

# The WSPEI Connector

December 2023



## What's Happening This Month:

There is plenty happening in December this year, most notably planning for a full calendar of family workshops coming in January! Check out all WSPEI has to offer in the links below. We are also highlighting our District Family Engagement Liaison program in this issue of The Connector.

Did you know that Independent Living Centers offer programming throughout the state? Be sure to explore this rich resource we are sharing this month. And as always, our partners at WI FACETS

have a wealth of information and events in their monthly newsletter available on the linked button below.

The holidays are a wonderful time to reconnect and recharge with family but can also bring unique challenges. We share some tips from the great people at [Understood.org](https://www.understood.org) with the hopes they will make for a smooth holiday break for all.

Wishing you a peaceful and happy Holiday season! The WSPEI Family Engagement Grant



Wisconsin Statewide Parent Educator Initiative

**WSPEI Workshops and Events**

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

[The Family's Role in the CCR-IEP Process - Spanish](#) (El papel de la familia en el proceso del IEP de preparación universitaria y profesional)

This series will include information to empower parents and other family members to become more confident participants in the IEP process. For families who have a child between the ages 3-21 who has an IEP.

[Families As Partners - Winter 2024](#)

[Families As Partners - Winter 2024 Spanish](#) (Las familias como aliados)

A five-session education and leadership opportunity for families focused on building relationships with school staff and others that can improve student outcomes. First session is September 26, 2023.

[Powerful Partnership Book Study - Winter 2024](#)

[Powerful Partnerships - Winter 2024 Spanish](#) (Alianzas poderosas: una guía para maestros para involucrar a las familias para el éxito estudiantil)

Join families from throughout the state of Wisconsin to take a deeper dive into the work of Karen Mapp, Ilene Carver and Jessica Lander. Discussions held on Thursdays beginning October 5, 2023.

[Family Support Community](#)

[Family Support Community Spanish](#) (Comunidad de Apoyo Familiar)

A monthly learning opportunity offered to families and other caregivers supporting a child(ren) with a disability. Meeting on the first Wednesday of the month beginning in September.

[Family Engagement Community of Practice](#)

A learning community for educators, administrators, statewide agencies, community partners, and families focusing on family-engagement-specific topics. Meeting the second Wednesday of the month beginning in September.

## WI FACETS Newsletter

### WI FACETS Newsletter and Training Calendar

Our mission is to provide and broaden opportunities that enhance the quality of life for children and adults with disabilities and their families, with emphasis on support for underserved families in the community.

[WI-FACETS Family Engagement Newsletter, December 2023](#)

This month's topic is: COMMUNICATION

[Wisconsin Training Calendar | WI FACETS](#)



## Learn all about the **WSPEI District Family Engagement Liaison (DFEL) Program!** 🤝

**Did you know there are parents and guardians throughout the state of Wisconsin who support families in their districts and promote positive home-school-community connections?**

To promote partnerships between home and school, WSPEI Family Engagement Coordinators work with school district Directors of Special Education to identify, recruit and support a parent/guardian of a child with an IEP to serve as a District Family Engagement Liaison (DFEL). This is a volunteer position that supports family engagement efforts in the district.

WSPEI will provide training in key topics such as Communication, the CCR-IEP Process, Transition Planning and Navigating Special Education Resources. DFELs receive ongoing coaching and support from Family Engagement Coordinators and their Special Education Director to foster connections with educators and other families in the district. The DFEL models positive family-school relationships, showcasing how families and schools can work together to solve problems, share in decision-making and create a school community that values the lived experience of families.

If you are a parent or guardian who is ready to make a difference and work with your school district in this role, talk to your Special Education Director today!

If you are a Special Education Director who would like to learn more about the WSPEI District Family Engagement Liaison program, contact your [CESA Family Engagement Coordinator](#) or email the Grant Coordinator at [wspei@cesa12.org](mailto:wspei@cesa12.org)

Together, we can build school communities where every family feels heard, valued, and empowered.

### **A DFEL in action!** 🗣️

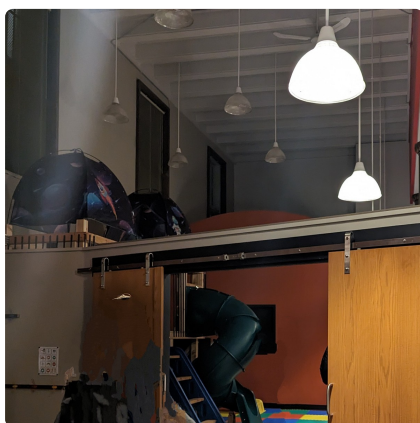
Meet Kate Everhart, District Family Engagement Liaison for the Milton School District and all around powerhouse parent! She has dedicated the past two years as DFEL to building community, empowering families and is the proud founder of a sensory play haven.

Kate credits her personal pillar of the desire to build a community where parents can help other parents plus her partnership with Milton's Special Education Director as the force behind a successful transformation of the district parent group. They saw an opportunity to make the group

more inviting to families and renamed the “Collaborative Community Council” to “Parent Connections”. Bi-monthly meetings highlight district updates, guest speakers who share their expertise on a specific special education topic and plenty of time for families to ask questions, network, share resources and experiences. It has become a vibrant support community for the families of the Milton School District.

Kate’s impact reaches beyond Milton. Her passion for creating a safe space for families of neurodiverse people of all ages led to the opening of SPACE Autastic in downtown Janesville in November 2023. On a recent visit, several members of the WPSEI Grant were blown away by this amazing indoor facility: quiet spaces, sensory rooms and an expansive playground for people of all abilities. SPACE Autastic is a dream come true for Kate, her family and countless others.

To learn more about this wonderful inclusive environment, visit their website at: [SPACE Autastic](#)



## This month's featured organization

### Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin

The Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin exists to provide a community for individuals affected by autism, their families, and professionals who serve them.

We are passionately committed to improving the lives of those affected by autism in our 53 county service area through our five core services areas; support, information & referral, advocacy, education and building community.

[Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin](#)

---

## ❄️ Tips and Ideas for the Holidays ❄️

[How to make the holidays more fun for your child](#)

[5 tips to help kids with self-control struggles “behave” \(and have fun\) at family gatherings](#)

[My child doesn't eat most foods at holiday meals, and my relatives don't understand. What can I do?](#)

[Holiday survival guide](#) (webinar)

---

## Wisconsin Independent Living Centers

An independent living center (ILC) is a consumer-directed, non-profit organization that provides four core services: peer support, information and referral, independent living skills training, and person and systems advocacy. There are 8 ILCs that serve individuals in the state of Wisconsin. Some ILCs provide additional services, such as community education, training on the Americans with Disabilities Act, personal care, and service coordination.

ILCs are also device loan and device demonstration centers as part of the [WisTech Assistive Technology Program](#).

To find the ILC that serves your area, visit the map at this link:

[Independent Living Centers Serving Wisconsin](#)

More information about ILC services can be found for each location searchable on this website:

[Independent Living Centers in Wisconsin](#)

---

## PROJECT SEARCH WISCONSIN

Project SEARCH is a business led collaboration that enables young adults with disabilities to gain and maintain employment through training and career exploration.

A 9-12 month program, Project SEARCH provides total immersion in a large community business. Students with disabilities are offered a workforce alternative for their last year of high school. All participants must be eligible for services with the Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). At some sites, young adults who have completed high school may be eligible to participate in Project SEARCH.

To find a Project Search Location in your area click on this link for the interactive map:

[Project Search Locations Map](#)

Application and Open House Information:

[Project Search - Eau Claire](#)

[Project Search - UW Platteville](#)

[Project Search - Prohealth Care Waukesha Hospital](#)

[Project Search - Milwaukee County Zoo](#)

[Project Search - Kalahari Resort](#)

## 📢 **NEW Resource from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services** 📢

### **Introducing The Wisconsin Wayfinder and Children's Resource Network**

Looking for a doctor or dentist? Have questions about Medicaid coverage? Need guidance on a specific diagnosis? Wisconsin Wayfinder and the Children's Resource Centers are here to help!

[Wisconsin Wayfinder: Guidance on Programs and Support](#)

[WiscWay Contact Form](#)

By Phone: **877-WiscWay (877.947.2929)**

---

## 📅 **Coming Up!**

### **Circles of Life Conference:**

[Circles of Life Conference - Family Voices of Wisconsin](#)

Dates: May 16-17, 2024

Stevens Point, WI

Registration coming in early 2024

**New in 2024:** The Circles of Life planning committee is committed to making sure every conference session is fully bilingual. Spanish-language interpreters will be available at each session to ensure that every family has access to this valuable information.

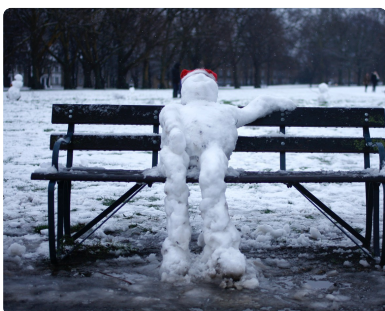
### **Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin**

Dates: April 25-27, 2024

Kalahari Convention Center, Wisconsin Dells, WI

[2024 Annual Conference – Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin](#)

---



### **Connect with us!**

Share with others! Tell us what you think! We would love to hear from you!

Email feedback and ideas of resources and information you would like to see from WSPEI

Email: [wspei@cesa12.org](mailto:wspei@cesa12.org)

Website: <https://wspei.org/>

Phone: [833-879-7734](tel:833-879-7734)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WisconsinStatewideParentEducatorInitiative>

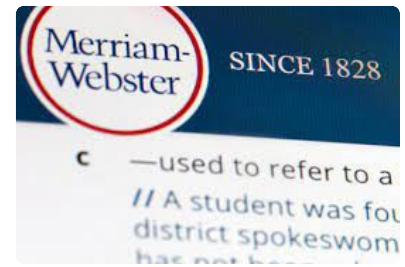
The Wisconsin Statewide Parent-Educator Initiative (CFDA #84.027A) acknowledges the support of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction in the development of all products or publications and for the continued support of this federally-funded grant project.

## Good to Know

### Merriam - Webster's Dictionary Word of the Year

Authentic

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-67543895>



#### WSPEI Grant

WSPEI is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters

Contact WSPEI

Subscribe to WSPEI

