

# Family Engagement Newsletter



## Family Engagement and Social Emotional Learning

By Wendy Overturf—(adapted from [article](#) by Leah Shafer, Harvard Graduate School of Education)

Social-emotional learning (SEL) involves learning skills such as the ability to manage emotions, to empathize, and to collaborate. When schools and families have shared behavioral expectations and a common language for SEL, it can be easier for the child to transition smoothly and be successful across multiple settings with many different adults.

### For Schools: SEL Practices That Engage Families

To engage families in SEL, teachers and school administrators shouldn't just send home packets and to-do lists. They need to create strong relationships, partner with families on goals for their children, and receive and provide ongoing support.

- **Start by learning about families.** Use surveys, open houses, or phone calls to find out about family composition, special skills, concerns, and likes and dislikes. This knowledge can help teachers connect with families on a personal level throughout the year.
- **Invite families to generate SEL goals for their children.** Ask families to identify what specific skills they would like their children to develop, and what kind of characteristics they would like their child to personify. Ask children, too, to write down their goals.
- **Create a resource center for families.** Schools should create a physical space where family members know they can go to pick up resources or books related to SEL. This designated space signals to parents that they are welcome at the school and that the school values their role in their children's development.
- **Plan ongoing SEL initiatives.** Create opportunities for families to learn more about social-emotional well-being.

### For Families: SEL Practices That Continue the Work of Schools

To build on the work of schools, families can use their everyday interactions to build critical competencies that will aid children throughout their day.

- **Focus on your child's strengths.** Especially when it comes to academics, it can be tempting to focus on problem areas. First, though, ask your child what she thinks she did well.
- **Use visual aids to help your child plan.** When something is new or hard for your child—completing homework, keeping his room clean—make visual reminders or step-by-step checklists that you can display prominently in your home.
- **Ask about feelings.** Together, talk about emotions—what it feels like to be frustrated, worried, or excited. The ability to identify and label negative emotions can grow self-awareness. Encouraging your child to use “I” statements — “I’m mad,” “I feel sad” — can help build self-control and communication skills, teaching her to pause and think when she's upset.
- **Stay calm when you're angry.** Learn to recognize your own “trigger situations” and talk about coping with anger as a family. Show your children how you calm down: i.e., “I’m feeling very upset, so I’m going to take a couple of deep breaths before we talk about this.”
- **Be willing to apologize.** When you do get upset, or make a mistake, apologize to your kids. Explain what you meant to do or say.
- **Encourage helping and sharing.** Regularly talk with your children about what others might need, and how they might help. These conversations build empathy, cooperation, and a community-oriented mind-set.

## Statewide Events

### [Children Come First Conference](#)

“Cooperation” is the theme of this conference for those caring for, working with, or concerned with the well-being of children and young adults with social, emotional, and behavioral challenges. Youth (ages 12-26) who have a social, emotional, behavioral, mental health or substance use challenge are invited to attend the keynote presentations, and then enjoy special youth-only sessions during workshop breakout times.

**Date:** November 11-12, 2019

**Location:** Glacier Canyon Lodge, Wisconsin Dells, WI

### [State Superintendent's Conference on Special Education & Pupil Services - Leadership Issues](#)

This conference provides local directors of special education and pupil services and other interested parties with opportunities to network with colleagues from around the state and consultants and administrators from the Division for Learning Support in the Department of Public Instruction. Presentations will include information about current issues and changes in state and federal policy related to meeting the needs of students with disabilities and students facing other challenges to success in school.

**Date:** November 14-15, 2019

**Location:** Glacier Canyon Lodge, Wisconsin Dells, WI

## Statewide Events

### [Supporting Neurodiverse Students Professional Learning System](#)

Trainings include regional training sessions, webinars, online discussion groups, book clubs, website resources, a needs assessment with accompanying toolkit and other professional learning opportunities to support educators serving students with disability-related needs in the areas of social and emotional learning including self-regulation, social communication, flexibility, resilience, sensory processing, and executive functioning. The training system is beneficial to educators supporting students with autism. These trainings are offered at no cost to parents of students with disabilities. See [flyer](#) for all dates and locations.

Upcoming Trainings:

#### [Flexibility and Resilience Training](#)

**Date:** November 5, 2019

**Location:** CESA 10, Chippewa Falls, WI

#### [Social Communication Training Workshop](#)

**Date:** November 20, 2019

**Location:** CESA 11, Turtle Lake, WI

### [Building the Heart of Successful Schools](#)

Highlights cutting-edge prevention, health, and wellness strategies in order to create positive school climates that build resilience and support students' behavioral and mental health.

**Date:** December 5-6, 2019

**Location:** Wilderness Resort and Glacier Canyon Lodge, Wisconsin Dells, WI

### [Advanced Training in Collaborative & Proactive Solutions:](#)

#### [Moving from Power and Control to Collaboration and Problem Solving Challenges](#)

[\(with Autism, ADHD, PDD-nos, Anxiety, Attention Deficits, Behavioral Issues & more\)](#)

In this two-day intensive training, Dr. Ross Greene will instruct educators and mental health clinicians on how to foster a collaborative partnership between adults and kids in engaging kids in solving the problems that affect their lives.

**Date:** December 12-13, 2019

**Location:** Best Western Premier, Neenah, WI



## At Home Learning Strategies

### Daylight Saving Time Ends

In most states, daylight saving time (DST) ends on November 3, 2019. Older children may enjoy this [video](#) about the history of DST.



### Veterans Day is November 11, 2019

This is the day our country honors the men and women who have served in the United States military. Older children can write a thank-you letter to a veteran. If you don't know a veteran, the letter could be sent to one of the Veterans Hospitals. Addresses for a Veterans Hospital in Wisconsin can be found [here](#).

### Chart the Weather

November is a time of changing weather. Get several different kinds of stickers and make a chart for your child to place a sticker each time it rains, snows, or each time it is sunny. At the end of a week, you can estimate together which column has more or less stickers and count how many to be sure.



### Check out your Local Library!

Thanksgiving is about more than the turkey! From Reading Rockets, here are [ten recommended books](#) for kids ages 0-9 that celebrate sharing, community, and family. Read these stories to the children in your life to help them see what the spirit of Thanksgiving is really all about.

### Thanksgiving Mad Libs for Kids

Mad Libs are a fun reading and writing activity for older children. Check out this [printable Thanksgiving mad lib](#). It would be a fun activity to do with family while waiting for Thanksgiving dinner to be done!

### Bubble Wrap Indian Corn

Kids of all ages can get involved in creating these raffia-tied corn cobs.



### Pumpkin Patch Pudding Cups

An adorable fall version of the always delicious chocolate dirt pudding.



*In preparation of Thanksgiving, sit down with your family and write down everything you're grateful for!*

Before they start school, most children develop an understanding of addition and subtraction through everyday interactions. Informal activities give children a head start when they start learning math in school. Have your child sort objects into bowls. It is even more fun if you use edibles and your child can enjoy a treat at the end!



Even young children can participate in cooking activities. Have them assist with holiday cooking and baking. They can help fill, stir, and pour. Through these activities, children learn, quite naturally, to count, measure, add, and estimate.

## Online Resources:

# EBD

Emotional Behavioral  
Disorder

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

This website has information about the definition, characteristics, causes, and frequencies of emotional and behavioral disorders. It also has brief information related to specific disorders. Links to numerous other resources are also included on the website. Also has a link to this information in Spanish.

### [Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction](#)

This website has an overview of services for children with an Emotional Behavioral Disability (EBD). It includes information on the eligibility criteria for EBD and has resources related to discipline for students with disabilities.

### [Wisconsin School Mental Health Framework](#)

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction has published a guide, “The Wisconsin School Mental Health Framework,” to help schools implement comprehensive systems for delivering and coordinating school mental health services. The “Wisconsin School Mental Health Framework” addresses all aspects of social-emotional development of school-age children, including wellness, mental illness, substance abuse, and the effects of adverse childhood experiences. It includes strategies for removing the stigma associated with mental illness and offers a continuum of supports as part of an integrated system for school mental health services.

### [National Institute of Mental Health](#)

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) is the lead federal agency for research on mental disorders. NIMH is one of the 27 Institutes and Centers that make up the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the largest biomedical research agency in the world. NIH is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The mission of NIMH is to transform the understanding and treatment of mental illnesses through basic and clinical research, paving the way for prevention, recovery, and cure.

### [Wisconsin Family Ties](#)

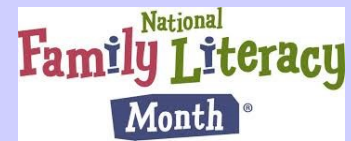
Wisconsin Family Ties (WFT) is a statewide nonprofit organization run by families for families with children and adolescents impacted by social, emotional, behavioral and mental health challenges. The [WFT Facebook page](#) has links to a variety of resources related to emotional behavioral disabilities.

### [Anxiety and Depression Association of America \(ADAA\)](#)

ADAA is an international nonprofit organization dedicated to the prevention, treatment, and cure of anxiety, depressive, obsessive-compulsive, and trauma-related disorders through education, practice, and research. Their mission focuses on improving the quality of life for children and adults affected with these disorders.

### [Behavior, Classroom Management, and Discipline](#)

This is a link to a webpage from the WI Department of Public Instruction. It includes frequently asked questions related to school discipline, including suspension and expulsion. It also includes a link to *The Wisconsin Response to Intervention (RtI) Center* which was formed by the Wisconsin PBIS Network in 2010 to help Wisconsin Schools use Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to increase student success.



Family literacy describes parents and their children learning together. Studies show that reading aloud with mom or dad is the most important activity when it comes to preparing children to read on their own. Reading helps with vocabulary, writing skills, attention span, memory, and teaches us about other times and places.

#### **Here are ways you can promote family literacy at home.**

- ◆ Set aside time each day for reading.
- ◆ Keep books visible around the house.
- ◆ Make regular visits to the library.
- ◆ Read the book version of your child's favorite movie.
- ◆ Organize a children's book club with friends in the neighborhood.

Reading books that match ability and interests exposes children to new worlds. Check out the [Kumon Recommended Reading List](#) for age-appropriate book selections.



Find [resources and activities](#) that can help your child become an engaged reader, including literacy adventure packs, themed booklists, author interviews, nonfiction resources, and more.

Use the [Reading Rockets Book Finder](#) tool to create your own customized list of fiction and nonfiction books. Search through more than 5,000 books on Reading Rockets — by author, illustrator, age, reading level, genre, format, and topic.

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 & Productive IEPs](#)

Date: November 4, 2019

Presenter: Nelsinia Ramos and Courtney Salzer, WI FACETS

#### [Supporting Literacy at Home during the School Year](#)

Date: November 7, 2019

Presenter: Jan Serak, Serak Consulting

#### [College and Career Ready IEPs](#)

Date: November 13, 2019

Presenter: Anita Castro, WI DPI

#### [Skills for Effective Parent Advocacy \(Spanish\)](#)

Date: November 14, 2019

Presenter: Nelsinia Ramos, WI FACETS  
To register, contact Nelsinia Ramos, (414) 374-4645, [nramos@wifacets.org](mailto:nramos@wifacets.org)

#### [IEP Checklist](#)

Date: November 19, 2019

Presenter: Matthew Zellmer, WI FACETS

#### [WSEMS: Dispute Resolution Options](#)

Date: December 2, 2019

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

#### [How to File an IDEA Complaint](#)

Date: December 4, 2019

Presenter: Anita Castro, WI DPI

#### [The Importance of Family Engagement in your Child's IEP Process](#)

Date: December 11, 2019

Presenter: Cheri Sylla, WSPEI



## Increasing Postsecondary Opportunities and Success for Students and Youth with Disabilities

The U.S. Department of Education has released a “[Questions and Answers](#)” document that describes how State educational agencies, local educational agencies, and State vocational rehabilitation agencies may coordinate to assist students and youth with disabilities, including students and youth with intellectual disabilities who are in high school and at postsecondary education institutions, through appropriate supports. Many of these supports are funded under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

### The document addresses the following topics:

- The opportunity for students with disabilities to enroll in postsecondary education programs while still in high school;
- The opportunity for students and youth with disabilities to enroll in comprehensive transition and other postsecondary programs for individuals with disabilities after leaving high school;
- The coordination of transition-related services that students with disabilities may receive under the IDEA and under the VR program; and
- The financial aid available to students with disabilities enrolled in comprehensive transition and postsecondary education programs for students with intellectual disabilities offered at Institutions of Higher Education under the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended.

## Research to Read

### Supportive Relationships and Active Skill-Building Strengthen the Foundations of Resilience

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2015). *Supportive Relationships and Active Skill-Building Strengthen the Foundations of Resilience: Working Paper No. 13.*

#### [Article Link](#)

**ABSTRACT:** The future prosperity of any society depends on a continuing investment in the healthy development of the next generation. The well-documented connection between adverse early experiences and a wide range of costly problems, such as lower school achievement and higher rates of criminal behavior and chronic disease, underscores the extent to which reducing the burdens of significant adversity on families with young children must be a critical part of that investment. That said, not all children exposed to stressful circumstances experience detrimental consequences. Science shows that children who do well despite serious hardship have had at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive adult. These relationships buffer children from developmental disruption and help them develop “[resilience](#),” or the set of skills needed to respond to adversity and thrive. This working paper explains how protective factors in a child’s social environment and body interact to produce resilience and discusses strategies that promote healthy development in the face of trauma.

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](mailto:woverturf@wifacets.org).*



## **Contributions to the Newsletter**

**Upcoming newsletter topics: December: Communication**

**January: Transition**

**February: Intellectual Disabilities**

*To submit contributions of articles, events, or resources, you may use the attached word document. Send submissions to [woverturf@wifacets.org](mailto: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.*

***The WI FACETS Family Engagement E-Newsletter  
can be found online at:***

***<https://servingongroups.org/resources>***



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