



## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

July, 2024

Volume 12 | Issue 7



### Social Communication Skills for Children

By Wendy Overturf

Social communication skills are essential for effective communication and social interaction. These skills help children understand how to use language in different social contexts. It is important to recognize and value that people think and communicate in different ways. Below are key components of social communication skills.

#### Key Components of Social Communication

**Listening Skills:** Understanding what others are saying and showing interest.

**Speaking Skills:** Clearly expressing thoughts, needs, and feelings.

**Nonverbal Communication:** Using and interpreting body language, facial expressions, and gestures.

**Social Understanding:** Recognizing and responding to social cues and norms.

**Conversation Skills:** Engaging in back-and-forth exchanges, taking turns, and staying on topic.

**Emotional Regulation:** Managing emotions in social situations.

By encouraging and supporting meaningful social connections, children can feel empowered to communicate in their preferred way.

Here are some ways to support your child's social language skills:

(The following information has been excerpted and modified slightly from PBS Kids, "[Supporting Great Communication Skills for Kids.](#)")

**Play together.** Grown-ups and kids can play together to build communication skills. Pretend you are going to a restaurant, library, or birthday party - how would you talk to other people in each of those different situations? Practice non-verbal communication using gestures and body language by playing charades. Read books together and talk about the characters' feelings, behaviors, and interactions with

others.

**Make time for social interaction.** Kids need opportunities to practice real-life social scenarios. They also need lots of examples from the adults in their lives. Make time for conversation and play with your child each day. Try setting a regular “screen-free” (no TV, computers or other electronic devices) time of day to encourage face-to-face interaction. It is important to balance screen time with meaningful in-person interactions.

**Think about others’ points of view.** Learning to understand the intentions, feelings, and beliefs of others is important. Seeing from another person’s viewpoint builds empathy and connection and can help us communicate better. Talking with a variety of people can help your child think about how others see the world. For example, ask each person at your dinner table to answer a “Would you rather...” question. (For example, would you rather be a dog or a cat?) Then, talk about why they made that choice.

[Read Full Article](#)

---

## UPCOMING WI FACETS EVENTS

### [WI FACETS Endless Possibilities Conference: Engaging Every Family for Student Success ! 8/2/24](#)

A Full Day of Learning and Lunch, for only \$50! Parent scholarships available, contact [WI FACETS](#). The conference will provide resources and tools to build effective teams to support our students with disabilities to succeed in school as well as in life! Learn from *families* who have built positive partnerships with their children’s schools and communities as well as from *experts* in the areas of equity and inclusion, mental health, and neurodiversity. Educators and families are encouraged to attend the conference together.

#### **Keynote: “The Influence and Effect of SMALL’s Engagements”**

Presenters: Troney Small & Dr. Ricardo Anderson

Troney will engage participants in a personal expressive talk about his family’s journey. The connections with families, parents, and children allow relationships to thrive in ways to create a pathway that is eased for children to reach their full potential. When there is an understanding and respect of each family’s dynamics, beliefs, values, and priorities, individuals show a genuine effort to work together to achieve the goals for the family. Troney will discuss the impact of “Adultification” and raise awareness about how our community can strengthen partnership with families for student success for all.

#### **[Breakout Sessions Include:](#)**

- Family Partnering and Community Engagement Action Planning
- Lessons Learned Along a ReMARKLEable Journey
- Understanding "Sensory"
- Keeping Individuals with Disabilities in Charge of their Lives: Supported Decision-Making and Early Choice-Making
- Welcome to College: Accessible and Inclusive
- Powerful Partnerships: Collaborative IEPs and Parent-School Collaboration
- The Power of Presence: A Mindful Approach for Community Self-Care and Well-Being
- Respecting, Honoring, and Valuing Families from All Walks of Life

**Date: Friday, August 2, 2024**

**Location: Waukesha County Technical College, Pewaukee Campus**

**[Registration is Open!](#)** (Closes July 24<sup>th</sup>)

There are very limited webinars during the summer. However, be sure to check some of our online resources. [IEP Mini-Modules](#): These 30–40 minute modules break down what you need to know about the IEP process. You can watch through the entire ten-part series or jump right in with the modules that are most interesting to you. Clicking on the module will direct you to a registration page. After filling out the required information, you will be able access the recorded video(s).

### [Training Webinar Recordings](#)

This link has many of our archived webinars in case you missed one or perhaps want to review it again. The webinars are all organized into categories. Just select the title of the webinar you would like to view. Please note: You will have to provide some basic registration information before you are able to access the recording. If there was a slide deck that was used during the webinar, it is included as well.

### [Supporting Literacy at Home | WI FACETS](#)

Check out the NEW self-directed, interactive online literacy modules NOW available! Literacy Training Series for Families on the WI FACETS website.

The purpose of this series is to help families better understand how to effectively support their children’s literacy development at home and to increase communication with their children’s teachers and school about literacy-related goals. While this information is beneficial to all families for supporting their children’s literacy development, this series was specifically developed for families of students with special education needs.

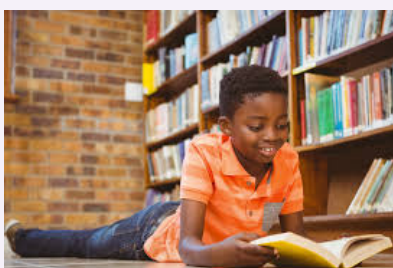
---

## HOME LEARNING



### [Early Literacy Activity Calendar: July 2024](#)

This month’s calendar is filled with craft ideas, math and science activities, book suggestions, and more to celebrate holidays like Independence Day, Park and Recreation Month, Video Game Day, and Different Colored Eyes Day.



### Reading is the Key to Learning

Reading aloud is one of the most important things parents and teachers can do with children. Reading aloud builds many important foundational skills, introduces vocabulary, provides a model of fluent, expressive reading, and helps children recognize what reading for pleasure is all about. Here are ideas for using this reading time to build your child’s literacy skills while keeping it fun for both of you. Click below for ideas if your child is:

- [0-3 years old](#)
- [in preschool](#)
- [in elementary school](#)

#### Public Libraries

Public libraries are a great and free resource that can support learning. Most libraries offer the following. [\(from Colorin Colorado and Reading Rockets\)](#)



**Free programs and activities:** From author visits to puppet shows to family films, libraries offer programs with kid appeal after school, on the weekends, and during the summer. Ask your librarian for the schedule of upcoming events.

**Story times:** There's nothing like hearing a good story read by someone who loves to read aloud. Libraries are terrific settings for story times which often include finger plays, games, songs, and crafts that can be learned and enjoyed again at home.

**Workshops:** Many libraries offer workshops that can help enrich your life as an adult and support you as a parent. At many libraries, it is possible to learn to knit, prepare your taxes, update your resume, gain computer skills, or improve your parenting skills.

**Books:** Librarians are happy to make recommendations and most public libraries have a special section just for children's books.

**Audiobooks:** Listened to a good book lately? Most libraries have a collection of popular adult and children's titles available for checkout on tape or CD.

**Movies:** Your public library is a great source for free access to the latest blockbusters, family movie classics, documentaries, or favorite TV shows.

**Music:** Want to introduce your children to Beethoven or the Beatles or new children's songs? Check to see if your library has a collection of music on CD.

**Magazines and newspapers:** Introduce your child to some of the magazines designed just for children. With bold photographs, poems, and a joke or two, magazines are another reading choice for beginning readers. Or catch up on the news in your community and share a smile over the comics.

**Computers:** Most public libraries offer free Internet access, computers with educational games for kids, and valuable online resources for teenagers.



### [Fourth of July Activities That Are Fun for the Whole Family](#)

Check the website for some fun, festive ways to celebrate the birth of our nation with your kids, friends, and neighbors



### [20 Ideas and Activities to Try This Summer](#)

Summertime is full of possibilities and adventure. Spark curiosity and inspire everyday fun with these activities. This list focuses on free, fun summer activities for kids that involve being both outdoors and inside rainy days.



### [Math Walks](#)

Going for walks is an excellent time to talk about math with your child. You will be surprised how much math talk you can have when you look for math in your very own neighborhood.

### [Make a Rain Gauge](#)

Making a rain gauge is a fantastic way to help kids connect more with natural weather patterns where they live. It also gives them a chance to practice their measurement and math skills.

---

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

### [Seclusion and Restraint Data for 2022-23 Now Available](#)

In April 2024, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) published information reported by Wisconsin public schools on incidents where seclusion and/or physical restraint was used during the 2022-23 school year.

Pursuant to [2019 Wisconsin Act 118](#) Wisconsin public schools submit a report containing information on the use of seclusion and restraint in schools to the DPI annually by Dec. 1. Though it is not a requirement, the DPI analyzes the reported data and works with schools as appropriate to identify root causes and provide additional supports and resources to limit these traumatic incidents.

“We want to help every student succeed in our schools, so we must make every effort to prevent the use of seclusion and restraint,” State Superintendent Dr. Jill Underly said. “We must remember each of these reported incidents represents a traumatic lived experience – both for a student and for school staff. As progress continues toward our goal of limiting these tactics, our schools need additional support to train and educate staff around trauma-informed practices to help address the unique behavioral needs of students.”

Statewide, schools in the 2022-23 school year reported 5,396 instances of seclusion and 6,366 instances where physical restraint was used – decreases of 8.7 percent and 8 percent from the 2021-22 school year, respectively. Among those instances, 1,868 students were involved in seclusion incidents, and 2,763 were involved in physical restraint instances. Data does not indicate whether incidents of seclusion and restraint occurred simultaneously. Students in elementary schools were involved in a higher percentage of instances of seclusion and/or physical restraint than at other grade levels. In addition, students with individualized education programs (IEPs) were involved in instances at a higher rate than other students, comprising 80 percent of all seclusion incidents and 78 percent of all physical restraint incidents reported for the 2022-23 school year.

Seclusion and restraint data and DPI’s corresponding analysis can be found in a report available [on the Wisconsin DPI’s seclusion and restraint webpage](#). Resources for practices supporting the reduction of seclusion and restraint are available in the report, as well as [on the DPI’s seclusion and restraint webpage](#).

The 2022-23 school year is the fourth year this information has been compiled and reported to the DPI. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and some Wisconsin schools shifting from in-person instruction to virtual instruction, the DPI urges caution when considering how incident rates have changed over time. Additional information on seclusion and restraint, including school- and district-level data, can also be found [on the DPI’s website](#).

---

## ONLINE RESOURCES: Speech and Language

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

This website has fact sheets about milestones of typical speech and language development. CPIR also provides information about speech and language impairments and links to many other resources related to speech and language development. Resources are also available in Spanish.

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

This website has information about services for students with a speech or language impairment. There is information on eligibility criteria for special education in the area of speech and language. The site also includes a [link](#) that provides more detail about the comprehensive special education evaluation.

### [Talk, Read, and Sing Together Every Day](#) (from U.S. Department of Education)

This is a tip sheet designed for preschool teachers and other early childhood providers. However, most of the tips also apply to strategies parents can use with their children to develop speech and language skills.

### [The National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders \(NIDCD\)](#)

The site provides information on conditions related to voice, speech, and language.

### [American Speech-Language-Hearing Association \(ASHA\)](#)

On this site you can find information about your child's communication development from kindergarten through grade 5. This is also available in Spanish.

### [How Does Your Child Hear and Talk?](#)

Your child starts communicating with you long before they say their first word. Learn more about what your child should do in their first 5 years and how you can help.

### [The Stuttering Foundation](#)

This organization provides free online resources, services, and support to those who stutter and their families, as well as support for research into the causes of stuttering.

### [icommunicate](#)

This website provides a wealth of information about a wide variety of speech and language disorders (such as apraxia, phonological delay, aphasia, dysarthria, stuttering etc.), communication development, hearing impairment, autism, brain injury, special needs and learning difficulties, and assistive communication (AAC).

### [Summer Reading Lists for Reluctant Readers](#)

During the summer, many children will not get the reading practice that they get in school. Books that engage the imagination can provide motivation to keep up skills until school starts again. The website gives some lists of books to captivate reluctant readers and includes books for children of all ages.

### [What's the Difference Between a Speech Impairment and a Language Disorder?](#)

Often the words speech and *language* are used interchangeably. However, these words have very different meanings. Check out the link to learn more.

### [How to Teach Social Communication Skills to Children](#)

Check this website for more ideas on how to teach social communication skills to your child.

---

## POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS & SUPPORTS



Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports ([PBIS](#)) is a strategy schools use to teach children expected behavior. Check this [article](#) for more detailed information on PBIS.

PBIS teaches children how to behave appropriately by focusing on teaching, practicing, and rewarding preferred behavior. The article by Laura Riffel entitled "[Getting Behavior](#)

[in Shape at Home](#)", can be used to assist parents with incorporating PBIS into their daily routines.

## RESEARCH

### Reading Aloud: Engaging Young Children during a Read Aloud Experience

Acosta-Tello, E. (2019). *Reading Aloud: Engaging Young Children during a Read Aloud Experience*. *Research in Higher Education Journal*, 37.

[Read Full Article](#)

Research documents the benefits of reading aloud to children and suggests that the more children are engaged during the read aloud experience the greater the benefit to their language and reading development. Children's engagement during a read aloud can be increased by creating anticipation regarding the story, making predictions about what will happen in the story, making connections with the characters, and by utilizing dialogic reading strategies. This paper makes specific recommendations on how to engage young children during a read aloud experience.

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER

**Upcoming newsletter topics:**  
**August: Other Health Impairment**  
**September: Assistive Technology**  
**October: Learning Disabilities**

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)



This document was produced under grants from the U.S. Dept. of Education, (PTIC-#H328M200017) and WI Dept. of Public Instruction (CFDA# 84.027A/2025-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, 2025.

WI FACETS | [www.wifacets.org](http://www.wifacets.org)



WI FACETS | 600 W. Virginia St., Suite 501 | Milwaukee, WI 53204 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)





Try email marketing for free today!