

The WSPEI Connector

March 2025 Newsletter

📢 Communicating Information and Resources for Wisconsin Families and Educators

The theme for Read Across America Week(March 2-7) 2025 is "Create & Celebrate a Nation of Diverse Readers". Goals of Read Across America:

- To encourage children to read and celebrate reading in all its forms,
- To promote cultural awareness,
- To build community, and
- To improve literacy rates.

Happy reading! 📖



This month's issue of the WSPEI Connector contains information about ACT 20, a law created to ensure each child attending a public school (including independent charter schools) is able to read proficiently by the end of 3rd grade.

We are also sharing new resources from the Minnesota PACER Center, updates from WI DPI and some Fall conference dates have been announced!

Have a great month of March!

"March bustles in on windy feet" 🦶

Learning Events from The WSPEI Project

Workshops, Book Discussions and Networking Opportunities

ANNOUNCING A NEW WORKSHOP! See below for all the details!

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

[Calendar of Events](#)

[Webpage to link directly to Registration Forms](#)

TOPIC SPECIFIC WORKSHOPS

****NEW WORKSHOP****

Finding Children with Disabilities:

What School Districts, Families, and Agencies Need to Know about IDEA and Child Find Law

Do you suspect a child may need extra supports?

This workshop will explore the responsibility of school districts to locate, identify and evaluate all children suspected of having a disability and the rights families and children have under IDEA law.

- Wednesday, April 9, 2025, 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
- All are welcome! Families, Educators, Community Organizations and Agencies

[Link to Flyer with Details and Registration Information](#)

[Click Here for Registration Form](#)

Partnering with Schools on Behavior and Discipline for Students with IEPs.

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; understand dispute resolution options in Wisconsin.

- April 24th, 2025 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
- All are welcome! Families, Educators, Community Organizations and Agencies

[Link to Flyer with Details and Registration Information](#)

[CLICK HERE FOR REGISTRATION FORM](#)

MONTHLY NETWORKING & LEARNING MEETINGS

REGISTER FOR THESE EVENTS ANYTIME!

Family Support Community

A monthly learning opportunity designed for families and other caregivers supporting a child(ren) with a disability. Two meeting options are available.

- The first Wednesday of the month from 7-8 pm: [REGISTER FOR WEDNESDAY FSC HERE](#)
- The first Thursday of every month from 12-1:00 pm: [REGISTER FOR THURSDAY FSC HERE](#)
- Our Community meetings provide valuable learning opportunities and mutual support.
- These meetings take place from September through May.

Link to:

[FLYER and Registration](#)

[Flyer in Spanish](#)

A learning community for educators, administrators, statewide agencies, community partners, and families focusing on family engagement specific topics. Come join us!

- Meetings are held the third Wednesday of every month September to May, 4:00-5:30 pm.
- Registration is required - register once and you are able to attend any monthly meeting!

[Click Here to Register for CoPL](#)

[FLYER with Monthly Topic and Dates](#)

[Flyer in Spanish](#)

✳️Family Engagement Community of Practice & Learning March Topic!✳️

Understanding Visual Perception: Insights for Educators and Families

Guest Presenter: Alisha Curtis, TVI, CLVT; WI Center for the Blind & Visually Impaired

Join us for an informative session designed to help educators and families better understand the complexities of visual perception and its impact on individuals, especially those with visual impairments or perception challenges.

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

4:00-5:30 pm via Zoom

[REGISTER HERE](#)



Understanding Visual Perception: Insights for Educators and Families

Presenter: Alisha Curtis, TVI, CLVT; WI Center for the Blind & Visually Impaired

Join us for an informative session designed to help educators and families better understand the complexities of visual perception and its impact on individuals, especially those with visual impairments or perception challenges. This presentation will explore the following key topics: What is Visual Perception?, Visual Perception Challenges, Educational Implications, Effective Strategies for Support, and Visual Education vs. Visual Therapy.

Wednesday, March 19, 2025
4:00-5:30 pm via Zoom

The Family Engagement Community of Practice & Learning is for educators, families, caregivers, and others who want to see improvement in family engagement across the state of Wisconsin. Come join us!

Register at: <https://shorturl.at/vNDRy>

Registration Questions: Contact Amy Elfner, WSPEI Program Support at wspei@cesa12.org

Session Questions? Contact Cheri Sylla, WSPEI Statewide FE Coaching Coordinator at csylla@cesa1.k12.wi.us



*The Wisconsin Statewide Parent-Educator Initiative, WSPEI (CFDA#84.027) acknowledges the support of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction in the development of this website and for the continued support of this federally-funded contract project. There are no copyright restrictions on this document; however, please credit the Wisconsin DPI and support of federal funds when copying all or part of this material. [34 CFR Sec.75.620]

News, Information and Resources

Wisconsin DPI closely monitors all actions at the federal government daily. For any actions that may impact local school communities, I encourage you to check in on the [DPI News Releases webpage](#) regularly to see updates from DPI as we learn more about any federal actions that may impact schools. You can also find past communications that DPI sends to district leaders at the DPI [Administrators Mailings webpage](#) and DPI's [Public Statements News Room](#).

In addition, the following was also posted from our agency that I think you will find helpful for your questions in your original inquiry in the below email. [Supporting Wisconsin Schools and Students Amid Recent Executive Orders | Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction](#)

Want to stay informed?

Visit the [DPI News Room](#)



Information about ACT 20

Act 20 is a law created to ensure each child attending a public school (including independent charter schools) is able to read proficiently by the end of 3rd grade. To achieve this goal, Act 20 requires schools to provide high quality, science-based early literacy instruction and interventions and to monitor early literacy skill development for all students in grades 5K-3.

Learn more at these DPI webpages:

[ACT 20 and Students with IEPs](#)

[ACT 20 Resources](#)



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: [2024-2025 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](#).



Special Needs Scholarship Program

The Special Needs Scholarship Program (SNSP) allows a student with a disability, who meets certain eligibility requirements, to receive a state-funded scholarship to attend a participating private school. Learn more [HERE](#)

WI FACETS

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. Check out the WI FACETS [Training Calendar](#), WI FACETS [Webinar Recordings](#) as well as WI FACETS [resources webpages](#).

The March Newsletter provides information and resources about Early Childhood:

[March Newsletter - English](#)

[March Newsletter - Spanish](#)

Wisconsin Conferences

[Celebrating Abilities](#)

This is a forum designed to empower families of children with disabilities. Celebrating Abilities will feature workshops, resources, and opportunities to connect with other families, experts, and community organizations supporting special education and inclusion. While this event is sponsored by Milwaukee Public Schools, anyone can attend.

[English and Spanish Flyer](#)

Date: March 8, 2025, 8:30am-1:30pm

Location: Marshall High School, 4141 N. 64th St., Milwaukee, WI 53216

[36th Annual Autism Conference](#)

This statewide conference brings the autism community together to learn, connect, and belong. It's a place where autistic adults, parents and family members, and professionals come to share experiences and learn together.

Dates: April 3-5, 2025

Location: Kalahari Convention Center, Wisconsin Dells, WI

Annual Wisconsin "Staycation" and Autism Summit

Call for Presenter proposals - [click here to submit](#)

We encourage all interested individuals and organizations within the Autism community to submit their proposals for this exciting event. This conference aims to be a valuable resource for attendees, and we look forward to reviewing your submissions.

Deadline for Proposal Submissions: Friday, April 11, 2024

Dates: July 11-12, 2025

Location: Wilderness Resort, Wisconsin Dells, WI

Mark your Calendars for the 2025 Endless Possibilities conference!

[Endless Possibilities Conference Wisconsin | WI FACETS](#)

Keynote: Mike Hipple ([WI AAC Network](#))

Bridging Success: Empowering Diverse Learners

Through accommodations, technology and innovation, educators and families can help students thrive in school and prepare for success after school. We will learn about Augmentative and Assistive Communication, how to support engaged readers, and learn what others are doing to support positive outcomes for students with disabilities to achieve their goals.

Date: Tuesday, August 5, 2025, 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Location: Waukesha Area Technical College, Pewaukee, WI

Interested in presenting at the conference? <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZM9M2YM>

- Please submit your proposal by Thursday, February 20, 2025

Self-Determination by Design: Your Life, Your Way

Dates: October 20 - 22, 2025

Location: Kalahari Resort, Wisconsin Dells, WI

For more information, visit: www.sdc.wi-bpdd.org

Registration Opens: July 1, 2025

Save the Date and mark your calendars now!

2025 Children Come First Conference

Dates: November 3rd-4th, 2025

Location: Kalahari Resort • Wisconsin Dells, WI

[Website](#)

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.

It's 4K and 5K Enrollment Season!

Check with your local school district for enrollment procedures and requirements!

Wisconsin Stat. Sec. 121.02(1)(d), requires all Wisconsin school districts to offer five-year-old kindergarten (5K), school districts have the option of offering four-year-old kindergarten (4K). If they offer 4K, they must make it available to all age-eligible 4-year-olds.

Additional information regarding attendance expectations, home school and 5K and readiness for Kindergarten is available on the [Frequently Asked Questions: Four- and Five-Year-Old Kindergarten](#).

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires young children with disabilities to be educated to the maximum extent appropriate with children who are nondisabled and ensures access to the general curriculum or age-appropriate activities so children with disabilities can meet the educational standards that apply to all children.

This [DPI Bulletin](#) provides information and guidance around what pre-school might look like for children with a disability.

A continuum of alternative special education placements must be available to meet the special education and related services needs of preschool children with disabilities, including:

- Regular education: designed for and serving 50% or more children without disabilities (such as Head Start, child care, public or private kindergarten);
- Special education: separate class, separate school, residential setting;
- Home or service provider location; or
- Any combination of the above.



Spring



will be



here soon!

PACER Center

From our neighbors in Minnesota!

New resources have been added to PACER's Disability Advocacy Tips video series. They cover the topics of addressing challenging behaviors, bullying, and placement changes for special education.

The videos are available in English, Spanish, and Somali.

Accompanying tip sheets are available in the video descriptions.

Videos:

- [Disability advocacy tips for families](#)
- [Disability advocacy tips for families \(Spanish\)](#)
- [Disability advocacy tips for families \(Somali\)](#)

There may be Wisconsin-specific forms or differences as this was developed by a Parent Training and Information Center in another state. This project is funded by the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

Wisconsin Family Voices

March and April Events

Many March 2025 Learning Opportunities can be found on the [Events Calendar!](#)

You will find dates and registration on the calendar too!
Each family has a voice. Together, our voices will be heard.

Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities

March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month!

Get information about Wisconsin events in the [March Newsletter](#)

Wisconsin School for the Deaf

Open House!
Friday, May 9, 2025 9:30 am - 2:30 pm
309 W.Walworth Ave. Delavan WI

Any interested families are encouraged to register by April 21, 2025
[Register for Open House](#)



WSD OPEN HOUSE

WHO:	ANY POTENTIAL NEW STUDENT AND THEIR FAMILIES
WHAT:	CAMPUS TOURS PROGRAM INFO MEET THE STAFF
WHERE:	WISCONSIN SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF 309 W.Walworth Ave. Delavan WI
WHEN:	FRIDAY, MAY 9, 2025 9:30-2:30 <small>REGISTRATION REQUIRED BY APRIL 21, 2025</small>

CLICK OR
SCAN TO REGISTER



Wisconsin Sibs

Teen Leadership Retreat!

We are thrilled to introduce the Teen Sib Leadership Retreat for 2025, an exciting new program designed for teenage siblings of children with disabilities. This retreat will provide a unique opportunity for teens, ages 13-17, to develop leadership skills, make new friends, and enjoy a fun and supportive environment.

June 29 - July 1, 2025
JCC Rainbow Day Camp
W3985 Trails End Rd
Fredonia, WI 53021

The cost of the retreat is \$150 per teen, with a required \$50 deposit upon registration.

To ensure a great experience for all participants, we have an application process in place. Interested teen sibs must complete the leadership application form, which will be reviewed by our team. Upon acceptance, a registration link will be sent to finalize their participation. Please encourage your teen to apply early, as spots are limited.

Information and Support from The WSPEI Project

Are you looking for information, resources or support 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](#)



The WSPEI Project

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

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

Facebook:

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

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The WSPEI Project

Develop Strong Relationships - Build Effective Partnerships

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