



# Family Engagement Newsletter

## Evaluations for Specific Learning Disability (SLD) During Virtual Learning

By Wendy Overturf

Wisconsin's Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) rule for determining initial eligibility for special education requires the analysis of data following intensive intervention to determine whether a referred student demonstrates sufficient progress. The COVID-19 pandemic does have a potential to impact those interventions. The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction has developed guidance to address this and many other questions parents of students with disabilities may have.

### [Excerpt from WI DPI Guidance](#)

**If a public health emergency order is not in effect and a school continues to provide virtual learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic and interventions are needed for the purpose of an SLD evaluation, how should scientific research-based interventions (SRBIs) be delivered? (Revised 8/06/2020)**

If a district is continuing to deliver instruction virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic and interventions are needed to determine response to intervention for the purpose of an SLD evaluation, district staff, along with parental input, should consider if a student may be able to receive the SRBIs in-person if they can be done in accordance with safety guidelines from the LEA's (school district's) local health department. If in-person delivery is not possible, district staff should deliver the interventions virtually if the intervention can be delivered with fidelity. There are a limited number of SRBIs that can be implemented virtually that meet the standards of the SLD rule and can be implemented with fidelity. Districts should contact their local vendors to see if updates to the SRBI have been made to deliver the intervention with fidelity in a virtual setting. If the IEP team can identify an SRBI that meets the standards of the SLD rule and can be implemented with fidelity, it can be considered. If in-person delivery is not safely possible and there is not a way to deliver the SRBI virtually with fidelity, IEP teams and LEAs should work with parents to determine a timeline to extend the evaluation and complete the evaluation as soon as the necessary data can be collected. In this case, the IEP team may extend the 60-day timeline, with written parent agreement, by using the M-3 form to document the extension and include a date when the evaluation will most feasibly be completed. It is possible for an intervention to be started one year (e.g. in spring) and be completed the following year. Teams should consider which grade level to continue interventions and progress monitoring and complete the interventions and the evaluations as soon as an intervention can be safely delivered in-person or virtually with fidelity.

**If an intervention was started with a student prior to the school closures in the spring of 2020, would the district have to start the intervention over when in-person learning is allowed?**

This will need to be determined on a case-by-case basis. Considerations would include, how much time was spent in the intervention, how much data was collected during the intervention process, and how the student was responding to the intervention prior to the school closure. If a student was close to completing the intervention, and there is enough data to establish a reasonable trend line, it would be appropriate to use that data whenever school resumes. IEP teams should also consider whether interventions can be delivered virtually if it is determined that there is not enough data from interventions. In a situation where interventions were not able to be delivered during the closure, the IEP team, including the child's parent, will need to review and discuss the available data and determine a plan for completing the evaluation. This may include a written agreement between the LEA and parent to extend the evaluation timeline. In general, the IEP team should consider the progress monitoring data that was collected during the SRBI prior to the school closure. Rather than considering whether to "start the intervention over," the IEP team could consider a review of data collected to date to determine how to proceed with the interventions and evaluation. This would include data and information related to the school closure, such as information provided by the parent and student input regarding mental health challenges and the student's level of engagement in virtual learning.

Be sure to check the [WI DPI guidance for questions and answers](#) to other matters related to Special Education.

## Statewide Events

### [Wisconsin Self-Determination Conference](#)

This event is for people with disabilities and the people who support them. Learn how to live more independently, participate more in your community, and direct your public funds efficiently.

**Date:** October 26-28, 2020

**Location:** This will be a virtual conference.

### [Wisconsin Family Ties 2020 Children Come First Conference](#)

A conference for those caring for, working with, or concerned with the well-being of children and youth with social, emotional, and behavioral challenges. Each year, this conference brings together professionals, educators, and families, with national experts in the field of children's mental health.

**Date:** November 9, 2020

**Location:** This will be a virtual conference.

### [State Superintendent's Conference on Special Education & Pupil Services Leadership](#)

This conference provides local directors of special education and pupil services and other interested parties with opportunities to network with colleagues from around the state as well as consultants and administrators from the Division for Learning Support at the Department of Public Instruction. The conference planning committee is currently discussing options for this event scheduled for November 17 & 18, 2020. The WI DPI will continue to monitor the situation and update their website accordingly.

### [New Community of Practice: Supporting Students with IEPs During COVID-19](#)

The DPI Special Education Team is offering a Community of Practice for professionals who are supporting students with IEPs.

The purpose is to provide ongoing guidance from DPI as well as opportunities for participants to collaborate and share ideas and resources. Upcoming topics will be based on participant feedback. Goals for the meetings include staying connected, collaboratively sharing ideas, listening and exploring concerns, and seeking answers to questions. The meetings will take place approximately twice a month, are free and available to anyone interested in learning and sharing best practices to support students with IEPs during COVID-19. Registration for each meeting is available on [this flier](#).



## At Home Learning Strategies

### [Children's Activity Calendar: October 2020](#)

For older children, the October calendar is full of engaging children's programming ideas for activities, craft projects, and books suggestions. Treat kids to tasty ideas for National Homemade Cookie Day and National Chocolate Cupcake Day, and also celebrate Indigenous Peoples' Day and Global Diversity Awareness Month.

### [Early Literacy Activity Calendar: October 2020](#)

The fun ideas are designed to help kids grow important skills while celebrating Cat Day, singing spooky songs, playing themed games, and more.



Discover the fall colors in Wisconsin with the official Travel Wisconsin [Fall Color Report](#). Wisconsin's state forests and parks offer a wealth of fall color viewing opportunities. [Find a state forest, park recreation area or trail](#).

### [50 things to do with your kids this fall during the coronavirus crisis in Wisconsin](#)

Autumn in Wisconsin is a beautiful time. Need some ideas to enjoy fall with your kids this year? This is especially relevant since most traditional festivities and events will not be happening this year due to the pandemic. Here are a few activities from the website.

- Harvest festivals have been canceled, but you can do many of the typical activities in your own backyard, including pumpkin bowling, relay races and eating caramel apples.
- If you are not comfortable going to movie theaters this fall, have your own movie marathon at home with some fall-themed films and TV specials. Some ideas? "It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown," "Spookley the Square Pumpkin," "Hotel Transylvania" or "Coco."
- We have all been spending more time in our houses the past few months. Go all out decorating your space for fall. Have the kids make art from fall leaves, acorns, and flowers. Make displays and centerpieces from pumpkins, gourds, and colorful flowers.
- Make a kid-friendly pumpkin spice drink, like a [no-coffee latte](#) or a [milkshake](#).
- [Virtual Doors Open 2020, September 26 - October 11](#). Doors Open is a public celebration of Milwaukee's architecture and neighborhoods. One of the goals of the event is to invite the public to explore buildings and neighborhoods not usually open to the public. This year you can learn from the comfort of your home!



### [Sidewalk Chalk Learning Activities](#)

If you are looking to boost your child's knowledge of everything reading-related – whether that be letters, sounds, spelling or sight words, these fun and inexpensive chalk-based activities will help.

- **Upper and Lowercase Letter Match Up:** Great for learning uppercase and lowercase letters – write a series of letters and then have your child draw a line between the matching pairs.
- **Sight Words Bean Bag Toss:** Write words (or letters) and then call them out – see if your kids can land a bean bag on the right word. You can make homemade beanbags by using Ziploc type bags and putting in dried beans.
- **Number Line Learning:** Brush up on their counting and math with these [fun games](#), all involving a large scale chalk number line.
- **Number Dice Match Up:** Write numbers 1–6 in one column and draw the 6 dice faces in another. Then task your kids to match each number with the corresponding die.



Check this [website](#) for nearly 100 more ways to use sidewalk chalk. In addition to reading and math activities, it also has suggestions for science activities, activities that promote creativity and imagination, and activities that encourage active movement. Try some of these activities while the weather is still great for outdoor activities.

# Online Resources



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

This website has a variety of links to resources related to learning disabilities. It includes information about potential signs of a learning disability, information about the evaluation process and tips for parents and teachers.

## [Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction](#)

This website provides guidance for implementing Wisconsin Criteria for Specific Learning Disabilities as well as links to other information related to learning disabilities.

## [The National Center for Learning Disabilities](#)

The mission of the NCLD is to improve the lives of all people with learning difficulties and disabilities by empowering parents, enabling young adults, transforming schools, and creating policy and advocacy impact. The website has information on learning disabilities, resources, as well as a link to sign up for their newsletter.

## [Learning Disabilities Association of America \(LDA\)](#)

LDA provides support to people with learning disabilities, their parents, teachers and other professionals with cutting edge information on learning disabilities, practical solutions, and a comprehensive network of resources. These services make LDA the leading resource for information on learning disabilities.

## [Understood.org](#)

The goal of the website is to help parents whose children, ages 3–20, are struggling with learning and attention issues. It provides information to empower parents to understand their children's issues and relate to their experiences. With this knowledge, parents can make effective choices that propel their children from simply coping to truly thriving. Website is very parent-friendly and offers links to information related to learning difficulties. Archived webinars are also available.

## [AdLit.org](#)

AdLit.org is a national multimedia project offering information and resources to the parents and educators of struggling adolescent readers and writers. AdLit.org offers articles that provide research-based and best-practice information for educators, parents, and others interested in helping young people become better readers and writers.

## [Bookshare](#)

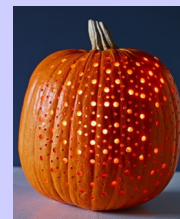
Bookshare is an ebook library that makes reading easier. Members can access a huge collection of ebooks and read their way with the most customizable ebooks for people with reading barriers. The library has 751,624 titles and is the most extensive collection of accessible ebooks in the world. It includes books for school, career, and reading pleasure, as well as titles in over 34 languages. The collection is supported by a dedicated volunteer community and partnerships with over 820 US and international publishers. Thanks to funding from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), Bookshare is free for all qualified U.S. students and schools.

## [Dyscalculia.org](#)

Dyscalculia is a math learning disorder that makes mathematical reasoning and computation difficult, despite adequate education, average or greater intelligence, and proper motivation. Check this website for a multitude of resources related to this learning disability.

## [The International Dyslexia Association \(IDA\)](#)

IDA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, scientific, and educational organization dedicated to the study and treatment of learning disabilities, dyslexia as well as related language-based learning differences. The purpose of IDA is to pursue and provide the most comprehensive range of information and services that address the full scope of dyslexia and related difficulties in learning to read and write. Their website has links to research, interventions, as well as a newsletter.



## [Easy Pumpkin Carving Ideas](#)



## WI FACETS



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)

### [Serving on Groups 3: Processes Groups Use](#)

**Presenter:** Jan Serak, Serak Consulting

**Date:** October 1, 2020

### [Self-Advocacy: Branding Yourself](#)

**Presenter:** Nafessa Burdine, Manpower

**Date:** October 13, 2020, 6pm-7pm

### [Raising Awareness of Mental Health Needs in Schools](#)

**Presenter:** Anna Moffit, NAMI

**Date:** October 14, 2020

### [Serving on Groups 4 & 5: Tools & Tips](#)

**Presenter:** Jan Serak, Serak Consulting

**Date:** October 15, 2020

### [Skills for Effective Parent Advocacy](#)

**Presenter:** Bonnie VanderMeulen, WI FACETS

**Date:** October 20, 2020

### [Dyslexia: How to Support Struggling Readers](#)

**Presenter:** Katie Kasubaski, Madison Children's Dyslexia Center

**Date:** October 21, 2020

### [Serving on Groups 6: Understanding and Using Data](#)

**Presenter:** Jan Serak, Serak Consulting

**Date:** October 22, 2020

### [Drop-Out Prevention](#)

**Presenter:** Jen Hilgendorf, Statewide Indicator 1 & 2 Coordinator

**Date:** October 28, 2020

### [Serving on Groups 7 & 8: The Role of Families and Skills for Serving on Groups](#)

**Presenter:** Jan Serak, Serak Consulting

**Date:** October 29, 2020

Learning  
Opportunities



## [Considerations for District and School Administrators Overseeing Distance Learning for Students with Disabilities](#)

This brief, produced by WestEd as part of a collection of Crisis Response Resources, provides guidance and resources to help district and school leaders ensure students with disabilities are well supported through distance learning prompted by the coronavirus crisis. The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the US Department of Education. The brief begins with key questions to guide administrators as they consider how to address the varied needs of students with disabilities that range from mild to low-incidence. The brief then provides suggestions and resources to address the following critical areas: (1) Creating a supportive distance teaching and learning environment for educators; (2) Using support staff effectively; and (3) Understanding the legal requirements of special education during school closures.

QUALITY MATTERS  
**QM** Of special interest to educators and families is the link to a [checklist](#) to help educators provide accommodations to students with disabilities while in a remote emergency instruction. The checklist was developed by Quality Matters which is a nationally recognized program focused on improving the quality of online education.

## Research to Read

### [How is COVID-19 Affecting the Mental Health of Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Their Families?](#)

Toseeb, U., Asbury, K., Code, A., Fox, L., & Deniz, E. (2020, April 21). Supporting Families with Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities During COVID-19.

#### [Article Link](#)



The COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on how people go about their day to day life. The sudden change, along with necessary measures such as self-isolation and social distancing has been particularly challenging for children with special educational needs and their families, given their reliance on many carefully established routines and relationships as well as professional and informal supports. The findings suggest that educators and policy makers should place the implementation of clear routines and targeted mental health support at the center of any strategy designed to support students with disabilities in making the transition back to school.



Youth and family involvement in the transition planning process are crucial components of a successful plan. There will be 3 separate webinars to address various aspects of family engagement at the elementary, middle school and high school (secondary) levels. Join us and other families to discuss critical issues relating to transition at each stage of your child's life. [Register](#) for one or all three sessions.



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 topics: November: Emotional Behavioral Disabilities**

**December: Communication**

**January: Transition**

*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 you are unable to access the form, you may send the 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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