



201 East Washington Avenue, Room G200  
P.O. Box 8916  
Madison, WI 53708-8916  
Telephone: 608-422-7000  
Fax: 608-422-7161

Governor Tony Evers  
Secretary Emilie Amundson

Secretary's Office

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April 30, 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 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, 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 that touch our child welfare system 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, all of us are able to 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: 48*

Wisconsin child protective services agencies screened in and investigated 48 reported incidents of suspected sexual abuse to 46 children residing in out-of-home care.

*Dates of the Incidents:*

The 48 reported incidents are estimated to have occurred between March 26, 2015, and March 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:*

For the 48 reported incidents, maltreatment determinations were made for 13 (27%) of the reported incidents, 35 (73%) maltreatment determinations are pending because the investigations are not complete.

Of the 13 reported incidents where the maltreatment determination was made, 12 (92%) were unsubstantiated (i.e., preponderance of the evidence indicating that sexual abuse occurred was not found), one was substantiated, and no allegations resulted in a finding of unsubstantiated/unable to locate source.

*Nature of Maltreater Relationship:*

In the one substantiated incident, the relationship of the maltreater to the child was a sibling placed in the same foster home as the child. The one substantiated incident did not include sex trafficking allegations.

*Types of Placement:*

In the one substantiated incident, the sexual abuse occurred in a licensed foster home.

*Location of Substantiated Incidents:*

In the one substantiated incident, the sexual abuse occurred in Racine County.

*Ages or Age Group of Children:*

The alleged sexual abuse was reported and investigated for children ages 0 to 17 years of age. An incident of sexual abuse was substantiated for one child who was 9 years old at the time of the incident.

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,



Emilie Amundson  
Secretary

Attachment

cc: Governor Tony Evers