

# FAMILY ENGAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

This month's topic: *Strategies for Effective Advocacy*

## Upcoming Statewide Events

### Youth Leadership Summit sponsored by WI FACETS and Independence First

This week-long event for high school students is designed to build leadership and self-advocacy skills as we explore life after high school. Students learn about jobs, college, relationships, money management and more in fun, interactive ways. Breakfast and lunch provided and youth earn a stipend for attending.

#### Times/Dates/Location:

10am-4pm, July 14-18, Mequon

**Registration:** A short application is required. Email Matthew at [mzellmer@wifacets.org](mailto:mzellmer@wifacets.org) to

receive one. Space is limited to 25 youth for each workshop-apply soon!

### Northern Wisconsin Special Education Conference

This conference is designed for special education administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals and parents. A variety of topics will be available to choose from, and parents are encouraged to attend a special evening cookout and session with Hugh Davis from Wisconsin Family Ties.

**Date:** July 29 & 30, 2014

**Location:** Lakewoods Resort, Cable, WI

**Registration:** Go to

[www.cesa12.org](http://www.cesa12.org).

Conference is hosted by CESA 12 Center for Students with Disabilities

## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IMPACT

### The Power of "With"

By Matthew Zellmer

It is easy for families of children with disabilities to say, "I need to advocate for my child." Done the right way, that approach can work. But picture the magnitude of change that could happen if more families said, "I need to advocate *with* my child. This is a story of the benefits of that one-word adjustment.

The parents in this story knew that they would need to do a lot of advocating the moment they found out their son had Down Syndrome. The fact that he was nonverbal would make it that much harder for him to be heard. Despite this, or perhaps because of it, they refused to take no for an answer, nor did they let that become an acceptable excuse for their son in school

or anywhere else.

The parents sought all the opportunities for advocacy and training they could get, bringing their son with them as often as they could. He gained visibility in school and in the community, and his parents learned to appreciate the value of collaboration. They thought their son would benefit from music therapy, but the school district didn't have one, so they rejected the request at first. Through continued collaboration and persistence, the family persuaded the IEP team of the need for one. Their son was a trailblazer, but several students ended up benefiting from the family's advocacy. Through it all, however, the young man has been an active presence in his IEP meetings.

Though he no longer receives



music therapy, the young man leads his own IEP meetings, is actively involved in numerous advocacy and recreational activities. He accompanies his father on legislative advocacy trips and has shared his story with his legislators. He will also have summer employment years ahead of most of his peers with disabilities.

This story typifies several of Joyce Epstein's strategies for effective family involvement. It also shows how much can be achieved when families support and advocate with rather than for their children.

## RESEARCH TO READ

### "One-to-one paraprofessionals for students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms: Is conventional wisdom wrong?"

Giagreco, Michael F. Journal Information 48.1 (2010). <http://tiny.cc/71tahx>

**Abstract:** Assigning one-to-one paraprofessionals has become an increasingly common response to support students with intellectual and other developmental disabilities in

general education classrooms.

This article challenges the conventional wisdom that such an approach to service provision is necessarily a desirable and supportive action. Five main reasons are presented that challenge overreliance on the use of one-to-one paraprofessionals in



inclusive classrooms, establishing it as a critical issue in special education. A series of recommended positions and initial actions are offered to spur debate and encourage development of alternatives to the status quo.

## Upcoming Statewide Events

### Statewide Transition Academy

The Academy is the single-best opportunity for transition-minded youth, parents, community members, agencies and educators from around the state to immerse themselves in information, strategies and resources related to transition planning to increase successful postsecondary outcomes. Attendees have enjoyed exploring model programs, hands-on workshops and guidance in best practices in supporting students who are transitioning to college, career and independent living, ages 14-21.

**Date:** 10/17/14

**Location:** Wilderness Resort, WI Dells

**Registration:** For more information, please visit [www.wsti.org](http://www.wsti.org)

### Special Education Conference

Will offer over 20 that will appeal to regular and special educators working with students with disabilities! Session content will focus on topics like EBD, LD, autism, Assistive Technology, transition, self-directed IEPs, classroom management, facilitating IEP team meetings, functional behavioral assessments, collaborating with parents, common core standards and much, much more!

**Date:** November 12-13, 2014

**Location:** Kalahari Resort, WI Dells

**Registration:** For more information and registration: <http://tiny.cc/e3a9gx>

## RESEARCH TO READ

(Continued from page 1)

### "Effects of Self-Directed Summary of Performance on Postsecondary Education Students' Participation in Person-Centered Planning Meetings."

Mazzotti, Valerie L., Kelly R. Kelley, and Cassie M. Coco. The Journal of Special Education (2013): 0022466913483575. <http://tiny.cc/q0tahx>

**Abstract:** Teaching students to develop and use a Summary of Performance (SOP) may be one method for teaching self-advocacy

skills to ensure students with intellectual disability can advocate for accommodations and supports during Person-Centered Planning (PCP) meetings and in post-school employment settings. This study used a multiple-probe across participants design to investigate the effects of the Self-Directed Summary of Performance (SD-SOP) on participation in PCP meetings for students with intellectual disability.



Results indicated increased participation during PCP meetings for all participants. In addition, participants were able to generalize use of the SD-SOP to employment settings. Implications for future research and practice are discussed.

## STATEWIDE PARTNERSHIP: QUALITY EDUCATION COALITION

The Quality Education Coalition (QEC) is Wisconsin's only coalition of parents, educators and advocates, that works together to improve the quality of special education in Wisconsin on a systemic basis. QEC works on a wide variety of issues which affect the quality of special education delivered to children with disabilities in Wisconsin, regularly meeting with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to improve the way that it enforces state and federal special education law at the local level.

QEC advocates for improvement of special education in many ways, including meetings with the Governor's office and state

legislators to advocate for increased funding and better special education policies and participation in Wisconsin Special Education Stakeholders meetings which not only works on revision to state special education law, but provides critical advice to DPI about how to monitor school districts.

The last few years have been challenging for those invested in the success of students with disabilities, but QEC has achieved some important victories, including passage of a law preventing seclusion and restraint of children, assisting in the identification of students eligible for Special Education and providing critical input to DPI when it hired a new State Superintendent of Special

Education.

More challenges certainly lie ahead, and all stakeholder perspective is valued. QEC membership is a unique way for parents, agencies and educators to communicate with one another and join forces in continued efforts to ensure that Wisconsin's students with disabilities receive the first-rate educational experience to which they are entitled.

For membership information, please contact Bonnie Vander Meulen: [bvandermeulen@wifacets.org](mailto:bvandermeulen@wifacets.org)

## FEATURED ONLINE RESOURCES



### Opening Doors Booklets:

Check out the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's newly redesigned resource booklets for students, parents and schools. There are now four in the series: Employment, Post-secondary Education and Training, Self-Determination, and Adult Services. A Guide to the Post-Secondary Transition Plan (PTP), the series' fifth booklet will be released soon. Links to and an order form for the first four are available at

<http://tinyurl.com/nehfvbd>

### PTP Demonstration Site

This is a key resource for families as parents and students prepare for transition IEPs. The site allows them to create a model IEP and walks through each transition goal area in detail. It is particularly useful for parents to be able to engage in the same planning process that schools are required to do with their children. It also encourages students to develop plans early for life after high school. Access the site at <http://tinyurl.com/q9au2rk> and click the "Create PTP" tab to begin.

### A New Way of Thinking

This new DPI publication for youth, families and teachers has chapters on introducing disability to students, positive thinking, self-advocacy, self-empowerment, and assessments. It is designed to help students gain understanding and build skills leading to effective transition planning. A online module is available at <http://tinyurl.com/lnulwys>. You must have a free account at [wsti.org](http://wsti.org) to access the module.

### Going to Work Video Series

Watch six Wisconsin youth with disabilities and their employers share their inspiring stories of successful transitions from school to employment. In this five-part video series. Go to <http://www.youtube.com/> and search "Wisconsin Youth First" to view.

### Job Accommodation Network

This online clearinghouse provides youth, families, employers, and other professionals with a vast array of resources. Visit <http://askjan.org/> for definitions of accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, a searchable database of kinds of accommodations for specific disabilities and fact sheets on how to appropriately ask for them and/or provide them to employees.

### Disability Scoop

Go to this website for a list of practical and necessary components of becoming a competent self-advocate. Other issues you will find on this website include education, housing, employment and money management. <http://www.disabilitycoop.com/>

### You Tube: Find the Captain in You

Listed at this site are several clips related to self-advocacy. You will find inspiring clips presented by students and leaders in self advocacy skills and training. Go to:

<http://tinyurl.com/os3jmc6>

### The Self-Determination Network

An online community for individuals with disabilities and those who support them that is designed to promote events, raise awareness and start discussion of disability-related issues. Free to join! <http://sdnetworkwi.org/>

## Upcoming Statewide Events

### Children Come First Conference

The 25<sup>th</sup> annual Children Come First Conference is for those caring for, working with or interested in the well-being of children and youth with social, emotional or behavioral challenges. The conference theme this year is "Fostering Resilience." Sponsored by WI Family Ties-Speakers and presenters to be announced.

**Date:** November 10-11, 2014

**Location:** Glacier Canyon Lodge, WI Dells

**For More Info.:** Visit <http://tinyurl.com/k8kwsz4>

### Self-Determination Conference

The Wisconsin Self-Determination Conference works to empower people with disabilities in Wisconsin to have more control over their lives. The conference is for persons with disabilities, their families and professionals who support them.

**Date:** November 10-11, 2014

**Location:** Kalahari Resort, WI Dells

**For More Info.:** Visit: <http://www.wi-bpdd.org/sdc/>

### Across the Lifespan Conference

This conference offers opportunities to learn about special education, transition, higher education, assistive technology and employment. The theme is "Bringing the Best Together," and the conference features keynote speakers, breakout sessions and exhibits.

**Date:** November 13-14, 2014

**Location:** Glacier Canyon Lodge, WI Dells

**Registration:** For more information, and registration: <http://tinyurl.com/p7aauama>

## WI FACETS Phone Workshops



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

**Individualized Education Program (IEP) Part I**  
**When:** 7/8/14  
**Presenter:** TBD, WI FACETS

**Individualized Education Program (IEP) Part II**  
**When:** 7/10/14, 12-1pm  
**Presenter:** TBD, WI FACETS

**Programa de Educacion Individualizado Parte I**  
**Cuando:** 7/11/14, 12-1pm  
**Presenter:** Martha Lechuga, WI FACETS

**Transitioning Out of Birth to 3**  
**When:** 7/23/14, 12-1pm  
**Presenter:** Dana Romary, DHS Birth to 3

**Programa de Educacion Individualizado Parte II**  
**Cuando:** 7/25/14, 12-1pm  
**Presenter:** Martha Lechuga, WI FACETS



## HOME-BASED INTERVENTIONS



### Reading Strategy

#### The Public Library and OverDrive.com

One sure way that children and youth can maintain and increase their reading level, vocabulary, and comprehension is to read books. Families can encourage their children to read over the summer by taking a trip periodically to their local library to borrow books. Check out your local library for more information on how to apply for a library card, new book releases, and special events. There's something for everyone in the family!

For families who have access to the internet and technology, try OverDrive. The library comes to you through OverDrive! You can borrow digital books from your library. The OverDrive app allows you to read eBooks and listen to audiobooks on a wide variety of compatible tablets, phones and computers. To download the app go to: <http://omc.overdrive.com/>. Set up an account, pick a book out and READ!



### Math Strategy

#### Measuring cups, Tablespoons and Teaspoons ... Oh My!

Measuring cups provide a great opportunity to learn concepts of volume, including vocabulary words such as more, less, and equal to. Fill a plastic bin with uncooked rice, un-popped popcorn, dried beans, or noodles. Allow your child to explore using all different sized measuring cups including teaspoons, tablespoons, and cup measurers. Pouring from one sized container into another helps children quickly see differences in volume. Ask your child questions, "Which container holds the most? Which holds the least? How many small scoops equal one big scoop? How many noodles do you think will fit into this container? How many popcorn seeds do you think will fit? Let's count and find out!"

The possibilities are endless!

From *Literacy in the Sciences: Activity No. 3: STEM Tools at Home*, Reading Rockets

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# CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER

## **Next month's newsletter topic: [Early Education](#)**

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 [ebraunel@wifacets.org](mailto:ebraunel@wifacets.org)

Deadline for submitting contributions to each month's issue is by the **20th of each month at noon**. 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 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 contact: **Emilie Braunel**, WI FACETS SPDG Coordinator at 715.561.2559 or [ebraunel@wifacets.org](mailto:ebraunel@wifacets.org).



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