



Family Engagement Newsletter

Family Engagement and the IEP

By Wendy Overturf

On the newly revised College and Career Ready IEP forms (CCR IEP), the following question is posed to the IEP team.

"How will school staff engage parents/families in the education of the student (e.g., sharing resources, communicating with parents/families, building upon family strengths, connecting parents/families to learning activities, etc.)?"

The term "family engagement" is different from "family involvement." Family engagement goes beyond just involvement and participation. True engagement takes place when families and school staff work together, on an ongoing basis, to support and improve the learning and growth of students.

The Wisconsin Department of Education (DPI) has developed some guidance to help address family engagement and there is a large variety of options to engage families in the IEP. These are a few things that school districts might consider.

Connecting Families to Specific Skill Activities

- Summarize a few universal strategies to support literacy instruction in the home and community that were discussed at the IEP meeting
- Introduce fun learning games and/or activities that support student learning or help with generalization, fluency, or mastery of skills.
- Work with the family to understand what the child is expected to know or do at school, and help the family recognize what they are already doing at home to support their child's learning

Connecting Families to IEP Goals

- Summarize how parent(s) assisted in developing the student's goal(s) in the IEP.
- Summarize the discussion of a strategy used at school to support a goal that the parent feels might be used at home.

Connecting Families to Accommodations / Supports

- Summarize possible strategies of accommodating the student in home and/or community settings that is similar to how school accommodations.

Supporting Families Resources and Networking

- Provide the family with resources for support and/or networking with other families (ex: brochures on community and state resources such as [Regional Centers for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs \(CYSHCN\)](#), [WI FACETS](#), [WI Family Ties](#), [Autism Society WI](#), [Transition Improvement Grant](#), [Parent to Parent](#), [Family Voices of WI](#), [Alianza Latina](#), [WI Statewide Parent-Educator Initiative-WSPEI](#)) or conferences/events.
- Share information about family leadership, like [Serving on Groups](#)
- For transition aged students, provide family connections with state agencies (ex: [Division of Vocational Rehabilitation-DVR](#), [Promise Grant](#))

Additionally, the DPI has an "[Engaging Families](#)" website. There is a video on that site that outlines exemplary family engagement practices and a link to other communication resources that provide strategies districts can use to help shift thinking and practices from family involvement to true family engagement.

Statewide Events

[Project Search](#)

Project SEARCH is an exciting transition program to train adults with disabilities for employment. It is a unique, business-led program that takes place entirely in a host business from September through early June. Total workplace immersion facilitates a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration and relevant job skills. 80% of our graduates have found community based employment. Project Search is offering [informational meetings and tours on numerous dates and locations.](#)

[Wisconsin DPI Autism Training Supporting Autistic Thinking Style](#)

Statewide training to assist in ongoing staff development designed to improve educational outcomes for children with autism.

Date: June 19-20, 2018

Location: Comfort Suites, Johnson Creek, WI

[TGI Summit-Mental Health and Transition](#)

Information and tools for educators, parents, agency providers and youth to build effective transition plans for students with mental health needs.

Date: May 8, 2018

Location: Crowne Plaza, Madison

[The Faces of Mental Health](#)

A Youth Behavioral Health & Wellness Summit. The Summit is open and free to all, however, please register in advance.

Date: May 19, 2018

Location: Italian Community Center, Milwaukee

Statewide Events

[Youth Leadership Summit](#)

A free Summit all about leadership, advocacy, college, careers and healthy relationships. For high school students with disabilities who are interested in becoming leaders and advocates for themselves and others with disabilities. Meet other teens and learn how to plan your future. For information, contact Matthew Zellmer, WI FACETS, mzellmer@wifacets.org or 414-374-4645, ext. 203.

Date: Monday, June 18, 2018 (All day) to Friday, June 22, 2018 (All day)

Location: Independence First, Milwaukee, WI [or](#)

Date: Monday, July 9, 2018 (All day) to Friday, July 13, 2018 (All day)

Location: Mequon Nature Preserve

[Best Practices in Inclusive Education](#)

Dates: July 23-25, 2018

Location: Westwood Conference Center, Wausau, WI

[Collaborative & Proactive Solutions: Understanding and Helping Students with Social, Emotional, and Behavior Challenges](#)

Presenter: Dr. Ross Greene

Date: July 31, 2018

Location: Appleton, WI

[Endless Possibilities Conference](#)

The theme for 2018 is "Supporting our Most Vulnerable Students." Our keynote speaker Hasan Davis, J.D. will talk about his journey as a Hope Dealer, from juvenile delinquent to J.D., and how adults can champion the lives of children. Breakouts will focus on special education, discipline, foster care, juvenile justice, and more. The cost to attend is \$35. Graduate credits and foster parent training hours are available.

A pre-conference training on **Youth Mental Health First Aid** will be available at UW Whitewater on August 2, 2018. There is no cost to attend the pre-conference, but space is limited!

Date: Preconference August 2, 2018,

Conference August 3, 2018

Location: UW-Whitewater

[Information & Registration](#)



At Home Learning Strategies



Focus on Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the practice of purposefully focusing on the present moment. It is a skill that can help children sleep better, increase concentration, reduce stress, recognize their emotions, communicate feelings, and be more compassionate. Check out these activities to help your child practice mindfulness, and join in yourself if you are interested.

Gratitude Jar

Ask your child to spend 5 minutes thinking of things for which he or she is grateful. Then, write the ideas down and place them into a jar, where as a family you can look back on all the things that make you feel grateful. Some suggestions for what to put in the jar are:

- Something that someone else did for you that day.
- A person in your life that you appreciate.
- An activity or hobby you are grateful to be able to do.
- A positive quality of someone that can sometimes be hard to get along with.
- A skill or ability you have.
- A part of your body you are grateful for and why.
- An item that you love.
- Something that made you laugh.
- What you have learned from something that was hard.

Source: [teachstarter](#)

There are other examples of thankfulness activities from [Little Flower Yoga](#).



Mindful Breathing Activity

Practice mindful breathing as a way for your children to focus on the present moment. Focusing on an object can help mindful breathing, so make this [pinwheel](#) with your child. They can make the pinwheel spin each time they exhale while doing the breathing exercise above. Adapted from [teachstarter](#).



Spidey Sense Activity

Ask your child to switch their senses up to a superpower level, just like Spiderman. In this moment, what can they hear, see, taste, smell, and feel? Walk them through these questions to get them to stay in their Spidey-senses for 2 or 3 minutes. For older children, ask them to name 5 things you can see, 4 things you can touch, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell and 1 thing you can taste. Source: [teachstarter](#)

There's an App for That – Apps to Help with Emotional Literacy

Check out this [free Sesame Street app](#) that helps kids work their way through stressful situations with the help of Mando. Audio can be played in English or Spanish, and there is a great resource section for parents as well. Older children (middle school and up) can try [Stop, Breathe and Think](#) to learn how to take stock of their emotions and communicate their emotional needs. Both of these apps are free and available on Android and iOS.

Create a Glitter Jar

Work with your child to make a glitter jar. Use different colors of glitter to represent thoughts, feelings and behaviors and then ask your child what can stir up their emotions, by shaking the jar. Then explain how it's hard to see clearly when everything is shaken up. Then explain how being still can make the glitter settle back to the bottom so we can see clearly again. Visit [mindful](#) for more details on how to make the jar and have a conversation with your child.



Online Resources



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

Find links to organizations that can assist in a crisis situation, quick fact sheets, information about insurance, and school based interventions, as well as links to organizations that support specific disorders.

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

This website has a multitude of links to resources useful for schools working to improve mental health among students.

[Wisconsin School Mental Health Framework](#)

This Wisconsin School Mental Health Framework provides key elements to implement comprehensive school mental health systems in districts and schools across our state. While the specific model used may vary between communities, the foundational elements must be in place to foster and sustain these critical school mental health systems. This Framework is designed to integrate mental health and wellness supports into a multilevel system of supports (MLSS).

[Wisconsin Safe and Healthy Schools Training & Technical Assistance Center](#)

The WISH Center builds the capacity of Wisconsin public school districts to implement programs in prevention and intervention of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug abuse, mental health, and promote school safety to reduce barriers to learning.

[National Alliance on Mental Illness](#)

The National Alliance on Mental Illness's (NAMI) support and public education efforts are focused on educating America about mental illness, offering resources to those in need, and insisting that mental illness become a high national priority. NAMI offers an array of peer education and training programs, initiatives and services for individuals, family members, health care providers and the general public.

[Wisconsin Family Ties](#)

Wisconsin Family Ties provides support, education, training and advocacy regarding children experiencing social, emotional, behavioral and mental health problems. They have staff who are located regionally throughout the state. Their Facebook page has many links to articles related to mental health needs.

[Suicide Prevention](#)

This web page on the DPI website provides information and resources for youth suicide prevention to school staff, administrators, school boards, parents, and other members of the school community.

[Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#)

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation. SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities. The website has an abundance of resources related to mental health concerns.



UPCOMING WEBINARS

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

By phone, Sandra: 877-374-0511

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

[Getting and Keeping Your First Job](#)

Date: May 1, 2018

Presenter: Matthew Zellmer,
WI FACETS

[WSEMS: Dispute Resolution Options](#)

Date: May 7, 2018

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

[Supporting American Indian Students with IEPs](#)

Date: May 9, 2018

Presenter: Eva Kubinski, WI DPI

[Opciones para solucionar desacuerdos sobre educación especial](#)

Date: May 10, 2018

Presenter: Nelsinia Ramos,
WI FACETS

[Trauma Sensitive Schools: Parents & Professionals Working Together](#)

Date: May 16, 2018

Presenter: Elizabeth Cook, WI DPI

[Supporting Literacy at Home During the Summer](#)

Date: June 5, 2018

Presenter: Vicki Davis Davila,
WI FACETS

[Creando la visión: Preparando a su hijo hacia la vida adulta](#)

Date: June 7, 2018

Presenter: Sara Bachleitner,
WI FACETS

[Latino Autism Support Group](#)

Date: May 19, 2018—10 am-12 pm

Location: WI FACETS

Contact: Sara Bachleitner,
WI FACETS (414) 374-4645, ext. 231

Instructional Trends

Project AWARE (Advancing Wellness and Resilience Education)

Wisconsin received the Project AWARE grant through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to help improve behavioral health awareness in school-aged youth. The goals of the project are to:

- increase awareness of mental health issues that school-aged youth are facing
- Provide training to adults interacting with school-aged youth so they can detect and respond to mental health needs
- Connect youth and families with behavioral health issues to appropriate services

In order to achieve these goals, schools work to increase access to school and community based mental health services; increase family-school-community engagement; coordinate services between agencies that serve youth; provide culturally relevant services; identify systems for early identification of symptoms so families can get services; integrating mental health services into the PBIS framework; and work on strategies to prevent violence.

One way to work toward these goals is through **Youth Mental Health First Aid** training for adults who work with school-aged youth. This training teaches participants how to help a young person (age 12-18) who is experiencing challenges with mental health or addiction. This training is compared to CPR – just as those who have no clinical training can help someone having a heart attack by using CPR, someone trained in mental health first aid can assist a young person with mental-health needs, including a crisis. This training is being provided free of charge at the Endless Possibilities pre-conference on August 2, 2018 at UW-Whitewater.

For more information, visit the Endless Possibilities Conference [registration page](#). Learn more about Project AWARE through [SAMHSA](#).

Research to Read

"The Effects of Mindfulness-Based Interventions on Cognition and Mental Health in Children and Adolescents: A Meta-Analysis of Randomised Controlled Trials." (2018) Dunning, Darren Lee, et al.

[Article Link](#)**ABSTRACT:**

Background. Mindfulness based interventions (MBIs) are an increasingly popular way of attempting to improve the behavioural, cognitive and mental health outcomes of children and adolescents, though there is a suggestion that enthusiasm for MBIs has moved ahead of the evidence base. As things stand, most evaluations of MBIs have involved either uncontrolled or non-randomised trials that, although helpful in identifying the likely efficacy of an intervention, should be regarded as preparation for randomised, controlled trial (RCT) evaluations. Method. A systematic literature search of MBIs that employed an RCT design was conducted. Thirty-three independent studies comprised of 3666 children and adolescents were included in the analysis. Separate analyses were completed for the seventeen studies (n 1762) that used an RCT design with an active control condition. Results. Across all RCTs we found support for significant positive effects of MBIs, relative to the comparison condition, for outcome categories of Mindfulness, Executive Functioning, Attention, Depression, Anxiety/Stress and Negative Behaviours, with effect sizes (d) small, ranging from .16 to .30. However, when considering only those RCTs with active control groups, support for significant benefits of an MBI was restricted to the outcomes of Mindfulness (d= .42), Depression (d= .47) and Anxiety/Stress (d= .18) only. Conclusion. This meta-analysis reinforces the efficacy of using MBIs for improving the mental health and wellbeing of youth when using the gold standard RCT methodology.

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, please [click here](#) or contact: Wendy Overturf at woverturf@wifacets.org.*



Contributions to the Newsletter

Upcoming newsletter topic: June: ADD/ADHD

July: Other Health Impairment

August: Other Health Impairment

To submit contributions, you may use either the attached word document for contributing articles, events, or resources. Send submissions to woverturf@wifacets.org. If unable to access form, send 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.



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