



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

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A Brief Introduction to ABLE Accounts

By Wendy Overturf

Are you familiar with *Achieving a Better Life Experience* accounts (ABLE)? You are not alone. According to an article on [The ArcWisconsin website](#), Wisconsin residents with disabilities and their families have had the opportunity to benefit from ABLE savings accounts since 2016. However, very few people know about this valuable tool and the number of people opening accounts is much lower than expected. The purpose of this article is not intended to give financial advice but rather to give a brief overview of ABLE accounts and to provide additional resources for you to find out more information.

Things You Should Know - [from ABLE National Resource Center](#) (ABLE NRC)

What is an ABLE account?

ABLE accounts are tax-advantaged savings accounts for eligible individuals with disabilities. The beneficiary of the account is the account owner, and income earned by the accounts will not be taxed. Contributions to the account, which can be made by any person (the account beneficiary, family, friends Special Needs Trust or Pooled Trust), must be made using post-taxed dollars and will not be tax deductible for purposes of federal taxes; however, some states may allow for state income tax deductions for contributions made to an ABLE account.

Why the need for an ABLE account?

Millions of individuals with disabilities and their families depend on a wide variety of public benefits for income, health care and food and housing assistance. Eligibility for these public benefits (SSI, SNAP, Medicaid) require meeting a means/resource test that restricts eligibility to individuals with less than \$2,000 in liquid resources, such as cash savings, non-ABLE checking and savings accounts and some retirement funds. The ABLE Act authorized states to establish tax-advantaged savings programs so individuals with disabilities can save and invest money without jeopardizing eligibility for public benefits.

[Read Entire Article](#)

UPCOMING WI FACETS EVENTS

[WSEMS: Facilitated IEPs \(Pre-recorded webinar\)](#)

Date: February 5, 2024

[I Have Some NEWS for you: Behavior Strategies and Advocating for Your Child](#)

Presenter: Jennifer Townsend, Educational Consultant and owner of Universal Access Consulting, LLC.

Date: February 7, 2024

[Crianza con propósito: Estrategias para criar niños sordos Latinos](#)

Presenter: Socorro “coyo” García, Consultant

Date: February 8, 2024

[Participating in Transition Planning through the WiTransition App](#)

Presenter: Pam Jensen, TIG

Date: February 14, 2024

[Sirviendo en grupos: Oportunidades para participar y tipos de grupos \(Secciones 1 & 2\)](#)

Presenter: Alejandra Loeza, WI FACETS

Date: February 15, 2024

[The Rights of Students in Adapted Physical Education: What Parents/Caregivers Should Know](#)

Presenter: Brock McMullen, UW-LaCrosse

Date: February 21, 2024

[Lista de verificación del IEP](#)

Presenter: Nathaly Silva, WI FACETS

Date: February 22, 2024

[What Does Supported Decision-Making look like for Wisconsin’s Youth with Disabilities? *Spanish Translation Available](#)

Presenter: Fil Clissa, Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities

Date: February 28, 2024, 6pm-7pm

[Sirviendo en grupos: Procesos utilizados por los grupos \(Sección 3\)](#)

Presenter: Alejandra Loeza, WI FACETS

Date: February 29, 2024

HOME LEARNING



National Random Acts of Kindness Day - February 17

Random Acts of Kindness not only make the world a little bit brighter, but can also have a ripple effect, inspiring others to pay it forward.

[Valentine’s Day related writing prompts](#), There should be one that will appeal to even the most reluctant writer. Perhaps start early in February so that your child can choose a few and get more practice.

[What Now? A Parent’s Guide to Tantrums and Meltdowns](#)

Learn Anywhere: Mental Math Games
Counting games are great in the car or on the bus since they don't require materials — just your brain. As your child is learning to count to higher numbers you can practice skip counting. Start by trying to count by 10s to 100. Then try counting by fives or twos. The more you play, the faster your child will become at picking up the patterns. When that gets too easy, brainstorm different ways to get to a specific number. For example: What are three numbers you can add together to get to 12? What four numbers can you add together to get to 20? How many different combinations can you come up with?

President's Day - February 19, 2024

President's Day is a holiday that occurs the 3rd Monday of every February to celebrate our past and present U.S.

Presidents. Presidents Day was originally a day to celebrate George Washington, then was later expanded to honor Abraham Lincoln. Eventually, the holiday grew to celebrate all U.S. presidents, past and present. Check out some of these [videos](#) for interesting facts about some of our presidents

UPCOMING STATE EVENTS

Training for Home Language Interpreters: Supporting Families through the Special Education Process

For those seeking training for home language interpreters for families at IEP meetings, DPI has partnered with WI FACETS, LEAs, and other organizations to develop a one-day training for home language interpreters who interpret for families at IEP meetings. Language interpretation training is a requirement to meet the provisions outlined in DPI's [Providing Language Assistance to Parents guidance document](#). The training provides increased knowledge of legal responsibilities and requirements related to translation and interpretation of special education terms and concepts, tools, and resources for interpreters. The training also provides increased awareness of state and federal laws, regulations, and policies related to the educational rights of students who receive special education through an IEP and who may also be English Language Learners. Finally, the training supports improved skills to handle common ethical considerations while interpreting IEP meetings.

To register, please choose an option below.

Virtual Trainings:

- [February 9, 2024](#) (8am-2pm)
- [February 16, 2024](#) (8am-2pm)

[Wisconsin Transition Conference - Diversity, Equity, Disability and Inclusion!](#)

Dates: February 15-16, 2024

Location: Kalahari Resort and Convention Center, Wisconsin Dells, WI

[Promoting Early Childhood 2024 Conference: Play is Lifelong Learning](#)

Dates: March 6-7, 2024

Location: Radisson Hotel and Conference Center, Fond du Lac, WI

[Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin 35th Annual Conference](#)

Dates: April 25-27, 2024

Location: Kalahari Convention Center, Wisconsin Dells, WI

This Conference provides a wide range of information to those within the autism community. Their goal is to provide relevant information for attendees at all levels, including those who are new to autism and those who have years of experience.

[Circles of Life Conference](#)

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

Dates: May 16 - 17, 2024

Supporting Neurodiverse Students (SNS)

The Supporting Neurodiverse Students (SNS) Professional Learning System provides learning events, virtual cohorts, coaching, resources, and technical assistance to support educators and families serving students with disability-related needs in the area of social and emotional learning (SEL). The goal of the SNS is to support a skills-based approach to challenging behaviors that will improve a student's social understanding and emotional management skills. The SNS System provides learning opportunities with a focus on regulation, social communication, flexibility, resilience, sensory processing, and executive functioning. For more about these events and registration information, please visit the [SNS Learning Events Registration](#) webpage. Complete information about the SNS can be found at the [Supporting Neurodiverse Students Professional Learning System](#) webpage.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

OSEP Releases New Fast Facts on Children Identified with Intellectual Disability

In September 2023, The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) released a new [OSEP Fast Facts: Children Identified with Intellectual Disability](#), which explores the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 618 data. This Fast Fact takes a closer look at data on children whose primary disability is intellectual disability.

Expect, Engage, Empower: Successful Transitions for All! - Check out these Blog Posts.

[Introduction: Improving Systems to Better Prepare Students for Secondary Transition Experiences](#)

This is the first in a series of blog posts on secondary transition from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services ([OSERS](#)).

[Student-Led Decision-Making in Schools](#)

This is the second in a series of blog posts on secondary transition from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services ([OSERS](#)).

ONLINE RESOURCES: Intellectual Disabilities

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

This website has fact sheets on intellectual disabilities and includes links to resources related to infants, toddlers, and school-age children. The website also has links to other organizations that support individuals with intellectual disabilities.

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

The Wisconsin DPI website has information related to eligibility criteria, programming and services, and assessment for students with intellectual disabilities. The disability category criteria IEP forms *assist* IEP teams with determining if a child has a disability. However, using these forms alone is not sufficient for completing an evaluation and developing a student's IEP. To ensure compliance with implementing a full, individual, and comprehensive evaluation, go to the Wisconsin DPI [Comprehensive Special Education Evaluation web page](#).

[College Career and Community Readiness for students with IEPs](#)

This website has resources to support students at all ages and developmental levels to be independent and college, career, and community ready.

[Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities \(BPDD\)](#)

The mission of the BPDD is to unite ALL of Wisconsin in supporting our residents with developmental disabilities to lead their most independent lives. They have numerous [toolkits](#) and [videos](#) that may be helpful for individuals with disabilities and their families to help prepare for adult life.

[Resources for Health and Safety for Students with Disabilities](#)

The resources on this website may assist administrators, general and special education teachers, parents and family members, and others that support the education of students with disabilities to foster self-determination and understanding of safety, well-being, and rights individuals have to report and communicate

crimes including violent victimization such as physical or sexual abuse.

[Exceptional Parent \(eParent\)](#)

eParent provides practical advice, emotional support, and the most up-to-date educational information for families of children and adults with disabilities. It also provides information on special healthcare needs to physicians, allied health care professionals, and educational professionals who are involved with families who have children with disabilities.

[National Down Syndrome Society \(NDSS\)](#)

The mission of the NDSS is to be the national advocate for the value, acceptance, and inclusion of people with Down syndrome. The vision of NDSS is a world in which all people with Down syndrome have the opportunity to enhance their quality of life, realize their life aspirations and become valued members of welcoming communities. Their website gives facts about Down syndrome, has a section that dispels common misperceptions, and has numerous links related to advocacy.

[The Down Syndrome Association of Wisconsin \(DSAW\)](#)

The DSAW's mission is to provide support to Wisconsin families and individuals with Down syndrome and related disabilities through awareness, education, information, programs, services, and the exchange of ideas and experiences.

[Disability Scoop](#)

While the website provides news related to many disabilities, this link is specifically related to Intellectual Disabilities. You may also register to receive frequent email updates.

[The Arc](#)

The mission of the Arc is to promote and protect the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively support their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes. Local chapters provide individual advocacy, programs, services, and supports for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. Information on local, state, and national programs is available on the website. Click [here](#) for local chapters in Wisconsin.

[Special Olympics Wisconsin](#)

Special Olympics is a global movement that unleashes the human spirit through the transformative power and joy of sports. It empowers individuals with intellectual disabilities to become accepted and valued members of their communities, leading to a more respectful and inclusive society for all. Using sports as the catalyst as well as programming around health and education, Special Olympics works to end inactivity, injustice, and intolerance.

[Think College Search](#)

The only directory of its kind, Think College Search features 314 colleges and universities that offer postsecondary education programs for students with intellectual disabilities. Users of this searchable online database can filter by state, length of program, type of school, options for living on campus, and more.

RESEARCH

An Evaluation of the *Beyond High School Model* on the Self-Determination of Students with Intellectual Disability

Palmer SB, Wehmeyer ML, Shogren K, Williams-Diehm K, Soukup J. An Evaluation of the *Beyond High School Model* on the Self-Determination of Students with Intellectual Disability. *Career Dev Transit Except Individ*. 2012 Aug 1;35(2):76-84.

[Read Full Article](#)

Students with intellectual disability are often served in community-based services to promote effective adult outcomes in employment, community inclusion, and independent living (Gauger, Morningstar & Clark (2004)). Beyond High School (Wehmeyer, Garner, Lawrence, Yeager, & Davis, 2006), a multi-stage model to promote student involvement in educational planning, was effectively used by 109 students with mild and moderate levels of intellectual disability between 17.8 and 21 years of age to increase student abilities. Results are discussed in regard to improved transition opportunities for individuals with intellectual disability such as those afforded through post-secondary education.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER

Upcoming newsletter topics:
March: Early Childhood
April: Autism Spectrum Disorders
May: Mental Health

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



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