

Circles of Life 2021 Break Out Sessions

Session A - Thursday, May 6: 10:30 - 11:30am

A1 Nurture Your Nature - Matt Glowacki

Did you feel inspired by Matt's keynote? Come talk with Matt in a smaller group to ask questions and hear more about his experiences and ideas for making our world more accepting and inclusive.

A2 Medicaid Made Easy - Barbara Katz

Are you confused by Medicaid and what your child's *ForwardHealth* card can pay for? Be confused no more! Come to this session to learn how to use Medicaid, what it pays for, and how to navigate roadblocks that might come your way.

A3 Deciding Together - Bureau of Children's Services/Wisconsin Department of Health Services

Learn about Deciding Together, a collaborative decision-making process used in the Children's Long-Term Support Waiver program to develop individualized service plans for children and their families. This session will provide an introduction to the 5-Step Deciding Together process.

A4 Sunny Side Up: The Importance of Tending to the Self - Laura Spoerl

No two bodies are the same, regardless of challenges and limitations. With all the demand and attention disability asks of individuals, families and professionals, exploring the depths, understanding the importance of, and caring for our body, mind, and spirit becomes crucial. Come in with a desire to better the personal lives of our self and loved ones and walk away with a refreshed outlook and tools for change.

A5 The IEP Checklist: A New Resource for Families - Matthew Zellmer and Bonnie Vandermeulen

This session is a walk-through of the IEP process using the IEP checklist, a new resource developed by WI FACETS for families. We will present information on timelines, rights, preparation, and more.

A6 EmploymentFirst in Action: Community Based Employment Experiences - Megan Rindal

Hear stories directly from *EmploymentFirst* Ambassadors who have achieved community-based employment and learn about their journeys. This session is designed to share strategies, supports and provide hope to families and young people with disabilities on how they can reach their employment goals.

Session B - Thursday, May 6: 1:00 - 2:00pm

B7 Family Conversations about Supported Decision Making - Beth Swedeen and Lisa Pugh

The process of guardianship is one that should be considered as a last resort, yet often it is the first option presented to families or is what families have always thought they must do. This session will discuss the common myths about what guardianship does (or doesn't) accomplish and share creative ways to spark the necessary conversations with families and caregivers. Leave with a better set of tools to help families better understand alternatives to guardianship, including ways to support their loved ones to retain essential rights that promote independence and improve quality of life.

B8 In Spanish – A Tale of Two Conversations: Communication Skills for Parents Who are New to the Special Education Process - Nelsinia Ramo

Parents: While your knowledge, skill, and confidence will naturally increase throughout time, there are some specific communication skills that can help you be most successful in developing and maintaining a strong partnership with your child's school. Learn about barriers to communication and personal conflict styles to develop and maintain partnerships with schools and other systems.

B9 Requesting a Shared Plan of Care and Exploring Care Mapping - Allison Lourash and Harrison Anderson

A Shared Plan of Care is a summary of your child's medical and non-medical information and may be used as a tool for communication. Learn more about the benefits of having one and how to work with your provider to develop one. A Care Map is a visual way to show all the people and services involved in caring for and supporting your child. Each family's care map may look different; you decide how many details to include.

B10 Building a Community for Your Child - Bonnie Eldred

Join us for an interactive panel discussion with several parents that have worked to build a school community for their child. Learn first-hand from their experiences and suggestions. Parents will share their creative suggestions on how to improve school and community interactions for your child.

B11 Special Education Resources - Tiffany Lisk / Caroline Rossing

This session will explain special education resources and information that will assist families to better understand and engage in their child's IEP process.

Thursday, May 6: 3:00 - 4:00pm - Session C

C12 Does this Treatment Work? - Pamela Terrell

This presentation will inform attendees about the importance of being an informed consumer of treatment. Guidance for identifying “red flags,” instruction in understanding simple research, and suggestions for questions to ask will be provided.

C13 Developing Employment Preparedness – It’s Never Too Early - Bob Meyer, Bureau of Children’s Services

What factors play most heavily into an individual’s employment success? For children with disabilities the most powerful predictors of employment include high expectations, early work experiences, pre-employment training and collaboration among team members. This session will discuss current research, best practices and training. Learn to create a path to employment resulting in greater inclusion.

C14 Autism-Seeing the World from a Different Perspective - Dakota and Peggy Maynard

Learn first-hand about autism from Dakota Maynard. Growing up on the autism spectrum, Dakota shares stories from his life. Through his lifetime of experiences, he hopes to educate others about this developmental disorder.

C15 How to Forgive in an Unforgiving World - Tim Markle

What is forgiveness? Why is it so hard? We have all had the chance to be hurt by someone. Sometimes those hurts turn into anger, stress, and depression. We try different ways to put it behind us, to forget about it, to get even, to dull the pain, but what if it doesn’t work? We will learn how forgiveness should be considered an option. Come learn the basics of forgiveness and how it fits into maintaining a healthy life.

C16 Helping Coordinate Your Wishes for Their Future - Bob Johnston

What will happen to your child when you are no longer around to care for them? How does the ABLE Act of 2014 impact their life? This session will help families plan for the financial future of their child with special needs. It will cover estate planning, guardianship, wills and trusts, and letter of intent. Not your typical discussion of financial planning products and services. Presenter draws from personal experiences as both parent and patient.

C17 Creating Accessible Theater - Katie Cummings and Mary Stone

For over seven years, Mary Stone and Katie Cummings have combined special education and theater arts to create theater that is accessible for all. Theater innately teaches us social awareness, decision making and empathy. This collaborative art form encourages empathy, critical thinking, and use of imagination. We will give you tools to take back to engage individuals who identify with a disability through theater arts. Join us for this interactive workshop.

Session D - Friday, May 7: 9:00 - 10:00am

D18 Birth to Three Listening Session - Kate Johnson, Laura Grulke-Rueter, Regena Floyd-Sambou

Members of the Birth to 3 Program Interagency Coordinating Council would like to hear from you about your stories and experiences with the Birth to 3 Program in your community. Please join this session to engage in conversation about how we serve infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families in Wisconsin.

D19 Dating, Sex, and Autonomy - Ellen Merker and Jordann Mason

Teens with disabilities are like all other teens in their desire to explore dating and their sexuality. These conversations are often difficult for parents and caregivers to navigate. We will discuss common concerns we hear from parents, as well as how initial instincts to exert more control can actually make teens less safe.

D- 20 Goals for Children: Helping Families and Children Create Goals Using the New "Goal Cards" - Becky Burns

Everywhere parents turn, they are asked about goals for their child. We created 39 goal cards intended to help with this challenge. During this workshop we will share the process of creating these goal cards and how they are now part of an interactive website for parents.

D21 Why Don't I have Friends to Play With? - April Doebert-Fischer

The presentation discusses the role and purpose of social skills for children with and without disabilities.

D22 Identity Theft - How to Protect Your Loved Ones (of Any Age) - Chastity Hartl

Every two seconds another person's identity is being stolen and those with disabilities (children included) are extremely vulnerable. During this session we will talk why its so important that we take the time to protect them (and yourself) and the best way to do that.

Session E - Friday, May 7: 11:00 - 12:00

E23 Build Your Bridge: Transitioning from Pediatric to Adult Healthcare - Tim Markle

This is a conversation to help guide families through the transition from child-centered to adult health care systems. Youth and families are often overwhelmed and under-prepared for the transition to adult health care. This presentation will introduce and discuss when to start thinking about health care transition as well as provide helpful tools and resources.

E24 In Spanish - Effective Practices when Respite is Provided to Latino Families - Hector Portillo

Positive relationships with families in need of respite start with a safe, trusting, culturally responsive environment in which all are empowered to have open conversation, share personal information and create authentic connections. Participants will understand the dynamics of communication including environment, non-verbal communication, message and culture to effectively partner with families of Latino heritage.

E25 How to Deal with Negative People and Keep from Becoming Negative Yourself - Michael R. Weber

Negative people are tremendous energy drainers for children, other adults, and themselves. Learn how to deal effectively with negativism and increase your own positive approach to people and everyday life challenges.

E26 A Tale of Two Conversations: Communication Skills for Parents Who are New to the Special Education Process - Nelsinia Ramo

Parents: While your knowledge, skill, and confidence will naturally increase throughout time, there are some specific communication skills that can help you be most successful in developing and maintaining a strong partnership with your child's school. Learn about barriers to communication and personal conflict styles to develop and maintain partnerships with schools and other systems.

E27 Life Care Planning for Special Needs - Brett Bauch

In this presentation we will discuss ten steps to life care planning for individuals with special needs.

E28 Therapeutic Foods for Special Needs - Sandy Durand

This session will be a family-friendly, science-based discussion of therapeutic food choices for optimizing nutrition, moods, and overall wellness. Learn the positive and negative effects of common ingredients. Boost the benefits of your dietary choices.