equal opportunity to individuals with disabilities to participate in, and receive the benefits of, the educational program, and require that these schools provide accommodations or modifications when necessary to ensure equal treatment. However, post-secondary schools often don't rise to the same standard when it comes to providing assistive technology. A [national longitudinal study](#) from the United States Department of Education found that 87 percent of students with learning disabilities received some kind of support at the K-12 level; but when these students moved on to college, only 19 percent continued to get support. In some cases, it may be that the school has not yet developed appropriate assistive technology supports. In other cases, it may be that the student didn't advocate for such resources.

In addition to the many factors such as academic programs, cost, and location that are involved when selecting a post-secondary school, it is also critical that parents and students investigate the types of supports that are available for students with disabilities. One parent remarked that this can be very time-consuming, but is essential. Not only did they talk with the "student services" personnel, they also asked to speak with students who were receiving such services (with consent of those students). The parent reported that sometimes there is a discrepancy on what the institution states is offered and how the student with the disability perceives the effectiveness of the services.

There are many websites one can access by searching for "assistive technology and higher education". One fairly comprehensive website with questions to ask of the institution can be found on the [LD Online Website](#).

As the use of technology in post-secondary increases for all students, students with disabilities may find it easier to find a school with services that match their unique needs. However, parents and students still need to be diligent in investigating what each potential school has to offer. Parents and students can also compare disability services offered at DPI's [Wisconsin Institute of Higher Education Searchable Database](#).

## Upcoming Statewide Events

### 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!

#### Circles of Life Conference

**Date:** April 21-22, 2016

**Location:** Country Springs Hotel, Pewaukee

### Save the Date!

#### 2016 Summit for Addressing Disproportionality

**Date:** April 21-22, 2016

**Location:** Green Bay, WI

[Information Link](#)



## What Special Education Laws Say Regarding Assistive Technology

[WI DPI Website](#)

## RESEARCH TO READ

### Assistive Technology in Special Education and the Universal Design for Learning

*Alnahdi, Ghaleb, Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology - TOJET, v13 n2, p18-23. Apr 2014*

#### [Article Link](#)

#### Abstract:

Using technology can help students with disabilities to enhance and improve their independence in academic and employment tasks, their participation in classroom discussions, along with helping them to accomplish some difficult academic tasks. This paper discusses the role and benefits of using assistive technology in the Universal Design for Learning (UDL), in academic skills, and in transition services. A summary of the important principles that need to be considered in the integration of technology in educating or training students with disabilities is provided.

### Instructional Technology Usage in Early Learning Environments: The Influence on Environmental Access, Training, Parental Use and Education

Jones, Nadia J.

*Electronic Theses & Dissertations  
Collection for Atlanta University & Clark  
Atlanta University. Paper 18. (2015)*

#### [Article Link](#)

#### Abstract:

The life of a child has completely transitioned from analogue to digital in the past 20 years. The use of digital devices and media has tripled among children between the ages of 0-8 years old since 2011. With the increasing amount of internet access in places that children and families frequent, it is almost impossible to go anywhere without the Wi-Fi access information being made available to consumers to enjoy while they patronize the business. Educators are in a unique position to find creative ways to incorporate technology into their instruction; however, this nuance is not without its challenges. Many early learning programs have not incorporated technology into their programs for a variety of reasons such as, but not limited to: lack of funding, fear, and the belief that it is not developmentally appropriate. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and The Fred Rogers Center drafted a joint statement that provided a framework for early childhood educators to use as



they introduced technology and digital media into their learning environments.

The researcher of this study conducted a mixed methods study with three diverse early learning programs in the southeastern part of the United States. After examining the aforementioned variables, the researcher found there to be no difference in the technology usage rate among the three schools. The findings also indicated that two out of the three schools were better equipped than the other with technology and access to digital media. Despite several of the survey participants having said that they had not received training on how to use digital devices for instructional purposes, an overwhelming 92% of them admitted to using technology for daily task completion.

The researcher was not able to collect sufficient data to answer the question about parental influence. However, the researcher has identified this variable as an area for future research and believes that further examination will yield thought-provoking results regarding parental influence.

## STATEWIDE PARTNERSHIP

### Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative (WATI)

WATI was funded by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction through an IDEA discretionary grant from 1992-2009. It currently is a volunteer network of assistive (AT) consultants from across the state who continue the work of providing AT training and support within Wisconsin educational settings.



On the website one can find the publication, "Assessing Students' Needs for Assistive Technology (ASNAT) 5th Edition - complete version." This is a very comprehensive manual that covers assistive technology assessments as well as resources for assistive technology materials related to specific disabilities.

The website also provides a link to the Assistive Technology Lending Center (ATLC). The Assistive Technology Lending Center (ATLC) is a lending library of high-end Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) equipment for trial purposes. The ATLC provides high-end AAC devices costing \$4000.00 or more for loan to Wisconsin LEA public school licensed professional educators for trial with children ages 3 to 18 who have IEPs and are enrolled in public schools or students age 19-21 who are enrolled in a Wisconsin LEA school program and have an IEP. [WATI Website](#)

## ONLINE RESOURCES



### Center for Parent Information and Resources (CPIR)

The website offers numerous resources related to assistive technology. It also has links to checklists that IEP teams can use when considering assistive technology. [CPIR Website](#)

### SETT Framework

SETT is an acronym for Student, Environments, Tasks, and Tools—all of which need to be fully explored when assistive technology tools are considered or selected. The website offers a set of forms for collaborative decision making. [SETT Website](#)

### The Family Center on Technology and Disability

This website offers monthly newsletters, success stories, information about disability organizations, reviews of technology resources, and more. Its collection of nearly 1,000 annotated resources can be browsed or searched by topic, disability, and material type. In addition, its newsletter archive provides examples of strategies and tools that are helping students succeed. Some of the resources are available in Spanish. [FCTD Website](#)

### National Center on Accessible Educational Materials (AEM)

This site focuses on how schools can serve students who are unable to read or use standard print materials, through the use of specialized formats (braille, audio, large print, and digital text). There are articles and research about effective practices, technical information, tutorials, webinars, online forums, and more. [AEM Website](#)

### Bookshare

Bookshare is an online library of more than 170,000 digital books for children and adults with qualifying disabilities. Schools can download textbooks, books, and periodicals, which their students can access on computers or mobile devices using software or apps that read the text aloud. For students with visual impairments, schools can also download files for use with braille devices. [Bookshare Website](#)

### Learning Ally

Learning Ally offers a collection of more than 70,000 audiobooks, including recorded textbooks and literature titles, for children and adults with qualifying disabilities. Audiobooks are available as digital downloads, as well as CDs, and free apps are available for popular mobile devices. Learning Ally works with volunteers to record books that its users request. [Learning Ally Website](#)

### Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology Services (QIAT)

The QIAT Consortium is a national, grassroots group that provides input into the ongoing process of developing, disseminating, and implementing a set of quality indicators for assistive technology services. The QIAT website provides guidelines that can help schools improve their assistive technology services, as well as an email list where educators can participate in online discussions.

[QIAT Website](#)

### Assistive Tech Innovations: 14 New Apps & Other Tools

Apps that allow the teacher to differentiate instruction to meet different learning styles.

[Understood.org Website](#)

### Free Assistive Tech Tools Make Learning Accessible to All

[The Innovative Educator Website](#)

### Assistive Technology Resources for Students with Autism

[Autism Speaks Website](#)



## IDEA—40 Years Later

On Nov. 29, 1975, President Gerald Ford signed into law the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142), now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In adopting this landmark civil rights measure, Congress opened public school doors for millions of children with disabilities and laid the foundation of the country's commitment to ensuring that children with disabilities have opportunities to develop their talents, share their gifts, and contribute to their communities.

In the last 40 years, we have advanced our expectations for all students, including students with disabilities. Classrooms have become more inclusive and the future of children with disabilities brighter. Significant progress has been made toward protecting the rights of, meeting the individual needs of, and improving educational results for infants, toddlers, children and youths with disabilities. (US DOE)

The U.S. Department of Education and Justice released several resources for use by special educators and families during its 40th Anniversary of IDEA celebrations on Tuesday including the:

**Dear Colleague Letter:** Clarification of FAPE and Alignment with State Academic Standards, which clarifies that individualized education programs for children with disabilities must be aligned with state academic content standards for the grade in which a child is enrolled. [Click here.](#)

**IDEAs That Work:** Preparing Children and Youth with Disabilities for Success website will connect teachers and families with resources to assist them in improving instruction and supporting academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs of students with disabilities as they become college and career ready. [Click here.](#)

**Supporting and Responding to Behavior:** Evidence-Based Classroom Strategies for Teachers toolkit, which summarizes evidence-based, positive, proactive, and responsive classroom behavior intervention and support strategies for teachers. [Click here.](#)

WI FACETS  
Telephone Workshops  
& Webinars



## HOME-BASED INTERVENTIONS

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

**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

**PBIS and Families**  
**Date:** January 6, 2016, 12-1 pm  
**Presenter:** Jennifer Grenke and Marlene Gross-Ackeret-WI PBIS Network

**Introduction to Special Education**  
**Date:** January 8, 2016, 12-1 pm  
**Presenter:** Emilie Braunel, WIFACETS

**WSEMS: Dispute Resolution Options**  
**Date:** January 11, 2016, 12-1 pm  
**Presenter:** Jan Serak, CEO/Founder, WI FACETS and Nissan Bar-Lev, CESA 7 Director of Special Education

**IEP Part 1**  
**Date:** January 12, 2016, 12-1 pm  
**Presenter:** Bonnie Vandermeulen, WIFACETS

**Rtl Center: Rtl & Family Engagement**  
**Date:** January 13, 2016, 12-1 pm  
**Presenters:** Liz Gaebler and Lynn Johnson

**IEP Part 2**  
**Date:** January 14, 2016, 12-1 pm  
**Presenter:** Bonnie Vandermeulen, WIFACETS

**Introducción a la Educación Especial**  
**Date:** January 15, 2016, 12-1 pm  
**Presenter:** Martha Lechuga, WIFACETS

**Specially Designed Physical Education for Students with Disabilities**  
**Date:** January 20, 2016, 12-1 pm  
**Presenter:** Dr. Garth Tymeson, UW-LaCrosse

**Serving on Groups That Make Decisions (Sections 1&2)**  
**Date:** January 21, 2016, 12-1 pm  
**Presenter:** Vicki Davis Dávila, WIFACETS

**Special Education Discipline Requirements**  
**Date:** January 27, 2016, 12-1 pm  
**Presenter:** Patti Williams, DPI

**Serving on Groups That Make Decisions (Section 3)**  
**Date:** January 28, 2016, 12-1 pm  
**Presenter:** Vicki Davis Dávila, WI FACETS

**Programa de Educación Individualizado (IEP) Parte I**  
**Date:** January 29, 2016, 12-1 pm  
**Presenter:** Martha Lechuga, WIFACETS

### Reading Strategies: Holiday Literacy Practice

#### Letter Writing

Many children may be anxious to pen a letter addressed to the North Pole this season, or may be writing thank you cards later in the year. Others may be sending cards or letters to friends and relatives who won't be making it to this year's party. Practice letter writing skills with your children. Resources available from *Reading Rockets* [here](#).



#### Holiday Story Time

Create a new tradition by practicing oral storytelling skills this holiday season. Have your children re-tell a story from holidays past during family time. Or, have your child give a narration for the photos from last year's celebration. Source: [Reading Rockets](#).

#### Winter Break Reading Challenge

Here is a challenge for you: Set aside some time every day over break to curl up on the couch and read with your children. Give your child one pat on the back for reading 5 minutes every day; two pats for 10 minutes each day, and three pats for 20 minutes or more each day! If you need suggestions for some great holiday-themed books, look [here](#).

### Math Strategies: Winter Math at Home

Reinforcing your child's math concepts while school is out for winter break is important, but also fun!



#### Gift Box Lineup

Have your child pick out 4-6 gift boxes, making sure they are all different sizes. Ask your child to identify the largest box, and then each smaller box. Have your child line up the boxes in order by size. You can also help your child to stack the boxes from largest to smallest. You can substitute gift boxes for stuffed animals, ornaments, cookies, or anything else around the house. This activity focuses on size discrimination.

#### Snowflake Symmetry

A shape is symmetrical if it can be cut into halves that are mirror images of one another. Start out with a square or circle piece of construction paper. Practice all the different ways the paper may be folded in half (diagonally, or width wise with the square vs. circles folding along any diameter). Ask your child to count how many times the shape can be folded in half. After your shape is folded, help your child to cut out pieces to form your snowflake. Unfold the paper and show your child the symmetrical figure. This activity highlights geometry principles and mathematical reasoning ability.

Sources (each with other suggestions): [Preschool Express](#); [US Department of Education](#)

### Support Group

#### Grupo de Autismo: Jugando con Palabras y Frases de IDEA

**Date:** January 23, 2016, 10 am-12 pm  
**Location:** WI FACETS, 600 W. Virginia St., Suite 501, Milwaukee, WI 53204



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# CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER

## Upcoming newsletter topics:

January: [Intellectual Disabilities](#) February: [Transition](#) March: [Traumatic Brain injury](#)

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](mailto: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.

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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.

**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](mailto:woverturf@wifacets.org).



[www.dpi.state.wi.us](http://www.dpi.state.wi.us)

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