



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

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Summary of the Process for a Special Education Evaluation When Specific Learning Disability (SLD) Criteria are Considered

By Wendy Overturf

Below is a short summary of what to expect if your child has been referred for a special education evaluation to determine whether they meet the criteria for special education services under the Specific Learning Disability (SLD) category.

1. Referral and Review of Existing Data

Referrals for special education evaluation must be made in writing. When a written referral is submitted (by a parent, teacher, or school staff), the school must respond within 15 business days. They will hold a *Review of Existing Data* meeting which includes the parents. The purpose of this meeting is to examine current information (such as grades, assessments, observations, intervention history) to determine if additional data is needed to move forward with an evaluation.

2. Parental Consent and 60 Calendar Day Evaluation Timeline

If the team decides more information is needed, they will request your written consent to proceed. Once consent is received, the school must conduct the evaluation and hold the eligibility meeting within 60 calendar days.

3. Data Collection: RTI, Assessments, Observations

Wisconsin requires that SLD evaluations include comprehensive information—including:

- [RTI \(Response to Intervention\) data](#) showing that your child received research-based interventions delivered with fidelity, with weekly progress monitoring to determine whether or not they made sufficient progress.
- Standardized academic and cognitive assessments in areas like reading, writing, math, memory, and processing.
- Classroom observations during general education core instruction and during one of the interventions.
- Additional data such as parent and teacher input, work samples, and behavior/emotional screenings (if relevant).

4. Eligibility Determination

At the end of the evaluation period, the IEP team will decide:

1. Does the child meet Wisconsin's SLD criteria (inadequate classroom achievement, insufficient progress, *no exclusionary factors apply* *)?
2. Does the child need [specially designed instruction](#)? Both questions must be answered "yes" for eligibility.

**Exclusionary Factors include:*

- Lack of appropriate instruction (reading or math)
- Limited English proficiency
- Vision/hearing/motor issues
- Emotional disturbance
- Cultural, linguistic, economic, or environmental disadvantages

5. Evaluation Report and Decision Notification

The school must provide a written evaluation report summarizing all data and the eligibility decision. If the student is eligible, an IEP (Individual Education Program) will be developed within 30 calendar days of the eligibility determination. (Sometimes, the eligibility determination and IEP development happen at the same meeting.) An IEP is a program designed to meet the unique and individual needs of a student who qualifies as a student with a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Once an IEP is developed, parents must provide written consent before the school can place their child in special education for the first time. If the child is not eligible, other supports such as a [504 Plan](#) may be discussed.

Additional Resources

[Frequently Asked Questions about Making Specific Learning Disability \(SLD\) Identification Decisions](#)
[Specific Learning Disabilities \(SLD\) in Plain Language](#)
[What is Specially Designed Instruction & Who Can Provide It?](#) (YouTube Webinar)

UPCOMING WI FACETS EVENTS

[Shortened School Day – Do's and Don'ts](#)

Date: October 1, 2025

Presenters: Mike Hickey and Eric Krestin, WI DPI

[IEP 5: Writing the IEP \(Part 1\) \(Pre-recorded\)](#)

Date: October 7, 2025

Presenter: Ann Zielke, WI FACETS

[Collective Responsibility in Special Education](#)

Date: October 8, 2025

Presenters: Eva Kubinski, Dawn Merth-Johnson, and Michelle Silverman, WI DPI

[Serving on Groups: Tools and Tips \(Sec 4 & 5\)](#)

Date: October 9, 2025

Presenter: Jan Serak, Serak Consulting

[Lista de verificación de transición: Participación de padres y jóvenes en juntas de IEP para estudiantes entre 14-21 años](#)

Date: October 9, 2025

Presenter: Nathaly Silva, WI FACETS

[IEP 6: Writing the IEP \(Part 2\) \(Pre-recorded\)](#)

Date: October 14, 2025

Presenter: Ann Zielke, WI FACETS

Other Health Impairment

Date: October 15, 2025

Presenter: Eva Kubinski and Michelle Silverman, WI DPI

IEP 7: Writing the IEP (Part 3) (Pre-recorded)

Date: October 21, 2025

Presenter: Ann Zielke, WI FACETS

Serving on Groups: Understanding and Using Data (Sec 6)

Date: October 23, 2025

Presenter: Jan Serak, Serak Consulting

Panel de padres: Experiencias y estrategias para criar a niños y jóvenes con discapacidad

Date: October 23, 2025

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Resources for Parents

Date: October 29, 2025

Presenter: Megan McLachlan, NAMI Wisconsin

HOME LEARNING



Pool Noodle CVC (Consonant-Vowel-Consonant) Words Activity

CVC words are typically the first words a child learns to read. They are the easiest to decode and sound out based on their letter sounds. Mastering them is an important early reading skill.

- Take two pool noodles, in different colors, and cut a straight line to the center of each noodle across the back. Then slice it into 1 – 1 1/2-inch slices.
- Next, write the letters of the alphabet on the front of the slices, using one color for consonants and another color for vowels. Then place the letters in a container with an edge.
- Have your child start making words by placing two consonant color slices on the outside with a vowel colored slice on the inside. Have them sound their combination out to see if it is a real or nonsense word.



October 5-11, 2025-Fire Prevention Week

Charge into Fire Safety™: “Lithium-Ion Batteries in Your Home” is theme for this year’s Fire Prevention Week. Lithium batteries are used in everything from phones and laptops to electric scooters and power tools. These batteries can pose fire risks under certain conditions.

[Learn about how to buy, charge, and dispose of them safely.](#)

Be sure to check out these additional resources related to fire safety and prevention.

[Books and Stories](#)

[Sparky’s website with videos, games, and activities](#)

Also, if your child needs special accommodations in the event of a fire or other emergency at school make sure that the school has a plan in place. This would include such things as:

- How to safely evacuate your child during an emergency.
- What supports or equipment are needed.
- The roles of staff members assigned to help.

- Any communication or medical needs to be addressed during evacuation.

new section



[Experience the Joys of Fall with Preschoolers](#)

To enjoy fall with preschoolers, engage their senses with outdoor nature walks, apple picking, and visits to pumpkin patches, then bring the fun indoors with activities like leaf rubbings, fall-themed sensory bins, autumn crafts, fall-themed baking, and reading books about the season.

Fall Foliage: One of the most beautiful aspects of the summer-fall transition is the changing colors of leaves on trees. Keep an eye out for the vibrant reds, oranges, and yellows as the leaves begin to change and fall from the trees. Take your child on a leaf hunt and choose your favorite colors.



Daily Literacy Activities for Preschoolers

[October 2025 Calendar](#). Each day provides practical, hands-on literacy prompts related to reading, talking, singing, writing, and playing. Also available in [Spanish](#).

Daily literacy activities for preschoolers include reading books with them, singing songs, talking to them about their surroundings to build vocabulary, and engaging in writing through scribbling and drawing. You can also incorporate games like [alphabet scavenger hunts](#), word games, and storytelling.

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 Learners. The training also provides increased knowledge and resources related to legal responsibilities and ethical considerations for translation and interpretation of special education terms and concepts.

Each training date covers the same content areas detailed in the description above, it is not necessary to register for more than one date. For virtual trainings, due to the high-level of interaction among participants, registration is limited to the first 30 registrants. There is no fee for virtual trainings, but you must register.

In-person trainings:

October 9, 2025 – CESA 5 – [Registration Information](#) - HURRY - Registration closes on October 1st!

March 13, 2026 – [CESA 1](#) - [Registration Information](#)

Virtual trainings:

February 6, 2025 (8am-2pm) – [Registration Information](#)

[2025 Children Come First Conference](#)

Dates: November 3rd-4th, 2025

Location: Kalahari Resort • Wisconsin Dells, WI

As one of the largest and longest-running family-driven events in the state, this conference is dedicated to addressing the pressing needs of children and families living with mental and behavioral health issues.

Join the 2025-26 Supporting Neurodiverse Students Learning Events

The Supporting Neurodiverse Students (SNS) Professional Learning System provides support for educators and families serving students with disability-related needs in the area of social and emotional learning (SEL). The SNS provides learning opportunities with a focus on regulation, social communication, flexibility, resilience, sensory processing, and executive functioning. This they are offering access to information in a variety of ways, so no matter how you learn, you can participate. There are in-person and hybrid learning options for many dates.

These workshops are FREE for Parents/Families of students with an IEP and anyone who attends virtually

To find subjects, dates, and registration, please visit the [SNS Learning Events Registration webpage](#).

To book a time to discuss learning events, coaching, and technical assistance click on [this booking link](#).

There are many resources to explore on the SNS website, including recordings of past training and quick videos on specific topics. For more information, please visit the [SNS Website](#)

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

[Helping Children Cope After a Traumatic Event \(En Espanol\)](#)

In the wake of a traumatic event such as episodes of violence or a natural disaster, your support and reassurance can help children with trauma. It can help them manage their fears, feel safe, guide them through their grief, and recover in a healthy way.

The [guide](#) was assembled by psychiatrists, psychologists and mental health experts who specialize in crisis situations. It offers simple tips on what to expect, what to do and what to look out for. If you or your children [require assistance from a mental health professional](#), do not hesitate to ask a doctor or other health care provider for a recommendation.

ONLINE RESOURCES: Learning Disabilities



[Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction](#)

This site has a variety of technical assistance and best practice resources related to comprehensive special education evaluations in which the characteristics of specific learning disabilities are assessed, including the specific learning disability category criteria worksheet in Wisconsin.

[Wisconsin's Informational Guidebook on Dyslexia and Related Conditions](#)

The informational guidebook discusses screening, instruction and intervention, and resources that can support improved learning for school-aged individuals with characteristics of dyslexia. The audience for the information is broad and includes (but is not limited to) parents and families, educators, interventionists or reading teachers, and educational leaders.

[The National Center for Learning Disabilities \(NCLD\)](#)

The mission of the NCLD is to improve the lives of all people with learning difficulties and disabilities by empowering parents, enabling young adults, transforming schools, and creating policy and advocacy impact. The website has information on learning disabilities resources, as well as a [link](#) to sign up for their newsletter.

[Learning Disabilities Association of America \(LDA\)](#)

LDA provides support to people with learning disabilities, their parents, teachers, and other professionals with information on learning disabilities, practical solutions, and a comprehensive network of resources. These services make LDA a leading resource for information on learning disabilities.

[Understood.org](#)

The goal of the website is to help parents whose children, ages 3–20, are struggling with learning and attention issues. It provides information to empower parents to understand their children’s issues and relate to their experiences. With this knowledge, parents can make effective choices that propel their children from simply coping to truly thriving. The website is very parent-friendly and offers links to information related to learning difficulties. Archived webinars are also available.

[AdLit](#)

AdLit.org is a national multimedia project offering information and resources to the parents and educators of struggling adolescent readers and writers. AdLit.org offers articles that provide research-based and best-practice information for educators, parents, and others interested in helping young people become better readers and writers.

[Bookshare](#)

A 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. The library has over 1.2 million titles and is the most extensive collection of accessible ebooks in the world. It includes books for school, career, and reading for pleasure. Bookshare also has titles in over 34 languages. Thanks to funding from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), Bookshare is free for all qualified U.S. students and schools.

[Dyscalculia.org](#)

Dyscalculia is a math learning disorder that makes mathematical reasoning and computation difficult, despite adequate education, average or greater intelligence, and proper motivation. Check the website for a multitude of resources related to this learning disability.

[The International Dyslexia Association \(IDA\)](#)

IDA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, scientific, and educational organization dedicated to the study and treatment of learning disabilities, dyslexia, and related language-based learning differences. The purpose of IDA is to pursue and provide the most comprehensive range of information and services that address the full scope of dyslexia and related difficulties in learning to read and write.

[ReadingRockets.org](#)

Reading Rockets provides detailed information about learning to read and strategies for supporting struggling readers at home, at school, and in the community. It offers news, practical information, expert advice, and resources for parents, teachers, tutors, childcare providers, and policy maker

ChatGPT as a Universal Design for Learning Tool Supporting College Students with Disabilities

Ayala, S. (2023). ChatGPT as a Universal Design for Learning Tool Supporting College Students with Disabilities. *Educational Renaissance*, 12, 22-41.

[Read Full Article](#)

The potential of ChatGPT is explored as an assistive technology tool within the framework of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to provide targeted support for college students with disabilities. As colleges and universities strive to promote inclusive practices, the implementation of UDL principles has gained significance. ChatGPT's interactive conversational interface aligns seamlessly with UDL, offering personalized assistance, promoting comprehension, and creating engagement opportunities among diverse learners. Numerous examples are provided, which align with both the universal design framework and the needs of learners receiving accessible and assistive services on a college campus. This paper identifies the possibilities for ChatGPT as an accommodation tool to significantly impact and improve the inclusive and equitable learning experiences of college students with disabilities.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER

Upcoming Newsletter Topics:

November: Emotional Behavioral Disabilities

December: Communication

January: Transition

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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