



Family Engagement Newsletter

Developing a Fire Safety Plan for Your Child with Autism

By Wendy Overturf

April is National Autism Awareness Month. This is an excellent time for parents with a child with autism (ASD) to engage their family and local firefighters in developing a fire safety plan. As cited on the [Autism Society - Maine website](#), it is an unfortunate fact that individuals with autism are at high risk in situations involving fires. Children with autism have died in fires when they retreated to a favorite hiding place; others died when they retreated from an approaching firefighter, apparently frightened by the firefighter's appearance (masks, hoses, etc.). Some children with ASD have escaped a fire, only to die after re-entering the dwelling to retrieve a prized object, not mindful of the danger they are placing themselves in by doing so. Having a plan in place and practicing that plan in advance helps ensure your child's safety.

The following are suggestions by Matt Brown, Law Enforcement Autism Information Specialist, Autism Society of Maine, to consider when developing a fire safety plan for your child with autism spectrum disorder.

- Be sure that a smoke detector is placed in or near your child's room, as well as on all levels of the home. Test those smoke detectors frequently to make sure they are in working order.
- Teach your child the basic fire safety tips (for example-stop, drop and roll; touching a door before opening it). This includes picking a gathering spot outside the home.
- It is imperative that one family member be specifically assigned the responsibility to get your child out of the home and to a place of safety.
- It is critically important that this person also stay with the child to ensure that he does remain safe and not re-enter the home to retrieve a favorite object. Remember that the individual with ASD may become overwhelmed with the lights, sirens, frantic activity and excessive stimuli and attempt to flee the situation.
- Be proactive by providing your local fire department with as much information as possible about your child. This includes giving them an information sheet that includes advising them of the location of the child's room and other places your child may flee in an emergency. Most fire departments would be happy to come to your home so that they can familiarize themselves with these locations.
- Visit the firehouse often, so that your child can see a firefighter with all their protective and firefighting gear, including the oxygen masks, axes and hoses, so that he/she can grow accustomed to them. Also, acquaint your child with medical equipment, such as stethoscopes, blood pressure cuffs, oxygen masks and stretchers, so that he is prepared in the event of a medical emergency.
- In the case of a non-verbal child, prepare a laminated card containing basic information about your child (including any allergies to medication) in case of a medical emergency.

Visit this [website](#) for an extensive list of related resources and tips on Fire Safety and Autism.

Statewide Events

[Sibling Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah Days at Blue Lotus Farm—West Bend](#)

Blue Lotus is offering two special days just for the brothers and sisters of individuals with special needs. This is their day to enjoy time away from life's daily challenges. Activities will include: nature walks, live animals, snacks & lunch, pond exploration, bonfire and more.

Dates: April 6th & May 4th
Advance Registration Required
(262) 675.2473

[Autism Society of Wisconsin's 30th Annual Conference](#)

Providing relevant information for attendees at all levels. Keynote 4/12: "Interception, The Eighth Sense: Influence on Self-Regulation, Health and Emotional Well-Being."

Date: April 11-13, 2019

[WSPEI's Family and Community Engagement Summit 2019 – Supporting Families of Students with IEPs](#)

The speaker for the day is Karen L. Mapp, EdD, Senior Lecturer, Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Topics Include: Effective Family Engagement for All Children; Effective Family Engagement Practices; Student Learning & Effective Family-School Partnerships.

Who Should Attend: Educators; School and program staff members; Community members and Partners; Parents; District leaders.

Date: April 12, 2019

Location: Park Hotel, Madison, WI

Statewide Events

[Racine County Special Needs Resource Fair](#)

Connect with a wide range of agencies serving children and young adults from birth to 21 and beyond, or connect with families who are experiencing the same concerns or issues as yours.

Date: April 12, 2019, 4-6:30 pm

Location: Waterford Union High School, Waterford, WI

[UW-Whitewater Early Childhood Conference](#)

The pre-conference workshop on 4/12 is "I Don't Remember Learning That": A Day to Reflect, Practice and Build Relationships with Other Early Childhood Providers as We Take on Some of the Big Topics." Speaker Robin Fox will tackle some of the pressing topics in early childhood education through information sharing, hands on activities, scenario work, and developing individual professional development plans. On 4/13, keynote speaker, Ann Terrell, will share some of the lessons learned on her leadership journey to becoming an award winning, effective, and inspiring leader.

Date: April 12-13, 2019

Location: UW-Whitewater

[Circles of Life Conference](#)

Wisconsin's annual conference for parents and family members who have children with disabilities and professionals who support them.

Date: May 2-3, 2019

Location: Holiday Inn – Convention Center, Stevens Point, WI

[Save the Date!](#)

[2019 Endless Possibilities](#)

[Conference: Supporting Students with Learning Disabilities](#)

8/2/19 Keynote : *Transforming the Impossible to Possible—My Journey from Special Education to Ph.D.*

Shawn Robinson, Ph.D. is the author of [Dr. Dyslexia Dude](#).

8/1/19 Pre-conference:
Youth Mental Health First Aid.

Date: August 1-2, 2019

Location: UW-Whitewater



At Home Learning Strategies



[Interactive Literacy Calendars](#)

Make literacy come alive every day of the year! The Reading is Fundamental website has new daily [calendars](#) that link to digital resources and reading activities designed to spark children's interest. You will find relevant and seasonal ideas with quick links to free book resources ready to print, download, or play on your mobile device. Easy to share and easy to use!

The ability to recognize and produce rhyming words is an important reading skill. Reciting nursery rhymes with your child is a great way to reinforce the concept of rhyming words. Try such favorites as "Jack and Jill" and "Humpty Dumpty." As your child has a basic concept of rhyming words, play rhyming games with her. Start out with words she already knows from her rhyming books. For example, if you are reading *The Cat in the Hat*, ask her for a word that rhymes with "cat."



[Spring Themed Books](#)

Celebrate the weather warming up with a book about Spring that you and your little one can read together. [19 Children's Books to Read This Spring](#)



[Earth Day—April 22, 2019](#)

Earth Day is an important day set aside to inspire appreciation for and awareness of the earth's environment. It is celebrated by people in different countries, all over the world, all sharing an appreciation of the planet and a dedication to protecting its natural resources. Explore the [Recycle City website](#). This site has several interactive games, as well as other activities and resources about reducing waste and energy use.

[Snap Some Pictures](#)

Take a walk outside, look for and take pictures of signs of Spring. Later, have your child write a short description of each picture. If your child is not yet writing, have them describe it to you to build vocabulary skills.



[Springtime Fun—Kid-Friendly Activities](#)

Cooking provides many learning opportunities for kids in a practical setting: literacy, math, following instructions, hygiene and safety, nutrition and life skills.



[Make Bird Nests](#)

[Springtime Chocolate Covered Popcorn](#)

[Deviled Egg Chicks](#)



[5 Jelly Bean Math Activities for Preschool and Kindergarten!](#)

[30 Simple Spring Outdoor Activities for Kids](#)

[50 Fun, Free Spring Activities](#)

Online Resources



[Center for Parent Information and Resources \(CPIR\)](#)

Extensive list of links to autism information & resources.

[Autism Navigator](#)

This website features a unique collection of web-based tools and courses that integrate the most current research in autism with an interactive web platform and lots of video footage showing effective evidence-based practices. It's intended for professionals as well as families.

[Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction](#)

Site has eligibility criteria for autism, information about trainings, and links to archived webinars. Sign up for the email autism newsletter which contains resources and updates relating to autism. Links to additional resources are also included on the site.

[Autism Society of Wisconsin \(ASW\)](#)

ASW is dedicated to improving the lives of all affected by autism in Wisconsin, promoting awareness and acceptance, advocating for individuals with autism, their families and those who work with them. ASW provides information and referral, family support, professional development, a free quarterly newsletter, monitors a peer support listserv, and sponsors annual Spring and Fall conferences. [ASW Conference](#)

[Autism Society of Southeastern WI \(ASSEW\)](#)

ASSEW works to increase public awareness about the day-to-day issues faced by people on the spectrum, advocate for appropriate services for individuals across the life span, and provide the latest information regarding treatment, education, research and advocacy.

[Autism Source](#)

The Autism Source, Resource Database, a product of the Autism Society of America, is the most comprehensive database of its kind. ASA employs a nationwide network of affiliates and collaborates with other autism organizations and professionals throughout the U.S. to ensure that the database continues to grow and is kept current with resource listings.

[Autism Speaks](#)

Autism Speaks is one of the world's leading autism science and advocacy organizations. It is dedicated to funding research into the causes, prevention, treatments and a cure for autism, increasing awareness of autism spectrum disorders, and advocating for the needs of individuals with autism and their families. Resources on this site include a section of [Tool Kits](#), which includes topics on Sleep Strategies for Teens with Autism Spectrum Disorder, Puberty and Adolescence Resource: A Guide for Parents, Tools for Successful Dental and Vision Exams and many more.

[My Autism Team](#)

A social network and online support group for parents who have children with autism.

[IRIS Center Modules](#)

The first module provides information on the early signs of autism spectrum disorder (ASD), as well as an overview of the difference between a medical diagnosis and an educational determination of ASD. The second module highlights strategies that have been shown to be effective in teaching appropriate behaviors and skills and decreasing inappropriate behaviors with children and youth with ASD.

[Family Engagement Newsletter Survey](#)



Is this newsletter a useful resource for you in your work and/or in your home? Please complete this [brief survey](#) and let us know. Thank you!



WI FACETS

Webinars
Trainings
Workshops

Event title links to information & registration for WI FACETS FREE workshops & webinars:

By phone, Sandra: 877-374-0511

All webinars 12:00—1:00 PM
(unless otherwise noted)

[WSEMS: Friendly and Productive IEPs](#)

Date: April 1, 2019

Presenters: Nissan Bar-Lev, CESA 7 and Courtney Salzer, WI FACETS

[Other Health Impairment \(OHI\) - Ways to Support Students](#)

Date: April 3, 2019

Presenter: Eva Kubinski, WI DPI

[Special Education Discipline Requirements](#)

Date: April 10, 2019

Presenter: Patricia Williams, WI DPI

[Pasos al Éxito para Comunicarse de Manera Efectiva con la Escuela de su Hijo](#)

Telephone Workshop

Date: April 11, 2019

Presenter: Nelsinia Ramos, WI FACETS

[Manifestation Determination and Expulsion](#)

Date: April 17, 2019

Presenter: Marge Resan, WI DPI

[Post Secondary Transition Planning](#)

Date: April 24, 2019

Presenter: Paul Sherman, WI DPI

[WSEMS: Dispute Resolution Options](#)

Date: May 6, 2019

Presenters: Nissan Bar-Lev, CESA 7 and Courtney Salzer

[Getting and Keeping Your First Job](#)

Date: May 7, 2019

Presenter: Matthew Zellmer, WI FACETS



Do you know that the U.S. Department of Education has an [Early Learning Newsletter](#)? Two articles of interest from the newsletter are highlighted below.

From the electronic newsletter you can now download the *40th Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2018*. The report includes national- and state-level exhibits about infants and toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities served under *IDEA* Part C and Part B. The data represent the reporting periods associated with fall 2016 or school year 2015–16. The report presents summaries of:

- findings and determinations resulting from Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) reviews of state implementation of *IDEA*;
- special education research conducted under Part E of the *Education Services Reform Act of 2002*;
- national special education studies and evaluations conducted; and
- the extent and progress of assessment of national activities related to determining the effectiveness of *IDEA* and improving its implementation.

Another featured article in the newsletter is the “Voices from the Field” Interview. In this issue the interview is with Kristie Kauerz, Director of the National P-3 Center. The P-3 Center focuses on the learning opportunities that young children experience from birth through 3rd grade.

Research to Read

Support, Inclusion, and Special Education Teachers’ Attitudes toward the Education of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders

Isabel R. Rodríguez, David Saldaña, and F. Javier Moreno, “Support, Inclusion, and Special Education Teachers’ Attitudes toward the Education of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders,” *Autism Research and Treatment*, vol. 2012, Article ID 259468, 8 pages, 2012.

[Article Link](#)

ABSTRACT: This study is aimed at assessing special education teachers' attitudes toward teaching pupils with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) and at determining the role of variables associated with a positive attitude towards the children and their education. Sixty-nine special education teachers were interviewed. The interview included two multiple-choice Likert-type questionnaires, one about teachers’ attitude, and another about teachers’ perceived needs in relation to the specific education of the pupil with ASD. The study shows a positive view of teachers’ expectations regarding the education of pupils with ASD. A direct logistic regression analysis was performed testing for experience with the child, school relationship with an ASD network and type of school (mainstream or special) as potential predictors. Although all three variables are useful in predicting special education teachers' attitudes, the most relevant was the relationship with an ASD network. Need for information and social support are the relatively highest needs expressed by teachers.

This monthly update is provided by the Wisconsin Family Assistance Center for Education, Training & Support (WI FACETS) to share statewide information regarding parent leadership and family involvement. *If you would like to receive this monthly update or if you would like to have your name removed from the distribution list, contact: Wendy Overturf at woverturf@wifacets.org.*



Contributions to the Newsletter

Upcoming newsletter topic: May: Mental Health

June: ADD/ADHD

July: Speech and Language

To submit contributions of articles, events, or resources, you may use the attached word document. Send submissions to woverturf@wifacets.org. If unable to access form, you may send information in an email.

Material appropriate for the monthly newsletter include web links to sources of family involvement/parent leadership resources, advertisements for statewide trainings for parents, youth or parent/educator audiences, information about statewide parent agencies, recent research pertaining to family engagement, and family engagement success articles.



This document was produced under grants from the U.S. Dept. of Education (PTIC-#H328M150015) and WI Dept. of Public Instruction (#84.027/2019-M132-WIFACETS) to WI FACETS. The content does not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Dept. of Education, WI Dept. of Public Instruction, or WI FACETS. You should not assume endorsement by the U.S. Dept. of Education, WI Dept. of Public Instruction, or WI FACETS of any product, commodity, service or enterprise mentioned in this publication. U.S. Dept. of Education Project Officer, David Emenheiser; WI Dept. of Public Instruction Grant Director, Rita Fuller. This product is public domain. Authorization to reproduce it in whole or in part is granted. The citation should be: U.S. Dept. of Education, WI Dept. of Public Instruction, and WI FACETS, Milwaukee, WI, 2019.