

The WSPEI Connector

May 2026

Communicating Information and Resources for Wisconsin Families and Educators

The "busy season" is officially here, and the month of May is bursting with milestones and celebrations!

While we're all starting to daydream about warm summer months, there's still plenty of great things to accomplish in this school year. We have some wonderful opportunities to connect, learn, and finish strong together.

Here is what's happening this month:

- **Family, Youth, & Community Engagement Network:** We've lined up a fantastic topic for our May gathering! You can find all the details in the WSPEI Section below.
- **Family Support Community Network:** It's time for our final meetings of the season. Come join us as we reflect on the year's journey and celebrate everything we've accomplished
- **Resource Roundup:** We've gathered the latest newsletters from our partners, along with handy resources to help you get a head start on preparing for next year.

A Heartfelt Thank You

To our incredible **Wisconsin Teachers and Mothers:** we know how precious your time is, especially right now. Thank you for spending a few of your rare, quiet moments with us. We truly appreciate everything you pour into the success of the children of our state every single day.

Enjoy this issue of *The Connector!*



The WSPEI Program Statewide Learning and

Networking Events

WSPEI Statewide Learning and Networking Opportunities

WSPEI Learning Workshops have wrapped up for the 2025-2026 school year!

Our Fall 2026 Training schedule will be published in the coming weeks!

The month of May does have one more chance to connect at our **Family Support Community and Family, Youth & Community Family Engagement Network**.

Details to join those gatherings is below

Stay up to date on WSPEI events by signing up for our [email list](#) for the monthly newsletter and event notifications.

[Calendar of Events](#)

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](#)

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.

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](#)

May FYCE Network Topic: The Family-School Connection: Enhancing Communication and Community

Wednesday, May 20, 2026 from 4:00-5:30 pm Via Zoom

Schools connect with families through a variety of channels, ranging from newsletters and websites to mass notification platforms and classroom apps.

But how do we ensure this communication is truly effective, supportive and two-way?

Join us for this virtual session to explore **current communication channels, share best practices, and discuss how to improve dialogue regarding student success, discipline, attendance, and upcoming school activities.**

Come ready to share your ideas and experiences from this school year as we learn to build more transparent, meaningful connections between home and school.

- If you are new to this Network, you can **register here:** <https://forms.gle/6VwbHUxh8hJt7xgZ9>
- If you have already registered during this school year, you will receive a reminder email with the Zoom Meeting information prior to the meeting! No need to register again!
- For more information please contact: Cheri Sylla at csylla@cesa1.k12.wi.us

Family, Youth, & Community Engagement Network

May 20, 2026



The Family-School Connection: Enhancing Communication and Community

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Via Zoom

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Register at: <https://forms.gle/6VwbHUxh8hJt7xgZ9>

For more information please contact: Cheri Sylla at csylla@cesa1.k12.wi.us

The Family, Youth, & Community Engagement Network is for educators, families, caregivers, and others who want to see improvement in family engagement across the state of Wisconsin. Learn from experts in the field, participate in book studies and other learning opportunities designed for educators, parents, families, and others. **Come join 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 grant program. 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]

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Extended School Year (ESY)

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction provides information and answers to questions regarding Extended School Year (ESY).

ESY services are required, special education and related services provided beyond the limits of the school term, in accordance with the child's IEP, and at no cost to the parents. These services are necessary in order to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

- [Information Update Bulletin 10.02 Extended School Year \(ESY\) Services for Children with Disabilities](#) distinguishes between **required ESY services and permissive summer school**. The bulletin also defines the requirements for permissive summer school programs.
- Additional information about ESY can be found in the [Special Education in Plain Language beginning on page 35](#).
- [WI FACETS Webinar IEP 9: IEP Revisions & Extended School Year](#) addresses ESY beginning at 22 minutes and 30 seconds.

Resource - Re-Entry with Care Guide

The WI Department of Public Instruction has put together a planning tool designed to guide schools in supporting students returning after an absence related to health and well-being. The transition back to school following hospitalization for a suicide attempt, suicidal ideation, or mental health crisis is a critical period for students and requires thoughtful, coordinated support. Schools play a vital role in creating a safe, supportive, and structured environment that fosters both emotional recovery and academic reintegration. Close collaboration between **students, families, hospital and mental health providers, and school staff is essential**. It is important for schools to assess each student's needs on an individual basis, taking into account their age, developmental level, and unique circumstances.

Additionally, schools must recognize and address the barriers that historically marginalized communities may face in accessing mental health support, such as cultural and linguistic differences, trust and safety concerns, and lack of representation or discrimination.

Click this link for the [Re-Entry with Care](#) guide.



Resource Reminder: Social and Emotional Learning Competencies and Trauma Sensitive School Resources

DPI has several resources that can be used to support special education evaluations, IEP development, and IEP implementation as well as provide universal support to all students. The [Wisconsin Social and Emotional Learning Competencies](#) provide information on knowledge and skill development Pre-K to Adult and can be a helpful tool in identifying a student's present levels of functional skills in the area of social and emotional learning.

In addition, the *Trauma Sensitive Schools Online Professional Development Modules* can provide information on effective intensive services to address a variety of disability-related needs in the areas of cognitive problem solving, academic interventions, emotional and physical regulation, as well as strategies of de-escalation for behaviors that interfere with learning.

Additional information on ways to use these resources can be found on the DPI [Social and Emotional Learning Competency webpage](#) and [Trauma Sensitive Schools webpage](#).



Updated Date for ADA requirements

On April 20, the Department of Justice (DOJ) officially extended the compliance deadlines for the new ADA Title II website accessibility rules. The deadline for most school systems has shifted to April 26, 2028. However, the deadline for state agencies and larger entities (including DPI and CESA 1) has shifted to April 26, 2027. While these extensions provide more planning time, DPI will continue its website modernization efforts to ensure digital content meets these new standards.

WI FACETS

May Newsletter and Annual 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 May Edition of the *WI FACETS Family Engagement Newsletter* highlights bullying and its effects on children's mental health.

[Link to May Newsletter in English](#)

[Link to May Newsletter in 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](#)

Wisconsin Conferences

Children Come First 2026 Conference Theme: *Every Child Belongs*

Save the Date:

- **Dates:** November 16-17, 2026
- **Location:** Kalahari Resort, Wisconsin Dells

Every Child Belongs invites us to imagine and build communities where children feel welcomed, valued, and connected. This theme centers belonging as foundational to children's well-being and growth, and encourages speakers to share ideas, practices, and lived experiences that honor children's identities, amplify their voices, and create spaces where every child is truly seen, heard, and valued.

Do you have lived experience, professional expertise, or a role in policy or systems change surrounding children's mental health? We invite you to submit a proposal to speak at the 2026 Children Come First Conference! Share your expertise with hundreds of attendees including parents, caregivers, social workers, mental health professionals, and educators.

Click this link to submit a proposal: <https://www.ccfconference.org/event/ec652757-814a-4d45-9710-5fccf223dc3e/summary>

Submit by May 6, 2026

Visit the [Conference Website](#) for additional information

[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 has closed.

[2026 WI FACETS Endless Possibilities Conference](#)

Focus on: Advocacy in Education and Beyond!

Date: August 7, 2026, 8:30 - 3:00

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

Registration fee is \$50 per person * Exhibitor options available

[Link to Conference Website](#)

REGISTRATION IS OPEN!!

[Click this link for Participant Registration](#)

[Click this link for Exhibitor Registration](#)

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.

Are you ready to advocate for a future without limits? This conference brings together a powerful collective of voices to provide you with the tools for success at every stage of the journey.

Featured Highlights:

- Keynote: Adult self-advocates on "Navigating and Advocating"
- Closing Address from [Dr. Jill Underly](#) - State Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Raising Adults: A parent panel on life after school
- Student Voice Matters! Unlocking Opportunities with Self-Advocacy Skills
- Voices of the Future: A teen-led session on "Getting the Care You Need"
- The Power of Parent Advocacy with Learn in My Shoes
- Rightful Presence: Creating a Sense of True Belonging and Inherent Value in our Schools

**Complete with youth-led entertainment to power up the atmosphere, this event is a testament to the power of self-advocacy.

**Teacher Appreciation Week | Monday, May 4 - Friday, May 8,
2026**

We hope you'll leave inspired and empowered with actionable tips to better support the caregivers in your life. Plus, discover how Wisconsin employers are successfully meeting the growing needs of caregivers in their workplaces while helping their businesses thrive.

Family Voices

Future Ready - A workshop for Teens and their Families

Future Ready is a two day, interactive workshop to help teens and their families prepare for the move to adult life.

Dates: June 18-19, 2026

Location: Tundra Lodge, Green Bay, WI

Event Cost: \$350 per Person

Click this link for additional information: <https://familyvoiceswi.org/transition-workshop/>

Click this link to register: <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=z25Y2NFhDU6Grc9L9lWVWobUcteA7oBHrOUdmB9niYBUQkQxUzBSMFNERIFFTE5QTE1XUFpQOV02SS4u&route=shorturl>

CLTS Funding Information:

Future Ready is coordinated by Family Voices of Wisconsin, an approved organization in the state CLTS Provider registry. We encourage families to work with their teen's CLTS service coordinator to add this event to their service plan.

Contact Beth, beth@fvofwi.org for more information about this possibility.

Statewide May Learning Events

[Register for Events Here](#)

Friday, May 8, 11:30am - 12:30pm

Get Started: Navigating Systems of Support

Tuesday, May 19, 5:30pm - 6:30pm

Introduction to the Children's Long-Term Support Program

Wednesday, May 20, 12:00pm - 1:00pm

What's After High School?

Wednesday, May 27, 12:00pm - 1:00pm

Medicaid Made Easy

Please Note: We won't be sending updates about our Learning Opportunities over the summer, but the updates will return this fall.

Updated Resource from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services(DHS)

Preparing for Life as an Adult: Transition Planning for Youth

Transition from youth to adult services can be a big change. This guide is a great place to get started!

Click this link to go to a pdf of the updated book!

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p00413a.pdf>

Welcome

Youth transition, also called transition planning, is a process for teens with health care needs or disabilities. It helps you plan for your future and shift from getting youth services to adult services. Transition planning can start as early as age 14.

During transition planning, you share what is important to you. You learn what options are available to you as an adult. You also decide what support will be most helpful. Many changes in services happen by age 18.

Six months before you turn 18, you may start working with your local ADRC (aging and disability resource center) or Tribal ADRC (aging and disability resource specialist).

Visit or contact your local ADRC or Tribal partner agency today

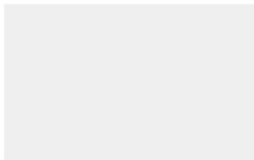


Contact us:

555 Example Street Name
City Name, WI 55555

Monday–Friday
8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
1-844-WIS-ADRC
(1-844-941-2372)

name@namecounty.gov
namecounty.gov/adrc



Scan me
FindMyADRC.org



Preparing for Life as an Adult: Transition Planning for Youth



The Transition Planning for Youth guide book

The transition from youth to adult services can be a big change. Your ADRC or Tribal ADRC is here to help make it easier for you and your family. This guide is a place to start.



Download your own Preparing for Life as an Adult: Transition Planning for Youth (P-00413a) guide book, available in various languages.

dhs.wisconsin.gov/library/collection/p-00413a

Accommodations and materials in alternate formats are available upon request. Please call to arrange for interpreters or captionists.

Guide topics walk you through:

- Getting ready for transition to adult services.
- Understanding the youth in transition timeline.
- Connecting with ADRC, Tribal ADRC, and disability benefit specialists.
- Learning who are transition partners.
- Preparing to make legal decisions.
- Planning for health care transition.
- Accessing Social Security benefits.
- Accessing public benefits.
- Obtaining jobs and employment.
- Securing housing.
- Advocating for resources.
- Considering adult long-term care programs.

Learn more about the transition process

- **Transition Planning for Youth**
dhs.wisconsin.gov/clts/transition.htm
- **Transition Action Guide**
dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/policy-guidance/toolkits-guides-manuals/transition-action-guide/
- **WiTransition App**
witig.org/self-advocacy-tools/witransition-app/

If you have questions, contact your local ADRC or Tribal partner agency.

New from Disability Rights Wisconsin(DRW) - The DRW Quarterly!

A new newsletter!

The DRW Quarterly is a newsletter designed to keep you informed about all things happening at Disability Rights Wisconsin. The Quarterly will cover DRW's work with people with disabilities in the state, how community members like you power DRW's impact, upcoming events, and so much more!

Click this link to subscribe to DRW updates:

<https://disabilityrightswi.salsalabs.org/GeneralMailingListSignup/index.html?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=5e8f10df-68ee-4a7f-84bb-02894aefd59f>

Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities

May Newsletter and Opportunity to Comment

[Link to May Newsletter in Spanish](#)

[Link to May Newsletter in English](#)

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](#)

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

Parents United

FREE Workshop: The ROUTINES RULE! Framework

Participants will explore the “ROUTINES RULE!” framework to design a customized, role-specific plan that maximizes efficiency and fosters responsibility in both children and adults.

Presented by Linda Armas, author of "The Freedom Routine".

Join us to learn how to minimize daily challenges while enhancing your professional and personal relationships.

Click this link to REGISTER: <https://cesa1.app.neoncrm.com/np/clients/cesa1/event.jsp?event=9094&>

DATE: Wednesday, May 20 | 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

LOCATION: In-Person, CESA 1

N25 W23131 Paul Road, Pewaukee

[Click this link for Information Flyer](#)

Looking Ahead to Next Year

Transition Resources for Families, Teachers and Students

The end of the school year is such an exciting time to celebrate, but it can also stir up nervousness and curiosities about next year!

This is especially true if you're getting ready to move to a new school this fall—whether you're headed to kindergarten, middle school, high school, or even college.

Even though spring has just arrived it's not too early to wonder about things like:

- **Will the classes be much harder?**
- **How does my child make new friends?**
- **Where is the lunchroom? How will my child learn their hot lunch code?**
- **Is my child eligible for the Free and Reduced School Lunch Program?**

- How will I keep track of all my/my child's homework?
- Will I be able to open my locker? What are options for my child's locker location?

The great news is that you don't have to figure it all out alone. There are lots of helpful tips and guides online for everyone—students, parents, and teachers—to help make the move to your next big adventure a smooth one.

Check out these tools to help you get ready for your next milestone in the K-12 journey and beyond:

[How to Help Your Child Transition From Kindergarten to First Grade](#): Entering elementary school can be intimidating for young children. This article, from the Children's Literacy Initiative, offers some conversation starters and ideas for easing the transition.

[Parenting Guides from Today.com](#)

TODAY Parenting Guides provide benchmarks and tips for your child's academic, physical and social emotional growth.

[Tips for Parents on a Successful Transition to Middle School](#): Middle school is a time of incredible growth for adolescent students, and these years have an impact on helping students gain and develop their sense of independence. This article from GoodTherapy.org offers four comprehensive tips for helping middle schoolers grow socially and emotionally.

[Smooth Sailing to Middle School](#): Author Joy Jameson Lea of the Association for Middle-Level Education provides practical tips and advice for incoming middle school students and their parents, in this article.

Another useful source from AMLE for teachers: "[Welcoming Students to Middle School](#)."

[Ensuring Successful Transitions From the Middle Grades to High School](#): AdLit.org produced this blog post, which features expert recommendations and examples of what a successful transition program might look like. There is great information here for parents, administrators, and educators

[High School to College Transition -- Three-Part Series](#): This Huffington Post series from Brian Harke, Dean of Students at the University of Southern California, is a great primer for parents of incoming college freshmen. Harke covers how to put some realistic expectations in place, and he also touches on academics and social challenges.

[3 Things Everyone Should Know Before Growing Up](#): After graduation, many teenagers are in a rush to grow up and be considered an adult. This article from NPR offers a few interesting insights that would be beneficial for any recent graduate considering their next steps in life.



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SPECIAL NEEDS MOMS - A LOOK INSIDE

*You may think us "special moms" have it pretty rough.
We have no choice. We just manage life when things get really tough.
We've made it through the days we thought we would never make it through.
We've even impressed our own selves with all that we can do.*

*We've gained patience beyond measure, love we never dreamed of giving.
We worry about the future but know this "special" life's worth living.*

*We have bad days and hurt sometimes, but we hold our heads up high.
We feel joy and pride and thankfulness more often than we cry.*

*For our kids, we aren't just supermoms. No, we do so much more.
We are cheerleaders, nurses, and therapists who don't walk out the door.
We handle rude remarks and unkind stares with dignity and grace.
Even though the pain they bring cannot be erased.*

*Therapies and treatment routes are a lot for us to digest.
We don't know what the future holds but give our kids our best.
None of us can be replaced, so we don't get many breaks.
It wears us out, but to help our kids, we'll do whatever it takes.*

*We are selfless, not by choice, you see. Our kids just have more needs.
We're not out to change the world, but want to plant some seeds.
We want our kids accepted. That really is our aim.
When we look at them, we just see kids. We hope you'll do the same.*

Written by a mom – April Vernon


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 us

Email: wspei@cesa12.org

Website: www.wspei.org



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