



# Family Engagement Newsletter

## What Every Parent Should Know About Play

By Wendy Overturf

*Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood. - Mr. Fred Rogers*

### Children learn through their play.

Don't underestimate the value of play. Children learn and develop:

- Cognitive skills – like math and problem solving in a pretend grocery store
- Physical abilities – like balancing blocks and running on the playground
- New vocabulary – like the words they need to play with toy dinosaurs
- Social skills – like playing together in a pretend car wash
- Literacy skills – like creating a menu for a pretend restaurant

### What type of play helps children learn the best?

[Gaye Gronlund](#) wrote that “Play that really engages children—play that they will focus on and stay with even when problems arise. This kind of play helps children develop their approaches to learning—in other words, the ways they respond to learning situations. Curiosity about the world, initiative and problem solving, and focused attention and persistence are just a few approaches to learning that children develop through play.”

### Pretend Play is Important

[Scholastic Magazine](#) for parents writes that imagination-driven play builds a young child's developmental skills. When children engage in pretend (or dramatic) play, they are actively experimenting with the social and emotional roles of life. Through different characters, they have the experience of “walking in someone else's shoes”, which helps teach the important moral development skill of empathy. It is normal for young children to see the world from their own egocentric point of view, but through maturation and cooperative play, children will begin to understand the feelings of others. He also builds self-esteem when he discovers he can be anything just by pretending!

While children do need time to play alone and with other children without adult intervention, research shows that playtime with parents is also important. Listed below are some additional ways parents can engage in play with their child.

- Play outdoors. Throw balls. Push kids on swings. Make mud pies. Go on a hike around the neighborhood. Take a nature walk in your backyard. Games such as Hide and Seek and Follow the Leader are also good outdoor games.
- Play games – card games – board games – silly and wacky games. Help them learn to take turns, how to win and how to lose. Praise, encourage and laugh with them.
- Get involved in a craft project together. Build a jigsaw puzzle as a family. Bake cookies. Paint a picture.
- Listen to music together. Sing along. Play rhythm instruments along with music. Get out the guitar or keyboard and make music.
- Read a book together. Ask questions. Ask them to change the story.
- Watch a movie together. Discover the child's interests. Find out what they liked – how they felt. Discuss any bothersome content, either words or actions.

**More information from [NAEYC](#) on the importance of Play!**

### Statewide Events

#### [Advocacy for Change](#)

A full-day advocacy and skills training event for parents, family members, professionals, and providers who care for, or work with children with disabilities or special health care needs.

**Date:** March 13, 2019

**Location:** Concourse Hotel, Madison, WI

#### [Tourette Connections Conference](#)

A FREE conference, made possible by a generous grant from the CDC. It is for both parents and professionals. Parents can bring their kids! There will be a youth program hosted by Tourette Camp USA!

**Date:** March 22, 2019

**Location:** Holiday Inn: Pewaukee-Milwaukee West

#### [Love and Logic-Supporting Youth with Special Needs](#)

Topics include how to avoid becoming overwhelmed by a child's disabilities, how to maintain can-do expectations, strategies for reaching discouraged and resistant learners, and more!

**Date:** Wednesdays-April 3-24, 2019, 6-7:30 pm

**Location:** Oregon School District Office, Oregon, WI

#### [Autism Society of Wisconsin's 30th Annual Conference](#)

Providing relevant information for attendees at all levels. Keynote 4/12: “Interception, The Eighth Sense: Influence on Self-Regulation, Health and Emotional Well-Being.”

**Date:** April 11-13, 2019

## Statewide Events

### [WSPEI's Family and Community Engagement Summit 2019 – Supporting Families of Students with IEPs.](#)

The speaker for the day is Karen L. Mapp, EdD, Senior Lecturer, Harvard Graduate School of Education. Dr. Mapp is the author of best-selling articles and books, including "Partners in Education: A Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships" (2014), and "From Private Citizens to Public Actors: The Development of Parent Leaders through Community Organizing" (2015) and "Powerful Partnerships: A Teacher's Guide to Engaging Families for Student Success" (2017)

**Date:** April 12, 2019

**Location:** Park Hotel, Madison, WI

### [Racine County Special Needs Resource Fair](#)

The purpose of the fair is for attendees to connect with a wide range of agencies servicing children and young adults from birth to 21 and beyond, or to connect with families who are experiencing the same concerns or issues.

**Date:** April 12, 2019, 4-6:30 pm

**Location:** Waterford Union High School, Waterford, WI

### [UW-Whitewater Early Childhood Conference](#)

The pre-conference workshop on 4/12 is "I Don't Remember Learning That": A Day to Reflect, Practice and Build Relationships with Other Early Childhood Providers as We Take on Some of the Big Topics." Speaker Robin Fox will tackle some of the pressing topics in early childhood education through information sharing, hands on activities, scenario work, and developing individual professional development plans. On 4/13, keynote speaker, Ann Terrell, will share some of the lessons learned on her leadership journey to becoming an award winning, effective, and inspiring leader.

**Date:** April 12-13, 2019

**Location:** UW-Whitewater

### [Circles of Life Conference-Save the Date!](#)

Wisconsin's annual conference for parents and family members who have children with disabilities and professionals who support them.

**Date:** May 2-3, 2019

**Location:** Holiday Inn – Convention Ctr., Stevens Point, WI



## At Home Learning Strategies



### [Hats Off to Dr. Seuss's Birthday!](#)

March 2nd is Dr. Seuss's birthday—what better way to celebrate than to read? Did you know Dr. Seuss would be 114 this year? While he is no longer with us, his legacy lives on in the pages of his books. He forever changed the way children's books were written and continues to inspire generations. The website has numerous activities that relate to his books. Also check out this [interactive phonics game](#), "Fox in Sox," to help your child practice rhyming skills.

Check out the [March 2019 Activity Calendar](#) from Reading is Fundamental. Included with most activities are links to additional resources.



Baseball spring training is in full swing! Upper elementary students might enjoy "[Baseball Saved Us: Read Aloud Video.](#)" Additional resources are also provided for follow-up activities. [FUNBRAIN](#) website is geared toward K-5 students where they can practice their math skills through an interactive baseball math game.

March is also the month for "March Madness." (College basketball tournament). Older children might enjoy learning more about the history of basketball with this fun [scavenger hunt](#). There is a [computer-based basketball game](#) to help practice verbs plus prepositions.



### [Daylight Saving Time](#)

The United States begins Daylight Saving Time at 2:00 a.m. on the second Sunday in March and reverts to standard time on the first Sunday in November. In the U.S., each time zone switches at a different time. The main purpose of Daylight Saving Time (called "Summer Time" in many places in the world) is to make better use of daylight. This [website](#) has numerous activities associated with Daylight Saving Time. One activity on the website involves [elapsed time](#). Elapsed time is simply the amount of time that passes from the beginning of an event to its end.

### [A Car Parking Numbers Game to Make Learning Numbers FUN!](#)

Use a shallow box for the parking lot base, cutting a ramp into one edge so that the cars can "drive" in. Then use number stickers to label the cars and draw the same number of parking spaces onto the base of the box. Have your child match the car to the matching numbered parking space.



## Online Resources: Early Childhood

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

This website has a variety of resources related to early childhood education. It also has a link to a webinar series on early childhood education.

### [Early Childhood Special Education-WI Department of Public Instruction](#)

This website gives information about the special education laws and eligibility criteria related to early childhood special education. It also has a link to the DPI bulletin and frequently asked questions related to early childhood special education.

### [Too Small to Fail](#)

Too Small to Fail aims to help parents and businesses take meaningful actions to improve the health and well-being of children ages zero to five, so that more of America's children are prepared to succeed in the 21st century. The website has an abundance of links to resources related to children from 0-5 years of age.

### [National Association for the Education of Young Children \(NAEYC\)](#)

NAEYC is dedicated to improving the well-being of all young children, with particular focus on the quality of educational and developmental services for all children from birth through age 8. The Association administers a voluntary, national accreditation system for high-quality early childhood programs, sponsors a variety of initiatives to improve professional preparation of early childhood educators, and produces a wide array of early childhood resources. NAEYC membership provides participation in both national and local services through the Association's network of over 300 local, state, and regional affiliates.

### [ZERO TO THREE](#)

ZERO TO THREE's mission is to support the healthy development and well-being of infants, toddlers and their families. This multidisciplinary organization advances its mission by informing, educating, and supporting adults who influence the lives of infants and toddlers.

### [Wisconsin Head Start Association](#)

The Wisconsin Head Start Association (WHSA) is a private not-for-profit membership organization representing over 16,000 young children and their families and over 4,000 staff composing the 62 Head Start/Early Head Start programs—including American Indian and Migrant/Seasonal programs—in Wisconsin. One purpose of WHSA is to provide a network for information, training, advocacy, support, and action for directors, parents, and staff of Head Start & Early Head Start programs in Wisconsin.

### [Milestones Checklists](#)

These milestones checklists can be used to help family and staff track the developmental progress of children ages three months to five years.

### [Get Ready to Read](#)

It is critical to help young children be ready for school by working with them to develop early literacy and learning skills. Because strong reading skills form the basis for learning in all subjects, it is important to identify those who struggle with reading as early as possible. Children who have been read to at home come to school with important early literacy skills. This site has an abundance of information related to early literacy. The site also has videos and webinars of examples of how parents can promote these important early literacy skills.



### Family Engagement Resources in an Equitable, Multi-Level System of Supports

A brand new [document](#) with local resources for schools and districts implementing and improving their family engagement efforts, all in ONE place!



## WI FACETS

Webinars  
Trainings  
Workshops

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:** March 4, 2019  
**Presenters:** Nissan Bar-Lev, CESA 7 and Courtney Salzer, WI FACETS

### [Public, Charter and Voucher School and the Rights of Students with Disabilities](#)

**Date:** March 6, 2019  
**Presenter:** Sally Flaschberger, Disability Rights Wisconsin

### [Self-Advocacy in Transition](#)

**Date:** March 13, 2019  
**Presenter:** Jen Hilgendorf, Transition Improvement Grant

### [Individual Education Program- Part 2 \(Spanish\)](#)

Telephone Workshop  
**Date:** March 14, 2019  
**Presenter:** Nelsinia Ramos, WI FACETS

### [Social and Emotional Learning in Wisconsin](#)

**Date:** March 20, 2019  
**Presenter:** Beth Herman, WI DPI

### [Understanding and Using Data for Families of Children with Special Needs](#)

**Date:** March 27, 2019  
**Presenter:** Dani Scott, WI DPI

### [WSEMS: Friendly and Productive IEPs](#)

**Date:** April 1, 2019  
**Presenters:** Nissan Bar-Lev, CESA 7 and Courtney Salzer, WI FACETS

### [Other Health Impairment \(OHI\) - Ways to Support Students](#)

**Date:** April 3, 2019  
**Presenter:** Eva Kubinski, WI DPI



## **PUBLIC FORUM—March 6—March 13—Join the Conversation!**

### **2018-19 State Superintendent's Advisory Council on Special Education**

The March public forum is accepting online comments only! The public forum allows the Special Education Advisory Council to :

- Listen to families, school administrators, educators, community representatives and others
- Gather input on the unique challenges and successes of special education in Wisconsin.
- Advise the State Superintendent and the Department of Public Instruction.
- Hear about any topic upon which people may choose to comment.

You may make your comment to the council by using this [link](#) on the State Superintendent's Council on Special Education web page from March 6 to March 13, 2019.

For questions on the public forum, contact [Rita Fuller](#).



## **Research to Read**

### **A Tablet Computer for Young Children? Exploring its Viability for Early Childhood Education**

*Leslie J. Couse & Dora W. Chen (2010) A Tablet Computer for Young Children? Exploring its Viability for Early Childhood Education, Journal of Research on Technology in Education, 43:1, 75-96, DOI: 10.1080/15391523.2010.10782562*

#### **Article Link**

#### **ABSTRACT:**

This study explored the viability of tablet computers in early education by investigating preschool children's ease in acclimating to tablet technology and its effectiveness in engaging them to draw. A total of 41 three-to-six-year old children were video-recorded while they used the tablets. The study found significant differences in the level of tablet use between sessions, and engagement increased with age. Teachers reported high child interest and drawings as 'typical' to 'above expectation'. Children quickly developed ease with the stylus for drawing. Although technical issues in learning this new technology were encountered, children were interested and persisted without frustration.

What seems to matter for children's learning is the ways teachers choose to implement this technology.

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



## Contributions to the Newsletter

**Upcoming newsletter topic:** April: Autism Spectrum Disorders  
May: Mental Health  
June: ADD/ADHD

*To submit contributions of articles, events, or resources, you may use the attached word document. Send submissions to [woverturf@wifacets.org](mailto: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.*



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