



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

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The Importance of Singing to your Baby

By Wendy Overturf

Did you know that singing to your baby plays a significant role in developing early literacy skills. Here's why it is so important:

Builds Language Skills

- Singing introduces babies to the sounds and rhythm of language. Hearing words sung repeatedly helps babies recognize speech patterns, which are critical for language development.

Enhances Vocabulary

- Songs expose babies to a wide variety of words they might not encounter in everyday conversation, helping to expand their vocabulary.

Develops Phonological Awareness

- Rhyming and repeating sounds in songs help babies become aware of the individual sounds in words, an essential skill for learning to read.

Boosts Listening Skills

- Singing encourages focused listening, as babies tune into melodies, words, and rhythms. These skills are foundational for literacy and comprehension.

Supports Memory Development

- Repetition in songs helps improve memory. When babies hear songs repeatedly, they start to anticipate words, sounds, and patterns.

Promotes Bonding and Emotional Connection

- The intimate act of singing to your baby strengthens your emotional bond, making them feel

secure and loved. A secure attachment supports overall development, including literacy.

Stimulates Cognitive Skills

- Singing helps babies connect words with meaning and actions (e.g., "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes"), fostering understanding of concepts like body parts, numbers, and colors.

Prepares for Reading

- Songs naturally slow down the pace of language, making it easier for babies to process words and syllables. This helps them later as they learn to decode words

Encourages Interaction with Texts

- Nursery rhymes and children's songs often have visual companions like books or actions, helping babies associate sounds with symbols or actions, a foundational literacy skill.

Below are several tips for singing that help promote literacy:

- Use songs with rhymes and repetition.
- Sing slowly so your baby can hear each word clearly.
- Pair singing with gestures or visuals (e.g., pointing to objects or pictures in a book).
- Include songs in daily routines to create a rich language environment.

Additional Resources

- [10 Ways Babies Learn When We Sing to Them](#)
- [New Research: Singing to Your Baby Helps Their Speech and Language Development](#)
- [Introduction to Singing with Your Baby](#)

UPCOMING WI FACETS EVENTS

[Creating Supportive School Communities - The Wisconsin School Mental Health Framework](#)

Presenters: Jessica Frain and Cristin Jones, WI DPI

Date: March 5, 2025

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

Presenter: Ann Zielke, WI FACETS

Date: March 11, 2025

[R.I.D.E. the Wave: Understanding Stress, Anxiety, and Promoting Resilience](#)

Presenter: Dr. Jen Rohrbaugh, Comprehensive School Mental Health Statewide Coordinator for WI

Date: March 12, 2025

[Sirviendo en grupos 7 & 8: La función de las familias y habilidades para prestar servicio](#)

Presenter: Alejandra Loeza, WI FACETS

Date: March 13, 2025

[Detangling Mixed Messages- Essentials for Healthy Communication and Relationships](#)

Presenter: Erica Scheifflee, Speech Pathologist and Relational Coach

Date: March 19, 2025

[IEP 4: Reevaluación y Evaluaciones Educativas Independientes](#)

Presenter: Nathaly Silva, WI FACETS

Date: March 20, 2025

HOME LEARNING

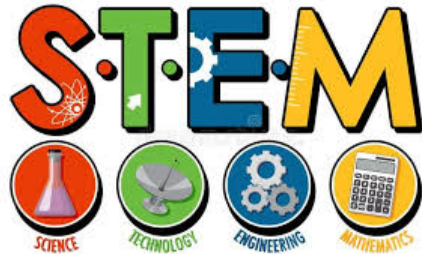


The Most Important 9 Minutes of a Child's Day

There are 9 minutes during the day that have the greatest impact on a child.

- The first 3 minutes right after they wake.
- The 3 minutes after they come home from school.
- The last 3 minutes before they go to bed.

These are times when parents can have meaningful conversations with their child and help them feel special, loved, and accepted. Check this [website](#) for more information.



Incorporating STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) in early education creates a playful yet meaningful way to introduce young minds to concepts that shape their understanding of the world and prepare them for future opportunities. Use these quick everyday STEM talk tips to encourage your child to think about their learning and to develop their STEM knowledge. Consider asking open-ended questions, narrating your observations and actions, and adding STEM vocabulary to daily routines, such as bath time, mealtime, story time, or other everyday activities.

Everyday STEM Talk: Caring for Plants

- Instead of just watering the plants, consider expanding the activity by using specific STEM vocabulary. "Plants are living things, and most need sunlight and water to grow."

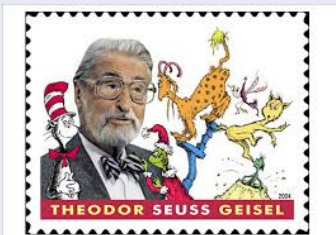
Everyday STEM Talk: Getting Ready

- Instead of just getting dressed or having a snack, consider exploring sequences during daily routines. "We have to put socks on before putting on our shoes." "First, we wash our hands, then we eat!"
- Instead of just getting dressed, consider asking your child what would come next if the pattern were to continue. "Your shirt has stripes! Purple, white, purple, white, what comes next?"
- Instead of teaching a new skill all at once by saying "Here's how you tie your shoelaces!", consider modeling or using visual cues to break down tasks into smaller steps. "First make an X with the laces. Second, pull one of the X arms underneath. Third, make a bunny ear out of one of the laces. Next, wrap the other lace around the bunny ear. Last, pull the lace through and pull tight."

Everyday STEM Talk: Mealtime

- Instead of just taking out the utensils and setting the table, consider posing a question or problem to solve. "Grandma is coming for dinner! What do we need to do to set the table? How many pairs of chopsticks do we need?"
- Instead of just following a recipe, consider expanding and narrating actions. "A recipe gives directions so we know in what order we should do the steps."

Be sure to check the [website](#) for other practical suggestions.



March 2nd is Dr. Seuss's birthday!



Spring Begins on March 20, 2025

What better way to celebrate than to read? While he is no longer with us, his legacy lives on in the pages of his books. He forever changed the way children's books were written and continues to inspire generations. Check out this [link](#) for a read aloud of "The Cat in the Hat." The website has numerous activities that relate to this book. Also check out this [interactive phonics game](#), "Fox in Sox," to help your child practice rhyming skills.

Celebrate the first day of Spring with these [fun activities](#). This website includes literacy ideas, math ideas, as well as activities that will get you outside when the temperature starts to warm and the snow melts.

[30 Spring Activities for Kids](#)

Fun and creative spring activities for kids including flower craft ideas, nature art, garden activities, and spring treats!

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 awareness of state and federal regulations related to the educational rights of students who receive special education through an IEP and who may also be English Language Learners. The training also provides participants increased knowledge and resources related to legal responsibilities and ethical considerations for translation and interpretation of special education terms and concepts.

March 7, 2025 – School District of Lomira – (registration information will be available soon at [Home Language Interpreters Wisconsin](#) | [Resources](#) | [WI FACETS](#)).

[Celebrating Abilities](#)

This is a forum designed to empower families of children with disabilities. Celebrating Abilities will feature workshops, resources, and opportunities to connect with other families, experts, and community organizations supporting special education and inclusion. While this event is sponsored by Milwaukee Public Schools, anyone can attend.

[English and Spanish Flyer](#)

Date: March 8, 2025, 8:30am-1:30pm

[36th Annual Autism Conference](#)

This statewide conference brings the autism community together to learn, connect, and belong. It's a place where autistic adults, parents and family members, and professionals come to share experiences and learn together.

Dates: April 3-5, 2025

Location: Kalahari Convention Center, Wisconsin Dells, WI

[Circles of Life Conference](#)

Dates: May 8-9, 2025

Location: Wilderness Resort, Wisconsin Dells, WI

Circles of Life is Wisconsin's annual conference for families who have children with disabilities and for the professionals who support them.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

[Considerations for Interruptions in IEP Service Delivery](#)

The Wisconsin DPI (Department of Public Instruction) receives numerous questions about how to address interruptions in service delivery; especially regarding missed or delayed speech and language services due to chronic statewide shortages of speech-language pathologists (SLPs). This document outlines considerations for local education agencies (LEAs) faced with interruptions of a student's individualized education program (IEP) services and clarifies situations in which IEP teams may need to consider compensatory services.

[Updated Guidance on Use of Functional Behavioral Assessments from OSERS](#)

The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) recently released guidance to help schools and early childhood programs better support students' behavioral needs. The [Using Functional Behavioral Assessments to Create Supportive Learning Environments](#) guidance focuses on evidence-based practices to support students, with or without disabilities, whose behavior interferes with learning. An FBA can help with understanding the function and root cause(s) of a child's specific behavior that interferes with their learning or the learning of others. FBAs are used to develop effective positive behavioral interventions, supports, and strategies to support a student's access, engagement, progress in school, and reduce exclusionary disciplinary removals. This guidance also clarifies when parental consent is needed before conducting an FBA. The Wisconsin DPI has updated [Bulletins 23.01](#) (Use of Positive Behavioral Interventions and FBAs) and [Bulletin 21.01](#) (Comprehensive Special Education Evaluation) to reflect this clarification.

ONLINE RESOURCES: EARLY CHILDHOOD



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

This website has a variety of resources related to early childhood education. It also has a link to this [webinar series](#) on inclusion and early childhood education. Additionally, if you are concerned about your child's development [this section](#) of the website has tips for parents. There are many immediate things you can do to help your child. Information on early intervention services is also provided.

[Wisconsin Birth to 3 Program](#)

The first three years are the most important building blocks of a child's future. The Birth to 3 Program is a federally-mandated Early Intervention Program ([Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act—IDEA](#)) to support families of children with developmental delays or disabilities under the age of three.

[Significant Developmental Delay \(SDD\)](#)

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction website has information related to SDD. Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams may now consider identifying SDD as a disability category for children ages 3 through 9, for both initial and reevaluations. A section on frequently asked questions related to SDD is available as well.

[Too Small to Fail](#)

Too Small to Fail aims to help parents and businesses take meaningful actions to improve the health and well-being of children ages zero to five, so that more of America's children are prepared to succeed in the 21st century. The website has an abundance of links to resources related to children from 0-5 years of age.

[National Association for the Education of Young Children \(NAEYC\)](#)

The NAEYC is dedicated to improving the well-being of all young children, with a focus on the quality of educational and developmental services for children from birth through age 8. NAEYC administers a voluntary, national accreditation system for high-quality early childhood programs, sponsors a variety of initiatives to improve professional preparation of early childhood educators, and produces a wide array of early childhood resources.

[ZERO TO THREE](#)

ZERO TO THREE's mission is to support the healthy development and well-being of infants, toddlers, and their families. This multidisciplinary organization advances its mission by informing, educating, and supporting adults who influence the lives of infants and toddlers.

[Wisconsin Head Start Association \(WHSA\)](#)

The Wisconsin Head Start Association (WHSA) is made up of 39 grantees providing Head Start and Early Head Start services to families throughout Wisconsin. They serve all of Wisconsin's 72 counties and interact with 424 school dist[Home Literacy Environment Checklist](#)

This checklist helps parents find out how well they are doing in creating a literacy-rich environment in their home, and what more they can do to enrich their child's exposure to books and reading. ricts in the

state. WHSA provides comprehensive services for over 16,000 of Wisconsin's youngest and most vulnerable citizens. WHSA provides a network for information, training, advocacy, support, and action for directors, parents, and staff of Head Start and Early Head Start programs in Wisconsin.

[Home Literacy Environment Checklist](#)

This checklist helps parents find out how well they are doing in creating a literacy-rich environment in their home, and what more they can do to enrich their child's exposure to books and reading.

[Center for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) Developmental Milestones](#)

Developmental milestones are a set of functional skills or age-specific tasks that most children can do at a certain age range. Your pediatrician uses milestones to help check how your child is developing. Although each milestone has an age level, the actual age when a typically developing child reaches that milestone can vary quite a bit as every child is unique. If parents have concerns about their child's development often the first step is to discuss those concerns with their pediatrician.

[Children's Screen Time Action Network](#)

This website has resources and recommendations developed by a group of educators, practitioners, parents, and advocates to reduce the amount of time kids spend with digital devices.

[The Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners Website](#)

This site serves as the collaborative source of information on issues of cross-sector interest, state initiatives, and research-based practices.

Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports (PBIS)

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.

Visual supports can help children learn new skills and prevent challenging behaviors. Visuals help young children learn and follow routines by helping them understand what is happening "now" and what is going to happen "next." They help children know exactly what is expected of them. Check this [website](#) for visual cue cards and templates that might work for your child.

RESEARCH

Everyone Plays! Recapturing Play for Children with Special Needs

Moore, L., & Zweig, E. (2022). Everyone Plays! Recapturing Play for Children with Special Needs. *Dimensions of Early Childhood*, 50(1).

[Read Full Article](#)

The article explores how children with special needs may have less access to play due to the nature of their developmental delay or disability or their lack of experience with typically developing peers. Early childhood educators are responsible for ensuring that all children have access to play opportunities and can fully participate in child-directed free play and play-based curriculum experiences. Children with special needs may require additional supports for access and full participation (Division for Early Childhood, 2014, 2016). The authors describe the role of the teacher in child-directed play, the role of the teacher in guided play, and recapturing play through advocacy. The authors hope their suggestions will serve as inspiration for teachers working with young children.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER

Upcoming Newsletter Topics:

April: Autism Spectrum Disorders

May: Mental Health

June: ADD/ADHD

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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