

Family Engagement Newsletter

Transition Planning and Self Determination

By Wendy Overturf

Transition planning is a process mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004) for all students who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) in K-12 education. The purpose is to facilitate the student's move from school to post-school activities. IDEA requires that students with disabilities age 16 and older have an IEP with a postsecondary transition plan. However, in Wisconsin the transition requirements begin no later than in the first IEP that will be in effect when the child is 14 years old and updated annually thereafter. The transition plan is documented in what is known as a [Postsecondary Transition Plan \(PTP\)](#). The coordinated transition activities outlined in the child's plan must be personally defined, considering a child's interests, preferences, needs, and strengths. This is why the school district must invite the child with a disability to attend the IEP team meeting "if the purpose of the meeting will be the consideration of the postsecondary goals for the child and the transition services needed to assist the child in reaching those goals." As students with disabilities become more involved with their transition plans and future goals, it is important that families and schools assist them in developing self-determination.

Self-determination is a concept reflecting the belief that all individuals have the right to direct their own lives. Students who have self-determination skills have a stronger chance of being successful in making the transition to adulthood, including employment and independence (*Wehmeyer & Schwartz, (1997), Exceptional Children, 63(2), 245-255*). Research suggests students with disabilities who are self-determined may:

- Be more academically successful and engaged in schoolwork
- Contribute actively to their educational and transition planning
- Experience more postsecondary involvement
- Report higher quality of life and more positive experiences in early adulthood

Self-determination skills are most effectively learned through real-world experiences, which often involves taking risks, making mistakes, and reflecting on outcomes. These experiences help a young person test his or her strengths and limitations and identify appropriate short- and long-term goals. In addition to real-world experiences, youth with disabilities benefit from open, supportive acknowledgement and discussion of their disability. Too often families, teachers, and other well-intentioned people protect youth with disabilities from making mistakes and avoid discussing the details and potential ramifications of the youth's disability. Instead, they focus on the positive and steer the youth away from many experiences where there is a potential for failure. However, in order to direct their own futures, youth need to know themselves and understand how their disabilities might affect academic learning, relationships, employment, participation in their communities, and need for supports. With this knowledge, they are better positioned to develop plans, make decisions, and learn from experience.

The internet has many resources on self-determination. Listed below are two sites that parents and schools may find valuable.

[Promoting Self-Determination Among Students with Disabilities](#)
[Self-Determination: Supporting Successful Transition](#)



Statewide Events

[Supporting Neurodiverse Students Professional Learning System](#)

These trainings include regional training sessions, webinars, online discussion groups, book clubs, website resources, a needs assessment with accompanying toolkit and other professional learning opportunities to support educators serving students with disability-related needs in the areas of social and emotional learning including self-regulation, social communication, flexibility, resilience, sensory processing, and executive functioning.

The training system is beneficial to educators supporting students with autism. These trainings are offered at no cost to parents of students with disabilities.

See [flyer](#) for all dates and locations.
Upcoming Trainings:

[Supporting Neurodiverse Students](#) (2 days training)

Date: January 21-22, 2020

Location: CESA 8, Gillett, WI

[Social Communication Training Workshop](#)

Date: February 4, 2020

Location: CESA 5, Portage, WI

[Social Communication Training Workshop](#)

Date: February 18, 2020

Location: CESA 2, Whitewater, WI

[Flexibility and Resilience Training Workshop](#)

Date: February 25, 2020

Location: CESA 1, Pewaukee, WI

Learning
Opportunities

Statewide Events

[2020 Adolescent Health Symposium](#)

Annual gathering of educators, youth workers, and health and human service professionals to focus and address key topics in the areas of health education and adolescent wellness. Hosted by UW-Oshkosh and UW- La Crosse.

Date: February 6-7, 2020

Location: Madison, WI

[Reaching High Expectations: Success for ALL. Technology Rich Solutions for Supporting Inclusive Practices](#)

In collaboration with WI DPI, this conference will feature expertise from CAST trainers and educators who are implementing Universal Design for Learning (UDL), who share the mindset and the design principles that are working in professional learning and classroom environments. (CAST is a nonprofit education research and development organization that works to expand learning opportunities for all individuals through UDL). This premier UDL conference will inspire participants to advance, amplify, and accelerate UDL in Wisconsin and in the multi-state region. An assistive technology component will be featured. While assistive technology for students with disabilities is decided by an IEP team, many times the technology can be provided as a universal support for any learner.

Date: February 6-7, 2020

Location: Kalahari Resort, WI Dells, WI.

[Webinar Opportunity for Paraprofessionals Supporting Students with on the Job or Work-based Learning](#)

Transition Improvement Grant staff will share technology supports that are currently being utilized on worksites to create positive outcomes for youth. These include low and highly technical accommodations that will increase independence on the job and provide consistent documentation between school and the worksite.

Date: February 11, 2020, 11:45 p.m.-12:30 p.m.

[Save the Date-Wisconsin's Collaborative Leadership Forum Promoting Early Childhood Conference](#)

Date: March 3-5, 2020

Location: Green Bay, WI



At Home Learning Strategies

School isn't the only place for learning activities. When your child's at home, you're his or her teacher. But everything doesn't have to feel like a classroom lesson. Get your kids excited about discovering something new by disguising the learning activities as fun time. Try these engaging and effective activities that you can do at home.

Tips to Help Your Child Learn Spelling

Scramble the Letters



Try this twist on flashcards. All you need is a black marker and a piece of paper. Write each letter of the week's spelling words. Get your scissors and cut each letter into its own card. Now the fun begins. Pull out the letters for one word and mix them up. Kids can then move the letters around until the spelling is correct. If you have a bell, let them ring it when they think the answer is correct. Are they too good at the game? Set a timer for each word to increase the difficulty.

Create a Spelling Memory Game

For this, you would create two sets of flashcards using white and colored index cards. On the white cards, you would write a series of age-appropriate words. On the colored cards, write the corresponding definition.

To play the game:

- Arrange the flashcards in a grid pattern face side down. There would be one set of white and one set of colored cards.
- Each player would take turns picking one white and one colored card. If the word and definition match, the player would keep the cards. If not, he or she would replace them.
- Players would have to use their memory to match up as many cards as possible. When all the cards are gone, the player with the most wins. Repetition is key to learning and retaining word comprehension.



Winter Weather Data



Graph the daily high and low temperature over the course of several weeks. Older children could also compute the average high and low temperatures for the week.

Study Snowflakes

Like a set of fingerprints, every snowflake is different. Take a magnifying glass and piece of cardboard outside and wait until a few flakes fall on the board. Hold your magnifying glass up to the cardboard and find the differences between each flake. It's the perfect mix between outdoor fun and an impromptu science lesson.



National Thank You Month

Practice the gift of "thank you" during National Thank You Month. Encourage your kids to write thank you notes and show them how to make those thank you cards special. Not sure where to start? Have the kids write thank you notes to their friends and family for gifts they received during the holidays. [Thank-You Note Tips for Children and Teens](#)



Online Resources: Transition

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

This website has many links to articles and information on transition that are specifically designed for both parents and students.

[Transition Improvement Grant \(TIG\)](#)

This grant is designed to strengthen and accelerate the transition process in Wisconsin schools to improve the quality of postsecondary transition plans, increase high school graduation rates, encourage outside agency connections and develop strong career and college readiness among our students with disabilities. TIG regional coordinators and statewide post-high school coordinators will assist students, educators, parents and transition stakeholders to transform transition programming by providing professional development through statewide networking opportunities, transition academies, in district trainings, county council support, and other supports as needed.

[Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction](#)

This website has a variety of resources related to transition, including information about outside agencies.

[Opening Doors to Self-Determination Skills \(English\) \(Spanish\)](#)

Setting and achieving goals helps students grow. Knowing their strengths and addressing their weaknesses is important as students prepare for life after high school. As students move through school and toward adulthood, they go through a process of considering who they are and who they wish to become. What kind of work would they like to do? What will they need to do to pursue this work? What living arrangements do they envision? What education, training, and services will be available to them along the way? Students can work with counselors, parents, and teachers as they work with this resource.

[Postsecondary Transition Plan "Demo" Site](#)

A "demo" site where parents and students can access questions that are on the Postsecondary Transition Plan (PTP). A PTP is required in Wisconsin for all IEPs if the student will be turning 14 during the duration of the IEP. It is then included in all subsequent years.

[Transition of Students with Disabilities to Postsecondary Education:](#)

A Guide for High School Educators

The purpose of this guide is to provide high school educators with answers to questions students with disabilities and their families may have as they get ready to move to the postsecondary education environment.

[Transition Planning for Students with IEPs](#)

Learn how this part of the IEP allows teens in special education to outline goals that will help them achieve their post-high school plans.

[National Parent Center on Transition and Employment](#)

This website has a multitude of links related to transition planning and work-based learning for students with disabilities.

[Transition Guide to Postsecondary Education and Employment for Students and Youth with Disabilities](#)

The guide addresses transition planning, services and requirements, as authorized by IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act; education and employment options for students after high school; and supported decision-making.

[National Center on Secondary Education and Transition](#)

The National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET) coordinates national resources, offers technical assistance, and disseminates information related to secondary education and transition for youth with disabilities in order to create opportunities for youth to achieve successful futures.



Bundle up and head outdoors for some winter fun. Whether it's building a snowperson, sledding, tubing, or just taking a walk, a snow day is a great opportunity for family time.



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

By phone, Sandra: 877-374-0511

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

[WSEMS-Mediation](#)

Date: January 6, 2020

Presenter: Nissan Bar-Lev, CESA 7 and Courtney Salzer, WI FACETS

[IEP 1: Starting the IEP Process: Special Education Basics](#)

Date: January 8, 2020

Presenter: Jan Serak, Serak Consulting

[Shortened School Day](#)

Date: January 15, 2020

Presenter: Marge Resan, WI DPI

[IEP 2: Special Education Referral Process](#)

Date: January 16, 2020

Presenter: Jan Serak, Serak Consulting

[Section 504 – What Parents Need to Know](#)

Date: January 21, 2020

Presenter: Matthew Zellmer, WI FACETS

[Mindfulness for Students with Disabilities](#)

Date: January 22, 2020

Presenter: Shannon Stuart, UW-Whitewater

[Literacy for All \(Spanish\)](#)

Date: January 23, 2020

Presenter: Samson Srok, WI FACETS

[Supporting Neurodiverse Students](#)

Date: January 29, 2020

Presenter: Katie Berg, Statewide Coordinator of School Site Grants

[WSEMS-Facilitated IEPs](#)

Date: February 3, 2020

Presenter: Nissan Bar-Lev, CESA 7 and Courtney Salzer, WI FACETS



The Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey

The Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is conducted as part of a national effort by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to monitor health-risk behaviors of the nation's high school students. These behaviors, in turn, result in the most significant causes of both mortality and morbidity during youth and adulthood. The behaviors monitored by the Wisconsin YRBS include traffic safety; weapons and violence; suicide; tobacco use; alcohol and other drug use; sexual behavior; and diet, nutrition, and exercise.

The YRBS includes questions about high-interest issues. State Superintendent Carolyn Stanford Taylor said, "Important data from the survey can provide local information for schools, districts, and counties, and even health care organizations to get a better sense of health-related needs, and to plan for grants, programming, and for tracking how well interventions are performing." Behaviors monitored by the Wisconsin YRBS include traffic safety; weapons and violence; mental health and suicidality; tobacco use; alcohol and other drug use; sexual behavior; and diet, nutrition, and exercise. This year, new questions about vaping, sexting, concussions, and screen use at night were included.

For the first time since the Department of Public Instruction has been conducting the YRBS, comparable, county-level data is now available across the state. County-level reports can be found on the [WI DPI website](#) under "County and Regional Reports."

Research to Read

Barriers Against and Strategies for Promoting the Involvement of Culturally Diverse Parents in School-Based Transition Planning

Geenen, Sarah; Powers, Laurie E.; Lopez-Vasquez, Alfonso, Journal for Vocational Special Needs Education, v27 n3 p4-14 Spr 2005.

[Article Link](#)

ABSTRACT: This qualitative study investigated the barriers against and strategies for promoting the involvement of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) parents in school-based transition planning. Focus groups and interviews were conducted with 31 parents from Native American, African American and Hispanic communities, and 10 professionals who had involvement in transition planning. Coding of the transcripts using established ethnographic and content analysis techniques revealed seven main categories or types of barriers which appear to inhibit or prevent parental involvement in school-based transition planning: (a) power imbalance; (b) psychological or attitudinal; (c) logistic; (d) information; (e) communication; (f) SES and contextual factors; and (g) cultural influences. In the qualitative study, parents and professionals also identified a number of potential strategies for increasing or better supporting parental involvement in transition planning. These strategies included: (a) positive communication between parent and professionals; (b) preparing for transition at an earlier age; (c) information on school-based transition planning; (d) use of a parent advocate; (e) emotional support for parents; and (f) flexibility in meeting formats. The implications of these findings for educational and transition services are discussed. (Contains 3 figures.)

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: February: Intellectual Disabilities

March: Early Childhood

April: Autism Spectrum Disorders

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

<https://servingongroups.org/resources>



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