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Governor Tony Evers
Secretary Emilie Amundson

Secretary's Office

October 31, 2019

Jeffrey Renk
Senate Chief Clerk
State Capitol, B20 SE
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707

Patrick E. Fuller
Assembly Chief Clerk
Risser Justice Center
17 West Main Street, Suite 401
P.O. Box 8952
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Chief Clerk Renk and Chief Clerk Fuller:

In compliance with 2009 Wisconsin Act 78, the Child Welfare Public Disclosure Act, please accept the Department of Children and Families' 2019 third quarter report on alleged sexual abuse of children residing in out-of-home care. The attached data addresses reports of alleged sexual abuse for the period July 1 through September 30, 2019, and fulfills the Department of Children and Families' reporting requirements under Section 48.981(9)(b), Wis. Stats.

We appreciate the legislature's interest in Wisconsin's child welfare system and their commitment to supporting the Department of Children and Families (DCF), county and tribal child welfare agencies, and the hundreds of non-profit organizations who work to protect Wisconsin children every day. Like you, we are saddened by all cases of child maltreatment and are committed to strengthening families so that child maltreatment does not occur. Wisconsin is fortunate to have dedicated and passionate child welfare workers and we want to recognize and express our appreciation for their commitment and compassion as they engage in these cases on a daily basis.

We encourage legislators and stakeholders to reinforce awareness that prevention of child maltreatment is a community-wide responsibility involving all individuals and organizations in the community, and to continue to support efforts at the local and state levels to develop a more robust and consistent array of child maltreatment prevention services. Through collaborative and data-driven analyses and discussions, we all can support efforts to strengthen the families in our state to provide safe, stable and nurturing homes for their children and help our families and children succeed and thrive.

The following is a summary of the findings in the attached report:

Number of Reported Incidents: 64

Wisconsin child protective services agencies screened in and investigated 64 reported incidents of suspected sexual abuse to 62 children residing in out-of-home care.

Dates of the Incidents:

The 64 reported incidents are estimated to have occurred between May 12, 2019, and September 27, 2019. Because children disclose abuse in different stages, it is common for children to report incidents months or even years after the incident occurred. Furthermore, in cases of alleged abuse involving non-verbal children, dates of alleged maltreatment are often difficult or impossible to determine.

Maltreatment Determinations:

Of the 64 reported incidents, maltreatment determinations were made for 42 (66%) of the reported incidents, while 22 (34%) maltreatment determinations are pending because the investigations are not complete.

Of the 42 reported incidents where the maltreatment determination was made, 33 (79%) were unsubstantiated (i.e., preponderance of the evidence indicating that sexual abuse occurred was not found), 8 (19%) were substantiated, and one (2%) was unsubstantiated/unable to locate source.

Nature of Maltreater Relationship:

Of the 8 substantiated incidents, the relationship of the maltreater to the child was a stranger in two incidents, a minor placed in the same facility as the child in two incidents, a parent's partner sharing the child's dwelling in one incident, a non-caregiver in one incident, a sibling in one incident, and another child in the same foster home in one incident. Of the 8 substantiated incidents, two included sex trafficking allegations.

Types of Placement:

Of the 8 substantiated incidents, one incident occurred while the child was placed in a kinship care court ordered placement, one incident occurred while the child was placed in a non-relative foster home, two incidents occurred while the child was placed in a non-relative treatment foster home, three incidents occurred while the child was placed in a residential care center, one incident occurred while a child was placed in a group home.

Location of Substantiated Incidents:

Of the 8 substantiated incidents of sexual abuse to children residing in out-of-home care, two incidents occurred in Dane County, one incident occurred in Eau Claire County, one incident occurred in Grant County, two incidents occurred in Milwaukee County, one incident occurred in Outagamie County, and one incident occurred in Racine County.

Ages or Age Group of Children:

The alleged sexual abuse was reported and investigated for children 0 to 17 years of age. Incidents of sexual abuse were substantiated for 7 children, one of whom was 3 years old at the time of maltreatment, one of whom was 11 years old at the time of maltreatment, one of whom was 12 years old at the time of maltreatment, one of whom was 13 years old at the time of maltreatment, two of whom were 15 years old at the time of maltreatment, and one of whom was 16 years old at the time of maltreatment.

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In closing, thank you for the opportunity to provide the attached information, in compliance with the statute. Feel free to contact the Department with questions or clarification requests.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Amundson', written in a cursive style.

Emilie Amundson
Secretary

Attachment

cc: Governor Tony Evers