

MILWAUKEE CHILD WELFARE PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL

Division of Milwaukee Child Welfare

Friday, May 15, 2026 12-2 PM

MINUTES

The meeting was conducted by Zoom. The Zoom meeting information was made available on the DCF DMCW Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership Council (MCWPC) webpage on May 8, 2026 (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/mcps/partnership-council>).

Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions, Kelly Pethke, Chair

Council members present at the meeting:

Present were Chairperson Kelly Pethke, ADA Libby Mueller, Judge Jane Carroll, Justice Grau, Sally Yeldell, Dr. Mallory O'Brien, Mary Thomas, Supervisor Sky Capriolo, Supervisor Jack Eckblad, Bria Grant, Rochelle Johnson-Bent, and Senator LaTonya Johnson. A quorum from the Council was present during roll call of the Zoom meeting.

Notice of Meeting

Chairperson Kelly Pethke reviewed compliance with Open Meetings Law requirements. The notice of the meeting was published on the DCF and DOA websites on May 8, 2026, and in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel on May 11, 2026. Second, the notice was emailed to the newspaper of record for the State of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin State Journal on May 7, 2026. The notice was emailed to the MCWPC stakeholders including any media who had requested such notice on May 11, 2026. Finally, the agenda was posted on the front door of the DMCW building at 635 N. 26th St. on May 7, 2026. This satisfies the requirements for notice under Wis. Stat. 19.84(1)(b).

Review and Approval of Past Minutes, Kelly Pethke, Chair

Elisabeth Mueller motioned to approve minutes from February 20, 2026, Rochelle Johnson-Bent seconded approval. Minutes were approved.

Division of Milwaukee Child Welfare/Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA)

Updates, Bridget Chybowski, Administrator, Division of Milwaukee Child Welfare

- Please see the full PowerPoint Presentation on the MCWPC website regarding DCF Organizational Initiative.
- Four Partnership Council members are attending National Citizen Review Conference in San Diego June 1-3rd. Statewide Citizen Review Conference Wednesday 5/20 via Zoom.
- There will be an August meeting to complete yearly report for Citizen Review Panel. Bridget asked panel to think of child welfare transformation recommendations on a state level and to the Division.
- The DCF Budget Office and Division are creating a presentation about the budget process and DMCW's budget.
- There will be a Critical Incident Committee meeting during the week of June 22, 2026. All MCWPC members may attend; a confidentiality form would need to be signed prior to the meeting.

- During Family Strengthening Month, DCF Secretary Jeff Pertl and Governor Evers honored eight individuals and teams by giving them Family First Awards.
- May 4th Week was Public Service Recognition to celebrate the contributions of public employees and their commitment to children and families.

Independent Monitoring Report Annual Report, Tyler Oettinger, Research, Analysis, and Performance Section Manager, Division of Milwaukee Child Welfare

The annual report 2025 included information on Access, Initial Assessment, safety, permanency, well-being, and the workforce. Please see the full PowerPoint Presentation on the MCWPC website.

Questions and Comments:

- Is it possible to break down the types of mandated reporters that make up 75%. Tyler Oettinger agreed that that info can be shared at a future meeting.
- What accounts for the reduction in number of substantiated cases in out-of-home care. Tyler Oettinger answered improvements with confirming safe environments and some of the policies related to assessing the safety of children in out-of-home care. Bridget added as they do case reviews, continued face to face conversations, and reconfirming safety.
- Does DCF receive Federal monetary reward from the recent number of children in a family setting. Tyler Oettinger answered there is not a reward, but there is a reimbursement of congregate care for a short period of time.
- How do turnover rates compare to other states nationwide. Tyler answered this can be shared in future meetings. In last few years rates, the rates are similar to statewide trends.
- Is there data being collected on possible reasons for decrease in screened-in cases. Bridget shared DMCW does quality reviews and that is an area that will be looked at deeper.
- Do we know why the number of foster care homes closed is high. Tyler answered most of the reasons case closure is achieved permanence with relative providers, guardianship or adoption.
- Do we track out of home care costs and hidden costs such as transportation. Bridget answered payment to foster parents is tracked. Specifics such as transportation are not tracked. Some costs are billed through insurance. Some funding has been donated that allows flexibility. Out-of-home care costs have increased such as Level 5 homes.

Stronger Families Milwaukee and Milwaukee Family Intervention Services (MFIS)

Kim Schwitzer, Program and Policy Analyst at DMCW, and Lauren Faulds, Child Welfare Program Manager with Community Advocates,

Please see the full PowerPoint Presentation on the MCWPC website for more information about Stronger Families and Milwaukee Family Intervention Services.

View from the Bench, Judge Jane Carroll, Presiding Judge, Milwaukee County Vel R. Phillips Center Children's Court

Judge Jane Carroll announced the Chief's Order judicial rotation came out. Three retirements and there will be two government appointees. All five treatment courts are having an annual celebration on May 29th United Community Center (UCC) at noon. There are discussions and planning for the new Criminal Courts building and the entire 1st floor will be treatment courts. There is a Youth Justice training is set for June 18, 2026.

Community Input, Kelly Pethke, Chair

Lance Jones, KIDS Matter, asked how many professional foster parent placements (level 5 for higher) exist for Milwaukee County youth. Jill Collins stated she would get back with the number and there are three agencies doing professional foster care. Bridget added Level 5 is like group home placement, not foster.

Concluding Remarks, Kelly Pethke, Chair

Kelly Pethke shared that Child, Youth and Family Services is sponsoring several events from May through August such as Heal the Hood Block Party. She gave a reminder the next meeting will be August 21 from 12-2pm and doodle poll will be sent out regarding choosing a date for the Council Budget Info presentation before August.

Adjourn

Sky Capriolo motioned to adjourn. Rochelle Johnson-Bent seconded. Meeting adjourned.