

The WSPEI Connector

February 2026

Communicating Information and Resources for Wisconsin Families and Educators

With the 2026 Winter Games kicking off this week, we are reminded that The Olympics are the ultimate example of **team building**—where trust, collaboration, and shared purpose can turn individual potential into gold-medal performances! It often takes an entire village to get the athletes across the finish line!

Hello
February

Channeling that energy, we share a newsletter full of upcoming resources and events to help strengthen connection and build on individual knowledge.

Together, let's go for GOLD! 🏅

The WSPEI Program Statewide Learning and Networking Events

WSPEI Statewide Learning and Networking Opportunities

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.

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

WHAT:

- This FREE weekly support hour is a welcoming space to ask a question or share a specific concern or wondering and receive direct guidance from WSPEI staff.
- Discussions during the Zoom meeting are ***not recorded and will remain confidential***.
- Our Family - School Partnership Coordinators are trained in confidentiality practices, and breakout rooms will be utilized for privacy.

WHO:

- All Wisconsin parents/families of students with an IEP are welcome!
- No appointment or registration is necessary.
- We are here to help you get informed and stay prepared!

[Link to FLYER](#) with information and the ZOOM Meeting Link!

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TOPIC SPECIFIC WORKSHOPS

[Leadership in Action: Finding the Leader in YOU!](#)

[Information Flyer in Spanish](#)

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

WSPEI is joining together with our partners at WI FACETS to bring you this 2-part virtual leadership workshop!

Learn about:

- Working in partnerships to effectively communicate with schools
- Building engagement and ensuring relevant parent participation
- Developing structures for convening & working together around issues
- Types of conflict & resolution styles
- Converting challenges into opportunities

February 11 & 18, 2026 | 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. on ZOOM

[REGISTER HERE](#)

[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](#)



ON GOING, MONTHLY NETWORK AND SUPPORT MEETINGS

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.

[Link to flyer with meeting dates and topics](#)

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](#)



Who Are We? Meet our WSPEI Program Staff Members!👤

We have Family-School Partnership Coordinators working to support families and educators around the state! Check out the map to find who the Coordinator is in your area!

Visit our webpage for information to get in touch with them: <https://wspei.org/contact/>

Family-School Partnership Coordinators



Stephanie Adrihan
CESA 1



Carlene Chavez
CESA 2



Caroline Rossing
CESA 3



Tiffany Lisk
CESA 4



Robyn Morris
CESAs 5 & 6*



Sara Nerenhausen
CESAs 7 & 8*



Heidi Lehman
CESAs 9 & 10*



Stephanie Lulich
CESA 11* & 12



Quiana Words
MPS Family Support
Associate

*Secondary CESA



Rita Fuller
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Amy Elfner
WSPEI Statewide Program
Support Specialist
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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 program.



FIND OUR TEAM



Contact us at:
<https://wspei.org/contact/>



Statewide Program Staff



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 program.

WSPEI in your Neighborhood - REGIONAL Trainings

Powerful Partnerships Book Discussion

The Northern and Southern Regions of the state are joining together to explore how effective Family Engagement can be as unique as our communities.

Join the conversation and share your perspective!

DATES: Wednesday afternoons: **3/4/2026 & 3/18/2026** | 4:00 – 5:30 p.m.

LOCATION: On Zoom

Contact with any questions:

- CESA 1: Stephanie Adrihan | sadrihan@cesa1.k12.wi.us
- CESA 2: Carlene Chavez | cchavez@cesa2.org
- CESA 9 & 10: Heidi Lehman | hlehman@cesa9.org
- CESA 11 & 12: Stephanie Lulich | stephanie@cesa12.org

[Link to Information Flyer](#)

Registration is required to receive Zoom meeting link:

[REGISTER HERE](#)

IEP Bootcamp: Empowering Families in the IEP Process

A no-cost, virtual learning event for families of students with IEPs, community agencies and educators in South Central and NE Wisconsin.

DATE: Friday March 6 , 2026 from 9am-11am

LOCATION: On Zoom

Facilitated by Family-School Partnership Coordinators Carlene Chavez and Heidi Lehman:

Contact with any questions:

- Carlene Chavez, CESA 2 | carlene.chavez@Cesa2.org | OR call: 414-791-0837
- Heidi Lehman, CESAs 9/10 | hlehman@cesa9.org | OR call: 715.360.2656

[Link to Information Flyer](#)

Registration is required to receive Zoom meeting link:

[REGISTER HERE](#)

The Family's Role in the IEP Process

DATE: Friday March 27, 2026 | 9:00 -11:00 a.m.

LOCATION: On ZOOM

Facilitated by Family-School Partnership Coordinators Carlene Chavez and Heidi Lehman:

Contact with any questions:

- Carlene Chavez, CESA 2 | carlene.chavez@Cesa2.org | OR call: 414-791-0837
- Heidi Lehman, CESAs 9/10 | hlehman@cesa9.org | OR call: 715.360.2656

[Link to Information Flyer](#)

Registration is required to receive Zoom meeting link:

[Register Here](#)

WI Department of Public Instruction (DPI)

Schools and Immigration: Guidance and Resources

To support you and your communities as you respond to questions and concerns related to immigration enforcement, the DPI has created [a dedicated webpage with guidance and resources](#). On this webpage, you will find information regarding: Legal rights of educators, students, and families, Trauma-sensitive practices, and Virtual instruction.

Webinar Resource to Support Children During Immigration Enforcement

The Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health recorded a webinar on January 16 and made the recording available until April 2026. The link and title of the webinar is [Supporting Children During Immigration Enforcement Operations](#). Many children from immigrant and refugee families have loved ones at risk of deportation. For these children, immigration enforcement operations in a community can pose a risk to mental health and development. Fortunately, supportive adults in a child's life can play a large role in protecting children's mental health and promoting positive development. This training offers concrete strategies that adults can use to support children during periods of uncertainty and fear.

Additional resources:

- [Supporting Children After a Parent's Deportation or Detention \(English, Spanish, Somali, Haitian Creole, Pashto, Dari\) - Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health](#)
- [When children are afraid of a parent's deportation \(English, Spanish, Korean, Mandarin, Somali\) - Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health](#)

Special Education Bulletins Available in Spanish

DPI recently translated several special education bulletins into Spanish. These can be found on the DPI [Special Education Bulletins webpage](#). They have also been added to the DPI [Spanish language special education topics webpage](#) that contain a wide variety of DPI resources in Spanish.

New Resources for Transitioning from Birth to Three

The [Local Educational Agency Transition Requirements for Late Referrals to Birth to 3 Programs resource](#) provides information related to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requirement that a referral be sent by the Birth to 3 Program to the Local Educational Agency (LEA) not less than 90 days prior to the child's 3rd birthday. The scenarios listed in this resource outline the circumstances when the LEA may receive the referral less than 90 days prior to the child's 3rd birthday and guides the LEA regarding how to proceed with the comprehensive special education evaluation within an expected timeframe. The [Transition Planning Conference \(TPC\) Conversation Guide to Support Families Moving from a Birth to Three Program \(IFSP\) to School Age Special Education Services \(IEP\)](#) provides information about the transition planning conference to support the family in understanding the transition process and help make the transition from the Birth to 3 Program to the school district special education services as seamless as possible for the child and family.

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) for Adolescents: An Introduction to Theory, Family Engagement, and Growing Motivation

Engagement, and Growing Motivation - SAVE THE DATE

Workshop Description: Dialectical Behavior Therapy for Adolescents (DBT-A) is an evidence-based treatment designed to help teens struggling with intensely dysregulated emotions and behaviors. Common problems targeted in DBT-A include self-harm, suicidal ideation and actions, violent outbursts, substance use, school refusal, and many other similar behaviors. This training will introduce a theoretical lens for understanding these emotions and behaviors, and an overview of how DBT-A treats these struggles.

Registration for this event opens on June 1. Save the date now and be sure to make a note to register! For more information, visit the [DBT-A workshop webpage](#)

Date: August 13, 2026 (9:00am - 4:30pm, including a 90-minute lunch break)

**Lunch is not provided.*

Location: Chula Vista Resort | 1000 Chula Vista Pkwy | Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin 53965

Fee for non-WAFCA members (includes CE): \$5 (If the cost of this event is a barrier to your participation, you can contact us at info@wafca.org)



Indicator 8 Family Engagement Survey

Each year, the WI Department of Public Instruction (DPI) requires 20% of Wisconsin school districts to take part in the Federal Indicator 8 Family Engagement Survey data collection as part of the district's self-assessment. The survey is offered to all parents of children ages 3-17 who are receiving special education services and support through an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Indicator 8 identifies the ***percentage of parents with a child receiving special education services who report that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities***. The survey is confidential. DPI will use the survey results to improve services to children and youth with IEPs and their families.

To find out if your school district is taking part in the survey, click here: [2025-2026 LEAs/School Districts in Indicator 8 Survey](#).

Interested in learning more about the Indicator 8 Survey?

Go to DPI's Indicator 8 Family Engagement Survey webpage [here](#).



Stay Up to Date

Want to stay informed?

Visit the [DPI News Room](#)

February Newsletter and 2026 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 February 2026 Newsletter explores Self-Determination and Making Choices

Self-determination for children with intellectual disabilities can mean helping them learn to make their own choices, set goals, and take control of their lives in ways that match their abilities and interests.

[February Newsletter - English](#)

[February 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](#)



Companion Resource from WSPEI

"MY SNAPSHOT"

This form can be filled out by you, the student, to provide a snapshot of what you feel is important to share with your IEP team.

You do not have to answer all the questions.

You can ask others to help you complete this form.

[LINK to Downloadable PDF](#) - English

[My Snapshot in Spanish](#)

Wisconsin Conferences

State Events and Save the Dates

[24th Annual WI Transition Conference](#)

Dates: February 12-13, 2026

Location: Kalahari Resort, WI Dells, WI

The conference will have two knowledgeable and humorous keynote speaker presentations. Spend all Thursday morning with the extremely informative and funny, **Pam Schuller** and all Friday morning with the hilarious "**Shut Up Sisters**", **Patricia Terrasi and Gina Gallagher**.

These keynote speakers bring a wealth of knowledge, from different perspectives, regarding the challenges faced in the world of special education. In addition, there are over 20 breakout sessions to choose from, relevant exhibitors, and networking time.

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](#)

Save the Dates 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.

Make Your Impact—Be a Conference Sponsor

[Sponsor Registration](#)

Be an Exhibitor Vendor

[Exhibitor Registration](#)

[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.



Wisconsin Family Voices

Wisconsin Family Leadership Institute (WiFLI) - Spring 2026 Foundations Training

This series provides the building blocks to successfully extend the advocacy you are already doing to reach beyond your own family, affecting the systems, programs, and services you interact with every day. From Telling your Story workshops to understanding how Boards and Committees work, we'll get you started on your family leadership journey.

For the first time, the Spring 2026 series will mix in-person learning sessions with virtual workshops. We'll begin by getting to know the other WiFLI members, then go virtual for two sessions, and finish up in-person to learn and compare our experiences. Our hope is that this

meets more of your learning styles and schedules where you are—Enthusiastic and ready to put ideas into action.

Sessions begin in February 2026.

Visit the [WEBSITE](#) for complete schedule and application information.

Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (WI-BPDD)

Events and February Newsletter

[February Newsletter](#)

Disability Advocacy Day: Registration Open!

Disability Advocacy Day is in-person this year! Register today! Join us in Madison on Thursday March 19th with other advocates from around the state and meet with your elected officials. This is a great opportunity to share your story and educate your legislators on disability rights!

Registration is free but required to attend. Register by March 2nd.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Future Planning Webinar Series

Join us for this 4-part webinar series on future planning for people with disabilities, family members, and professionals.

Registration is free and you will only need to register once as all sessions will use the same zoom link.

You will receive an email with the zoom link and a reminder before each session.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Session Dates:

12-1 pm on the dates

Session 1 (March 4): Supported Decision-Making and Alternatives to Guardianship.

Session 2 (March 11): Lived Experience with Decision-Making: Young Adult Panel

Session 3 (March 25): Financial Planning for People with disabilities and Family Members

Session 4 (April 1): Understanding Work and Benefits

Autism Society of Wisconsin

Announcement!

The Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin and the Autism Society of South Central Wisconsin are coming together to form one statewide organization - the Autism Society of Wisconsin.

The goal of this partnership is to strengthen the impact by sharing resources, expanding support, and amplifying advocacy for autistic individuals and their families across the state.

If you'd like to learn more, please visit the [Autism Society of Wisconsin FAQ webpage](#).

WI CoP on Autism Spectrum Disorders and Developmental Disabilities

February Gathering

We are partnering with the [Wisconsin Autism Transition Demonstration \(WAuTD\) Project](#) Coalition. Parts of the gathering will include updates on the project as well as the opportunity for small groups. We are grateful for collaboration and partnerships.



Our topic revolves around becoming an adult, specifically our youth/young adults entering into the adult world—this is usually called transition or transition to adulthood. It includes many overlapping concerns, possible barriers, and a large amount of anticipation and excitement!

We will introduce some of the main important areas of transition — a Transition to Adulthood 101 or Nuts and Bolts of Transition to Adulthood. We will then learn from self-advocates about some of their successes and some barriers. We hope to build on this gathering to host another virtual gathering in May.

DATE: February 24, 9-11am | Virtual Gathering

[REGISTRATION IS OPEN](#)

Would you like to share your transition story?

We are seeking **autistic adults or individuals** with developmental disabilities in Wisconsin to share their personal transition experiences. Speakers are invited to provide a 3–5 minute presentation, which can be delivered live during the event or submitted as a pre-recorded video.

We are asking speakers to address one or both of the following questions:

- What is one area of your transition that went well, and what factors contributed to that success?
- What is one area of your transition that was challenging, and what improvements could have been made?

If you or someone you know is interested in sharing their story to help improve the transition process for others, please contact one of the following event planners:

- James Williams | jmw820@comcast.net
- Colleen McCluskey | colleenmccluskey93@gmail.com
- Lynn Hrabik | hrabik@wisc.edu

Additional information can be found on the [Connections CoP ASD/DD webpage](#).



Looking for support? An Important Resource from the Dept of Health Services

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) created the [Wisconsin Wayfinder: Children's Resource Network](#).

Wisconsin Wayfinder supports families of children with delays, disabilities, special health care needs, and mental health conditions.

Children's resource guides are helpers who assist families, caregivers, professionals, and organizations in finding a wide array of supports and services available through the Children's Resource Network. Their services are free and confidential.



Connect with WSPEI

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

Contact

Subscribe

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 contract program.