



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

September, 2023
Volume 11 | Issue 9



Using Smartphone Apps to Promote Independent Living Skills

By Wendy Overturf

It is safe to say that parents of a child with a disability want their child to be as independent as possible as they approach adulthood. Learning independent living skills while still in school leads to more opportunities and greater success after high school graduation. There are many aspects to living independently as a young adult. Starting with the basics, it is about acquiring daily living skills, which include grooming and hygiene, personal safety, and knowing how to take care of oneself. These skills are learned over time at home, at school, and in the community. They provide the foundation for what it takes to live meaningful adult lives.

Did you know that technology may help your child as there are many free or low-cost apps for a smartphone that might be able to assist your child with independent living skills? A smartphone is a cell phone that has access to the internet through Wi-Fi or a data plan and can run a variety of mobile apps. Nearly ninety-five percent of U.S. teens say they have [access to a smartphone](#).

The purpose of this article is to highlight a few of these helpful apps and to encourage parents to explore the internet for other apps that may be available to assist their child as they move toward more independent living.

[Read Full Article](#)

UPCOMING WI FACETS EVENTS

[IEP 3: Evaluation & Eligibility in the IEP Process](#)

Presenter: Ann Zielke, WI FACETS

Date: September 5, 2023, 12pm-12:45pm

[Access to Educational Materials and Mental Health, What's the Connection?](#)

Presenter: Toni Chambers, WI Family Ties

Date: September 6, 2023

[Lista de verificación del IEP](#)

Presenter: WI FACETS

Date: September 7, 2023

[IEP 4: Reevaluation & Independent Educational Evaluation \(IEE\)](#)

Presenter: Ann Zielke, WI FACETS

Date: September 19, 2023, 12pm-12:45pm

[Estilos de Comunicación- Consejos para Padres](#)

Presenter: WI FACETS

Date: September 21, 2023

[Serving on Groups - Opportunities to Get Involved & Types of Groups \(Parts 1 & 2\)](#)

Presenter: Jan Serak, Serak Consulting

Date: September 21, 2023

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

Presenter: Ann Zielke, WI FACETS

Date: September 26, 2023

[Special Education Legal Updates](#)

Presenter: Paul Sherman, WI DPI

Date: September 27, 2023

HOME LEARNING



[Children's Activity Calendar: September 2023](#)

The new school year is here and that makes it the perfect time to launch back into a variety of fun learning ideas. September is Yoga Month and the beginning of Hispanic Heritage month. and it also has celebrations like Dance Day, Constitution Day, and Good Neighbor Day. Find exciting activities, book suggestions, crafts, and more.

Understanding Calendars

It is generally thought that children under the age of around 6 or 7 cannot fully understand the concept of time, so trying to get them to learn the ins and outs of days, months and years might not be appropriate at younger ages. However, you can start to boost your child's basic time and day knowledge by incorporating key vocabulary into their day-to-day activities. This could be the days of the week or month names or key concepts of time such as now, later, before and after. This helps the child build a great foundation for when it is eventually time to learn the more complex aspects of the calendar.

Once your child is ready for more complex concepts relating to the calendar here are some suggestions on how to teach or reinforce more [advanced calendar skills](#).

Important Tip for Parents

Talk about days, weeks, and months during your daily activities. This allows your child to associate them with real-life events. If needed, this is a link to [plain paper calendars templates](#).

Check out these fun calendar videos:

- [12 Months of the Year](#)-exercise song for kids
- [Calendar](#)-a Read Aloud
- [Using a Calendar](#)



Supporting Your Child's Reading and Writing at Home

Learning to read is complex and involves many skills. [Reading Rockets](#) has developed [Reading 101: A Guide for Parents](#). This guide will help parents learn about typical milestones and find simple activities to help their child with reading and writing.



First Day of Fall - September 23, 2023

This might be a good time to start planning a family road trip. Check out the [11 Scenic Drives to Experience Fall in Wisconsin](#). This website also has a link to the [Fall Color Map](#) which approximates when leaves will be at their peak color.



Tips for getting kids ready for back-to-school

Whatever their age, many kids are apprehensive about starting school or going back to school. The good news is there's a lot you can do to ease their minds and help them get ready for a new school year. [10 Back-to-school tips for kids and parents](#).

UPCOMING STATE EVENTS

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

This year, the 39th Annual State Superintendent's Conference on Special Education and Pupil Services Leadership will be an in-person event. Perry Zirkel is the keynote speaker with legal updates. [View the tentative agenda with topics listed here](#). Due to space restrictions this year, there is a registration capacity. Payment must be received by Friday, September 8, 2023, or your registration spot will be offered to someone on the conference waitlist. Walk-in registrations will not be available this year.

Date: September 20, 2023

Location: Glacier Canyon Lodge, WI Dells, WI

[20th Annual Foro Latino-Special Education Family Forum](#)

Foro Latino provides free workshops for families. For questions, contact Monica Lopez at (414) 902-8434 or lopezmm@milwaukee.k12.wi.us. Interpretation available.

Date: September 23, 2023, 8:30am- 2:30pm

Location: South Division High School, Milwaukee, WI

[Children Come First Conference](#)

This conference is full of practical and inspiring content about caring for or working with children, youth, and

young adults with social, emotional, behavioral, or mental health challenges. The keynote speaker for this year's Children Come First Conference is New York Times best-selling author, Angeline Boulley. Angeline, an enrolled member of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, will talk about her experiences growing up in the Ojibwe community in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

Dates: November 6-7, 2023

Location: Kalahari Resort, WI Dells or Virtual

[Wisconsin Special Education Conference- Trauma Sensitive, Educating the Whole Child](#)

Dates: November 9-10, 2023

Location: Kalahari Resort, WI Dells

Keynote speaker Steve Graner, Project Manager for Child Trauma Academy, Neurosequential Model in Education, and Mathew and Mitchell LeBerge, autistic twins, share their experiences and challenges in school. Wisconsin DPI consultants will be holding double session breakout workshops in the morning and afternoon on "Conducting Needs Based Special Education Evaluations" that highlight best practices for conducting comprehensive special education evaluations with a specific focus on the increasing need to understand mental health and social and emotional needs of students. The DPI afternoon workshop will be on "Developing College and Career Ready IEPs" with a focus on documenting present levels of functional performance compared to age and grade level peers, writing IEP goals with clear baselines and levels of attainment, collaborative goal IEP development, and effective progress monitoring procedures. The conference will also provide many other breakout sessions, a special education legal update, and a Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction update from the Special Education Director.

[Building Hearts of Successful Schools Fall 2023 Conference](#)

Date: December 7, 2023 (pre-conference sessions on December 6, 2023)

Location: Glacier Canyon Lodge, WI Dells

Mark your calendar for the 2023 Building the Heart of Successful Schools Conference. [The keynote speaker will be Derek Francis](#). Derek is an experienced licensed school counselor and the Executive Director of Equity and School Climate for Minneapolis Public Schools with a passion and focus for proactive and equity-based counseling. Derek is dedicated to showing educators that the work you do as an individual can create a welcoming and inclusive school for all.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Foundations of Accessible Educational Materials

Introducing the [AEM Takeaway series](#). The National Center on Accessible Educational Materials (AEM Center) developed a collection of quick videos on topics surrounding accessible educational materials and technology. Each takeaway is a concise presentation by the AEM Center team and professionals in the field sharing their practical perspective, explaining important terms, concepts, and practices. With each module, additional resources are provided to delve deeper.

["The Next Steps for Providing Accessible Educational Materials \(AEM\) to Students with Disabilities,"](#)

developed by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, provides additional guidance and resources related to AEM.

Assistive Technology (AT) Forward

AT Forward is a grant funded project between Wisconsin DPI and CESA 2 and includes the [Assistive Technology Lending Center](#) (ATLC), [Accessible Education Materials \(AEM\) Center](#), and the statewide [Assistive Technology Community of Practice](#). The AT Forward Project supports educators, practitioners, caregivers and **families** to increase student autonomy in utilizing Assistive Technology tools to support access, engagement, and progress in learning. It provides a statewide, virtual Community of Practice (CoP) to support AT, and by joining this Community of Practice (CoP), members will have the opportunity to learn from experts in the field and network with colleagues through

statewide meetings, participate in free AT micro-credentialing opportunities, and receive monthly AT email updates.

From AT beginner to experienced implementers, the AT Forward CoP welcomes all knowledge background levels to join! The CoP includes regular AT CoP meetings on a variety of topics that are all recorded and archived on the [Wisconsin DPI AT Forward YouTube playlist](#). There is also a [CoP Meeting Video Resource Library](#) that categorizes all the videos into groups by topics. The CoP also started an [AT microcredential program](#) to improve the knowledge and skills of educators across Wisconsin that provides microcredentials on a variety of AT skills. The AT forward project also developed a [statewide AT lending center map](#) and provides [monthly email updates to CoP members](#) that are also archived.

[Accessible Playgrounds to visit in Wisconsin](#) - Inclusive parks are for everyone!

ONLINE RESOURCES: Assistive Technology



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

Resource links related to assistive technology as well as links to checklists that IEP teams can use when considering assistive technology.

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

Along with AT resources, this site also has federal and state requirements that address assistive technology as it relates to the development of IEPs and implementation of special education.

[What are some types of assistive devices and how are they used?](#)

From the NIH website - a good overview of the most common assistive technology devices.

[Information Update Bulletin 22.02 from WI Department of Public Instruction](#)

This bulletin provides technical assistance on state and federal requirements related to identifying and addressing the need for assistive technology as part of a special education evaluation and Individualized Education Program (IEP) development.

[National Center on Accessible Educational Materials \(AEM\)](#)

Agency providing technical assistance, coaching, and resources to increase the availability and use of accessible educational materials and technologies for learners with disabilities across the lifespan.

[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. Bookshare is free for U.S. students with qualifying reading barriers. People with [qualifying conditions](#) who are not U.S. students, and organizations serving them, pay a low membership fee. [Educators](#) may also sign up for an account to access books for their students.

[SETT Framework](#)

The SETT Framework is an organizational tool to help collaborative teams create Student-centered, Environmentally useful, and Tasks-focused Tool systems that foster the educational success of students with disabilities. The SETT Framework is built on the premise that in order to develop an appropriate system of assistive technology devices and services, teams must first gather information about the student, the customary environments in which the students spend their time, and the tasks that are required for the

students to be active participants in the teaching/learning processes that lead to educational success.

[Free Assistive Technology Apps](#)

Check this website for links to online assistive technology tools to help with reading, writing, and math. There are also many more not included in this list. Do a search for “free assistive technology apps” and the search results will provide even more links.

[Reading Rockets](#)

This is a link to an article for parents about the role of AT in helping their children with a learning disability. The better informed that parents are about AT, the greater the chances their child will experience success in school, in recreation and, eventually, at work.

Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports

PBIS Tip of the Month for Parents

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a strategy schools use to teach children expected behavior. Check the [July 2023 Family Engagement Newsletter](#) for more detailed information on PBIS.

When you have to say NO, give a reason why. For example, while shopping, your child asks you to buy him a toy. You know how many toys he already has, and you are short of time. You tell your child, “No, we can’t buy that toy today because you already have a toy in the car that you can play with on the way home.” If your child accepts your answer, compliment him, saying something like “Thank you for being respectful and understanding that we can’t buy a new toy today.” ([From Parents Using PBIS Principles at Home.](#))

RESEARCH

Perceptions of Using Assistive Technology for Students with Disabilities in the Classroom

Ahmed, A. (2018). Perceptions of Using Assistive Technology for Students with Disabilities in the Classroom. *International Journal of Special Education*, 33, 129-139.

[Read Full Article](#)

In special education, professionals interact with families and individuals with special needs who seek support. One part of the support that professionals and educational agencies can provide is assistive technology. This study was conducted to determine education professionals' opinions regarding the use of assistive technology in the classroom. There is a significant connection between what people think and what they practice regarding assistive technology. Educators should acknowledge this relationship and how it may shape the entire educational experience of students with disabilities. In this particular study, the researcher intended to reveal the factors behind the lack of availability of assistive technology in the classroom, as well as to determine peoples' attitudes towards supporting individuals with disabilities and their right to access the general education curriculum in the classroom. Twenty-eight students and staff members from a Midwestern University in the United States participated in the study; generally, participants were asked if they support the use of assistive technology or not, and to pinpoint obstacles that might prevent people from using assistive technology.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEW SLETTER

Upcoming Newsletter Topics:

October: Learning Disabilities

November: Emotional Behavioral Disabilities

December: Communication

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



This document was produced under grants from the U.S. Dept. of Education, (PTIC-#H328M200017) and WI Dept. of Public Instruction (CFDA# 84.027A/2024-M132-WIFACETS-342) to WI FACETS. The content does not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Dept. of Education, WI Dept. of Public Instruction, or WI FACETS. You should not assume endorsement by the U.S. Dept. of Education, WI Dept. of Public Instruction, WI FACETS, U.S. Dept. of Education Project Officer, David Emenheiser; or WI Dept. of Public Instruction Grant Director, Rita Fuller of any product, commodity, service or enterprise mentioned in this publication. This product is public domain. Authorization to reproduce it in whole or in part is granted. The citation should be: U.S. Dept. of Education, WI Dept. of Public Instruction, and WI FACETS, Milwaukee, WI, 2023.

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