



# Family Engagement Newsletter

## Family Engagement in Supporting Literacy Skills in Young Children

By Wendy Overturf

Literacy (reading) skills are important for a child's early language development, social communication, and academic success. Reading is essential. It is the backbone of education. Before children can pick up a book and decode the words on a page into something meaningful, they must first develop an understanding of what written language is and how it is used throughout their environment. Preschoolers also learn early concepts of literacy by watching others interact with written language. These are some of the first steps in learning to read. These steps are called *emergent literacy skills*. Listed below are some ways parents can help support emergent literacy skills.

One important skill for early language development literacy is understanding that sounds can be manipulated in order to become words, which is known as [phonological awareness](#). Parents can support phonological awareness by talking about and teaching different speech sounds during shared reading activities. (See this [video link](#) for examples of shared reading.)

Another skill that helps support reading development is *print awareness*. When children demonstrate that they understand that logos, signs, and labels in their environment have meaning, they are showing they have print awareness. For example, many children can identify a McDonald's logo or the packaging of their favorite food long before they can read those words. Print awareness also involves holding a book upright and knowing that the words on the page tell a story. Even before they read the words, encouraging children to follow the words with their finger from left to right while reading to them supports print awareness.

Alphabet knowledge, or the understanding that letters represent sounds and letters can be grouped together to become words, is another skill that we can teach children while reading together. There are many children's books about the alphabet, but parents can also identify individual letters anywhere and talk about sounds that they make.

Finally, oral language skills are needed for early language development and reading comprehension. Every time parents engage in conversation with their children, they are modeling oral language skills. Teaching new vocabulary is essential for oral language and early reading.

(Modified from [Speech Buddies](#))

### Statewide Events

#### [Best Practices in Inclusive Education](#)

**Dates:** July 23-25, 2018  
**Location:** 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

#### [WI American Indian Studies Summer Institute](#)

An active, highly participatory, week-long workshop designed to increase participants' understanding of issues related to the history, culture, and tribal sovereignty of the American Indian nations and tribal communities in Wisconsin.  
**Date:** July 30-August 3, 2018  
**Location:** Red Creek Elementary, Black River Falls, WI

#### [Endless Possibilities Conference](#)

"Supporting our Most Vulnerable Students." 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 on working with schools, discipline, manifestation determination, foster care, homeless youth support, juvenile justice and more. The cost to attend is \$35. Graduate credits & foster parent training hours are available.

**Conference** August 3, 2018  
**Location:** UW-Whitewater  
[Information & Registration](#)

## Statewide Events

### Wisconsin Statewide Parent Educator Initiative (WSPEI) Training Opportunities for Families of Children with Disabilities- 2018-2019

**Parents in Partnership (PIP)** is a statewide program which deepens the ability of families and educators to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. PIP is a leadership development training for parents who have children with disabilities ages 6-14 that takes place over five weekend sessions during the year. For more information about PIP and for the locations and dates for the 2018-2019 PIP trainings visit: [the website](#).

### 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Children Come First Conference

The 2018 conference theme is: Collaboration. We're excited to welcome Dr. Ross W. Greene and Dr. Tina R. Goldstein as our 2018 keynote speakers. **Date:** November 12-13, 2018  
**Location:** Glacier Canyon Lodge at Wilderness Resort, Wisconsin Dells, WI

### Employing Young Adults with Barriers: Finding Workforce Solutions – A Community Forum – Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Businesses have workforce needs and young adults with disabilities and other barriers have the skills and the desire to work. Join the discussion to help identify how to make these connections. This is a no cost event and includes dinner. **Date:** September 19, 2018  
**Location:** Botanias , Milwaukee, WI  
[EVENT INFORMATION IN SPANISH](#)



**“One benefit of Summer was that each day we had more light to read by.”**

*-Jeanette Walls, The Glass Castle*

## At Home Learning Strategies



The school bell may stop ringing, but summer is a great time for all kinds of learning opportunities for kids. [Reading Rockets](#) has packed a virtual beach bag full of activities to launch students to fun, enriching summertime experiences.

[Ideas for Summer reading fun](#)  
[Ideas for active Summer learning](#)  
[Online activities for families](#)



**PBS KIDS Lab:** offers the newest educational games, activities and mobile apps, for kids Pre-K to grade 3.

**National Geographic Kids:** This website has an abundance of great videos and activities as well as games and stories.

**NASA Kids Club:** A place to play games and learn about NASA through interactive explorations.



**Discovery Kids:** Video, games and activities to explore dinosaurs, sharks, space, pets, history and more.



**My Wonderful World:** Explore this tour created by Smithsonian experts for learning about the seven continents of our world.

**Time for Kids:** An online weekly magazine written for kids, fun games (The Great State Race), and news from around the world. There are editions for K-6th Grade.

### Milestone Tracker

Milestones matter! Track your child's milestones from age 2 months to 5 years with this easy-to-use illustrated checklist. The tracker provides tips for encouraging your child's development especially in the area of language development. Photos and videos in this app illustrate each milestone and make tracking them for your child easy and fun!

### ***Family activities that promote literacy***



### **Alphabet Hunt in the Backyard (or when taking a walk.)**

Look for things that begin with each letter of the alphabet. For example, A--ant; B--bark; C--clover; D--dragonfly, etc. Can you find the whole alphabet?



### **Recipe for Success**

Read a recipe together. Plan a grocery list. Shop for ingredients. Cook! [21 Fun & Delicious Recipes You Can Make with Your Kids](#)

## **Online Resources:** **Speech and Language**

### **[Center for Parent Information and Resources](#)**

This website provides fact sheets about milestones of typical speech and language development. It also provides information about speech and language impairments and provides links to many other resources related to speech and language development.

### **[The National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders \(NIDCD\)](#)**

The National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), conducts and supports research in the normal and disordered processes of hearing, balance, taste, smell, voice, speech, and language.

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

This site outlines services for students with speech and language disabilities. There is information on eligibility criteria as well as links to other resources on the web.

### **[American Speech-Language-Hearing Association](#)**

This link provides information about activities to encourage speech and language development as well as information related to typical speech and language development.

### **[The Stuttering Foundation](#)**

This foundation provides free online resources, services and support to those who stutter and their families, as well as support for research into the causes of stuttering.

### **[icommunicate](#)**

The website contains information relating to speech and language difficulties, child development, milestones, autism, apraxia, hearing impairments, stuttering and stammering, and dyslexia and literacy difficulties. It also has links to many more resources related to speech and language.

### **[U.S. Department of Education](#)**

This is a very comprehensive site offering information on language development activities for children from infancy to age six. These are activities parents can do with their children that not only promote language development but also to assist in helping children learn to read.

### **[Free Online Speech and Language Apps for Kids](#)**

This site has provides link to free online apps that offer parents a way to refine and practice their child's speech and language skills at home.

### **[Summer Reading Lists for Reluctant Readers](#)**

During the summer, many children won't get the reading practice that they get in school. But books that engage the imagination can motivation to keep up skills until school starts again. The website gives some lists of books to captivate reluctant readers, no matter what their age.





**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)

**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:** Daily, Monday, July 9, 2018 to Friday, July 13, 2018

**Location:** Mequon Nature Preserve

**Cómo Abogar por su Hijo (a) de Manera Eficaz**

(Telephone Workshop in Spanish)

Cada padre desea ver a su hijo feliz, saludable y ser parte de su comunidad. Sin embargo en muchas ocasiones, los padres necesitan abogar para que sus hijos reciban los servicios que necesitan. Este taller muestra cómo los padres pueden abogar por sus hijos de manera eficaz.

**Date:** Thursday, July 12, 2018



**READING**

not just for school . . . but for life

## Instructional Trends



### Wisconsin's Trauma-Sensitive Schools Initiative

Trauma-Sensitive Schools (TSS) is an innovation in which schools infuse the core values of safety, trust, choice, collaboration, and empowerment into their Multi-level System of Support's practices. TSS acknowledges the high prevalence of traumatic exposure for students, the importance of staff well-being and strives to meet the unique needs of all learners. - Black, P., Cook, E & Daniel, S. 2017

Exposure to traumatic events in childhood is extraordinarily common. Although not all exposure to trauma leads to difficulty in functioning, research tells us that exposure to trauma and toxic stress changes people. Just as a physical assault on the body can cause bodily impairment, psychological trauma can result in a mental injury that impacts such things as a child's ability to regulate emotions, attend to classroom activities, and/or achieve normal developmental milestones.

Schools have a great ability to prevent and mitigate the impacts of traumatic exposure on our youth. By becoming a trauma-sensitive school, schools can become a protective factor for these students and increase the social and emotional and academic skills of the entire school body.

Trauma-sensitive schools is a **process, not a product**. Strategic and thoughtful implementation is critical to ensure successful implementation. Using the principles of [implementation science](#), the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction has worked to create an [Online Professional Learning System](#) to help support schools as they embark on the transformative process of becoming a TSS. (While these modules were designed for school professionals they do contain information that might be useful for families.)

The [TSS Professional Learning System](#) is meant to integrate into a school's existing [equitably multi-level system of support](#) to promote maximum sustainability and to ensure the implementation is meaningful and manageable.

## Research to Read

### Parental Involvement in Speech-Language Intervention

Finley, Victoria Beech, Honors Theses Paper 75 (2012).

[Article Link](#)

**ABSTRACT:** This thesis examines how parents of children who are successful in therapy are involved, from the parent's perspective. Literature on parental involvement in therapy is limited, especially findings from the parent's perspective. This thesis follows a phenomenological qualitative design. The investigator interviewed three mothers regarding their participation. The investigator then transcribed the interviews and cyclically analyzed them to find salient themes across all three. There were two shared themes, acceptance and emotions. It is hoped that this study will provide insight for other parents so that they can contribute to their children's success in speech-language intervention.

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



## Contributions to the Newsletter

**Upcoming newsletter topic:** August: Other Health Impairment  
September: Assistive Technology  
October: Learning Disabilities

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



This document was produced under U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs Grant No. H323A070022-11. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the Department of Education. No official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of any product, commodity, service or enterprise mentioned in this publication is intended or should be inferred. This product is public domain. Authorization to reproduce it in whole or in part is granted. While permission to reprint this publication is not necessary, the citation should be:

State Personnel Development Grant (2015). Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Madison, WI, Wisconsin Family Assistance Center for Education, Training, and Support, Inc.