



January 28, 2022

Edward A. Blazel
Assembly Chief Clerk
Risser Justice Center
17 West Main Street, Suite 401
Madison, WI 53703

Mike Queensland
Senate Chief Clerk
B20 – Southeast, State Capitol
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Assembly Chief Clerk Blazel and Senate Chief Clerk Queensland:

In compliance with 2009 Wisconsin Act 78, the Child Welfare Public Disclosure Act, please accept the Department of Children and Families' 2021 fourth quarter report on alleged sexual abuse of children residing in out-of-home care. The data presented below addresses reports of alleged sexual abuse for the period October 1 through December 31, 2021 and fulfills the Department of Children and Families' reporting requirements under Section 48.981(9)(a), Wis. Stats.

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 [report](#):

Number of Reported Incidents:

Wisconsin child protective services agencies screened in and investigated 32 reported incidents of suspected sexual abuse to 29 children residing in out-of-home care.

Dates of the Incidents:

The 32 reported incidents are estimated to have occurred between April 2009 and December 23, 2021. 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 32 reported incidents, maltreatment determinations were made for 15 (47%) of the reported incidents, while 17 (53%) maltreatment determinations are pending because the investigations are not complete.

Of the 15 reported incidents where the maltreatment determination was made, six (40%) were unsubstantiated (i.e., preponderance of the evidence indicating that sexual abuse occurred was not found), six (40%) were substantiated, two (13%) were unable to locate source, and one (7%) was deemed services not needed.

Nature of Maltreater Relationship:

Of the six substantiated incidents, the relationship of the maltreater to the children was an unnamed minor in three cases, other non-caregiver in two cases, and a peer maltreater in one case. Three of the substantiated incidents included allegations of sex trafficking.

Types of Placement:

Of the six substantiated incidents, three incidents occurred while the children were placed in group homes and three occurred while the children were placed in a non-relative foster family home.

Location of Substantiated Incidents:

Of the six substantiated incidents of sexual abuse to children residing in out-of-home care, three incidents occurred in Milwaukee County and three incidents occurred in Wood 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 six children, one of whom was two years old, two of whom were six years old, two of whom were 15 years old and one of whom was 16 years old at the time of maltreatment.

In closing, thank you for your continued partnership in ensuring all Wisconsin children are safe and loved members of thriving families and communities. Feel free to contact the department with questions or clarification requests.

Sincerely,



Emilie Amundson
Secretary

Attachment

cc: Governor Tony Evers