



April 26, 2023

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

Michael 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' 2023 first 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 January 1 through March 31, 2023, and fulfills the Department of Children and Families' reporting requirements under Section 48.981(9)(a), Wis. Stats.

We appreciate the Legislature's interest in Wisconsin's child welfare system and their commitment to supporting 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 and are committed to strengthening families. 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, 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 June 2015 and March 2023. 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 15 (38%) of the reported incidents, while 25 (62%) maltreatment determinations are pending because the investigations are not complete.

Of the 15 reported incidents where the maltreatment determination was made, 15 (100%) were unsubstantiated (i.e., preponderance of the evidence indicating that sexual abuse occurred was not found).

Nature of Maltreater Relationship:

Statute only requires DCF to report this information for substantiated incidents. See s. 48.981(9)(a). There were no substantiated incidents of maltreatment for this quarter.

Types of Placement:

DCF only provides a summary of this information for substantiated incidents. There were no substantiated incidents of maltreatment for this quarter. The placement type for each of the 40 reported incidents is included in the report, which is linked above.

Location of Substantiated Incidents:

DCF only provides a summary of this information for substantiated incidents. There were no substantiated incidents of maltreatment for this quarter. The location of each of the 40 reported incidents is included in the report, which is linked above.

Ages or Age Group of Children:

The alleged sexual abuse was reported and investigated for children 3-17 years of age.

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