



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

May 2026
Volume 14| Issue 5

Bullying and Mental Health

By Wendy Overturf

[Research](#) suggests that children and youth who are bullied may experience negative mental health effects. They may experience feelings of sadness, loneliness, isolation, resentment or retaliation. Physical health can also be affected—sleep disturbance, heart disease, eating disorders and other ailments can last into adulthood. Academic performance and participation may decline, and some children may retaliate with violence. Bullying is also a risk factor for youth suicide.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-age children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both children who are bullied and those who bully others may have [serious, lasting problems](#). “In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

An Imbalance of Power: Children who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.

Repetition: Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.”

[\(Taken from “What is Bullying” Stopbullying.gov\)](#)

There are different types of bullying that include:

Verbal Bullying

Verbal bullying involves saying or writing mean or hurtful things.

Examples include:

- Teasing
- Name-calling
- Inappropriate sexual comments
- Taunting
- Threatening to cause harm

Social (Relational) Bullying

Social bullying, sometimes called relational bullying, involves harming someone’s reputation or relationships.

Examples include:

- Deliberately leaving someone out of activities
- Telling others not to be friends with someone
- Spreading rumors
- Publicly embarrassing someone

Physical Bullying

Physical bullying involves hurting a person's body or damaging their belongings.

Examples include:

- Hitting, kicking, or pinching
- Spitting
- Tripping or pushing
- Taking or breaking someone's belongings
- Making mean or rude hand gestures

[Warning Signs a Child May Be Experiencing Bullying](#)

Look for changes in the child. However, be aware that not all children who are bullied exhibit warning signs. Some signs that may point to a bullying problem are:

- Unexplainable injuries
- Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics, or jewelry
- Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick or faking illness
- Changes in eating habits, like suddenly skipping meals or binge eating. Your child may come home from school hungry because they did not eat lunch.
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school
- Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations
- Feelings of helplessness or decreased self esteem
- Self-destructive behaviors such as running away from home, harming themselves, or talking about suicide

What Parents Should Do if They Feel Their Child is Being Bullied

If you feel your child is being bullied, it is important to keep written documentation and to report it to the school. In Wisconsin, each school board must adopt a policy prohibiting bullying by pupils. The school board is required to distribute the policy annually to all pupils enrolled in the school district and to their parents or guardians. The school board is to provide a copy of the policy to any person who requests it. The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has a [sample model policy](#). The policy requires school district officials and employees to report incidents of bullying and identify the persons to whom the reports must be made. The policy must also identify the school district employee in each school who is responsible for conducting the investigation and require that the parent or guardian of each pupil involved in a bullying incident be notified.

Students with disabilities who are eligible for special education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) have an Individualized Education Program (IEP). If parents feel that their child is being bullied, they should request an IEP meeting. The IEP can be a helpful tool as part of a bullying prevention plan. Remember, every child receiving special education is entitled to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) and bullying can become an obstacle to that education. For more information, check the following resources.

[Bullying Prevention for Children with Disabilities: Using the IEP, 504, or Creating Your Own Plan](#)

[Bullying and Children and Youth with Disabilities and Special Health Needs](#)

Additional Resources:

[My Child is Being Bullied -Wisconsin DPI](#)

[A Comprehensive Approach to Bullying Prevention-Wisconsin DPI](#)

[Bullying \(The National Child Traumatic Stress Network\)](#)

[stopbullying.gov-U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#)

[Center for Parent Information and Resources](#)

[Bullying Prevention and Awareness \(archived webinar WI FACETS\)](#)





The Heart of a Special Needs Mom

Special needs moms are more than caregivers. They are:

- **Advocates** who fight for services, inclusion, and understanding.
- **Teachers** who adapt lessons to fit their child's unique way of learning.
- **Nurses** who know every medical term, every symptom, every sign of distress.
- **Champions** who celebrate victories others might overlook — a first word, a steady step, a calm moment in a noisy room.

They live in a world where progress is measured in inches, not miles — and yet, they cheer as if their child has crossed a finish line.

The Strength Behind the Smile

What makes these mothers extraordinary is not that they never feel fear, frustration, or exhaustion — it's that they keep going despite those feelings.

- They face appointments, paperwork, and sometimes judgment from those who don't understand.
- They learn to speak a new language — the language of specialists, therapists, and educators — and then translate it into love and encouragement for their child.
- They carry hope in one hand and resilience in the other.

Why They Deserve Our Deepest Respect

Special needs moms teach us that love is not just an emotion — it's an action. It's showing up, every single day, even when the world feels heavy.

They remind us that **every child is worthy of dignity, opportunity, and joy**. They prove that strength is not loud — sometimes, it's the quiet persistence of a mother who refuses to give up.

HOME LEARNING



Memorial Day-May 25, 2026

Memorial Day is a day we remember and honor the men and women who died while serving in the U.S. military. Learn more about Memorial Day with these read alouds.



Thank-You Letter Writing

May includes Mother's Day (May 10, 2026) and Teacher Appreciation Week (May 4-8, 2026).

Have your child:

- Write a thank-you letter
- Use complete sentences

[What is Memorial Day?](#)
[Memorial Day Children's Book](#)
[Memorial Day Activities for Kids](#)

[Annual Memorial Day Concert on PBS](#)

Honoring our country's veterans, servicemen and women and military families. The concert unites the country in remembrance and appreciation of those who gave their lives for our nation.

• Include specific details

Example prompts:

- "Thank you for helping me when..."
- "I appreciate you because..."

Appreciation



May Reading Bingo

Create a simple bingo board with squares such as:

- Read outside
- Read a poem
- Read a nonfiction book
- Read about an animal
- Read to a sibling, pet, or stuffed animal
- Read a book about friendship
- Re-read a favorite story

Add stickers or give small rewards for a completed row. Don't forget that your local library is a great resource for finding books that will interest your child.



Fairy Tales and Literacy

Literacy is the ability to read, write, speak and listen in a way that lets us communicate effectively and make sense of the world. Fairy tales are especially useful for literacy because they have repeated story structures, rich language, and familiar patterns that help children recognize themes and vocabulary while enjoying storytelling. Check out these read aloud fairy tales.

[The Three Little Pigs](#)
[Goldilocks and the Three Bears](#)
[Jack and the Beanstalk](#)
[King Midas](#)

WI FACETS EVENTS

[Supporting Literacy at Home During the Summer](#)

Date: May 5, 2026

Presenter: Jan Serak, Serak Consulting

[Developing Protective Factors and Resiliency for Students with Disabilities](#)

Date: May 13, 2026

Presenters: Tim Peerenboom and Eva Shaw, WI DPI

[Inclusion Toward Rightful Presence](#)

Date: May 20, 2026

Presenters: Iris Jacobson, WI DPI and Amy Jablonski, Swift Education Center

[¿Tienes una Reunión del IEP? ¡Llega Listo!](#)

Date: May 21, 2026

Presenter: Nathaly Silva, WI FACETS

[Alternate Academic Achievement Standards](#)

Date: May 27, 2026

Presenter: Iris Jacobson, WI DPI

UPCOMING STATE EVENTS

[2026 WI FACETS Endless Possibilities Conference](#)

Focus on: *Advocacy in Education and Beyond!*

Date: August 7, 2026, 8:30 - 3:00

Location: Waukesha County Technical College ([AJN Center](#)), Pewaukee, WI

Registration fee is \$50 per person * Exhibitor options available

Are you ready to advocate for a future without limits? This conference brings together a powerful collective of voices to provide you with the tools for success at every stage of the journey.

Featured Highlights:

- Keynote: Adult self-advocates on "Navigating and Advocating"
- Closing Address from [Dr. Jill Underly](#) - State Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Raising Adults: A parent panel on life after school
- Student Voice Matters! Unlocking Opportunities with Self-Advocacy Skills
- Voices of the Future: A teen-led session on "Getting the Care You Need"
- The Power of Parent Advocacy with Learn in My Shoes
- Rightful Presence: Creating a Sense of True Belonging and Inherent Value in our Schools

**Complete with youth-led entertainment to power up the atmosphere, this event is a testament to the power of self-advocacy.

[PARTICIPANT REGISTRATION](#)

[EXHIBITOR REGISTRATION](#)

The annual Endless Possibilities conference invites families and professionals who support students with disabilities to learn and grow together. We encourage open dialogue between families and professionals.

30 Years of Serving Families Wisconsin Family Assistance Center for Education, Training & Support (WI FACETS)

The [2025 Annual Report](#) beautifully encapsulates three decades of dedicated support for families of children and youth with disabilities throughout Wisconsin. Discover the inspiring journey and achievements within the report.

[Transition Planning and Services for Students with IEPs](#)

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction has released a new guidance bulletin related to transition planning and services for students with IEPs. Transition planning is the process that supports students with disabilities and their families to think about and prepare for life after high school. The process helps students identify long-range goals, designing the high school experience to ensure that students gain the skills and connections they need to achieve these goals after high school. In Wisconsin, transition planning requirements begin in the first individualized education program (IEP) that will be in effect when the child is 14 (or sooner if appropriate) and are updated annually thereafter.

Important Information about the DPI Website

The DPI website is undergoing a major update to enhance the user experience and improve accessibility. Over the next several months, you will notice changes to portions of the website, and some resources may be temporarily unavailable during the transition. Thank you for your patience during this process.

ONLINE RESOURCES

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

The website has links to organizations that can assist in a crisis. It has quick fact sheets, and information about Medicaid benefits for mental health disorders. The website also has links to organizations that support specific disorders.

[Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction \(DPI\)-School Mental Health](#)

This website has numerous links to resources related to improving mental health among students.

[Wisconsin School Mental Health Framework: Building and Sustaining a Comprehensive System](#)

In this framework, districts and schools partner with students, families, and the community to build a comprehensive school mental health system (CSMHS). A CSMHS provides a continuum of services and supports to promote student and staff mental health and wellbeing. A CSMHS is not limited to treating mental illness or substance use disorders. Rather, it includes services and supports that promote social and emotional wellbeing, foster positive mental health and school culture, and eliminate systemic barriers to wellbeing and success for all students.

[Wisconsin Safe and Healthy Schools Center](#)

The Wisconsin Safe and Healthy Schools Training and Technical Assistance Center builds the capacity of Wisconsin public school districts to implement programs in prevention and intervention of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug abuse, mental health, and school safety. All programs are intended to reduce barriers to learning.

[Mental Health America of Wisconsin \(MHA\)](#)

MHA of Wisconsin is dedicated to improving the mental health of all individuals through advocacy, education, and service.

[National Alliance on Mental Illness](#)

NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness.

[NAMI Wisconsin](#)

The mission of NAMI Wisconsin is to improve the quality of life for those affected by mental illness and to promote recovery. The website has many resources related to mental health as well as links to educational programs and support groups.

[Youth Suicide Prevention](#)

This web page on the DPI website provides information and resources for youth suicide prevention to school staff, administrators, school boards, parents, and other members of the school community. It also has links to crisis hotlines.

[Prevent Suicide Wisconsin](#)

Prevent Suicide Wisconsin (PSW) is a statewide public-private partnership whose mission is to reduce the number of people who attempt and/or die by suicide in Wisconsin.

[Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#)

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation. SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities. The website has an abundance of resources related to mental health issues.

[National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health \(NFFCMH\)](#)

NFFCMH is a national family-run organization linking more than 120 state and local affiliates and national partners. It focuses on the issues of children and youth with emotional, behavioral, or mental health needs and substance use challenges and their families. The website has links to many [resources](#) related to mental health.

RESEARCH

Parent Education: A Key Aspect in Prevention and Intervention of Bullying in School Communities

Doss, K. M., & Crawford, S. H. (2023). Parent Education: A Key Aspect in Prevention and Intervention of Bullying in School Communities. National Youth Advocacy and Resilience Journal, 6(2).

<https://doi.org/10.20429/nyarj.2023.060201>

[Read Full Article](#)

Bullying is a widespread public health problem in schools that affects students' academic performance, emotional well-being, and overall development. While schools play a key role in preventing and addressing bullying, parents and community members are also essential partners. This article highlights the importance of educating parents about bullying prevention and intervention. It discusses the roles of schools and community stakeholders, provides resources to support parent involvement, and offers recommendations for raising awareness, strengthening parent education efforts, and guiding future research.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER

Upcoming Newsletter Topics

June: ADD / ADHD

July: Speech and Language

August: Other Health Impairment

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/2026-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, Dr. Anna Macedonia; 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, 2026.

WI FACETS | www.wifacets.org





Try email marketing for free today!