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Governor Scott Walker
Secretary Eloise Anderson

Secretary's Office

January 29, 2016

Jeffrey Renk
Senate Chief Clerk
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P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707

Patrick E. Fuller
Assembly Chief Clerk
Risser Justice Center
17 West Main St, 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, attached is the Department of Children and Families' 2015 annual report, which details alleged sexual abuse of children residing in out-of-home care. The attached data details reports of alleged sexual abuse for the period January 1 through December 31, 2015 and fulfills the Department of Children and Families' reporting requirements under Section 48.981 (9)(b), Wis. Stats. The following information summarizes the key findings in the attached report:

Number of Incidents Reported: 217 Incidents

Wisconsin child protective services agencies screened in and investigated 217 reported incidents of suspected sexual abuse to 170 children residing in out-of-home care during 2015.

Dates of Occurrence:

The incidents reported are estimated to have occurred between November 2011 and December 2015. Children disclose abuse in different stages, therefore it is common for abuse to be reported months or even years after the incident occurred. In cases of alleged abuse to younger children, dates of alleged maltreatment may be difficult or impossible to determine because of the child's inability to effectively communicate details of the incident(s).

Maltreatment Determinations: 217 Incidents

For reported incidents, maltreatment determinations were made for 172 (79.3%) of the reported incidents; 10 (4.6%) maltreatment determinations could not be made because the agencies were not able to locate the family and/or information; and 35 (16.1%) maltreatment determinations are pending because the investigations are not complete. Of the 172 reported incidents where the maltreatment determination was made, 142 (82.6%) were unsubstantiated (i.e., sexual abuse likely did not occur) while 30 (17.4%) of the reported incidents were substantiated, which means these children were sexually abused following removal from home.

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Nature of Maltreater Relationship:

Of the 30 substantiated incidents, the relationship of the maltreater to the child in 5 cases was a foster parent or other adult in the child's placement. In 23 cases the maltreater was either another child living in the home or a peer maltreater. In 1 case, the maltreater was the biological parent of the child. In 1 case, the maltreater relationship to the child was unknown.

Types of Placement:

Of the 30 incidents of substantiated sexual abuse to children in out-of-home care, 24 occurred while the children were placed in non-relative family foster homes or treatment foster homes, 2 occurred while the children were placed in group homes, 2 while the children were placed in unlicensed relative homes, and 1 while the child was placed in a court ordered Kinship Care placement. The alleged sexual abuse did not necessarily occur within the placement setting or by a maltreater in the setting.

Location of Substantiated Incidents:

Thirty-four counties investigated incidents of sexual abuse to children residing in out-of-home care. Ten counties substantiated incidents of sexual abuse, with the majority of substantiated incidents (16) occurring in Eau Claire, involving 3 children within the same case

Ages or Age Group of Children:

Alleged sexual abuse was reported and investigated for children ages 0 to 17 years. Sexual abuse was substantiated 14 times for children age 7 years and younger, and 16 times for children age 8 years and older.

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,


Eloise Anderson
Secretary

cc: Governor Scott Walker