



## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

December, 2022  
Volume 12 | Issue 11



### How to Effectively Communicate with Your Child's IEP Team

By Wendy Overturf

The importance of parent and student participation in developing a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) cannot be overstated. In fact, The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was passed with the intention of full and meaningful partnership with families. Parents are equal members of the IEP team. In Wisconsin, when a child is 14, they must be invited to the meeting as well.

[Read Entire Article](#)

## UPCOMING WI FACETS EVENTS

### WSEMS: Friendly and Productive IEPs (PRE-RECORDED)

Presenter: The Wisconsin Special Education Mediation System  
December 5, 2022

### IEP 9: IEP Revisions and Extended School Year

Presenter: Jan Serak, Serak Consulting  
December 6, 2022

### What Does Family Engagement Have to Do with Equitable Multi Level Systems of Support?

Presenter: Jennifer Grenke, MEd, North Regional Technical Assistance Coordinator,  
Wisconsin RtI Center  
December 7, 2022

### Birth to Three Program (Spanish)

Presenter: Clara De La Garza, Specialist with the Bureau of Children Services (BCS) at the Department of Health Services  
December 8, 2022

### [IEP 10: Parent Rights in the IEP Process](#)

Presenter: Jan Serak, Director, Serak Consulting Services  
December 13, 2022

### [Guardianship and the Alternatives to Guardianship \(Supported Decision Making\)](#)

Presenters: Victoria Davis Davila, attorney focusing on disability and civil rights and Tami Jackson, Legislative Liaison and Public Policy Analyst, BPDDI  
December 14, 2022

### [IEP 11: Useful Resources in the IEP Process](#)

Presenter: Bonnie Vander Meulen, Training Coordinator WI FACETS  
December 20, 2022

## HOME LEARNING



### Children's Activity Calendar

'Tis the season for learning. Take kids on a virtual zoo visit, graph snowfall amounts, learn about holiday celebrations from other cultures and religions, and reflect on the joys of another year.

[Download Calendar](#)

### [Reading Tips for Parents \(in Multiple Languages\)](#)

A child's success as a reader begins much earlier than the first day of school. Reading, and a love for reading, begins at home. These one-page parent tips from [Reading Rockets](#) offer easy ways for parents to help kids become successful readers. This site has tips for parents ranging from babies to third graders. These tips also are also available in multiple languages. Parent tips are also included for specific disability areas.



Below is an example of the Kindergarten Tip Sheet. While these are tips by age or grade level, they can be used with children at various ages and stages.

#### Talk to your child

- Ask your child to talk about their day at school. Encourage them to explain something they did, or a game they played during recess.

#### Say silly tongue twisters

- Sing songs, read rhyming books, and say silly tongue twisters. These help kids become sensitive to the sounds in words.

#### Read it and experience it

- Connect what your child reads with what happens in life. If reading a book about animals, relate it to your last trip to the zoo.

#### Use your child's name

- Point out the link between letters and sounds. Say, "John, the word jump begins with the same sound as your name. John, jump. They both begin with the same letter, J."

#### Play with puppets

- Play language games with puppets. Have the puppet say, "My name is Mark. I like words that rhyme with my name. Does park rhyme with Mark? Does ball rhyme with Mark?"

#### Trace and say letters

- Have your child use a finger to trace a letter while saying the letter's sound. Do this on paper, in sand, or on a plate of sugar.

#### Write it down

- Have paper and pencils available for your child to use for writing. Working together, write a sentence or two about something special. Encourage them to use the letters and sounds they are learning about in school.

### Play sound games

- Practice blending sounds into words. Ask "Can you guess what this word is? m-o-p." Hold each sound longer than normal.

### Read it again and again

- Go ahead and read your child's favorite book for the 100th time! As you read, pause and ask your child about what is going on in the book.

### Talk about letters and sounds

- Help your child learn the names of the letters and the sounds the letters make. Turn it into a game! "I'm thinking of a letter and it makes the sound mmmmmm."



### [Winter Crafts for Kids to Make – Fun Art and Craft Ideas for All Ages](#)

This site has winter crafts for kids, from simple ideas perfect for toddlers and preschoolers to more complex crafts for older kids.



December 21, 2022

### First Day of Winter

Be sure to check out these read aloud books.

[How Do You Know It's Winter](#) and [Winter is Here](#)

## UPCOMING STATE EVENTS

### [Supporting Neurodiverse Students Professional Learning System \(SNS\)](#)

SNS provides learning opportunities with a focus on regulation, social communication, flexibility, resilience, sensory processing, and executive functioning. It includes regional training sessions, virtual trainings, and virtual cohorts to support educators and families serving students with disability-related needs in the area of social and emotional learning. For a complete calendar and registration information, please visit the [SNS Learning Events Registration](#) webpage

### [Families as Partners](#)

This is a multi-day education and leadership opportunity beginning in 2023 for families with an emphasis on building relationships with school staff that can lead to improved student outcomes. Skill-building in the areas of communication and authentic relationships focused on family-school collaborations will be a central theme throughout all sessions. Meetings will be held via Zoom.

There are two sessions to choose from. Session dates and times:

**Session 1-Tuesdays: January 10 & 24, February 7 & 21, March 7 & 21 (6:00-8:00 pm) and**

**Session 2-Saturdays: January 14 & 28, February 11 & 25, and March 11 & 25 (9:00-11:00 am)**

### [Family Engagement Community of Practice and Learning](#)

The Family Engagement Community of Practice and Learning is for educators, families, caregivers, and others who want to see improvement in family engagement across the state of Wisconsin. Learn from experts in the field, participate in book studies, and other learning opportunities designed for educators, parents, families, and others. Meetings are held the 2nd Wednesday of the month from 4-5:30 pm via Zoom.

Upcoming schedule and topics:

**January 11, 2023:** Home and School Ongoing Communication

**February 8, 2023:** Parent-Teacher Home Visits

**March 8, 2023:** Topic to be determined



April 12, 2023: Topic to be determined  
May 10, 2023: Topic to be determined

Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin Annual Conference - Save the Date  
April 20-22, 2023, KI Convention Center, Green Bay, WI

Circles of Life Conference - Save the Date

Circles of Life is Wisconsin's annual conference for families who have children with disabilities and the providers and other professionals who support them  
May 11-12, 2023 at Wilderness Resort, Wisconsin Dells, WI

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## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

### Report Data Shows Prevalence of Disciplinary Removals Among Students with Disabilities

The U.S. Education Department's Office of Special Education Programs reported that 3 in 10 students with disabilities, age 3 to 21, received a disciplinary removal in the 2018-19 school year. Such removal is defined as when a child with a disability is removed from their educational placement for disciplinary purposes, including in-school and out-of-school suspension, expulsion, removal to an interim alternative educational setting for drug or weapon offenses or serious bodily injury, and removal by a hearing officer to protect the child or others from potential injury.

WI FACETS receives many calls from families asking questions about discipline and discipline procedures. Below are some links from the Wisconsin's Department of Public Instruction (DPI) that are frequently shared with families.

- [Information Update Bulletin 06.02](#)- Legal Requirements Relating to Disciplining Children with Disabilities
- [Information Update Bulletin 07.01](#)- Addressing the Behavioral Needs of Students with Disabilities
- [Information Update Bulletin 14.03](#)-Shortened School Day
- [Frequently Asked Questions about the Use of Physical Restraint and Seclusion in Public Schools under Section 118.305, Wis. Stats.](#)
- [Special Education in Plain Language PDF](#)
- [Discipline Strategies to Improve Outcomes for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Answers to Frequently Asked Compulsory School Attendance Questions](#) (2009)
- [Special Education Procedural Safeguards \(Rights for Parents and Children\)-](#) (Procedures When Disciplining Children with Disabilities starts on page 20.)
- [PowerPoint Presentation](#) - Provides basic information on special education legal requirements relating to discipline.

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## ONLINE RESOURCES: COMMUNICATION

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

The [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#) (IDEA) strongly supports the parents' right to be involved in the special education their child receives. As IDEA states: "Almost 30 years of research and experience has demonstrated that the education of children with disabilities can be made more effective by strengthening the role and responsibility of parents and ensuring that families have meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children at school and at home." This website provides many resources for parents so that they can be active participants in the IEP process.

### [Wisconsin Statewide Parent-Educator Initiative \(WSPEI\)](#)

WSPEI is all about partnerships. Its goal is to help families and school districts find or create the resources that will help them build positive working relationships that lead to shared decision making and better outcomes for the student. It supports increased sharing of information among families, schools, projects, organizations, and agencies through networking meetings,

conferences, person-to-person contact, and media. Be sure to check out the [Student Snapshot](#) and [Family Profile](#) documents. Both documents will help the school team learn more about the student and their family.

### [CADRE's Steps to Success: Communication with Your Child's School](#)

CADRE is the Center for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education. The document highlights some specific communication skills that can help parents be most successful in developing and maintaining a strong partnership with their child's school.

### [Andrew F. Talking Points \(Worksheet for Parents\)](#)

The Supreme Court's [Andrew F. decision](#) (2017) redefined the meaning of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for students with disabilities. In short, the Supreme Court ruled that Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) must give students with disabilities more than a de minimis, or minimal, educational benefit. Parents may want to use these talking points at an IEP meeting to identify their concerns and to find ways to talk about them using Andrew F. language.

### [Communicating with ELL Families: 10 Strategies for Schools](#)

There are many ways that educators and administrators can connect with families of English language learners (ELLs) and keep that communication strong. This communication can be challenging to figure out, but in many cases, it can make a tremendous difference in students' learning. This website offers some tips for schools, many of which are based on lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### [It Takes a Village to Teach a Child](#)

It truly does take a village to educate a child. Educators need the cooperation of families as partners in the educational process. In an ideal world, all parents, teachers, and school administrators would always agree on the best practices for teaching children. However, disagreements happen. Disagreements can be emotionally charged and if those disagreements are not resolved, parents and school staff can end up working in different directions. Often, it is the student who suffers. To further the goal of building bridges between families and teachers, this website provides several resources related to home-school communication and conflict resolution strategies.

### [Tips for Parents: Parent –Teacher Conferences](#)

Learn more about parent-teacher conferences and how parents can use the meeting to ask questions that will help their child. The content is available in both Spanish and English.

### [Key Questions to Ask at Your Child's School](#)

Parents have a key role in their child's education and parents can help bridge their child's transition from home to school and give them the best chance at success in learning and in life. This tool provides parents with a set of questions to ask, and important issues to consider, when approaching their child's teachers, principals, and counselors about their development.

### [Building Parent-Teacher Relationships](#)

Effective communication is essential for building school-family partnerships. It constitutes the foundation for all other forms of family involvement in education. This website provides strategies that have been effective in improving parent-teacher communications.

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## RESEARCH

### [Improving School-Family Communication and Engagement: Lessons from Remote Schooling During the Pandemic](#)

Orta, D., & Gutiérrez, V. (2022). Improving school-family communication and engagement: Lessons from remote schooling during the pandemic. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Consortium on School Research. [Read Full Article](#)

Focus groups with parents and educators revealed a diverse range of experiences and perspectives with remote schooling. The insights shared by the focus group participants were used to draw seven communication lessons that emerged during all-remote schooling—and

that remain salient as in-person learning resumes.

#### Lessons Learned:

- Virtual meeting options provided more flexible scheduling opportunities for parents to communicate with educators.
- Mobile apps increased timely communication between parents and educators.
- Translation features in mobile apps allowed for direct communication between educators and parents who speak languages other than English.
- Schools enlisted all staff members, including non-instructional staff, to serve as additional resources to help cultivate additional relationships between schools and parents.
- Schools created inclusive, family-focused co-curricular events that helped deepen their relationships with parents.
- Schools created virtual and in-person forums where parents connected with one another and deepened their sense of community.
- Understanding students' family and community contexts helped schools to reach—and know how to be reached by—families during the pandemic.

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## CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER

Upcoming newsletter topics:

January: Transition

February: Intellectual Disabilities

March: Early Childhood

To submit contributions of articles, events, or resources you may use the [Word document](#). Send submissions to [Wendy Overturf](#). 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 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.

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. If you would like to receive this monthly update or if you would like to have your name removed from the distribution list, please email [WI FACETS](#).

The WI FACETS Family Engagement E-Newsletter can be found online [www.servingongroups.org/newsletter](http://www.servingongroups.org/newsletter)



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