



The WSPEI Connector

May 2025

 **Communicating information and resources for Wisconsin Families and Educators**



Spring Has Sprung 🌻

And the warm sunshine sure feels good!

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and in this issue, we're highlighting important resources and eye-catching flyers for you to share with your networks. The WI FACETS newsletter is also centered around this important topic.

We're continuing our series on the **Transition to Adulthood**, with this month's focus on **Post-Secondary Education and Training**. This topic will carry into next month and likely continue in future newsletters, as we explore more aspects of this crucial life event.

As the school year winds down, there are still many opportunities to stay connected and engaged over the summer. You'll find a variety of upcoming events and activities featured throughout this newsletter.

Thank you for taking the time to read our monthly edition. We always welcome your ideas for special education topics or local events that we can share with families and educators across Wisconsin. How you can contact us are at the bottom of the newsletter.

Wishing you joy and renewed energy during our beautiful Wisconsin spring!

~The WSPEI Project Team





Networking Opportunities with The WSPEI Project

One more month of gatherings before our break for summer!

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](#)

**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](#)

Family Engagement Community of Practice & Learning

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](#)

Indicator 8 Family Engagement Survey

The Survey is open until June 30, 2025

Thank you to all the families who have responded and completed the survey providing valuable feedback to your school district!

Families who have not had a chance to do so yet, please complete it if you have received a letter! If your school is in the survey cycle (find out in link below) and you have questions, you can contact staff you know at your child's school or:

Cheri Sylla, WSPEI Statewide Coaching & Indicator 8 Coordinator
262.787.9500, ext. 9565

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](#).

Summary and Highlights from the 2023-2024 Indicator 8 Survey

Wisconsin Indicator 8 Family Engagement Survey - Supporting Students with IEPs
[Open-Ended Comments & Closed-Ended Summary Report 2023-24](#)

Wisconsin Indicator 8: Family Engagement Open-Ended Comments Summary 2023-24

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) conducts an annual Family Engagement Survey to assess parent involvement in special education services.

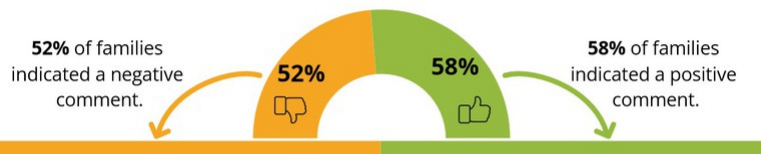
4,352

Number of families who participated in the survey



1,037 (24%)

Number of families who provided open-ended feedback



AREAS OF CONCERN

26% of families indicated that Staff-Parent Relationship was an area of concern.

21% of families indicated that IEP-related process/progress/implementation was an area of concern.

STRENGTHS

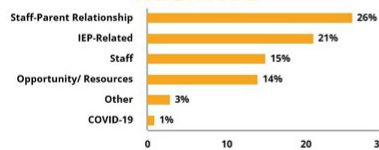
42% of families indicated that Staff-Parent Relationship was a strength.

20% of families indicated that IEP-Related process/progress was a strength.

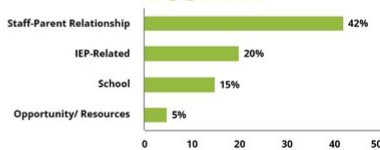
THEMES

PERCENT OF FAMILIES WHO MENTIONED A THEME

NEGATIVE



POSITIVE



THEMATIC DETAILS

NEGATIVE

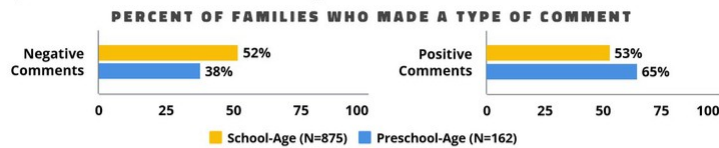
- Inconsistent communication between school and parents
- Delayed responses to parent inquiries
- Limited parent involvement in decision-making
- Gaps in regular progress updates
- Compliance issues with IEP requirements
- Delays in service implementation
- Lack of student progress
- Limited understanding of IEP content by staff

POSITIVE

- Strong collaboration between staff and parents
- Effective communication channels
- Supportive and caring staff attitudes
- Prompt response to parent concerns
- Effective implementation of IEP goals
- Notable student progress
- Well-structured support systems
- Appropriate accommodations and modifications

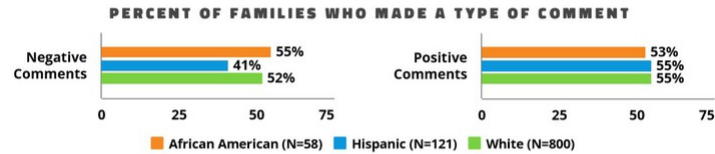
SURVEY TYPE

Families of children in preschool are more likely to make a positive comment and less likely to make a negative comment than families of school-age children.



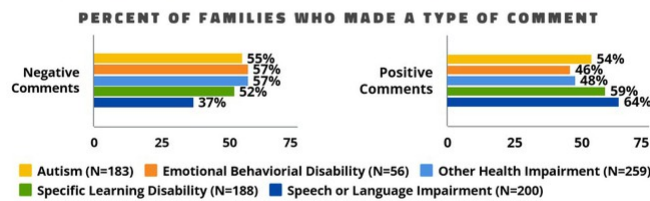
RACE/ETHNICITY

Positive sentiment is similar across families of children of different race/ethnicities. Families of Hispanic children are less likely to make a negative comment than families of children of other race/ethnicities.



DISABILITY

Families of children with Speech/Language Impairment are more likely to make a positive comment and less likely to make a negative comment than families of children with other disabilities.



SUMMARY

Interestingly, the two themes of staff-parent relationship and IEP-related process/progress/implementation represent both the top two strengths and the top two areas of concern.

POTENTIAL NEXT STEPS



Conduct a root cause analysis as to why perceptions vary among families to determine specific factors contributing to positive and negative experiences.



Identify districts or schools with positive feedback on these two themes and share and scale best practices.



WIFACETS

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](#).

This month's Family Engagement Newsletter has a focus on Mental Health and Youth Suicide Prevention.

[May Newsletter Spanish](#)

[May Newsletter English](#)

Mental Health Matters from Understood

[Understood for Families Newsletter](#)

Wisconsin's Office of Children's Mental Health

Children's Mental Health Week 2025, May 4 - May 11

Our focus this Children's Mental Health Week is simple, but so important – **Listen to youth**. Everywhere, from intentionally inviting their opinions on things that affect them to one-on-one opportunities for conversation and connection, seeking youth voice matters.

Below are a number of fantastic flyers and infographics for you to use and distribute to your networks:

New Flyers - Wisconsin Students Spoke, We Listened

Top Stressors - Academic pressure and achievement culture topped the list, but there are many other issues stressing our teens. See the new flyer [here](#).

Mental Wellness - Youth tell us what they need for a strong foundation in mental wellness. See the new flyer [here](#).

Increasing Youth Belonging - Youth share what makes them feel connected to their school. See the new flyer [here](#).

Starting Early - Youth agree that addressing mental wellness should start earlier than high school. They share ideas on how. See the new flyer [here](#).

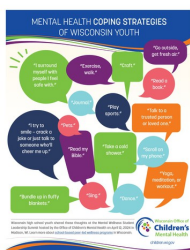
Youth Voice fosters mental well-being because it activates social skills, a sense of belonging and connection, and decision-making skills.

See our Data Bite on Youth Voice [here](#). Share it among your networks.

See [Key Facts in Youth Mental Health](#), a snapshot of the key children's mental health data indicators.

Youth share their tips on mental health coping strategies, from youth to youth. See those [here](#).

Fact Sheet on Understanding Boys Mental Health. See that [here](#).



Youth Coping Strategies



Youth Voice is Important



Teen Stressors

Wisconsin Conferences

Join others from around the state!

[2025 Wisconsin Employment First Conference](#)

May 19-20 Kalahari Resorts and Conference Center

Annual Wisconsin "Staycation" and Autism Summit

We're thrilled to invite you to the 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.

Dates: July 11-12, 2025

Location: Wilderness Resort, Wisconsin Dells, WI

Learn more on the [Conference Website](#)

[Register to Attend](#)

[2025 Endless Possibilities Conference](#)

Bridging Success: Empowering Every Learner!

Date: Tuesday, August 5, 2025

In person – Location: [Waukesha County Technical College, Pewaukee Campus](#)

[Registration is open!](#)

We also have limited space for Exhibit Tables: [Exhibit Registration](#)

This year we welcome Mike Hipple as our keynote speaker to share his first-hand experience and talk about technology and accommodations for students. We will also hear from young adults with lived experience in special education, delve into dynamic discussions around how to support engaged readers, learn what others are doing to support positive outcomes for students with disabilities to achieve their goals, and much more.

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

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.

Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities

Information and Resources about Post-Secondary Education and Training

Last month we began exploring the topic of Transition Planning for Youth age 14 - 21. If you did not have a chance to read the [APRIL NEWSLETTER](#), here it is for your reference.

This month we are dipping our toes into the topic of Post-Secondary Education and Training. While this isn't an exhaustive list of resources, it offers a helpful starting point for those on the journey.

If you are interested in have an in-depth conversation, contact your local WSPEI Family-School Partnership Coordinator: [WSPEI Contact Page](#)

Thank you Tim Markle at the Waisman Center and who wears many Transition hats for this quote: *"Transitioning to adulthood has so many pieces and parts. Be patient. Give yourself grace. Try to stay a step ahead."*

Transition Services

Transition services are services or activities in the PTP that assist the student in meeting their postsecondary goals. Transition services are defined as educational activities and supports designed to assist students with disabilities to achieve IEP goals and leave school prepared to reach their measurable postsecondary goals.

[Transition Services/Pre-ETS](#)

Start College Now

"Start College Now" will allow high school students school pupils that have completed 10th grade to have the opportunity to take college courses at Wisconsin Technical Colleges.

For more information visit the:

[Start College Now Website](#)

Work Based Learning

Different from a regular after-school job, work-based learning programs are K12 school supervised experiences that allow for a student to observe, train, and/or work with an employer to discover how knowledge learned in school is put into action, while gaining applicable worksite skills.

[Wisconsin Work Based Learning Programs](#)

Dual Enrollment

Dual Enrollment Options in Wisconsin Dual enrollment is a program wherein high school students can take college-level courses while still in high school. The student then earns credit towards their high school diploma while simultaneously earning college credits. There are many different options within this program. This resource will outline the different options and provide guidance on who to contact and resources to gather additional information.

[Dual Enrollment Options](#)

Think College

As the parent or family member of a young adult with intellectual disability (ID), you may have heard a bit about Think College or seen videos or articles describing how students with Down syndrome and other intellectual disabilities are attending colleges and universities all over the United States.

[Family Resources](#)

[Think College Resource Pack](#)

[College Search by State](#)

[List of Wisconsin Programs and Colleges for Students with an Intellectual Disability](#)

Supports In College

College is different from high school in a variety of ways. When you were in high school, a set of policies and procedures were followed to determine your eligibility for services. Postsecondary institutions have policies and procedures that are substantially different.

If you are planning to attend a college and you have a disability, you may be eligible for special services. These services are referred to as disability-related accommodations.

[What Supports Can I Expect in College?](#)

Opening Doors

This handbook is designed as a guide to help students and their families take another step in preparing for “life after high school.” While high school is an exciting time, what you do after high school can be just as exciting if you have done some careful and thoughtful planning:

[Opening Doors Handbook to Post-Secondary Education and Training](#)

Other Websites to Explore

Wisconsin Youth Health Transition Initiative: <https://healthtransitionwi.org/>

Think Ability Wisconsin: <https://www.thinkabilitywi.org/s/>

Got Transition: <https://www.gottransition.org/>

Center for Transition to Adult Health Care for Youth with Disabilities:

<https://movingtoadulthealthcare.org/toolkits/>

Transition Resource Fairs and Learning Opportunities

Wauwatosa School District Resource Fair

Wednesday, May 7, 2025

Time: 6:00-8:00PM

Wauwatosa West High School

11400 West Center Street

Wauwatosa, WI 53222

Information Flyer: [Wauwatosa School District Resource Fair](#)

Wisconsin School for the Blind and Visually Impaired Resource Fair

The Wisconsin School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (WSBVI) College and Career Resource Fair is an annual event that connects students with valuable resources and opportunities. This year, we're planning an even bigger and better event with more vendors and enhanced opportunities for connection. High school students with blindness/low vision and their families can expect to learn about resources to help in preparation for college, the workforce, and community living. The resource fair will be on Friday, May 16, 2025, from 9-11 a.m., at WSBVI, 1700 West State Street, Janesville, WI 53546. [Register here for WSBVI Resource Fair.](#)

Virtual Learning Opportunities:

[WIFACETS: Navigating Transition – Together](#) (Virtual)

- May 28, 12:00pm; During this transition training, participants identify what a self-determined life can look like, and describe how support can be given and accepted without losing autonomy.

[Health Care Transition for I/DD ECHO](#) (virtual) 11:30am-1:00pm

- **5/13 Mental Health Barriers and Options during the Transition to Adult Services;**
- 6/10 Health Care Transitions for those with Medical Complexity Funded by the [Center for Transition to Adult Health Care for Youth with Disabilities.](#)

- Learn more about this [Transition ECHO](#) and access recordings from past Transition ECHOs.

[Introduction to customized employment for young adults](#) (Virtual)

- May 14, 1:00-2:30pm; "Join us to hear ... about flexible employment options for young adults with disabilities."

Transition Table Talk

Brought to you by a group of Impassioned Parents and the Youth Health Transition Initiative

Transition Table Talk is casual, low-pressure online Zoom Chat where parents and caregivers can connect, share what's working, exchange ideas, ask questions, and support each other through the ups and downs of raising kids. No experts, no lectures-just families helping families.

- We meet on the 4th Wednesday of the month from 12-1:00 p.m.
- 5/28 -- How do we help our kids find their voice?;
- 6/25 -- Let's talk transition! What's on your mind?
- [Registration](#)
- [Transition Table Talk Flyer](#)

Events and Camps around the State of Wisconsin

Save the Date: 2025 Sensory Days at Noah's Ark Waterpark

Sensory Days are back at Noah's Ark Waterpark in Wisconsin Dells!

- Monday, June 9th
- Monday, July 14th
- Monday, August 18th

This year, the park is adding heated water in select areas and an incredible new Calming Room to enhance the experience.

More details coming soon!

Presented in partnership with the Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin and Autism Society of South Central Wisconsin. [Events Calendar](#)

SIBSHOP: Movie Morning! (In-Person) May 17, 9:00am-12:00pm; We will have lots of fun snacking on popcorn while we watch "Inside Out" at the Oregon Youth Center, 110 N Oak St, Oregon WI. Then take some time discussing different emotions that come with being a Sib." Sibshops are for kids aged 6-12 who have a sibling with disability, there is a registration fee of \$15

The WisconSibs Teen Sib Leadership Retreat

A unique opportunity for teens aged 13-17 who have siblings with disabilities. This retreat allows participants to connect with peers who share similar experiences, discussing the challenges and

rewards of being a teen sibling. Attendees will also learn to develop and enhance their leadership skills, drawing from their sibling experiences.

Registration is open until May 30th. We are running a fundraiser option, selling Mrs. Fields cookie dough to cover your registration. This fundraiser is available now through May 10th.

Follow the link below to register today!

[Link to Registration](#)

3:00 pm, Sunday, June 29 through 12:00pm, Tuesday, July 1

LOCATION:

JCC Rainbow Day Camp

W3985 Trails End Rd

Fredonia, WI 53021

Sankofa Midwest offers peer support that is designed by and led by Black parents for parent of Black children with special healthcare needs.

They hold monthly meetings every third Wednesday of the month 5:30pm CST via Zoom.

Upcoming meetings are **5/21** and **6/18**.

Zoom Link: <https://bit.ly/SankofaMeeting>

The Sky's the Limit STEM Camp

The goals of The Sky's The Limit STEM Camp are to broaden science opportunities for autistic youth through a camp that supports curiosity in a safe, supportive, and accessible learning environment; provide nature-based and interactive learning opportunities aimed at building interest and appreciation for STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics); and to embrace neurodiversity and the associated unique thinking and learning of autistic youth through flexible teaching strategies.

The camp is open to all autistic youth within grades 5-12. That includes youth with a medical diagnosis, self-diagnosis, or suspected diagnosis

- [Link to Camp Calendar](#)
- Visit the [Camp Website](#) for Registration Information

From Independence First - June 2025 Events

- [2025 Youth Leadership Summit Flyer](#)
- [Women's Financial Education Series Flyer](#)

Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities:

[May Newsletter](#)

Wisconsin Family Voices

[May Newsletter](#)



Teachers Light the Way to Brighter Futures

Teacher Appreciation Week: May 5-9, 2025

Teachers illuminate paths of knowledge, guiding students toward limitless possibilities. From morning greetings and classroom discussions to after-school support and thoughtful feedback, teachers shine their light on every aspect of student growth and development. Each day, they spark curiosity, kindle creativity and brighten the future for every student in their care.

Join us in celebrating these remarkable educators during Teacher Appreciation Week, **May 5-9, 2025**.

The WSPEI PROJECT

Visit our Website for information about what we do!

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

Use the link to our Support Request form below to request help!
Information provided on this form allows us to quickly connect you to your local

WSPEI Family-School Partnership Coordinator:

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



Share with others! Do you have a topic you want to know more about? 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>

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 project.



The WSPEI Project

[Contact](#)

[Subscribe](#)

