

April 29, 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' (DCF) 2022 first 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 January 1 through March 31, 2022 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: 40

Wisconsin child protective services agencies screened in and investigated 40 reported incidents of suspected sexual abuse to 35 children residing in out-of-home care.

Dates of the Incidents:

The 40 reported incidents are estimated to have occurred between November 2016 and March 27, 2022. 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 40 reported incidents, maltreatment determinations were made for 18 (45%) of the reported incidents, while 22 (55%) maltreatment determinations are pending because the investigations are not complete.

Of the 18 reported incidents where the maltreatment determination was made, 15 (83%) were unsubstantiated (i.e., preponderance of the evidence indicating that sexual abuse occurred was not found) and three (17%) were substantiated.

Nature of Maltreater Relationship:

Of the three substantiated incidents, the relationship of the maltreater to the child was an employee in a juvenile correction facility in one case, other non-caregiver in one case and a non-relative foster parent in one case. One of the substantiated incidents included an allegation of sex trafficking.

Types of Placement:

Of the three substantiated incidents, one incident occurred while the child was placed in detention, one incident occurred while the child was placed at a Group Home, and one incident occurred while the child was placed in a non-relative foster home.

Location of Substantiated Incidents:

Of the three substantiated incidents of sexual abuse to children residing in out-of-home care, one incident occurred in Ashland County, one incident occurred in Milwaukee County, and one incident occurred in Walworth County.

Ages or Age Group of Children:

The alleged sexual abuse was reported and investigated for children 2-17 years of age. Incidents of sexual abuse were substantiated for three children, one of whom was nine years old, one of whom was 16 years old, and one of whom was 17 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

cc: Governor Evers