Family Engagement Newsletter

College and Career Ready IEPs Five Step Process

By Wendy Overturf & Vicki Davis Dávila

To be an active participant in the development of their child’s IEP, it is critical that parents understand that process. Many Wisconsin districts are now using the new CCR IEP forms. In the October 2017 newsletter, the “Five Beliefs” were discussed. In this newsletter, the “Five Step Process” will be highlighted.

Step 1: Understand how the student is doing academically and otherwise. The IEP team gathers information about the student’s academic and functional skills compared to the expectations for other students in the same grade. The family and student share their point of view on the student’s strengths, interests, and needs.

Step 2: Identify how the student’s disability affects their academics and behavior. The team answers the question: why is the student not achieving some of the grade level standards? The IEP team, including the student and family, shares what they have seen and tries to find out what causes the student to struggle.

Step 3: Develop Goals. Address the student’s disability related needs and support the student’s unique strengths by developing ambitious and achievable goals. The goals should be based on high expectations, but the student should also be able to reach them within one year.

Step 4: Align special education services needed to support the student’s goals. Everyone on the IEP team talks about how they can work together to support the student. The team will talk about how the student will access the same content and curriculum and use the same thinking strategies as other students in the same grade.

Step 5: Analyze progress towards goals. The IEP team keeps track of the student’s progress, reviewing and making changes to the IEP as needed to help the student stay on track to meet the IEP goals.

The Wisconsin DPI created an excellent short video that explains this five step process with examples. In the December 2017 newsletter, we will dive deeper into each of these steps.
Statewide Events

Parents in Partnership (PIP)
This is a no cost event. PIP is a leadership development opportunity for parents of children with disabilities ages 6-14. Parents and other caregivers meet five times during the year to share their family stories, challenges, joys, and triumphs of raising their children. PIP assists parents to: learn about valuable community and statewide resources, plan ahead for their child and family, enjoy time with other parents, learn more within the topics of; health care, education, policy making, inclusion and self-determination.

Training locations, start dates & links

Children Come First Conference
For those caring for, working with, or concerned with the well-being of children and young adults with social, emotional, and behavioral challenges. Some scholarship funding will be available for parents/primary caregivers who would otherwise be unable to attend.

Date: November 13 & 14, 2017
Location: Glacier Canyon Lodge, WI Dells

Building the Heart of Successful Schools Conference
Topics Covered: Before you can know how to help, you need to know when to help. We call this mental health literacy – or a basic understanding of what different mental illnesses and addictions are, how they can affect a person’s daily life, and what helps individuals experiencing these challenges get well. You learn about: Depression and mood disorders Anxiety disorders Trauma Psychosis Substance Use disorders. Mental Health First Aid teaches about recovery and resiliency – the belief that individuals experiencing these challenges can and do get better, and use their strengths to stay well.

Date: December 7 & 8, 2017
Location: Radisson Paper Valley, Appleton, WI

Transition Conference 2018
Save the date!
Date: February 5 & 6, 2018
Location: Kalahari, WI Dells

Autism Society of Wisconsin 29th Annual Conference
Date: April 19-21, 2018
Location: Kalahari, WI Dells

At Home Learning Strategies

Check out this great reading list from Vanderbilt for ages infant-8 (and even some suitable for adults!) that covers anger, sadness, grief, worry, happiness, and everything in between.

Sometimes getting emotions out can be hard. Journaling about them can help! Here are 52 great writing prompts for your child to think about self-esteem and confidence. These prompts can be great conversation starters on the road or at mealtime, too!

Try these feelings games from The Gift of Curiosity!

Feelings Sort: Cut out different pictures of faces looking happy, angry, surprised, sad, and scared. After taking some time to explain different facial expressions to your child(ren), have them sort the photos into different piles according to the feeling or emotion they see in the image. This helps with visual literacy.

Feelings Charades: Put your images from the activity above into a bowl or hat, and have the child(ren) draw them out one by one and act out the emotion they see on the card without speaking. See if they can get the other players to guess the correct emotion. Take some time to talk about each feeling afterwards.

This fun feelings chart with characters from the movie Inside Out can help your child learn new words to describe different emotions.

Feelings Stress Balls

You and your child can follow this visual recipe for homemade dough to make your own stress balls using balloons. Then, draw faces representing different emotions on each of your stress balls. This is a great way to talk about different emotions and how stress balls can be used as a calming tool.

Make an Anger Catcher with your child(ren)! This is a paper-folding craft often called a fortune teller, but instead children count off by a number and then spell out a color, opening and closing the catcher for each letter. When they open it, it will suggest a strategy for dealing with anger.

For older kids, try these team building activities that also require critical thinking skills. Focus on the connections and relationships with the other players.

You’ve probably noticed the adult coloring book craze. Coloring is a mindfulness activity that can relax us. This mathematical coloring book features geometric shapes based on math principles (that will look cool when your child is finished).

A Children’s Song: Five Little Turkeys
Online Resources

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 brief information related to specific disorders. Links to numerous other resources are also included on the website.

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 also has resources related to discipline for students with 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 quality of life for children and adults affected with these disorders.

Scaffolding Behavior for Student Success-Moving Beyond Seclusion and Restraint
This is a link to a document highlighting best practices related involving student behavior. The document also has information on functional behavioral assessment (FBA).

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.

National Association of Special Education Teachers (NASET)
The NASET website has links to resources related to emotional behavioral disabilities. It includes possible accommodations, has links related to specific disorders, as well as advocacy information.

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.

Wisconsin PBIS Network—Family Resource Page
The Wisconsin Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Network operates within the Wisconsin RtI Center with a specific focus on behavior. The family resource page offers families information to support positive behavior at home.
Instructional Trends

The Use of School Resource Officers (SROs)

In Spring of 2016, a cross agency work group of staff from the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) Student Services/Prevention and Wellness and Special Education teams came together to discuss the use of school resource officers (SROs) in Wisconsin. In May 2016 and June 2017, DOJ and DPI brought together critical stakeholders to discuss the issues and determine what DOJ and DPI could do to support their work across Wisconsin. The website is intended to be a resource to support students, law enforcement, school staff, families, and educators across Wisconsin.

DOJ and DPI strongly suggest that local education agencies (LEAs) and law enforcement articulate the roles and responsibilities of school resource officers and their respective organizations through memoranda of understanding (MOUs). The DPI along with DOJ and the critical stakeholders developed a model framework to use to develop a MOU. Particularly interesting in this model framework is the suggestion that absent a real and immediate threat to student, teacher, or public safety, incidents involving public order offenses including: disturbance/disruption of schools or public assembly; loitering; profanity; and fighting that does not involve physical injury or weapon, shall be considered school discipline issues to be handled by school officials, rather than criminal law issues warranting formal law enforcement intervention (e.g., issuance of criminal citation, ticket, summon, or filing of delinquency petition. Data for the number of arrests in WI schools can be found on this website and can be compared with other states.

The DPI website also has additional resources that include “guidelines for best practices”, as well as an extensive listing of “additional resources” related to SROs.

Research to Read

Social-Emotional Learning and Equity in School Discipline


Article link

ABSTRACT: Summary Beginning as early as preschool, race and gender are intertwined with the way US schools mete out discipline. In particular, black students and male students are much more likely than others to be suspended or expelled—punishments that we know can hold them back academically. These disparities, and the damage they can cause, have driven recent reforms, including some that incorporate social and emotional learning (SEL) practices. Anne Gregory and Edward Fergus review federal and state mandates to cut down on punishments that remove students from school, and they show how some districts are embracing SEL in their efforts to do so. Yet even in these districts, large disparities in discipline persist.

The authors suggest two reasons current discipline reforms that embrace SEL practices may hold limited promise for reducing discipline disparities. The first is that prevailing “colorblind” notions of SEL don’t consider power, privilege, and cultural difference—thus ignoring how individual beliefs and structural biases can lead educators to react harshly to behaviors that fall outside a white cultural frame of reference. The second is that most SEL models are centered on students, but not on the adults who interact with them. Yet research shows that educators’ own social and emotional competencies strongly influence students’ motivation to learn and the school climate in general. Gregory and Fergus describe how one school district is striving to orient its discipline policies around a conception of SEL that stresses equity and promotes both adults’ and students’ SEL competencies. Although such reforms hold promise, they are still in the early stages, and the authors call for rigorous empirical work to test whether such efforts can substantially reduce or eradicate racial and gender disparities in discipline.
Contributions to the Newsletter

Upcoming newsletter topics: December: Communication
January: Transition

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.

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.

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