

The WSPEI Connector

April, 2026

Communicating Information and Resources for Wisconsin Families and Educators

☀ As the view outside turns greener and the days grow longer, it's the perfect time to channel fresh energy into our final push of the learning year.

We're wrapping up a busy year of WSPEI learning with two more workshops this month. Details are below - be sure to register soon if you haven't already! Our Family Support Community continues to meet and we will have our final Family, Youth and Community Family Engagement Network meeting in May.

🌸 Our Family Support Organization partners are blooming with activity; we've compiled opportunities around the state to connect and learn. And, stay informed with the latest news and updates from DPI.



Summer is on the way!



Enjoy the sun!



Bees are buzzing!
We love our pollinators!



Strawberry Fields!
Delight in lots of fresh fruit!

But keep our skin protected -
remember the sunscreen!

The WSPEI Program Statewide Learning and Networking Events

WSPEI Statewide Learning and Networking Opportunities

WSPEI is wrapping up our workshop schedule this month. Stay tuned for fall offerings!

All statewide WSPEI events are FREE, will be held virtually on ZOOM, and are open to families, educators, and community agency members.

Registration is required. Zoom meeting links are sent out one week prior to the first session.

Workshops are not recorded. If you register, please plan to attend.

Sign up for our [email list](#) for the monthly newsletter and event notifications.

[Calendar of Events](#)

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💡 WEEKLY ON WEDNESDAYS - VIRTUAL Drop-In Office Hour | Noon - 1:00 p.m. on ZOOM

The world of special education is filled with complex acronyms and life-changing decisions. Our goal is to empower **families, school staff, and agency members** with the expertise and resources needed to help every child thrive. You don't have to navigate this alone. Join us for a conversation! Registration is NOT required. See flyer linked below for ZOOM details.

WHAT:

- A WSPEI Coordinator will be available to answer questions about, Special Education, IEPs and strategies for families and school staff partnerships.
- When needed, we will connect families, school staff and others with their local WSPEI Coordinator for more support and information.
- We provide guidance in finding resources and new learning opportunities.

WHO:

ANYONE! Families, School Staff or Agency member who is:

- Seeking assistance with the special education process, including questions about an IEP(Individualized Education Program).
- Looking for resources and information to support children with a disability
- Interested in fostering stronger family-school partnerships.

Confidentiality:

Discussions during the Zoom meeting will remain confidential. Our coordinators are trained in confidentiality practices, and breakout rooms will be utilized for privacy. Sessions are NOT recorded.

[LINK to FLYER](#) with ZOOM Meeting Link and call in information

[LINK TO ZOOM MEETING](#)

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TOPIC SPECIFIC WORKSHOPS

[Partnering with Schools on Behavior and Discipline for Students with IEPs](#) [Information Flyer in Spanish](#)

- Habrá interpretación al español disponible para las familias que la soliciten al registrarse

This workshop will help participants:

- Understand how all policies apply to all children, including those with disabilities;
- Build awareness of IDEA protections for students with disabilities in regard to discipline;
- Explore dispute resolution options in Wisconsin.

April 10, 2026 | 9:00 am-11:00 am

[Click to REGISTER](#)

[The Family's Role in the CCR-IEP Process](#)

[Information Flyer in Spanish](#)

- Habrá interpretación al español disponible para las familias que la soliciten al registrarse

This **2-hour workshop** is aimed at equipping parents and other family members with knowledge and confidence to **actively participate in the IEP process**.

For families who have a child/youth between the ages of 3-21 who has an IEP.

Educators are encouraged to participate as well!

We have two dates offered in April 2026.

Choose the day and time that works best for you! Content delivered is the same on each day.

- **April 28, 2026** | 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
- **April 30, 2026** | 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Register for either of these dates here: [Click to Register](#)

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ON GOING, MONTHLY NETWORK AND SUPPORT MEETINGS

ANNOUNCEMENT: Unfortunately, we are cancelling our April Family Youth and Community Engagement Network gathering.

We hope to bring an exciting and important topic to our May 2026 meeting!

[Family, Youth and Community Engagement Network](#)

(formally known as the Family Engagement Community of Practice & Learning)

A learning community for educators, administrators, statewide agencies, community partners, and families focusing on family engagement-specific topics. Learn from each other and experts in the field!

Meetings are held on the **third Wednesday of every month, September to May, 4:00-5:30 pm.**

*These Network meetings are recorded and shared in an email after the meeting date.

Register one time and you will automatically receive the monthly reminder emails.

[Click to REGISTER](#)

Family Support Community

A monthly learning opportunity designed for families and other caregivers supporting a child(ren) with a disability.

These meetings occur on the **second Wednesday of the month from 7:00 pm -8:00 pm** and the **second Thursday of the month from 12:00 -1:00 pm**.

Our supportive community meetings provide valuable learning opportunities and mutual support. They take place from **September through May**.

Register one time and you will automatically receive the monthly reminder emails.

[Click to REGISTER](#)

A WSPEI Regional Learning Opportunity!

Partnering with Schools on Behavior and Discipline for Students with IEPs

What Families and their support systems need to know!

A Northern WI CESAs Collaboration!

Friday, May 1, 2026 11 am - 1 pm Virtual, Via ZOOM

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Partnering with Schools on Behavior and Discipline for Students with IEPs
What Families and their support systems need to know

A CESA collaborative event!

Friday, May 1, 2026
11 am - 1 pm
Virtual, Via ZOOM

During this workshop, YOU will:

- **Learn** how to locate the student/parent handbook and policies on a district's website, and
- **Understand** how all policies apply to all children, including those with disabilities
- **Build** awareness of IDEA protections for students with disabilities regarding discipline
- **Understand** dispute resolution options in Wisconsin

For more information, contact:

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[Click to Register](#)
-OR-
[Scan QR Code to Register](#)

The Wisconsin Statewide Parent-Educator Initiative (CFDA #84.027A) acknowledges the support of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction in the development of all products or publications and for the continued support of this federally-funded grant project.

WSPEI Wisconsin Statewide Parent Educator Initiative

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF Public Instruction

From the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction



Important Reminder: DPI Website Modernization Project

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.

In the meantime, if there is anything you access frequently or are hoping to view in the next month, you may wish to download a copy to your computer now.

Thank you for your patience during this process!



Public Comment on Wisconsin State Application Under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

As a part of the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B** application process, the State must accept public comments on the application for 30 days and must publish the application for 60 days. We are still awaiting the FFY2026 allocation information from the Department of Education. Until then, the posted allocations and the interactive spreadsheet provide information from FFY2025.

Comments about the application should be submitted to the Department of Public Instruction, P.O. Box 7841, Madison, WI 53703-7841 by 4pm on Sunday, April 20, 2026.

For more information including links to the FFY2025 IDEA Part B allocation, see DPI's website for [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\) Federal Special Education Law and Coordination with Wisconsin Law and Regulations | Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction](#).



Wisconsin Conferences



State Events and Save the Dates

2026 Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin and the Autism Society of South Central Wisconsin Annual Conference

The purpose of the annual conference is to provide a wide range of information to those within the autism community. The 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.

Dates: April 23-25, 2026

Location: Kalahari Convention Center, Wisconsin Dells, WI

[REGISTRATION is OPEN](#)

[Circles of Life Conference](#)

Dates: May 14-15, 2026

Location: Holiday Inn Stevens Point Convention Center, Stevens Point, WI

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

Keynote Speaker: Dr. K Jane Lee

Dr. Lee is the mother of two children, one of whom has severe neurologic impairment from a brain injury at birth. She is a passionate advocate for anti-ableism, and has published a book, *Catastrophic Rupture: A Memoir of Healing*, which invites readers to join her as she shifts from an ableist medical perspective of disability that sees only an impaired body, to the mother's perspective that sees the **beauty and value in the person that is her child**.

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!

Deadline: May 1 / No Walk-in Registrations

[Link to Register in English](#)

[Registro Espanol](#)

[Autism eXchange Annual Conference and Staycation](#)

A gathering dedicated to advancing understanding, support and innovation in Autism research and services in your community! The conference brings together a diverse group of experts, advocates, caregivers, and individuals on the Autism Spectrum to share insights and strategies that make a difference.

Date: Friday July 10 – Saturday July 11, 2026

Time:

- Attendee check-in begins at 11:45 am Friday, July 10
- Conference activities end at 4:00 pm July 11

Location: Wilderness Resort & Waterpark and Glacier Canyon Lodge

[Learn More HERE](#)

[2026 WI FACETS Endless Possibilities Conference](#)

Save the Date!

Date: August 7, 2026

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

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 to discuss positive solutions for all our students with special needs in Wisconsin.

WI FACETS

April Newsletter and Training Calendar

WI FACETS is Wisconsin's Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) funded through the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. WI FACETS has a large variety of resources, upcoming trainings, and webinar recordings to help families navigate special education. WI FACETS [Webinar Recordings](#) as well as WI FACETS [resources webpages](#).

The April Issue of the WI FACETS Family Engagement Newsletter covers Autism and shares multiple resources for families and educators:

[April Newsletter - English](#)

[April Newsletter - Spanish](#)

Are you looking to enhance your knowledge and confidence while supporting a child with a disability? WI FACETS invites **families, caregivers, and professionals** to explore our 2026 calendar of free, expert-led workshops designed to empower and inform you every step of the way.

📄 View and register for upcoming trainings at: www.wifacets.org/training/calendar

[PDF of Training Calendar in English](#)

[PDF of Training Calendar in Spanish](#)

April is Autism Acceptance Month

Autism Acceptance Month celebrates and honors the experiences and identities of Autistic individuals. It emphasizes understanding, inclusion, and support, moving beyond awareness towards meaningful acceptance. There are many opportunities in Wisconsin to learn about autism including DPI grant funded resources and statewide family support and advocacy groups supporting people with neurodiverse needs.

- The Supporting Neurodiverse Students (SNS) Professional Learning System is a grant funded project designed to support educators serving students with IEPs in social and emotional learning. For additional information on in-person learning events, quick videos, interactive self-guided modules, and virtual cohorts, please visit the [SNS webpage](#).
 - Wisconsin is home to the Autism Society of Wisconsin and Autism United, both of which offer resources and support. Additional information on ways to promote inclusion in our communities and practice acceptance in everyday life can be found on their websites:
 - [Autism Society of Wisconsin](#)
 - [Autism United](#)
 - Autism Acceptance Day at the Capitol: On **Thursday, April 2, 2026, from 12:00p.m.- 2:00p.m.** an event will be held in the Assembly Parlor of the Wisconsin State Capitol in Madison, where attendees will hear brief remarks from Autistic self-advocates, family members, and legislators.
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Autism United of Wisconsin

Some program highlights:

[Change Champions](#)

Autism United of Wisconsin invites you to help bring a unique program to schools in your community.

The Change Champions program is a fun, educational coin/donation drive specifically designed by Special Education teachers, for schools:

- Helps students gain a better understanding of Autism.
- Provides materials and resources to participating schools to help raise awareness.
- Gives students agency to personally make a difference in their own communities, and support the programming and events offered to families every year from Autism United of Wisconsin.

Autism Exchange Statewide Conference

Learn more [HERE](#)

Autism Resource Directory™ by Autism United of Wisconsin

Autism United of Wisconsin Autism Resource Directory™ was developed to provide information only and does not recommend, endorse, guarantee, or promote the services and interventions included in this guide.

Navigate the [DIRECTORY HERE](#)

Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities

April Newsletter

Lots of good information from our friends at WI BPDD - webinars, listening sessions and a conference!

[April Newsletter - English](#)

[April Newsletter - Spanish](#)



Share your comments about WI BPDD's new state plan!

Every five years, we make a new state plan to improve the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities through inclusion in all aspects of community life. Please let us know what you think by May 15, 2026.

Check out our plain language and full versions of the plan:

[Plain language English](#); [Full version English](#)

There are three ways you can share comments:

1. Join a listening session to hear about the plan and to share your thoughts.

April 29, 2026, 5:30-6:30pm: [Registration \(English\)](#), [Registration \(Spanish\)](#), [Registration \(Hmong\)](#)

May 5th, 2026, 12:00-1:00pm: [Registration \(English\)](#), [Registration \(Spanish\)](#), [Registration \(Hmong\)](#)

2. Fill out a short survey: [English survey](#); [Spanish survey](#); [Hmong survey](#)

3. Mail or email written comments to us by May 15, 2026:

WI Board for People with Developmental Disabilities - State Plan, 101 E. Wilson Street, Madison, WI 53703; or email molly.cooney@wisconsin.gov

Accessibility info: If you need the plan in another language or format, please email molly.cooney@wisconsin.gov or call 608-266-0266.

Wisconsin Family Voices

April Events

[REGISTER FOR EVENTS HERE](#)

Saturday, April 4, 11:30am - 1:00pm

Nurture Network Coffee Gathering (In-Person) - The Hub in West Bend

We will be in a private downstairs area, which will keep the capacity to 20-25 moms, so you must sign up before for this event.

Monday, April 6, 6:00pm - 7:30pm

What's After High School?

Wednesday, April 8, 11:30am - 12:30pm

Thinking About Supported Decision Making

Thursday, April 9, 11:30am - 12:30pm

Get Started: Navigating Systems of Support

Monday, April 13, 5:00pm - 6:00pm

Thinking About Supported Decision Making

Wednesday, April 15, 5:30pm - 6:30pm

What's After High School? - Life in the Community

Thursday, April 16, 12:00pm - 12:45pm

Lunchtime Transition Learning - Health Insurance Literacy for Young Adults

Saturday, April 18, 10:30am - 12:00pm

Nurture Network Coffee Gathering (In-Person) -Inclusion Coffee, Hartland

Wednesday, April 29, 12:00pm - 1:00pm

Introduction to the Children's Long-Term Support Program



Virtual Listening Session

Thursday, April 30 | 5:00pm - 6:15pm

The ***Annual Family Voices Virtual Listening Session*** is for parents and family members of children with disabilities or special health care needs, ages 0–21. Participants will be joined by representatives from the agencies that provide the supports and services our children rely on every day. We'll meet on Zoom to hear what's working, what could be improved, and any ideas you have to better support.

[REGISTER FOR LISTENING SESSION HERE](#)

Wisconsin Special Education Mediation System and Dispute Resolution Options

An Important Resource for Families

Here at WSPEI, we're all about families and schools working together to help kids thrive, but acknowledge that even the best teams might hit a snag where they just can't agree. Luckily we have a fantastic dispute-resolution option here in Wisconsin to help in these instances. It is designed to help navigate family-school partnerships and keep the focus on student success.

The [Wisconsin Special Education Mediation System](#) provides assistance to parents (or adult students) and school districts in resolving special education disputes. This is a free and voluntary service.

The [Wisconsin Special Education Mediation System \(WSEMS\)](#) is funded through a DPI discretionary grant. WSEMS offers mediation and facilitated IEP meetings at **no cost** to either party.

For additional dispute resolution options see the DPI [Dispute Resolution Options webpage](#).

This is a valuable resource as well: [Communication Options for Families resource](#).

Resource for Families: Talk Tools

From the friends at Exceptional Children's Assistance Center

Talk Tools features helpful questions to use in conversations and meetings about your child—including **behaviors, accommodations, modifications, support strategies, classroom situations, teaching methods, or a child's response to these.**

Check out this ECAC resource! [LINK TO PRINTABLE PDF](#)

TALK TOOLS

"It's better to ask some of the questions than to know all the answers."

Questions to Use in Conversations & Meetings About Your Child

The following questions are "talk tools" that ECAC Parent Educators often use with families and professionals. They provide effective ways to request clarification in conversations about behavior, accommodations, modifications, support or intervention strategies, classroom or community situations, teaching methods, or a child's response to any of these. Asking for more information is also a great way to help you maintain your focus and cool!

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE:

1. Select the questions that best relate to your child's current situation.
2. If needed, adapt the wording so that it feels comfortable for you.
3. Have a copy on hand for phone conversations and meetings.

You can also use these questions when communicating through email.

Question to begin a new conversation:

- Would you be willing to help me think about ways to help my child?

Questions for clarification:

- What are we hoping to learn or accomplish by doing this?
- What does that (skill, behavior, activity, etc.) sound like and look like?
- How is this functional/useful for my child?
- How did you come to think that way?
- What evidence (data) do we have to support that?

Questions for problem solving:

- What has already been tried? What hasn't been tried?
- In what specific circumstances or environment did you try this?
- How long did (will) you try this?
- What are (were) the results? What has been learned by trying this?
- Will you review the data with me?
- Why are you trying (did you try) this specific strategy for my child?
- Is it research based?
- What will we see and hear that lets us know this is working?
- What are the other options?
- Who else can help us with this?
- What do we need to do next?

ecac
Exceptional Children's Assistance Center
1-800-942-6817 www.ecac-parentcenter.org ecac@ecacmail.org

Happenings around the State

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Southwest Wisconsin Technical College

Celebrating "The Week of the Young Child" with Dr. Dipesh Navsaria

Tuesday, April 14

9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Registration Required: Register [HERE](#)



Southwest Tech

March 30 at 3:31PM · 🌐



Register Now!

Join us for a special event on Thursday, April 16. As part of the Week of the Young Child, this special evening event will focus on language and literacy and is designed for early childhood professionals, students, families, and community members.

The keynote presentation will be delivered by Dr. Dipesh Navsaria, pediatrician, educator, and national advocate for early literacy. His presentation, Reach Out and Read, will explore the important role early language exposure and shared reading play in a child's development.

Following the keynote, in-person participants will have opportunities for discussion and connection around practical literacy strategies and family engagement. Virtual attendance for the presentation, is also available.

Registration is required: <https://tinyurl.com/4t6fn7nk>



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ALAS: SPECIAL EDUCATION TUTORING & HOMEWORK HELP: WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS?

This workshop will help families learn about tutoring and homework help options for students who receive special education services. We will talk about support available at school and in the community, how to understand what your child needs, and how to find the right help.

When: April 24, 2026, 10:30 - 11:30 am

Where: Virtually on ZOOM

[Link to flyer](#) with more information and QR Code to register

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Special Needs Resources Fair

Tuesday, April 21st, 2026 | 4:30-7:30

Burlington High School

400 McCanna Parkway

Burlington, WI

[Link to Flyer in English](#)

[Link to Flyer in Spanish](#)

Connect with WSPEI

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We are here to support and assist! 🤝

Are you looking for support information, or resources about Special Education and IEPs from WSPEI?

✉️ Information provided on this **form** will help us connect you to your local

WSPEI Family-School Partnership Coordinator:

[Click this link for Support Request Form](#)

🗓️ **Visit our Weekly Wednesday Drop-In Support Hour! Noon-1:00 every Wednesday**

[Click Here](#) for Flyer with Zoom Meeting information

🏠 **Bring a Workshop to Your Area! We'd love to partner with you!**

Interested in hosting one of our workshops locally? Reach out and let's make it happen.

Email us at: wspei@cesa12.org

📄 Downloadable pdfs of past **newsletters** can be found [HERE](#)



The WSPEI Program

www.wspei.org

[Contact](#)

[Subscribe](#)



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