

**2020 – 2024
Children and
Family Services
Plan
Final Report**



Wisconsin Department of
Children and Families

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Glossary of Acronyms and Terms

AFCARS = Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System. State and Tribal title IV-E agencies are required to report AFCARS case-level information on all children in foster care and children who have been adopted with title IV-E agency involvement.

AODA = Alcohol and Drug Abuse.

ASFA = Adoption and Safe Families Act, particularly the ASFA requirement to pursue termination of parental rights after a child has been in Out-of-Home Care (OHC) for 15 months.

BCRA = Bureau of Child Welfare Research and Analytics (BCRA) is responsible for the oversight and management of the data analytics and program integrity of DSP programs and policies related to child welfare to ensure compliance with Federal title IV-E requirements.

BITS = Bureau of Information Technology Services in the Division of Management Services (DMS).

BOS = Balance of State refers to information and/or data that describes the counties outside Milwaukee.

BPOHC = Bureau of Permanence and Out-of-Home Care administers the state public-adoption program; provides policy guidance to counties on foster care, kinship care, and other out-of-home-care placements; and licenses and monitors group homes for children, residential care centers for children and youth, child-placing agencies, and shelter care. It also administers the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC), which regulates the safe placement of children across state lines.

BPM = Bureau of Performance Management in the Division of Management Services is responsible for continuous quality improvement, performance review and evaluation, and research/program evaluation.

BRO = Bureau of Regional Operations in the Division of Management Services works with local agencies administering DCF programs, including child welfare, child care subsidy, child support, and W-2 financial assistance.

BSWB = Bureau of Safety and Well Being in the Division of Management Services is the state unit responsible for child welfare program policy and practice standards.

BYS = Bureau of Youth Services administers the youth justice system and supports service delivery systems that move youth towards academic success, safe and stable housing, employment, permanent connections with supportive adults, and healthy lifestyle behaviors.

CFSR = Federal Child and Family Services Review.

Ch. DCF 43 = Division of Safety and Permanence administrative rule on child welfare staff training.

Ch. DCF 56 = Division of Safety and Permanence administrative rule on foster home licensing.

Chapter 48 = Wisconsin Children's Administrative Code.

Chapter 938 = Wisconsin Juvenile Justice Administrative Code.

CANPB = Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board

CFA = Children and Family Aids is a state level block grant funding source distributed to counties to assist with the costs associated with administering child welfare services.

CFSP = Child and Family Services Plan.

CCIP = Children's Court Improvement Program, Wisconsin's Court Improvement program.

COKC = Court-Ordered Kinship Care placements for which providers receive a monthly payment.

CPS = Child Protective Services.

CQI = Continuous Quality Improvement which is DCF's Quality Assurance System.

CY = Calendar Year (January – December).

DCF = Department of Children and Families. The Department was created in July 2008 and includes child welfare services, prevention services, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (W-2), child care regulation and licensing, child support, and youth development initiatives.

DHCAA = Division of Health Care Access and Accountability in the Department of Health Services, the state Medicaid agency in Wisconsin.

DHS = Department of Health Services. Department that coordinates health services for the state of Wisconsin, including Medicaid, mental health and substance abuse services, and the Food Share program.

DMS = Division of Management Services is responsible for finance, information technology, performance management, and regional operations.

DMCPS = Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services directly operates child welfare services in Milwaukee and coordinates with DSP and DCF in state child welfare planning.

DSP = Division of Safety and Permanence in the Department of Children and Families, the state child welfare agency in Wisconsin.

dWiSACWIS = DCF's system that works with Business Intelligence (BI) staff to maintain current BI reporting tools and to implement enhancements to its BI data warehouse.

eWiSACWIS = Wisconsin Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS system).

eWiSACWIS Project Team = Staff supporting operations of eWiSACWIS system.

ETV = Education Training Voucher program.

FFPSA = Family First Prevention and Services Act.

FFY = Federal Fiscal Year (October – September).

FCARC = Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center; statewide resource center that provides information and materials on foster care and adoption.

GPR = General Purpose Revenues from state tax revenue.

GPRS = State Geographic Placement Resources system.

ICPC = Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children.

ICWA = Indian Child Welfare Act.

Kinship Care = Payment program to support children living with relatives.

NCANDS = National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System. The Federal child abuse and neglect data system is a source of safety data submitted by states.

NYTD = National Youth in Transition Data Base.

Ongoing Services Standards = The five Child Protective Services Standards and Practice Guidelines issued by DSP that establish program standards for ongoing child welfare services.

OHC = Out-of-Home Care including children placed under court order in foster care, group homes, residential care centers and kinship care. This is equivalent to the federal definition of foster care.

PAC = Policy Advisory Committee

PDSA = Plan Do Study Act is a continuous quality improvement approach to improving practices that incorporates extensive feedback.

PIP = Wisconsin Program Improvement Plan for Round 3 of the Federal CFR.

QRTP = Qualified Residential Treatment Program.

Rate Regulation = Payment system that ensures that providers are licensed to provide a certain level of care, based on the types of services they offer, and receive a pre-defined amount for providing those services to a child who needs them.

SAFE = Structure Analysis Family Evaluation.

SFY = State Fiscal Year.

TPR = Termination of Parental Rights.

WAFCA = Wisconsin Association of Child and Family Agencies.

WCWPDS = Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System is Wisconsin's School of Social Work operated training system that operates at the state level.

WCWPDS Steering Committee = leadership entity comprised of UW School of Social Work, WCWPDS, DCF, DMCPD and counties charged with oversight of the Professional Development System.

WiAPS = Wisconsin Adoption and Permanency Supports.

WICWA = Wisconsin Indian Child Welfare Act.

WiFCC = Wisconsin Family Connections Center

YAC = Youth Advisory Council.

YJ = Youth Justice is Wisconsin's preferred term for Juvenile Justice.

YLT = Youth Leadership Team.

1. Overview and Agency Administering the Child and Family Services Plan

Overview

In this report, the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) provides its final update on the 2020-2024 Children and Family Services Plan. Over the past five years, Wisconsin's plan has been jointly guided by the Child Welfare Model for Practice, DCF's Putting Families First approach, and Wisconsin's approved Children and Family Services Review (CFSR) Program Improvement Plan (PIP). During this time Wisconsin worked to transition the child welfare system to become more in-home, family-focused, and collaborative in alignment with the elevation of lived experience voice and federal guidance.

More detailed information regarding the organizational structure of DCF, the administering agency for title IV-B, title IV-E, CAPTA, Chafee, and ETV is described in section 1 of Wisconsin's 2025 – 2029 Children and Family Services Plan.

Collaboration

Over the past five years, DCF continued to support extensive collaboration as the hallmark of DCF operations and its coordination of the state child welfare system. Of particular significance since the issuance of the 2020 – 2024 CFSP was DCF’s continued system transformation efforts called Putting Families First. Over the past five years, this collaborative approach to strategic planning and extensive external partner engagement placed a stronger emphasis on the meaningful and systematic inclusion of lived experience and advancing racial equity.

More information on Wisconsin’s Putting Families First approach can be found at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/family-first>.

Collaborative Partners over the Past Five Years		
Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board (CANPB)	Child Welfare Parent Leaders Workgroup	Children’s Court Improvement Program (CCIP)
Citizen Review Panels	Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Advisory Committee	Council on Offender Reentry
Criminal Justice Coordinating Council	Data Superusers Group	DCF Bureau of Regional Operations (BRO)
DCF Division of Early Care and Education (DECE)	Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC)	Foster and Adoptive Parent Advisory Council
Foster Youth Advocates (FYA) Advisory Group	Foster Youth to College (FYC) Advisory Group	Indian Child Welfare Committee (ICW)
Local Child Welfare Agencies	Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership Council	Office of Children’s Mental Health
Rate Regulation Advisory Committee	Relative Caregiver Stakeholder Group	Secretary’s Advisory Council on Child Welfare
Secretary’s Advisory Council on Youth Justice	State Council on Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse	Transition Resource Agencies (TRA)
Universities of Wisconsin System	WI Department of Health Services (DHS)	WI Department of Public Instruction (DPI)
WI Department of Workforce Development (DWD)	Wisconsin Council for Mental Health (WCHM)	Wisconsin County Human Services Association (WCHSA)
Wisconsin County Human Services Association’s Policy Advisory Committee (WCHSA PAC)	Wisconsin Foster/Adoptive Parent Association (WAFCA)	Wisconsin Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Project
Youth Advisory Council (YAC)	Youth Leadership Teams	

For a more detailed description of specific ongoing collaborative efforts, please see the Collaboration Section of Wisconsin’s 2025 – 2029 Children and Family Services Plan.

2. Update on the Assessment of Current Performance in Improving Outcomes

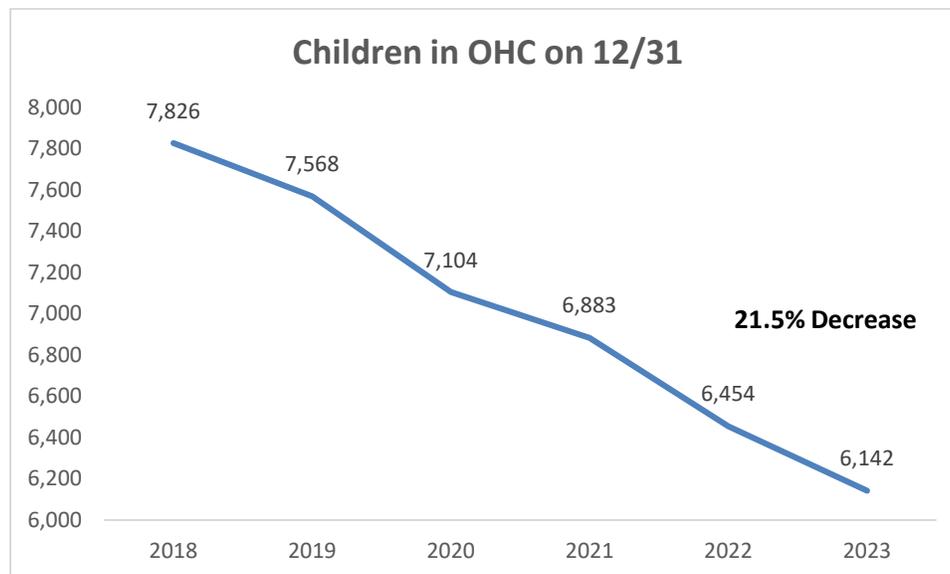
Context for State's Current Performance

This section captures data related to the Children and Family Service Review (CFSR) performance outcomes specific to safety, permanency, and well-being, noted trends with respect to national performance standards, and highlights initiatives to address each area.

Data presented includes:

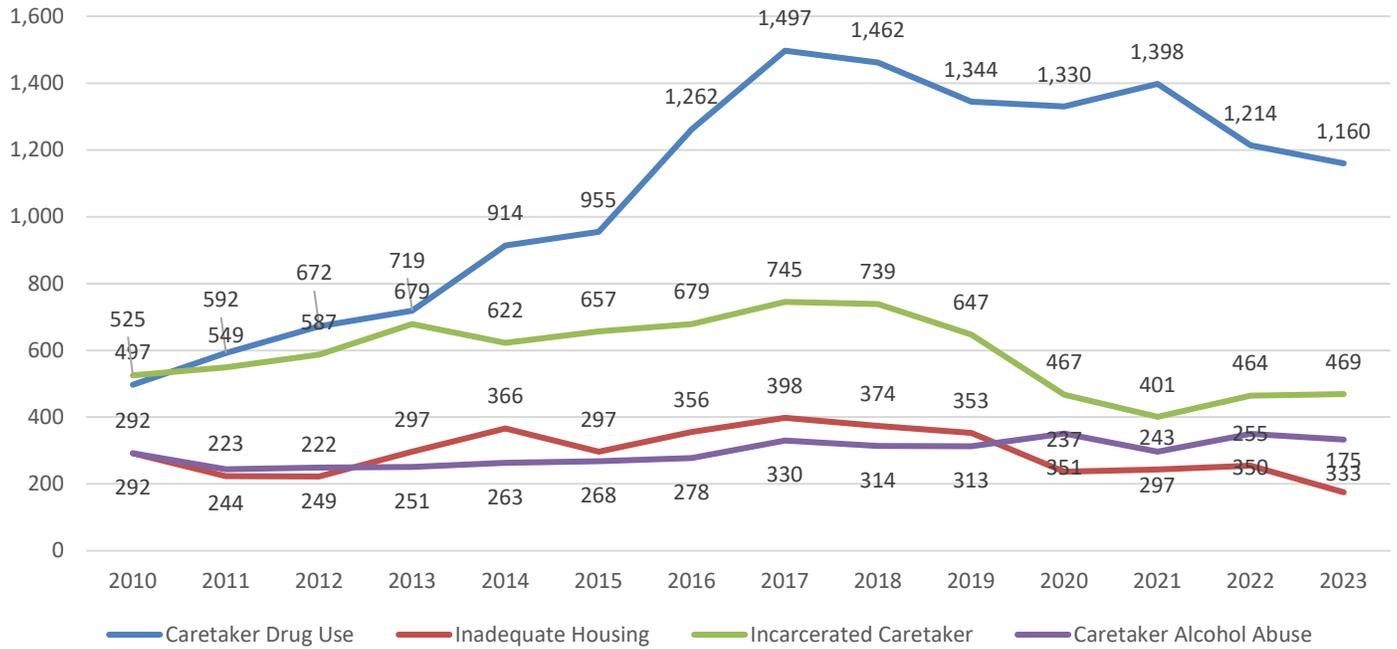
- The most recently available case review data using the federal On-Site Review Instrument (OSRI);
- State administrative data when available;
- Federal performance measures; and,
- Where data is available, information from research partners on specific topics.

Over the past five years, Wisconsin saw a decline in the number of children staying in care longer than six months and in out-of-home care (OHC) cases overall. This was accompanied by a proportional increase in the number of children placed with relatives and achieving permanency through guardianship as Wisconsin transitioned the child welfare system to be more family-focused and collaborative in serving more children in-home.

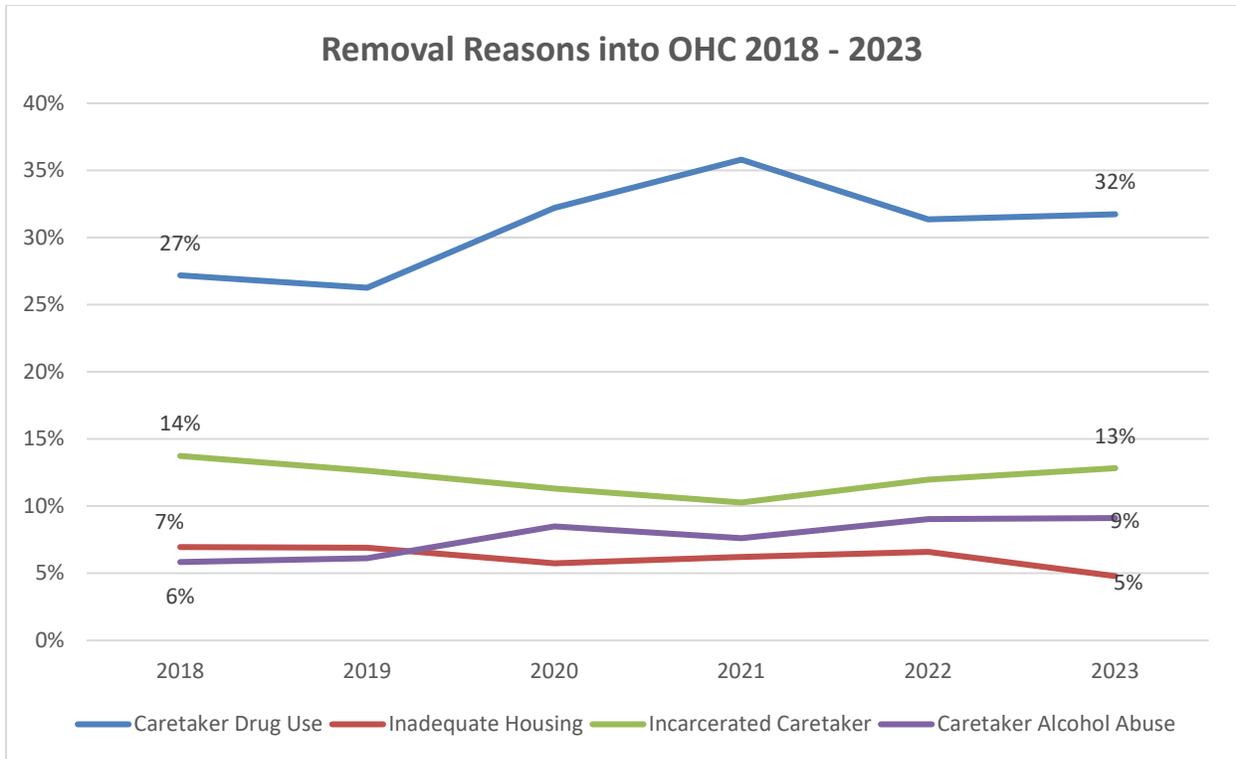


Although overall case numbers dropped over the past five years, removals due to parental drug abuse, which reflects the significant rise in opioid, fentanyl, and methamphetamine use in the state, proportionally increased in the state. In fact, parental drug and alcohol abuse was one of the only removal reasons where Wisconsin did not see a significant decrease due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Statewide Removals due to Caregiver Drug Abuse, Caregiver Alcohol Abuse, Caregiver Incarceration, or Inadequate Housing CY2010 - CY2023



	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Caretaker Drug Use	497	592	672	719	914	955	1,262	1,497	1,462	1,344	1,330	1,398	1,214	1,160
Inadequate Housing	292	223	222	297	366	297	356	398	374	353	237	243	255	175
Incarcerated Caretaker	525	549	587	679	622	657	679	745	739	647	467	401	464	469
Caretaker Alcohol Abuse	292	244	249	251	263	268	278	330	314	313	351	297	350	333
Unique Child Removals	4,735	4,728	4,471	4,949	4,976	4,942	4,993	5,277	5,100	4,833	3,937	3,753	3,709	3,474



Child and Family Outcomes

This section represents data specific to each of the 18 safety, permanency, and well-being case review items. These include the State 2018 CFSR results, performance on the CFSR national standards and available state administrative data for areas of safety, permanence, and well-being over recent years. Additionally, DCF reports baseline and annual case review data from our Program Improvement Plan measurement plan.

Safety Outcomes 1 and 2

Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.

Item 1: Timelines of Initiating Investigations of Reports of Child Maltreatment.

*Were the agency's responses to all **accepted child maltreatment reports initiated**, and **face-to-face contact** with the child(ren) made, within the time frames established by agency policies or state statutes?*

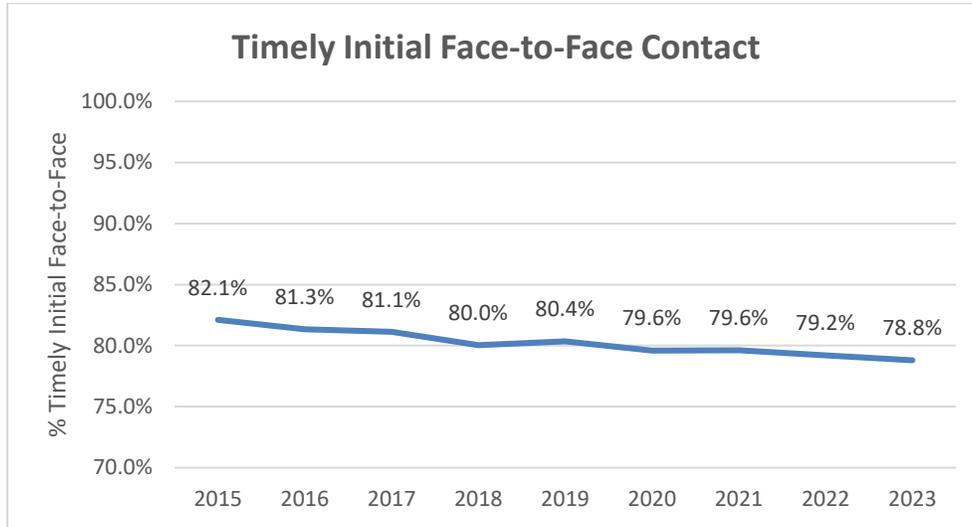
Improvement Goal: 88%

Final PIP Determination: WI did not achieve the required level of improvement.

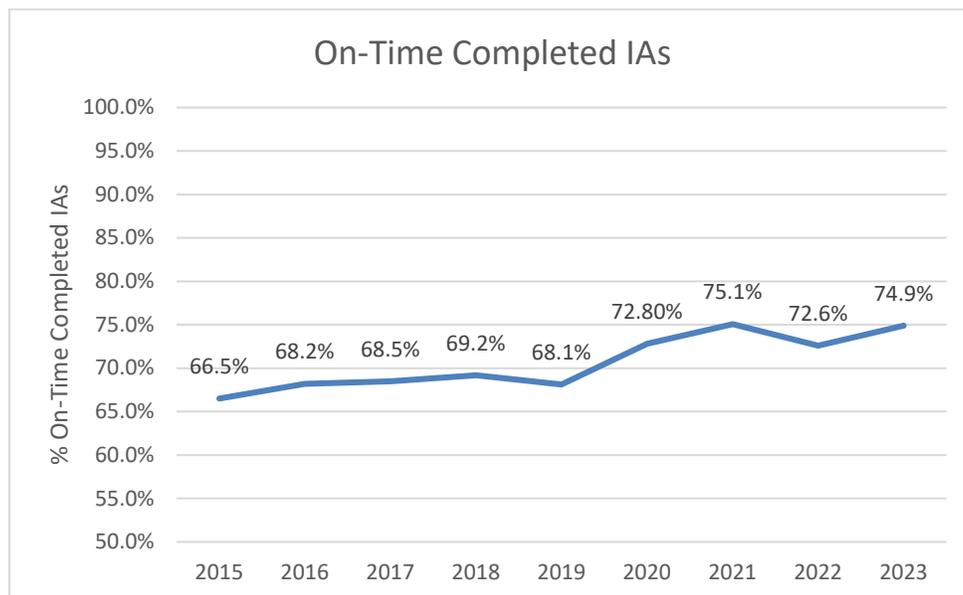
	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CF SR (65)	2019 - 2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020 - 2021 PIP YR 1 (80)	2021 - 2022 PIP YR 2 (77)	2022 - 2023 PIP YR 3 & NOP* (111)
Item 1	76%	76%	76%	49%	93%	75%	74%	77%	81%

*Wisconsin Non-Overlapping Period (NOP) ran from 6/1/22 through 11/30/23.

Administrative Caseworker Contact Data

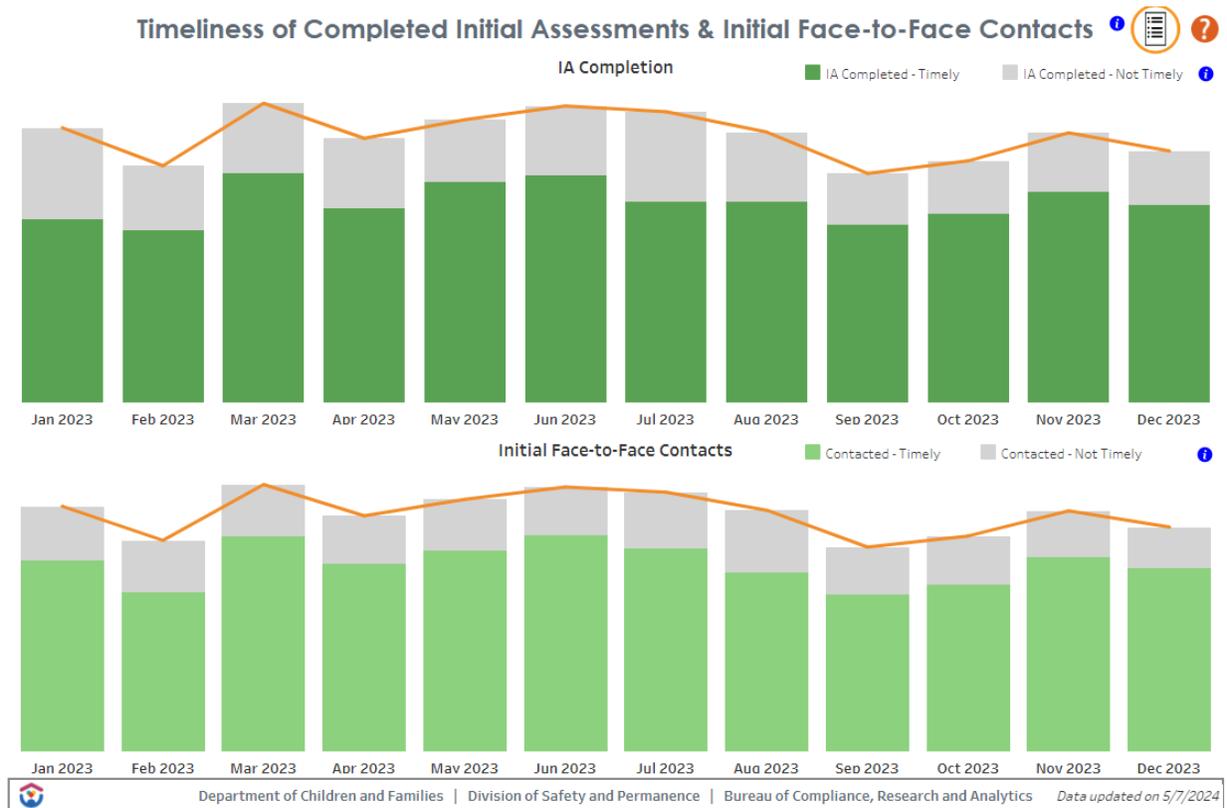


	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Timely Face-to-Face Contact	82.1%	81.3%	81.1%	80.0%	80.4%	79.6%	79.6%	79.2%	78.8
Total IAs Completed	26,956	26,456	26,188	27,148	25,352	22,684	22,180	21,893	20,554



	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
On Time IAs	66.5%	68.2%	68.5%	69.2%	68.1%	72.80 %	75.1%	72.6%	74.9
Total IAs Completed	26,956	26,456	26,188	27,148	25,352	22,684	22,180	21,893	20,554

Initial Assessment Dashboard



Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.

Item 2: Services to Family to Protect Child(ren) in the Home and Prevent Removal or Re-Entry into Foster Care.

Did the agency make concerted efforts to provide services to the family to **prevent** children’s **entry into foster care or re-entry** after reunification?

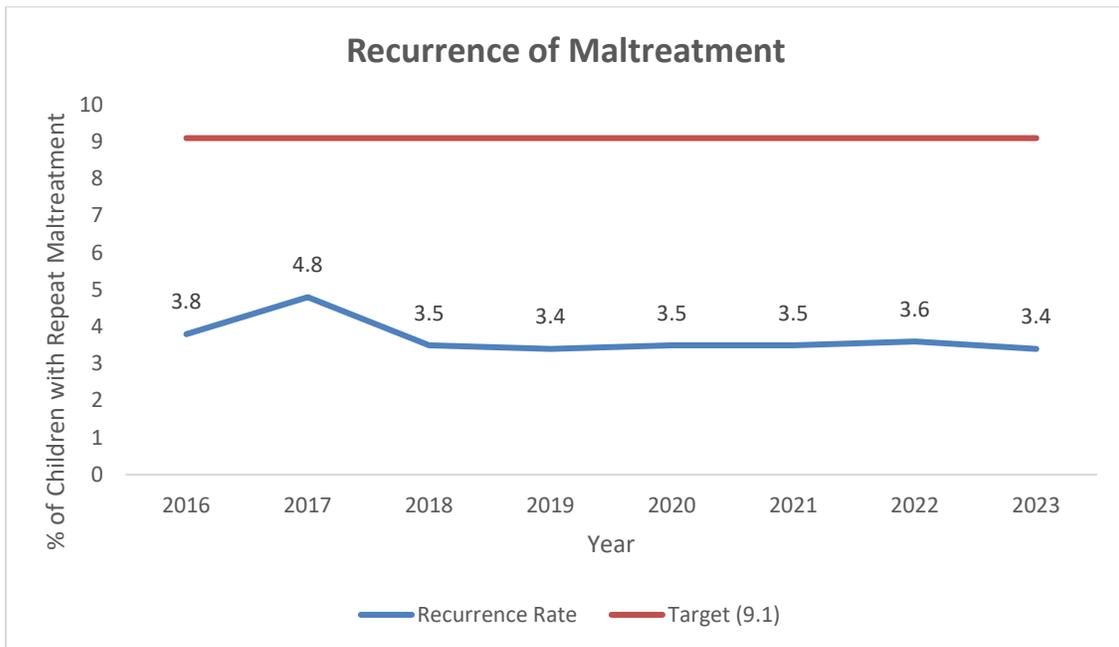
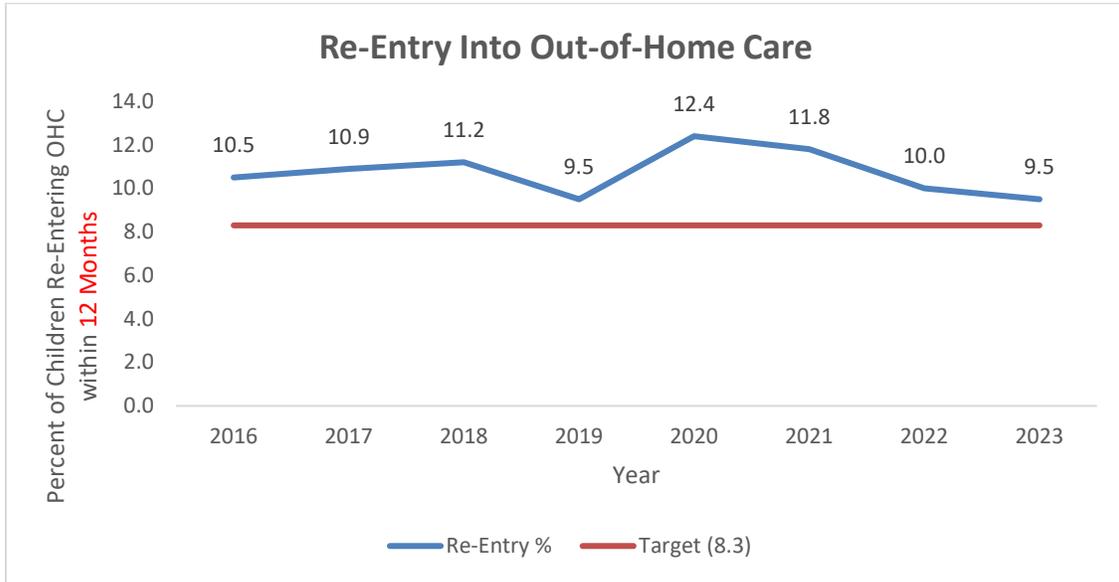
Improvement Goal: 90%

Final PIP Determination: WI achieved the required level of improvement in Reporting Period 3.

	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CFSR (65)	2019 - 2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020 - 2021 PIP YR 1 (80)	2021 - 2022 PIP YR 2 (77)	2022 - 2023 PIP YR 3 & NOP* (111)
Item 2	88%	86%	82%	83%	58%	82%	82%	85%	77%

*Wisconsin Non-Overlapping Period (NOP) ran from 6/1/22 through 11/30/23.

National Performance Data-CFSR 3 Measures*



*Note, the X axis for both CFSR3 measures above notes performance during the CY Outcome Window.

Item 3: Risk and Safety Assessment and Management.

Did the agency make concerted efforts to **assess and address the risk and safety** concerns related to the child(ren) in their own homes or while in foster care?

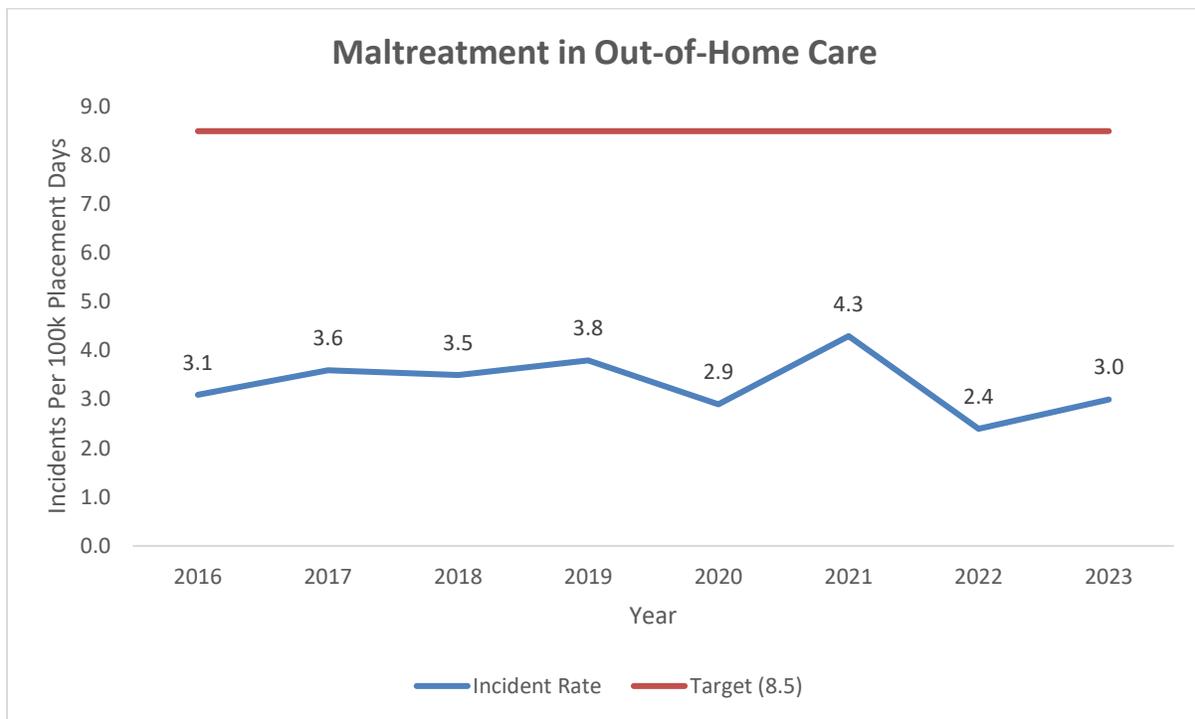
Improvement Goal: 82%

Final PIP Determination: WI did not achieve the required level of improvement.

	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CFSR (65)	2019 - 2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020 - 2021 PIP YR 1 (80)	2021 - 2022 PIP YR 2 (77)	2022 - 2023 PIP YR 3 & NOP* (111)
Item 3	64%	72%	70%	64%	35%	75%	78%	66%	50%

**Wisconsin Non-Overlapping Period (NOP) ran from 6/1/22 through 11/30/23.*

National Performance Data-CFSR3 Measures*



**Note, the X axis for the measures above notes performance during the CY Outcome Window.*

Administrative Initial Assessment Data

Safety Decision by Initial Assessment Disposition for Primary Caregiver CPS Initial Assessments: Calendar Year (CY) 2023

Initial Assessment Disposition	Safe		Unsafe		No Safety Decision		Total	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Case Closed	13,899	73.4%	123	0.6%	253	0.5%	14,275	75.4%
Case Closed – Child Safe and Referred to Community Services	1,634	8.6%	36	0.2%	130	0.3%	1,800	9.5%
Case Opened – Ongoing CPS Services: Petition	161	0.9%	1,413	7.5%	70	0.1%	1,644	8.7%
Case Already Opened – Ongoing CPS Services	165	0.9%	172	0.9%	12	0.0%	349	1.8%
Case Closed – Child Safe and Referred to Community Response Program	260	1.4%	2	0.0%	21	0.0%	283	1.5%
Case Opened – Ongoing CPS Services: Voluntary	159	0.8%	294	1.6%	3	0.0%	456	2.4%
Case Opened – Non-CPS Services	103	0.5%	12	0.1%	6	0.0%	121	0.6%
Case Opened – DMCPs Safety Services	12	0.1%	20	1.1%	0	0.0%	32	0.2%
Total	16,393	86.6%	2,072	12.0%	495	0.9%	18,960	100.0%

Confirming a Safe Environment

Confirming Safe Environment (CSE) is an assessment used to confirm the home environment is safe prior to placing a child in OHC. If there is a pre-existing approved CSE, a Reconfirming Safe Environment (RCSE) is completed. CSEs are due 10 calendar days after the placement begin date, and RCSEs are due 180 calendar days after the previous RCSE or CSE approval date.

CY 2023 Data:

	CSE	RCSE
Amount Due:	2,315	2,015
Completed:	1,752	2,015
Completed Timely:	510	1,094

Risk Management Services by Child/Provider Match Category

When a risk is identified during a CSE/RCSE, a risk management plan must be created to mitigate the risk and ensure the environment is safe for the child. Considerations for a risk management plan include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Additional or special training for placement providers
- Additional contact by agency or other providers
- Re-arranging the living environment

The table below shows the number of risk management services provided to each child/provider match category determined by a child’s approved CSE/RCSE. The table also shows what percentage of the service was received by each match category.

The definition of Child/Provider match category is whether the child’s level of need (LON) matches the provider’s level of care (LOC). These data include the most recently completed CSE/RCSE for each child’s placement with identified risk assessment and management from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023.

Risk Management Services Provided

Risk Management Services	Child/Provider Match Category							
	LOC Exceeds LON (n= 262)		LOC matches LON (n=471)		LON exceeds LOC (n=334)		N/A (n=446)	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Special Training	112	42.7%	122	25.9%	56	16.8%	94	21.1%
Additional Contact	82	31.3%	123	26.1%	99	29.6%	116	26.0%
Rearrange Living	43	16.4%	73	15.5%	46	13.8%	45	10.1%
Closer Supervision	160	61.1%	270	57.3%	188	56.3%	248	55.6%
Additional Rules	39	14.9%	53	11.3%	42	12.6%	44	9.9%
Special Equipment	21	8.0%	33	7.0%	34	10.2%	25	5.6%

Safety Outcomes Strengths and Challenges

Over the past five years, DCF has continued to orient the child welfare system toward the goal of keeping children with their families and supported in their homes and communities. The safety data captured throughout this section provides a way of looking at Wisconsin’s child welfare system’s ability to maintain children safely in their home. Wisconsin’s ability to assess and address safety concerns are measured using the Onsite Review Instrument (OSRI) for the 333 applicable cases reviewed over Wisconsin’s PIP period. Other administrative data shows performance holding relatively steady over the last five years. From 2015 to 2023, Wisconsin did see a marked improvement in the timely completion of Initial Assessments with a relative drop in performance during the COVID-19 pandemic due to in-person related public health

complexities. Finally, National Performance Data suggests Wisconsin continues to exceed the federal standards in the areas of recurrence of maltreatment and the incidents of reported maltreatment in out-of-home care.

Over this time period, challenges pertaining to timely Initial Assessments came up infrequently and sporadically. Regional coordinators continued to follow-up with counties when timely completion numbers dipped abnormally low to discover the cause and offer support. Common reasons for Initial Assessments not being completed in a timely manner were directly related to staff turnover and high caseloads. Safety of children always takes priority; therefore, when caseloads are high and staff numbers are low, documentation detail and timeliness are more likely to be negatively affected as staff prioritize safety related responsibilities in the field.

Key Initiatives Over the Past Five Years to Address Safety:

- DCF Initial Assessment Standards spelled out policies and practices to ensure child safety needs were attended to and state and federal guidelines were met.
- Applied Learning Communities (ALCs) provided by the Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System continued to support and improve safety practices through a collaborative learning model. Additionally, a peer support Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) approach to identify and implement process improvements was provided in each of the DCF regions across the state.
- The provision of required Initial and Ongoing training in safety decision making was another professional development resource focused on safety practices.
- Reporting tools and dashboards were available to the state and local agencies to track and monitor safety outcomes and patterns and identify areas where performance was strong, or improvements were needed. This was initiated as part of the state's 2020 PIP and DCF plans to continue reviewing of these dashboards and providing feedback to counties about performance expectations.
- Related to the PIP initiative, DSP continued to coordinate with the Bureau of Regional Operations (BRO) to assess initial face-to-face contact timeliness during the CPS process. These monthly reports were gathered and documented by BRO and sent to the DSP lead for further analysis.
- DCF continued to provide and in 2022 increased the annual allocation of flexible funding to agencies through Targeted Safety Services Funding (TSSF) moving forward, subject to available funds, to prevent removal and re-entry into the child welfare system by keeping children safely in home. As part of DCF's support for TSSF, technical assistance was provided to counties and served as a venue for peer support related to meeting safety needs of families.

Permanency Outcomes 1 and 2

Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

Item 4: Stability of Foster Care Placement.

Is the child in foster care in a **stable placement** and were any changes in the child’s placement in the best interests of the child and consistent with achieving the child’s permanency goal(s)?

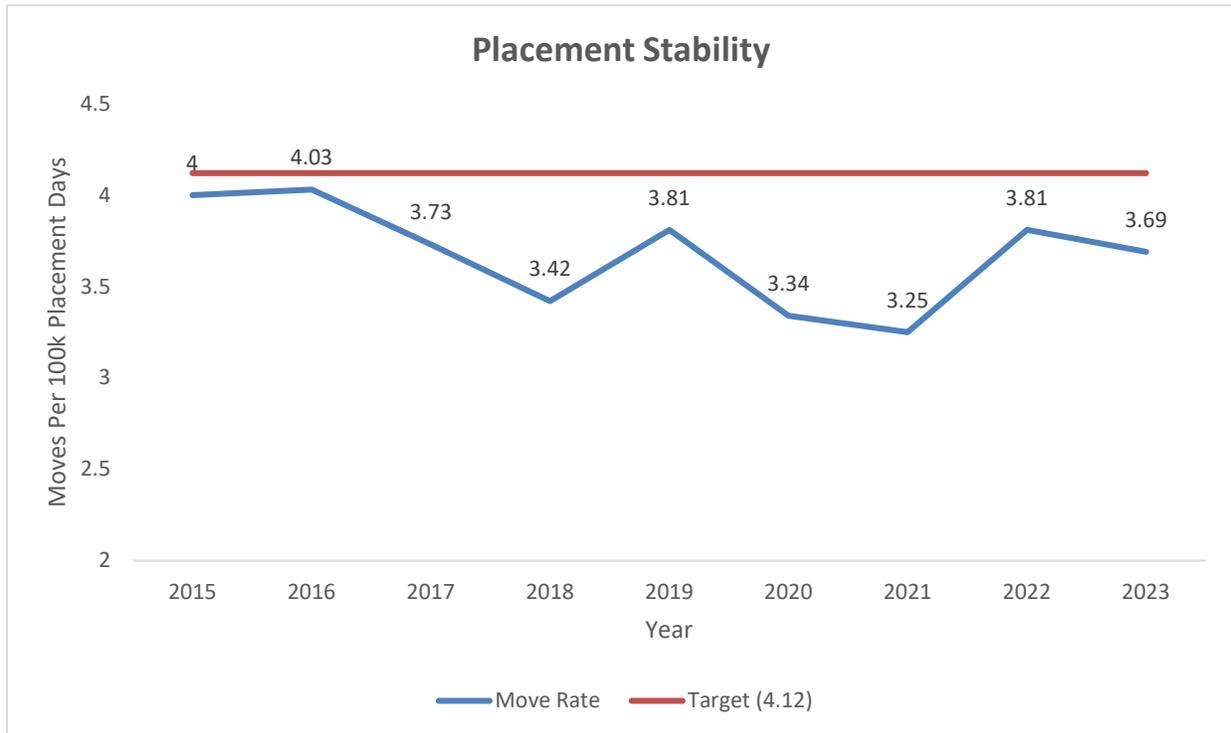
Improvement Goal: 81%

Final PIP Determination: WI did not achieve the required level of improvement.

	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CFSR (65)	2019 - 2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020 - 2021 PIP YR 1 (80)	2021 - 2022 PIP YR 2 (77)	2022 - 2023 PIP YR 3 & NOP* (111)
Item 4	82%	71%	72%	61%	88%	73%	73%	51%	63%

**Wisconsin Non-Overlapping Period (NOP) ran from 6/1/22 through 11/30/23.*

National Performance Data- CFSR 3



Over the past five years, Wisconsin undertook several initiatives to address this item. Objective 3.1 in Section 3 highlights Family Find and Engagement (FFE), the research-based approach to find and engage relatives. To increase placement stability and support goodness of fit at time of placement, a Business Process Reengineering (BPR) project targeting the initial assessment

process is currently underway to reduce redundancy and inefficiencies for Wisconsin’s workforce and increase a more robust portrayal of a child/youth’s strengths, cultural identities, and needs while creating digital efficiencies within our documentation process and eWisACWIS system. In July of 2023, DCF launched the Supporting Youth and Children (SYNC) portal to allow electronic referrals for placement and treatment services to licensed group homes and residential care centers. More information on the SYNC portal can be found at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/sync>

These approaches over this period targeted system-wide improvement in Wisconsin and DCF will continue to monitor their impact on placement stability in Wisconsin’s next five-year Children & Family Services Plan (CFSP).

Item 5: Permanency Goal for Child Case Record Review Results.

Did the agency establish **appropriate permanency goals** for the child in a **timely manner**?

Improvement Goal: 48%

Final PIP Determination: WI achieved the required level of improvement in Reporting Period 2.

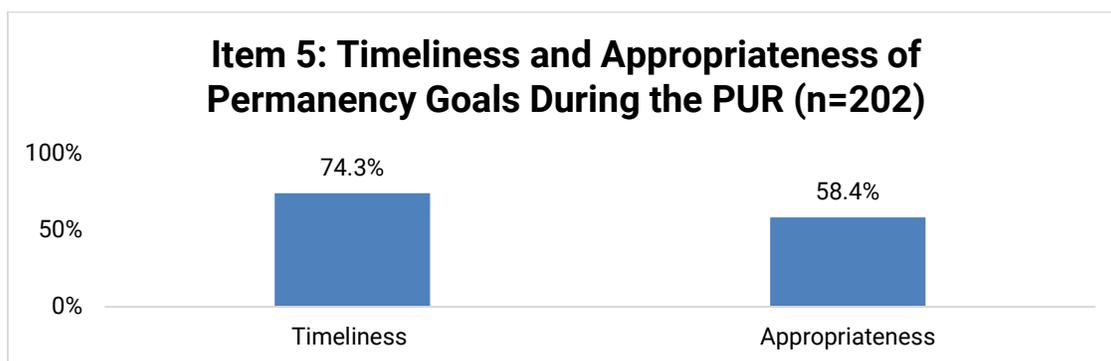
	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CFSR (65)	2019 - 2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020 - 2021 PIP YR 1 (80)	2021 - 2022 PIP YR 2 (77)	2022-2023 PIP YR 3 & NOP* (111)
Item 5	54%	67%	59%	56%	59%	38%	50%	40%	35%

**Wisconsin Non-Overlapping Period (NOP) ran from 6/1/22 through 11/30/23.*

Case Review Data

Item 5B: Were all the permanency goals that were in effect during the period under review (PUR) established in a **timely manner**?

Item 5C: Were all the permanency goals that were in effect during the period under review **appropriate** to the child’s needs for permanency and to the circumstances of the case?



Source: Online Monitoring System (includes all case reviews required for the PIP Measuring Plan-PUR start date: 6/1/18 – 11/1/22)

Administrative Data

Permanency Plan Goals

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Adoption	1,178	1,309	1,346	1,584	1,680	1,674	1,759	1,737	1,595	1,673	1,464
Reunification	4,430	4,781	5,019	5,182	5,848	5,862	5,660	5,271	4,962	4,692	4,620
Guardianship	583	710	795	945	968	1,095	1,055	1,079	1,003	989	836
Permanent Placement with a Fit and Willing Relative	211	162	171	187	157	152	135	93	85	91	74
Alt. Permanency Plan	82	6	2	2							
OPPLA	532	500	452	387	370	332	301	320	312	273	274
No Permanency Plan Goal Listed	1,713	1,879	1,773	1,765	1,764	1,725	1,603	1,388	1,227	1,283	1,176
Total	8,729	9,347	9,558	10,052	10,787	10,840	10,513	9,888	9,184	9,001	8,444

Qualitative Data

Wisconsin provides additional data on the timeliness of permanency review hearings under Item 22: Permanency Hearings. This data is pulled from a report created as part of Wisconsin’s overall PIP strategy that allows counties to access and track their internal local timeliness measures. A memo describing the report can be viewed at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cwportal/policy/pdf/memos/2021-34i.pdf>.

Item 6: Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption, or Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement. Case Record Review Results.

Did the Agency make concerted efforts to **achieve reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement** for the child?

Improvement Goal: 39%

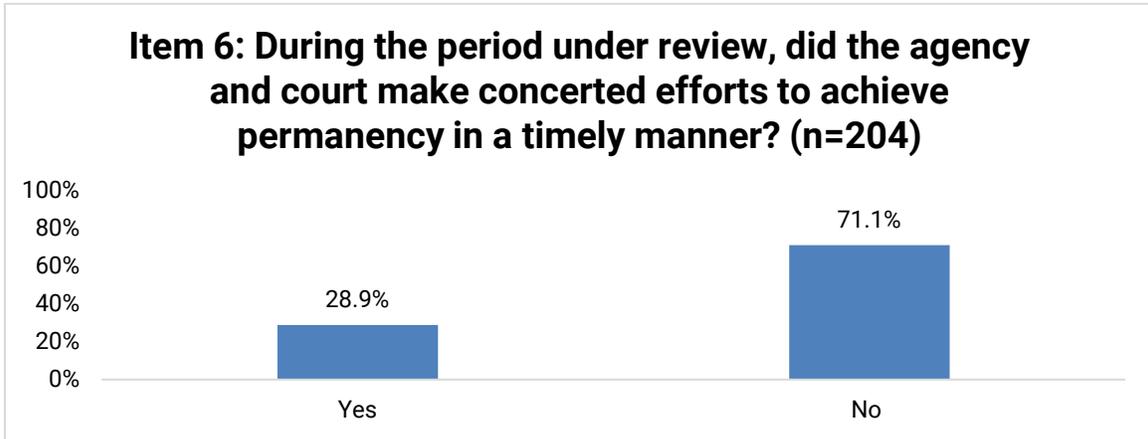
Final PIP Determination: WI did not achieve the required level of improvement.

	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CFSR (65)	2019 - 2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020 - 2021 PIP YR 1 (80)	2021 - 2022 PIP YR 2 (77)	2022 - 2023 PIP YR 3 & NOP* (111)
Item 6	66%	59%	50%	46%	48%	30%	29%	33%	27%

*Wisconsin Non-Overlapping Period (NOP) ran from 6/1/22 through 11/30/23.

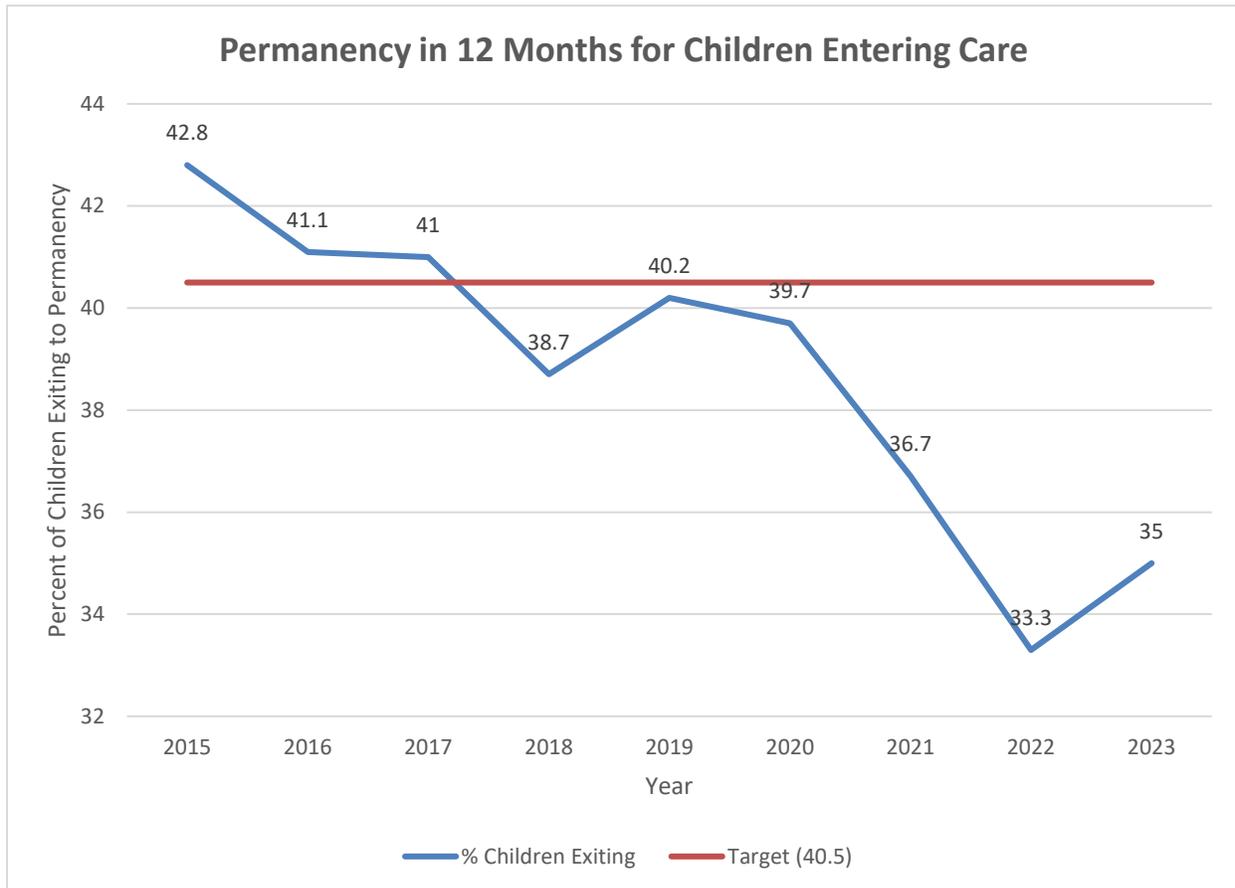
Case Review Data

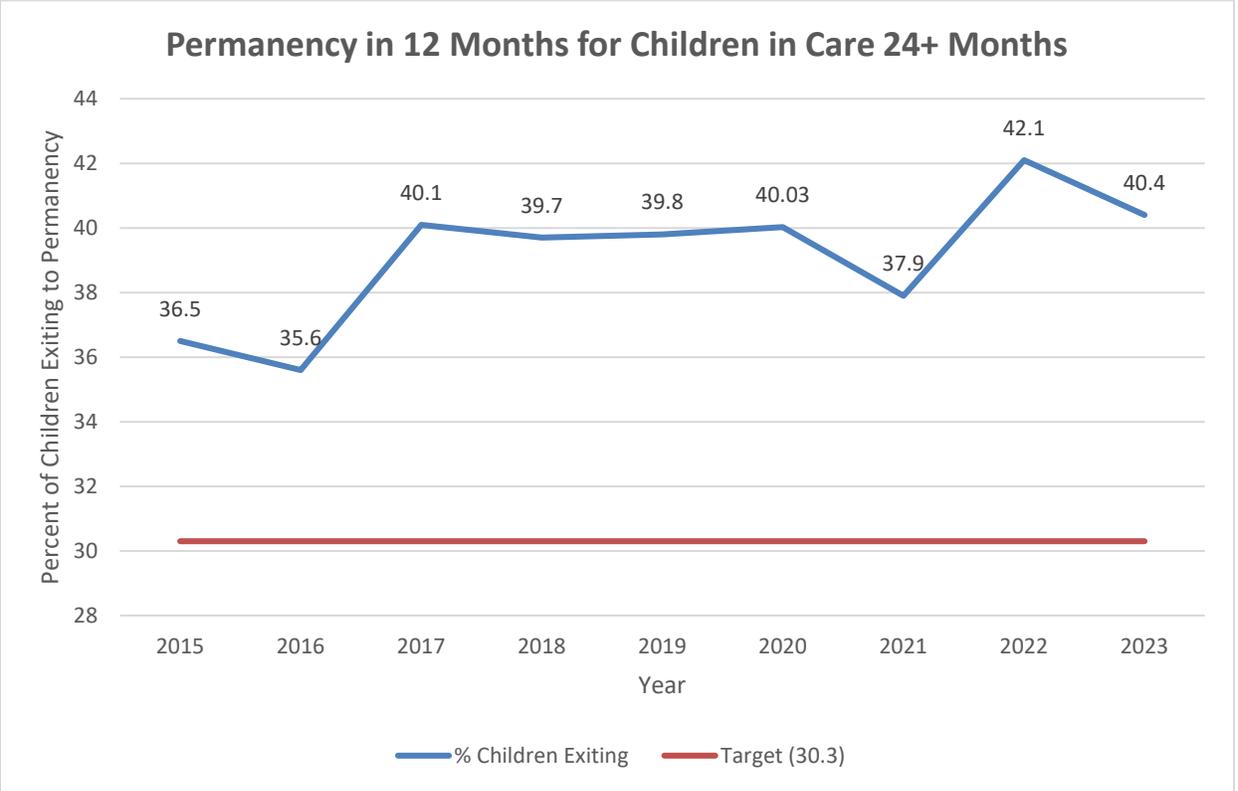
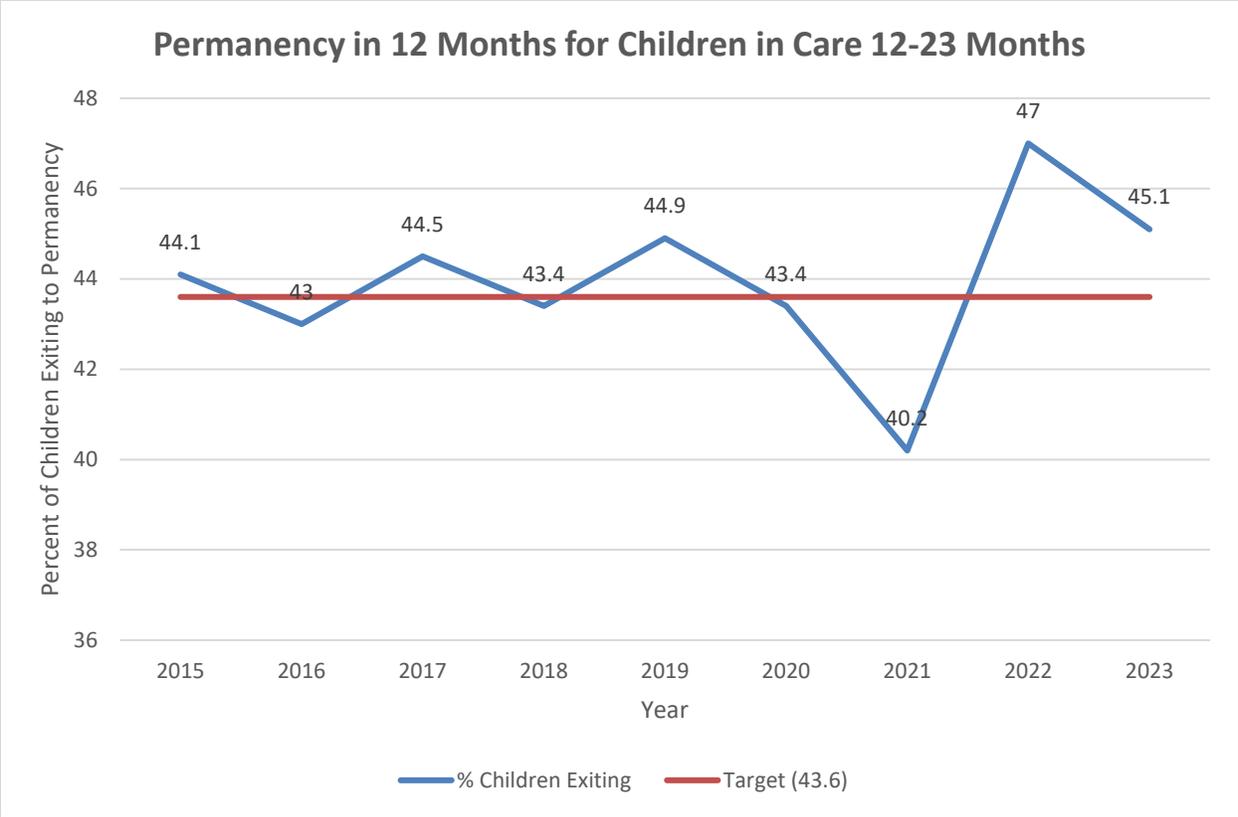
Item 6B: During the period under review, did the agency and court **make concerted efforts** to achieve the permanency in a timely manner?



Source: Online Monitoring System (includes all case reviews required for the PIP Measuring Plan-PUR start date: 6/1/18 – 11/1/22)

National Performance Data – CFSR3* and Administrative Data

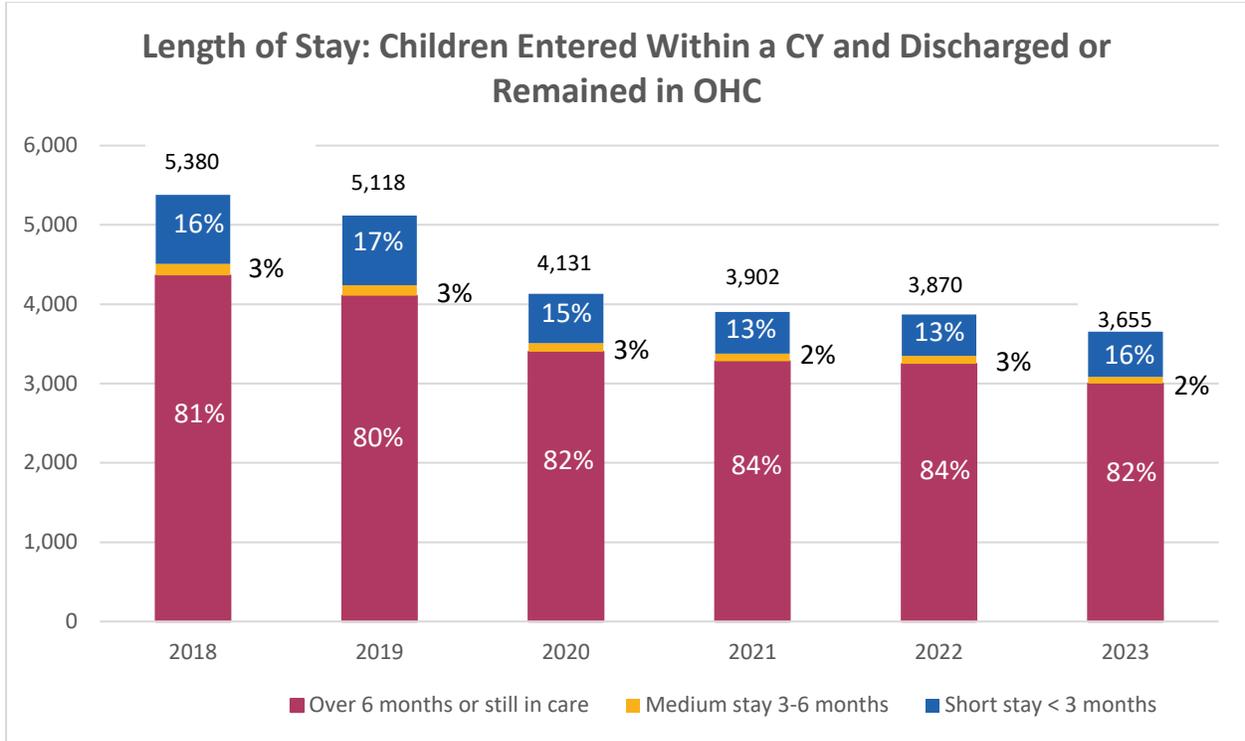




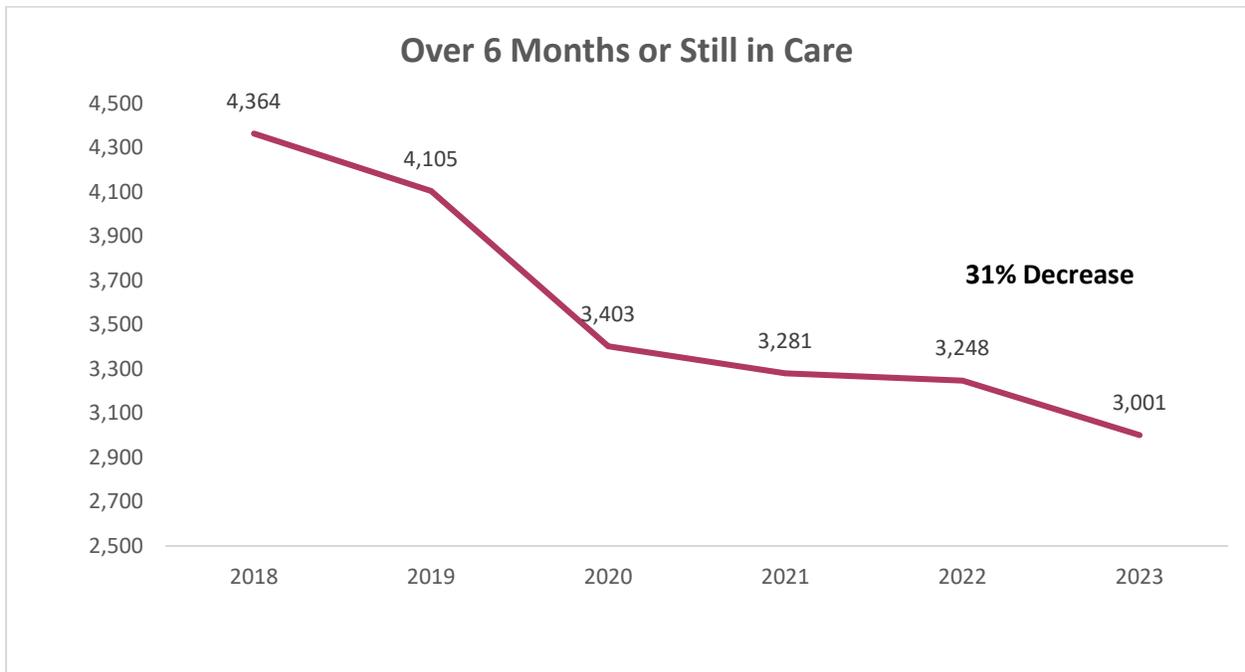
**Note: The X axis for the CFSR3 measures above notes performance during the CY Outcome Window.*

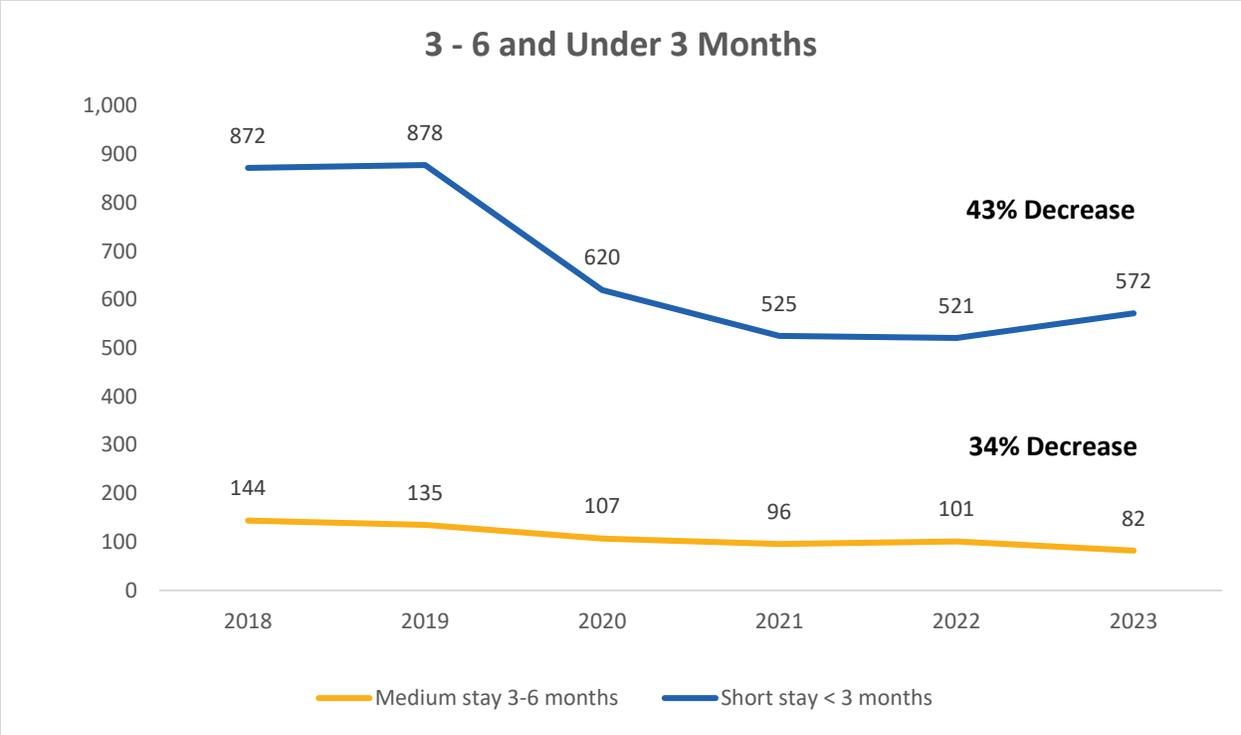
Administrative Data

Over the past five years, Wisconsin saw its overall discharges from out-of-home care decrease with a proportionally higher rate of decline for children discharged within 3-6 months which is inflating Wisconsin’s overall median length of stay.

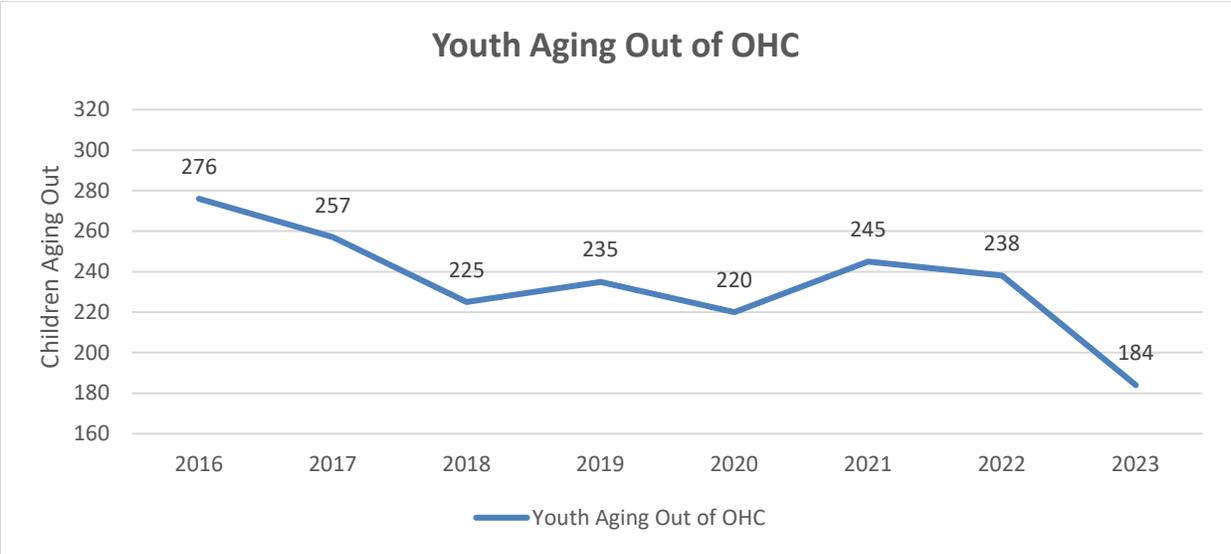


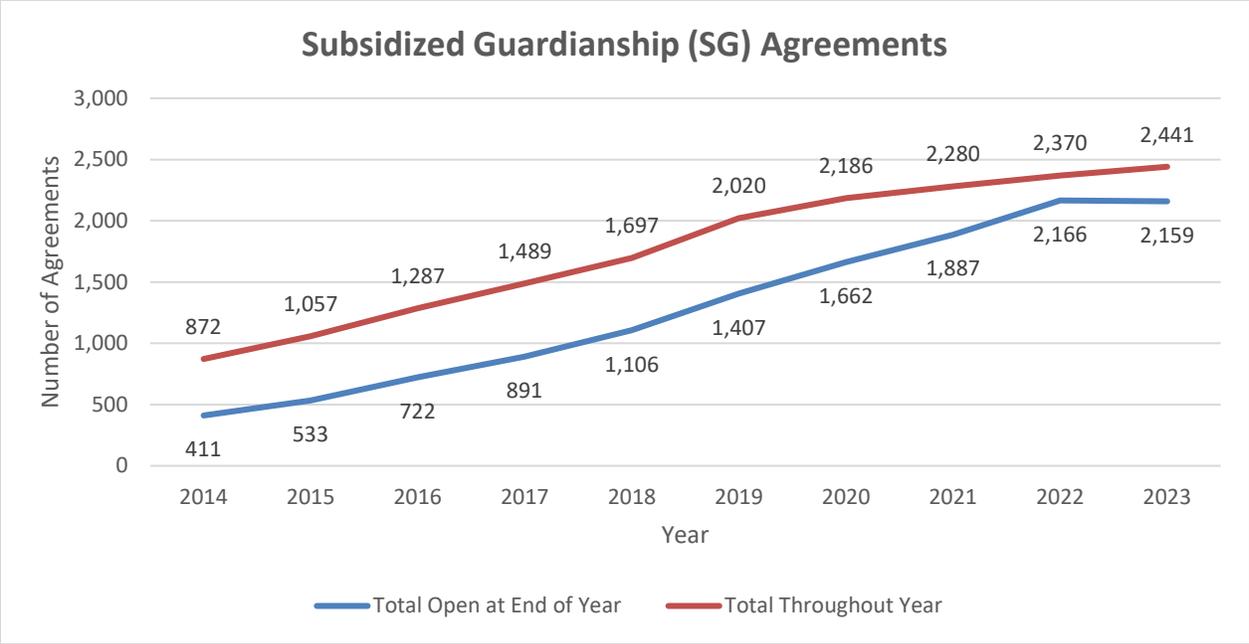
Length of Stay: Children Entered within CY and Discharged or Remain in OHC





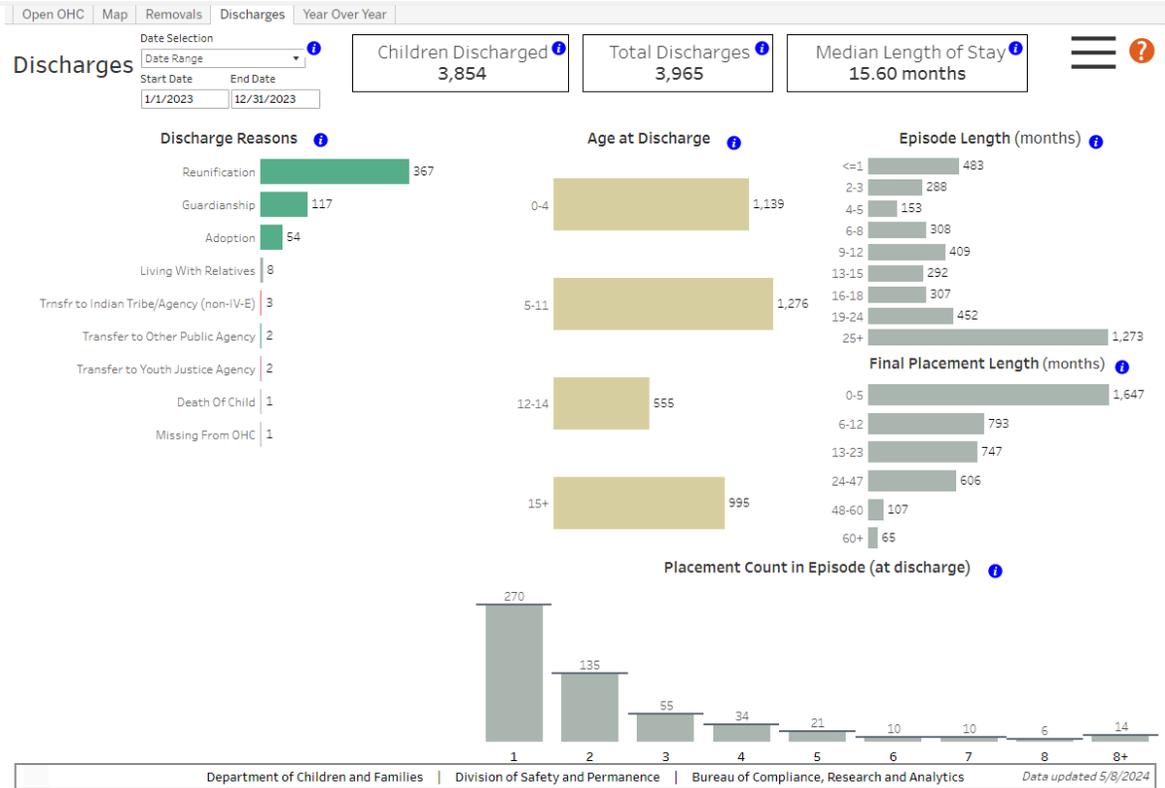
Over that same time period Wisconsin has seen a steady decline in the number of youth that aged out of out-of-home care (OHC) accompanied by an increase in the utilization of Subsidized Guardianship as a permanency option.





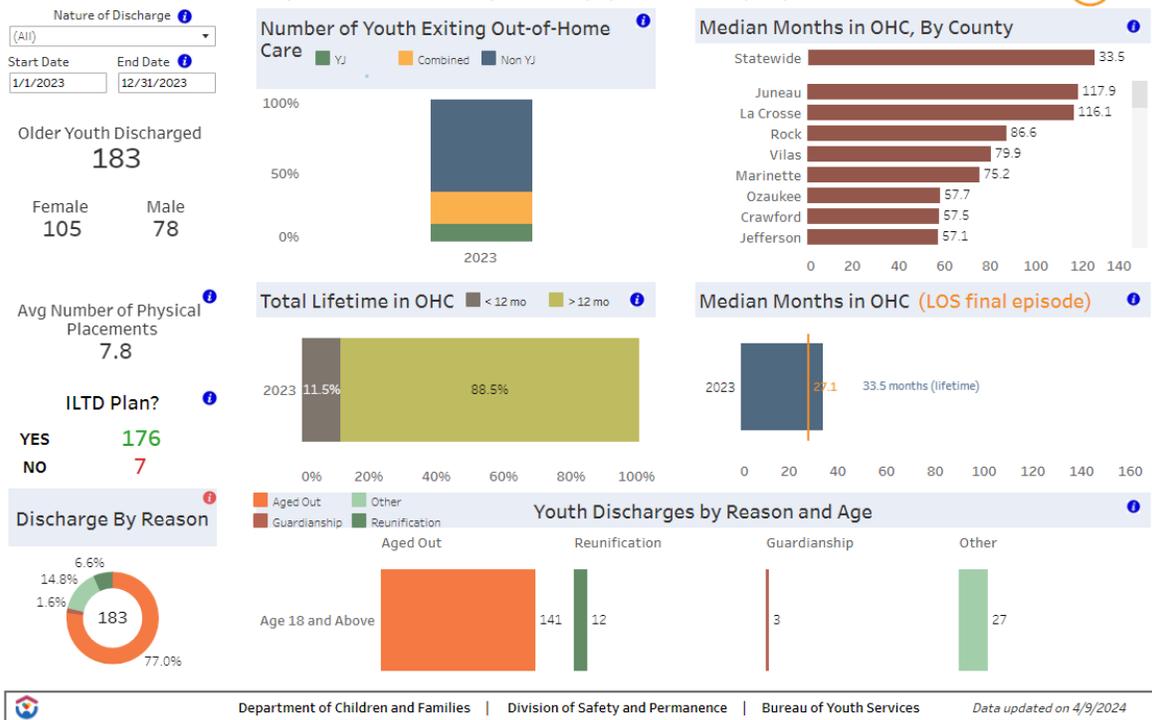
**Note: Not every SG Agreement open within a CY remains open on the last day of the year.*

OHC Discharge Dashboard



Older Youth Outcomes Dashboard

Older Youth Outcomes (Age 15 and Older) from 1/1/2023 to 12/31/2023



Youth Discharge Comparison

		Youth Discharge Reason by Calendar Year							
		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Age Out		276	257	225	235	220	245	238	184
SG		763	835	874	927	802	708	786	762
Total		4,962	5,200	5,344	5,383	4,590	4,117	4,305	3,937

		Youth Discharge Reason Percentage by Calendar Year							
		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Age Out		5.56%	4.94%	4.21%	4.37%	4.79%	5.95%	5.53%	4.67%
SG		15.38%	16.06%	16.35%	17.22%	17.47%	17.20%	18.26%	19.35%

Research demonstrates that when children are not able to be safely maintained in their home, it is important they are placed with relatives whenever possible. Over the past five years, Wisconsin made concerted efforts to engage more relatives and placed significant investments in key initiatives that have resulted in a substantial decrease in the number of children being placed in congregate care settings (see item 10). More information regarding these efforts can be found at the end of this section under Summary of Permanency Outcomes 1 and 2. DCF will continue to monitor the impact this approach has on Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption in Wisconsin's next five-year Children & Family Services Plan (CFSP).

Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.

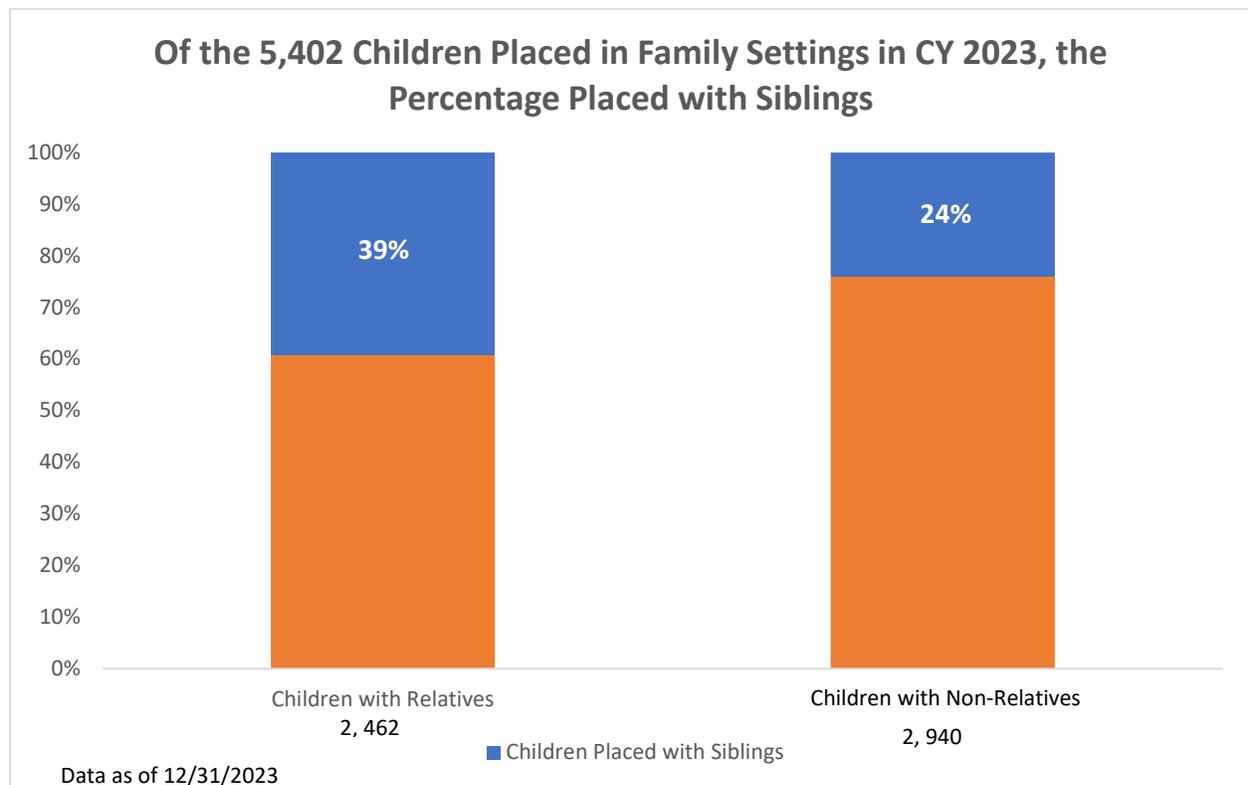
Item 7: Placement with Siblings.

Did the agency make concerted efforts to ensure that **siblings in foster care are placed together** unless separation was necessary to meet the needs of one of the siblings?

	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CF SR (65)	2019 - 2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020 - 2021 PIP YR 1 (80)	2021 - 2022 PIP YR 2 (77)	2022 - 2023 PIP YR 3 & NOP* (111)
Item 7	86%	84%	90%	93%	83%	96%	90%	88%	83%

*Wisconsin Non-Overlapping Period (NOP) ran from 6/1/22 through 11/30/23.

Administrative Data



Item 8: Visiting with Parents and Siblings in Foster Care.

Did the agency make concerted efforts to ensure that **visitation between a child in foster care and his or her mother, father, and siblings** was of sufficient frequency and quality to promote continuity in the child’s relationships with these close family members?

	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CFSR (65)	2019 - 2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020 - 2021 PIP YR 1 (80)	2021 - 2022 PIP YR 2 (77)	2022 - 2023 PIP YR 3 & NOP* (111)
Item 8	57%	68%	65%	58%	66%	63%	73%	70%	63%

**Wisconsin Non-Overlapping Period (NOP) ran from 6/1/22 through 11/30/23.*

Item 9: Preserving Connections.

Did the agency make concerted efforts to **preserve the child’s connections** to his or her neighborhood, community, faith, extended family, Tribe, school, and friends?

	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CFSR (65)	2019 - 2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020 - 2021 PIP YR 1 (80)	2021 - 2022 PIP Year 2 (77)	2022 - 2023 PIP YR 3 & NOP* (111)
Item 9	75%	81%	78%	64%	65%	73%	73%	71%	69%

**Wisconsin Non-Overlapping Period (NOP) ran from 6/1/22 through 11/30/23.*

Administrative Data

	Number of Children Placed in Homes (at Removal) Within 60 Miles of Home								
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Children Removed	4,008	4,094	4,442	4,229	4,098	3,225	3,114	3,149	3,486
Total Removals	4,183	4,292	4,597	4,439	4,303	3,349	3,223	3,257	3,668
Percentage	96%	95%	97%	95%	95%	96%	97%	97%	95%
Median Distance (miles) from Home	7.73	7.14	7	6.82	6.41	7.13	7.14	6.41	6.77

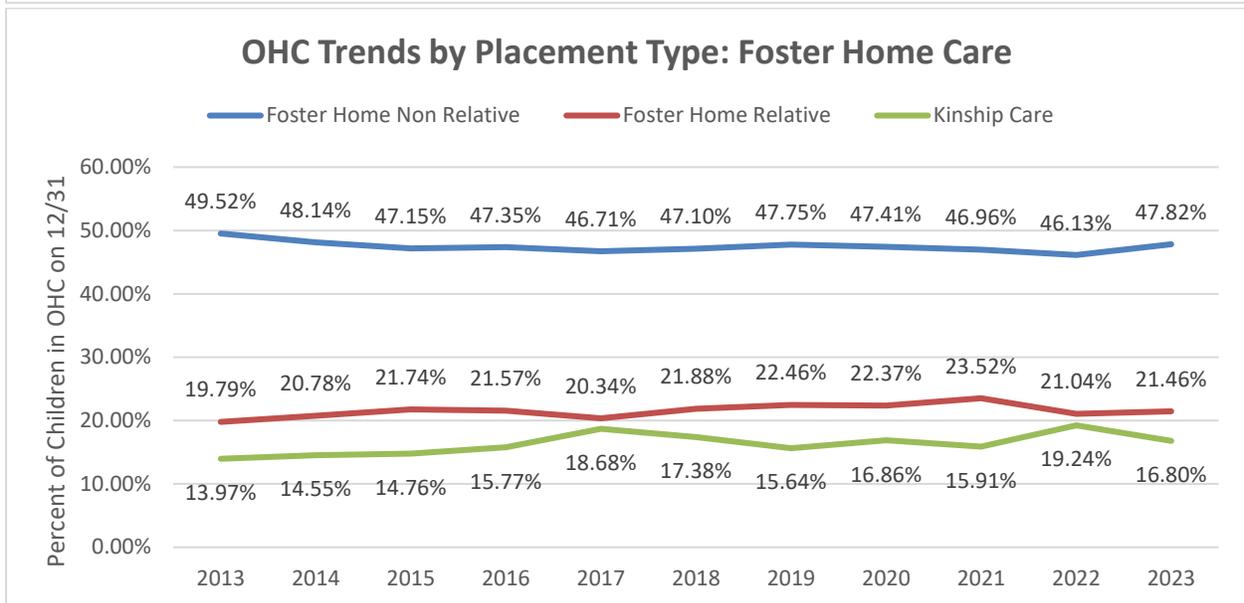
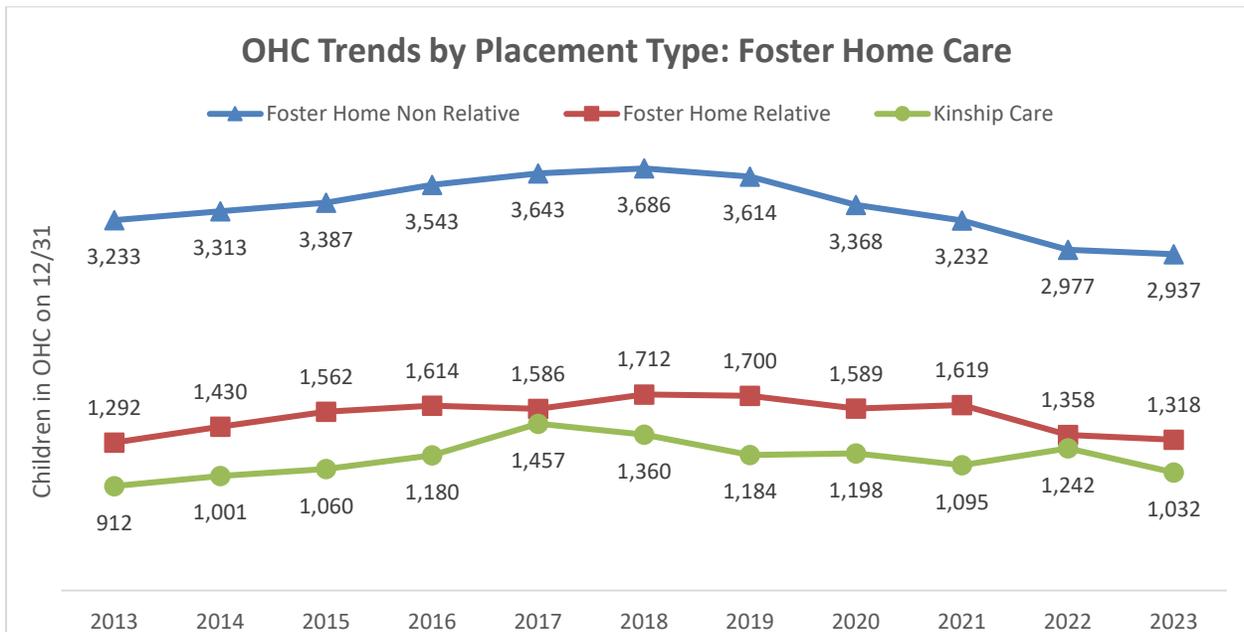
Item 10: Relative Placement.

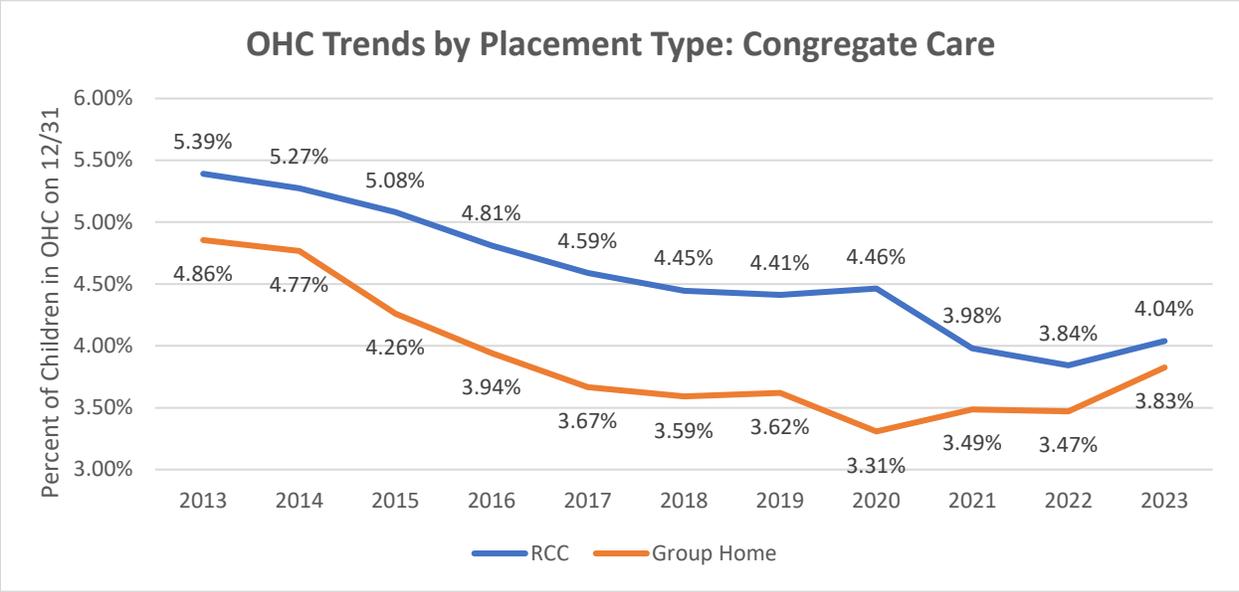
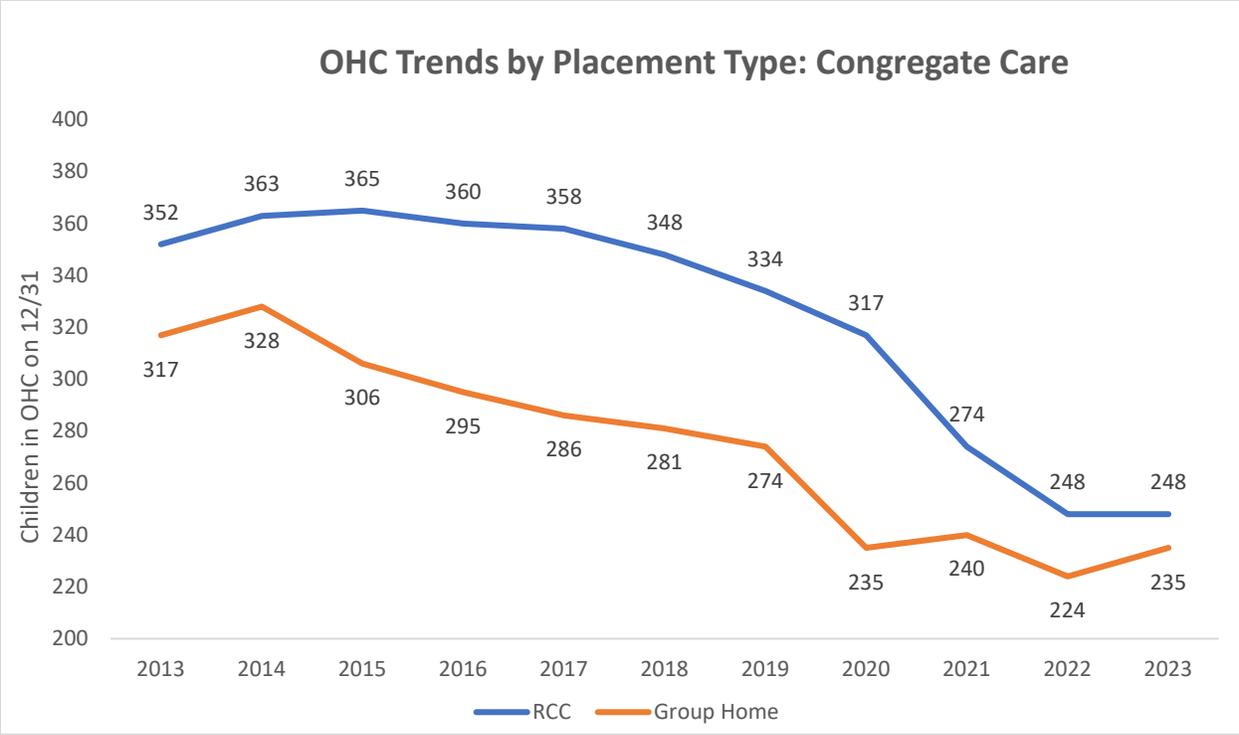
Did the agency make concerted efforts to **place the child with relatives** when appropriate?

	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CFSR (65)	2019 - 2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020 - 2021 PIP YR 1 (80)	2021 - 2022 PIP YR 2 (77)	2022 - 2023 PIP YR 3 & NOP* (111)
Item 10	62%	70%	82%	57%	68%	74%	79%	83%	80%

*Wisconsin Non-Overlapping Period (NOP) ran from 6/1/22 through 11/30/23.

Administrative Placement Data





Item 11: Relationship of Child in Care with Parents.

Did the agency make concerted efforts to promote, support, and/or maintain **positive relationships between the child in foster care and his or her mother and father** or other primary caregivers from whom the child had been removed through activities other than just arranging for visitation?

	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CFSR (65)	2019 - 2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020 - 2021 PIP YR 1 (80)	2021 - 2022 PIP YR 2 (77)	2022 - 2023 PIP YR 3 & NOP* (111)
Item 11	67%	67%	72%	65%	65%	67%	80%	80%	61%

**Wisconsin Non-Overlapping Period (NOP) ran from 6/1/22 through 11/30/23.*

Summary of Permanency Outcomes 1 and 2

Over the past five years, Wisconsin’s vision for child welfare strongly emphasized the role of relatives and like-kin in caring for all children and youth who are unable to remain safely in their home. This focus was reflected in the substantial decrease in the number of children placed in congregate care settings during this period.

Key Initiatives Over the Past Five Years to Address Permanency:

- In 2023, Wisconsin expanded its definition of “relative” so that children could be placed more easily with those who already know and love them, and those caregivers can receive financial support. More information regarding this change can be found at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/familyfirst/impact-of-like-kin-legislation.pdf>
- Starting in 2022, DCF began fully reimbursing local child welfare agencies for the costs associated with children achieving permanency through subsidized guardianship.
- Ongoing Standards outlined comprehensive policies to assure alignment with federal and state permanency guidelines and requirements focused on promoting timely and safe permanency for children.
- A focus on quality case practice to clarify and support child welfare case planning to ensure plans address the needs of the children, youth, and family and services are identified to avoid re-entry.
- Revisions to the Permanency Plan were made in an effort to support the workforce and families in a more streamlined, trauma informed document. Additionally, DCF revised the Permanency Plan timeliness report and began providing technical assistance to support timely reviews, including a desk guide to support permanency review panels.
- DCF continued to support local agencies in prioritizing Family Find and Engagement practices in an effort to expand the pool of relatives to care for children in the OHC system. This initiative was a key focus of the Wisconsin PIP.

- The Kinship Navigator program continued to support relative caregivers to keep children with their families. Throughout the past two funding cycles, DCF provided opportunities for local tribal and county child welfare agencies to provide concrete supports and brief legal services to these caregivers.
- DCF continued to partner with the Children’s Court Improvement Program (CCIP) on the Tailored Dispositional Order (TDO) project. To ensure that reunification occurs as soon as is safely able to, this project provided training and technical assistance to local child welfare agencies. Training and technical assistance focused on the identification and creation of court ordered conditions that are unique and specific to the behavioral goals related to safety. In 2023, the TDO project expanded to include dispositional orders for youth who are involved in the youth justice system.

Well-Being Outcomes 1, 2, and 3

Well-Being 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children’s needs.

Item 12: Needs and Services of Child, Parents, and Foster Parents.

Did the agency make concerted efforts to **assess the needs** of and **provide services** to **children, parents, and foster parents** to identify the services necessary to achieve case goals and adequately address the issues relevant to the agency’s involvement with the family?

Improvement Goal: 38%

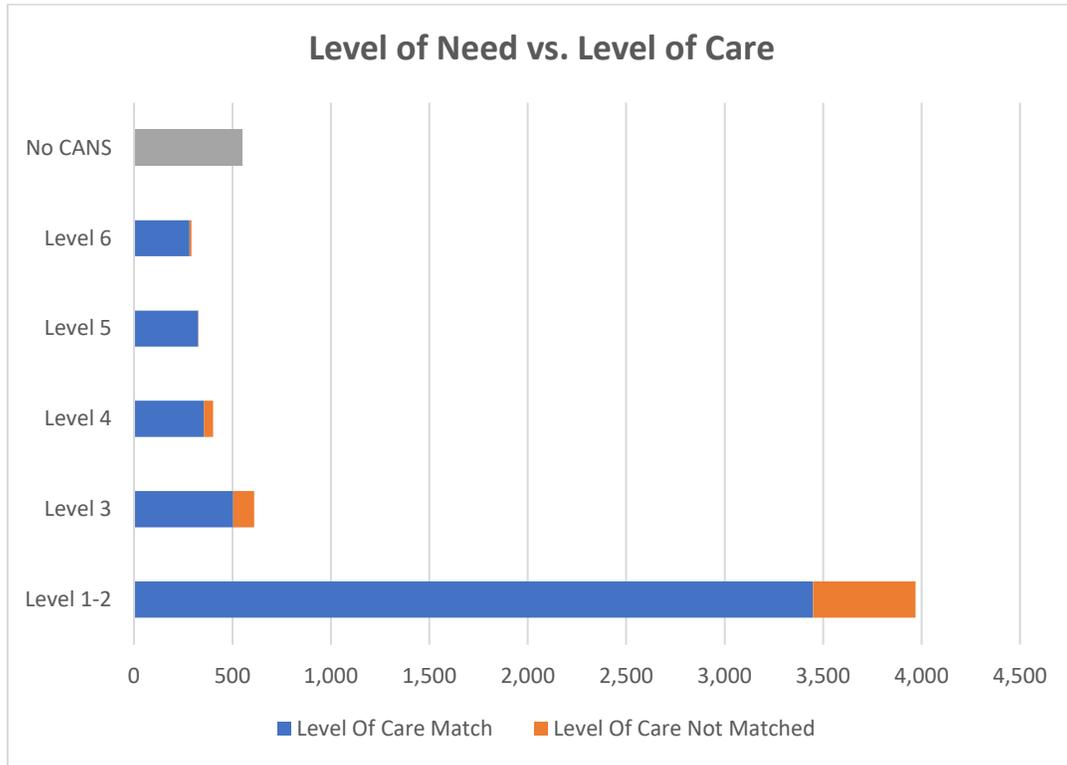
Final PIP Determination: WI achieved the required level of improvement in Reporting Period 3.

	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CFSR (65)	2019 - 2020 - PIP Baseline (65)	2020 - 2021 PIP YR 1 (80)	2021 - 2022 PIP YR 2 (77)	2022 - 2023 PIP YR 3 & NOP* (111)
Item 12	52%	60%	54%	36%	43%	31%	43%	40%	37%

**Wisconsin Non-Overlapping Period (NOP) ran from 6/1/22 through 11/30/23.*

Child Level of Need vs. Level of Care

A match constitutes a child with an X Child Level of Need (LON) placed with a placement provider with a Level of Care (LOC) equal to X. A Mismatch means a provider’s LOC is either above or below the child’s assessed LON.



**Data includes all children in OHC as of 12/31/23 by their Match/Mismatch of CANS LON and LOC.*

Item 13: Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning.

Did the agency make concerted efforts to **assess the needs** of and **provide services** to **children, parents, and foster parents** to identify the services necessary to achieve case goals and adequately address the issues relevant to the agency’s involvement with the family?

Improvement Goal: 36%

Final PIP Determination: WI achieved the required level of improvement in Reporting Period 1.

	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CFSR (65)	2019 - 2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020 - 2021 PIP YR 1 (80)	2021 - 2022 PIP YR 2 (77)	2022 - 2023 PIP YR 3 & NOP* (111)
Item 13	80%	61%	67%	49%	42%	29%	59%	51%	45%

**Wisconsin Non-Overlapping Period (NOP) ran from 6/1/22 through 11/30/23.*

Item 14: Caseworker Visits with Child.

Were the **frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and child(ren)** sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child(ren) and promote achievement of case goals?

Improvement Goal: 73%

Final PIP Determination: WI achieved the required level of improvement in Reporting Period 2.

	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CFSR (65)	2019 - 2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020 - 2021 PIP YR 1 (80)	2021 - 2022 PIP YR 2 (77)	2022-2023 PIP YR 3 & NOP* (111)
Item 14	69%	69%	68%	60%	55%	66%	81%	71%	67%

**Wisconsin Non-Overlapping Period (NOP) ran from 6/1/22 through 11/30/23.*

Administrative Data

Monthly Caseworker Visits with Children in Foster Care; October 1, 2022-September 30, 2023

	Cumulative Number of Children in Foster Care	Number of Required Visits	Number of Successful Contacts	Percent	Number of Visits in Child's Residence	Percent
State Total	8,990	73,214	70,791	96.7%	61,590	87.0%

Item 15: Caseworker Visits with Parents.

Were the **frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the mothers and fathers** of the child(ren) sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child(ren) and promote achievement of case goals?

Improvement Goal: 33%

Final PIP Determination: WI achieved the required level of improvement in Reporting Period 1.

	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CFSR (65)	2019 - 2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020 - 2021 PIP YR 1 (80)	2021 - 2022 PIP YR 2 (77)	2022 - 2023 PIP YR 3 & NOP* (111)
Item 15	48%	49%	49%	42%	41%	27%	56%	42%	34%

**Wisconsin Non-Overlapping Period (NOP) ran from 6/1/22 through 11/30/23.*

Well-Being 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.

Item 16: Educational Needs of the Child.

Did the agency make concerted efforts to assess **children’s educational needs**, and appropriately address identified needs in case planning and case management services?

	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CFSR (65)	2019 - 2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020 - 2021 PIP YR 1 (80)	2021 - 2022 PIP YR 2 (77)	2022-2023 PIP YR 3 & NOP* (37)
Item 16	88%	90%	84%	70%	87%	82%	86%	85%	84%

**Wisconsin Non-Overlapping Period (NOP) ran from 6/1/22 through 11/30/23.*

High School Educational Outcomes¹

In the past five years, DCF contracted with the Institute for Research on Poverty (IRP) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in order to better understand education outcomes of youth experiencing out-of-home care (OHC); IRP investigated several potential links between OHC and the reduced likelihood of high school graduation. Analysis of education outcomes for students was considered for three different groups:

- (1) “Never SNAP, SI, OHC”: These students came from families who did not receive SNAP assistance, had no history of a screened-in CPS report, and were not in OHC;
- (2) “SNAP Only”: These students have families who received SNAP but who had no history of a screened-in CPS report or OHC;
- (3) “SI Only”: These students had a screened-in CPS report but did not experience OHC.

Overall findings were that students in OHC move schools more often than students who are not in OHC. Additionally, OHC students have fewer accumulated credits which is a barrier to graduation. Both trends are tied to poor educational outcomes. Lastly, a joint Elementary and Secondary Education Committee was created between DCF and the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to continue the collaboration on improving the educational experience and outcomes for kids in OHC.

¹ L. Berger and H. Kim, “Credit Transfer and High School Graduation Among Wisconsin’s Out-of-Home Care Population.” Report submitted to the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, February, 2020.

Well-Being 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

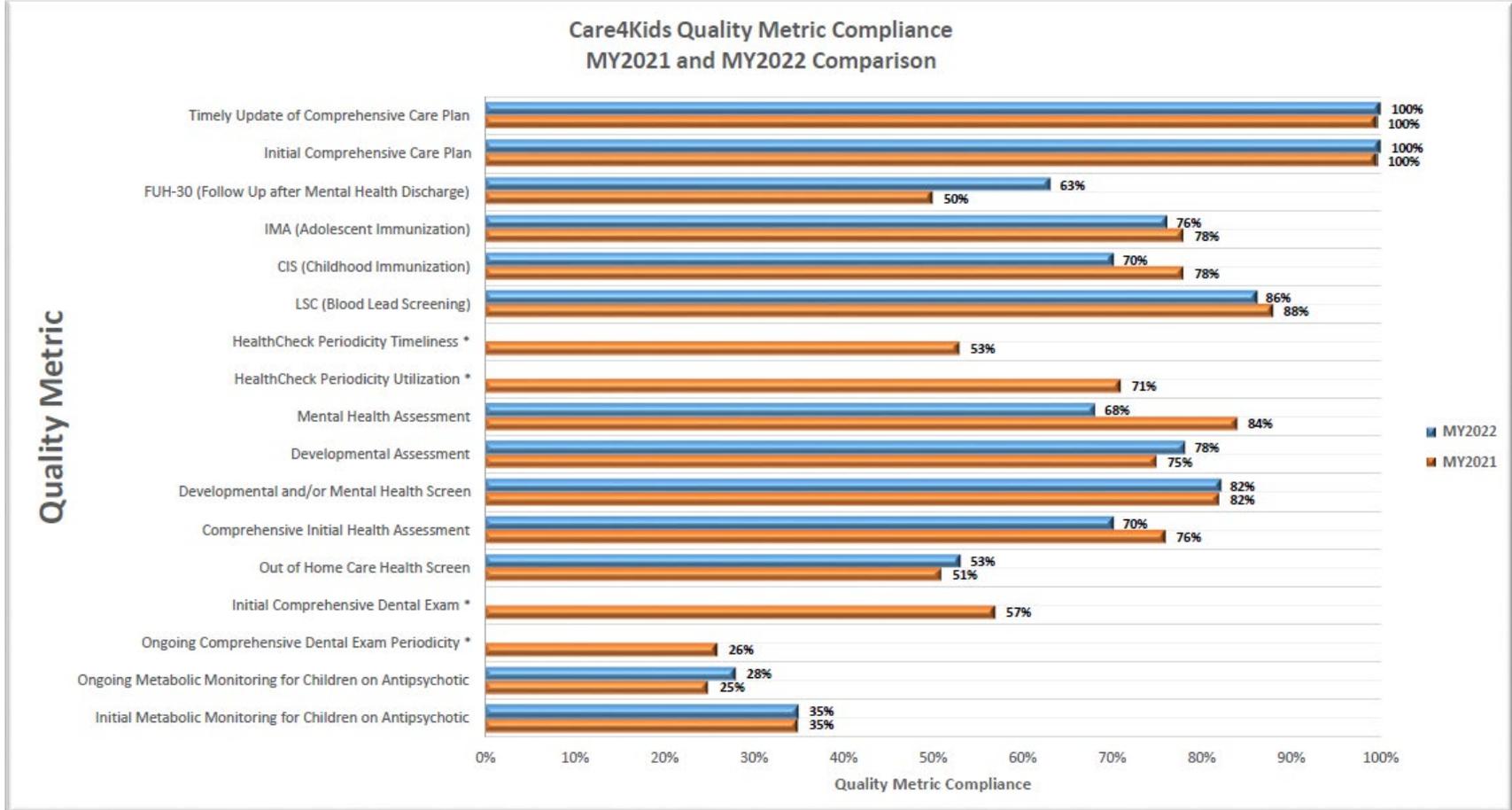
Item 17: Physical Health of the Child.

Did the agency address the **physical health needs** of children, including dental health needs?

	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CFSR (65)	2019 - 2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020 - 2021 PIP YR 1 (80)	2021 - 2022 PIP YR 2 (77)	2022 – 2023 PIP YR 3 & NOP* (111)
Item 17	61%	60%	60%	53%	72%	77%	74%	69%	66%

**Wisconsin Non-Overlapping Period (NOP) ran from 6/1/22 through 11/30/23.*

Over the past five years, DCF and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) closely collaborated to improve the quality, access, and timeliness of health care services to children and youth in OHC through the implementation of a Medicaid medical home service delivery model called Care4Kids. The Care4Kids program provides comprehensive, coordinated care for children and youth in foster care tailored to each child’s individualized needs.



*2023 Rates have not yet been reported to DHS.

Item 18: Mental/Behavioral Health of the Child.

Did the agency address the **mental/behavioral health needs** of children?

	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CFSR (65)	2019 - 2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020 - 2021 PIP YR 1 (80)	2021- 2022 PIP YR 2 (77)	2022-2023 PIP YR 3 & NOP* (111)
Item 18	77%	72%	66%	54%	55%	65%	58%	73%	46%

**Wisconsin Non-Overlapping Period (NOP) ran from 6/1/22 through 11/30/23.*

Summary of Well-Being Performance

Over the past five years, DCF continued to consult with key external partner groups, including parents and youth served by Wisconsin’s child welfare system, relative caregivers, service providers, and child welfare agency staff regarding factors that affect the state’s performance related to child and family well-being. The Child Adolescent Needs and Strengths Tool (CANS) continued to be an effective tool in helping identify needs and connecting youth and their families to resources.

Key Initiatives Over the Past Five Years to Address Well-Being:

- DCF and DPI staff met monthly to collaborate on addressing the educational needs of children in OHC.
- The CANS assessment tool continued to provide a comprehensive assessment of youth and parent needs and helps identify services that will meet the level of need for children and families in the system.
- Care4Kids initiative continued to focus on physical health and mental health and is a critical resource for children in OHC.
- Services funded with federal title IV-B dollars continued to provide supports to runaway and homeless youth to address educational and well-being needs.
- The Chafee program continued to support the Transition Resource Agency (TRA) structure that offers a range of educational, social and well-being initiatives designed to assist youth in successfully transitioning to adulthood across the state.

Systemic Factors

The following section outlines a final update to the 2020-2024 CFSP on the seven systemic factors for state child welfare system functioning. Information is presented for each item that are part of the seven systemic factors. For each of the systemic factors, there is a description of what the factor is, a description of available and most current data to demonstrate functioning and a summary of initiatives to address each systemic factor. Some of the systemic factors are described as individual items and some are combined, such as the service array systemic factor.

Management Information System (Item 19)

How well is the **statewide information system** functioning to ensure that, at a minimum, the state can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months has been) in foster care?

The Wisconsin SACWIS system, known as eWiSACWIS, is a comprehensive, mature, and well-functioning system that captures the status, demographics, and goals for children in out-of-home care (OHC) placements including foster care, and provides child welfare case management functionality for statewide OHC, guardianship, and adoption services. In alignment with DCF's vision to keep kids safely in-home with their families whenever possible, eWiSACWIS is also used to document programs and services designed to keep children safe, strengthen families, and provide a permanent and nurturing family home. All 72 Wisconsin counties, selected state agencies, and other external partners use eWiSACWIS.

Over the past five years, DCF continued to transition its eWiSACWIS system to become a Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) in accordance with its CCWIS roadmap and Annual Planning Document.

DCF's over-arching strategic vision, Putting Families First, permeates all statewide information system priorities, including the ongoing enhancement of eWiSACWIS as a modern CCWIS compliant system. Putting Families First means keeping children safely in-home with their families whenever possible. To support that vision in eWiSACWIS, DCF continued to prioritize system enhancements over the past five years that supported family-centered supportive services and programs, reduced the disproportionate impact of child welfare on communities of color, and supported the child welfare workforce.

Case Review System (Items 20-24)

WRITTEN CASE PLAN (ITEM 20)

How well is the case review system functioning statewide to ensure that each child has a **written case plan** that is developed jointly with the child's parent and includes the required provisions?

Wisconsin has a robust and comprehensive process in place for developing a case plan for families in the child welfare system who have a child placed in out-of-home care. In Wisconsin, this case plan is called a Permanency Plan.

Over the past five years, efforts have focused on improving the Permanency Plan through an in-depth analysis of the entire written Case Plan that ensure Wisconsin was adhering to all federal standards. Key initiatives over this period included implementation of FFPSA requirements, incorporation of lived experience, consolidation of ICWA/WICWA reporting requirements and a focus on a trauma-sensitive practice approach.

PERIODIC REVIEW (ITEM 21)

How well is the case review system functioning statewide to ensure that a **periodic review** for each child occurs no less frequently than once every six months, either by a court or by administrative review?

In Wisconsin, over half of the jurisdictions utilize an administrative panel for some or all the six-month reviews. In the other counties, a court commissioner or a judge conducts the six-month review, without distinguishing between a periodic (six-month) review or an annual Permanency Hearing.

Over the past five years, DCF continued to work closely with CCIP to assess, measure and address Item 21 as it relates to processes that occur in the court system but impact child welfare families. Key initiatives over this period included Wisconsin Child Professional Development System training, eWiSACWIS enhancements, and ongoing Permanency Hearing timeliness monitoring.

PERMANENCY HEARINGS (ITEM 22)

How well is the case review system functioning statewide to ensure that, for each child, a **Permanency Hearing** in a qualified court or administrative body occurs no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter?

Wisconsin practice varies around the state as to whether the court or an administrative panel conduct the six-month permanency review, while the court always hears the 12-month review.

Over the past five years, DCF enhanced the Permanency Plan Detail Report to allow local county child welfare agencies to monitor timeliness of both 6-month and 12-month permanency review which has increased performance over that period.

Table: DCF Performance Measures by Thresholds

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Children having timely annual permanency review hearing	46.89%	48.39%	48.12%	48.88%	50.92%	52.69%	54.27%	53.29%	55.09%
Children having timely six-month permanency reviews	66.92%	67.19%	67.16%	66.86%	67.86%	67.36%	68.9%	66.98%	68.89%

**Data reflects all hearings and reviews due for child in out-of-home care within a calendar year.*

TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS (ITEM 23)

How well is the case review system functioning statewide to ensure that the filing of **termination of parental rights (TPR)** proceedings occurs in accordance with required provisions?

Over the past five years, DCF collaborated with the Children’s Court Improvement Program and the University of Wisconsin’s Institute for Research on Poverty to complete a data-driven Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) Timeliness project. This ongoing collaborative effort was intended to increase understanding and make improvements to factors that impact TPR timeliness once the TPR process once initiated.

TPR Timeliness project key activities and outputs:

- Initial Institute for Research on Poverty Report (2019)
- Additional contact and analysis with the Institute for Research on Poverty (2019)
- Child Welfare & Legal Partner Surveys (2020)
- Case File Reviews (2021)
- Training and resource material development
- Statewide TPR Timeliness Final Report (2022):
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cwportal/reports/pdf/tpr.pdf>

NOTICE OF HEARINGS AND REVIEWS TO CAREGIVERS (ITEM 24)

How well is the case review system functioning statewide to ensure that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care are **notified of, and have a right to be heard** in, any review or hearing with respect to the child?

Over the past five years, DCF collaborated with CCIP to conduct manual circuit court case reviews to analyze notice of hearing compliance, including additional requirements when

WICWA applies. This data informed program practice and led to the development of new training materials.

Case Review System (Items 20-24) Brief Assessment on Progress to Date

Over the past five years, DCF extensively collaborated with CCIP, judicial and legal partners, and other external collaborators to identify strengths and weaknesses in the case review system to improve areas of practice.

Quality Assurance System (Item 25)

How well is **the quality assurance system** functioning statewide to ensure that it is (1) operating in the jurisdictions where the services included in the CFSP are provided, (2) has standards to evaluate the quality of services (including standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect their health and safety), (3) identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, (4) provides relevant reports, and (5) evaluates implemented program improvement measures?

Wisconsin's approach to CQI is articulated in the following mission statement.

Wisconsin is committed to a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) system that supports the assessment and improvement of child welfare practice, processes, and outcomes at the state and local level. Wisconsin DCF fulfills this mission by providing resources, tools, and processes to build and sustain CQI at the state and local level.

Over the past five years, DCF continued to use data from multiple sources to inform a quality improvement process. Key initiatives over this period included ongoing Program Improvement Plan (PIP) and targeted case reviews, successful completion of Wisconsin's PIP, and the creation of CQI case record review tools and performance monitoring dashboards.

More detailed information regarding DCF's CQI efforts are described under the Item 25 section of Wisconsin's 2025 – 2029 Children and Family Services Plan.

Training System (Initial, Ongoing and Foster Parent Training, Items 26-28)

The following section describes the state's overall training system and is broken into the state response for initial (Item 26), ongoing (Item 27) and foster and adoptive training (Item 28).

DCF has a robust child welfare training system that provides high quality, uniform training statewide. DCF contracts with the Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System (WCWPDS), which is housed in the University of Wisconsin-Madison's School of Social Work, to provide job-specific professional development opportunities for Wisconsin child welfare professionals.

The WCWPDS provides a continuum of services intended to facilitate and sustain positive change and support improved outcomes within Wisconsin's child welfare system. Those services include education, training, transfer of learning, technical assistance, coaching, project

management, organizational effectiveness and development, research and evaluation, parent voice, and research to practice.

INITIAL TRAINING INITIATIVES (ITEM 26)

How well is the staff and provider training system functioning statewide to ensure that **initial training** is provided to all staff who deliver services pursuant to the CFSP that includes the basic skills and knowledge required for their positions?

Wisconsin's initial training has several components to meet the needs of new child welfare professionals including pre-service, basic intake, and foundation training.

Over the past five years, DCF worked on required training documentation and the development and implementation of WiLearn, Wisconsin's new initial in-service training program required by all new access, initial assessment, and ongoing Wisconsin child welfare professionals. WiLearn consists of a completely virtual delivery model consisting of both synchronous and asynchronous components and substantially shifted the way training was delivered, the time frames in which it was delivered and the expectations for learners as well the agencies who employ them.

ONGOING TRAINING (ITEM 27)

How well is the staff and provider training system functioning statewide to ensure that **ongoing training** is provided for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP?

Wisconsin's ongoing training system builds upon the knowledge, awareness, skill development, and values included in foundation training by providing in-depth knowledge, awareness, values, and skill development training around a specific child welfare topic. Different forms of input gathering help shape the suite of special skills and training topics available to child welfare professionals statewide. These include, but are not limited to, direct feedback from training participants by way of course evaluations, the statewide training needs flash survey, DCF defined priorities, and feedback provided at regional supervisor meetings.

Over the past five years, Wisconsin focused its training efforts on ethics, efficiency in both training and practice, compliance, and addressing racial disproportionality.

FOSTER PARENT TRAINING (ITEM 28)

How well is the staff and provider training system functioning to ensure that **training** is occurring statewide for current or prospective **foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff** of state licensed or approved facilities (that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E) that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children?

DCF contracts with WCWPDS-Madison who subcontract with WCWPDS-Milwaukee for curriculum development and maintenance of the Pre-Placement training, Foundation

Curriculum, and the other various ongoing trainings. In addition, private child placing agencies generally license foster homes with a Level of Care of 3 or 4 and conduct their own training of the required curriculum for their licensed foster homes.

Over the past five years, DCF experienced COVID-19 complexities, embraced virtual training platforms, focused on licensing compliance, and worked to advance racial equity and support for underserved communities.

Training System (Items 26-28) Brief Assessment on Progress to Date

External partner feedback drove Wisconsin efforts over the past five years to expand training options, particularly in rural areas, increase training compliance, and implement WiLearn.

Service Array Systemic Factor (Items 29-30)

How well is the service array and resource development system functioning to ensure that a comprehensive array of services is **accessible** in all jurisdictions throughout the state (Item 29) and that services are **individualized** to meet the unique needs of children and families (Item 30)?

Wisconsin has a state-supervised, county-administered service delivery system, except for Milwaukee County which is state-administered through DCF's Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services. The state-supervised, county-administered structure offers many benefits, including the ability for local jurisdictions to develop and deliver services tailored to meet the needs of children and families. This includes, but is not limited to, tailoring culturally specific services and supports for non-English speaking populations, tribal populations, and different races and ethnicities represented in the state.

Service Array (Items 29-30) Brief Assessment on Progress to Date

Over the past five years, Wisconsin's service model aimed to keep children and youth safely in their own home, family, tribe, and community whenever possible. As such, services and supports were designed to work with children, youth, and families to expand healthy connections to supports and individuals in their communities and tribes and bolster resiliency in families to help them thrive. Wisconsin strengthened and reissued its Child Welfare Model for Practice in 2022, which can be found at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/model>. This was possible through a collaborative partnership with tribes, counties, and other external partners and by abiding by the guiding principle that services be based on trust, engagement, accountability, trauma-informed, culturally responsive, workforce support, and family-centered practices. The Wisconsin Child Welfare Model for Practice is the compass which guides the state's child welfare work and decision-making. Especially over the past five years, DCF has increased its emphasis on developing a continuum of services for families serving children in their home, children in out-of-home care placements, supports for children who will be served in the QRTP settings, and supports needed when children transition out of a QRTP setting. These collective efforts will help strengthen the statewide service array.

Wisconsin conformity with service array standards both frames and is reinforced by required state policies and practices, DCF-delivered programs and supports, DCF collaborations with external partners to meet service array needs, and referrals to other providers' key statewide efforts.

Agency Responsiveness (Items 31-32)

How well is the agency responsiveness to the community system functioning statewide to ensure that in implementing the provisions of the CFSP and developing related APSRs, the state engages in ongoing consultation with tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals, objectives, and annual updates of the CFSP?

STATE ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS (ITEM 31)

The 2018 CFSR concluded that Items 31 and 32 were a strength due to DCF's extensive collaboration efforts and agency responsiveness that over the past five years have continued to drive policymaking and program development. More specific information regarding the performance and initiatives that address Item 31 are described in the Collaboration section of this plan.

COORDINATION OF CFSP SERVICES WITH OTHER FEDERAL PROGRAMS (ITEM 32)

In addition to child welfare, DCF administers other key federal programs that serve children and families including the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy, the Wisconsin Works (W-2) Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program, and child support. Over the past five years, this co-location enforced collaborative efforts and ensured program alignment.

DCF also collaborated and promoted data sharing with other state agencies that operate federal programs to ensure benefit and service access to eligible families in the child welfare system. Child welfare professionals utilize individualized case planning to identify if families as eligible for, and subsequently connected to, appropriate programs and services.

More detailed information regarding DCF's ongoing service coordination efforts are described under the Item 32 section of Wisconsin's 2025 – 2029 Children and Family Services Plan.

Agency Responsiveness (Items 31 – 32) Brief Assessment of Progress Toward Outcomes

Over the past five years, DCF's collaborative approach to child welfare reinforced existing external partnerships and successfully facilitated family access to benefits and services.

Foster and Adoption Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention Systemic Factor (Items 33-36)

For this systemic factor, items 33, 34, and 36 are described. Item 35 is considered Wisconsin's foster and adoptive parent recruitment program and is separately attached.

STANDARDS APPLIED EQUALLY (ITEM 33)

How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system functioning statewide to ensure that state standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-B or IV-E funds?

Under Wisconsin Statutes, DCF is responsible for the development of administrative rules related to licensure of OHC placements for children. DCF currently licenses child placing agencies (DCF 54), group foster homes (DCF 57), shelter care (DCF 59), and residential care centers (DCF 52). DCF staff evaluate these agencies at least twice a year to ensure compliance with licensing rules. Licensing staff also investigate all complaints of rule violations and take appropriate action as necessary. Additional visits are conducted based on complaints/other concerns, or technical assistance.

Foster homes are licensed and monitored by a county, tribe, or private child placing agency according to Wisconsin Administrative Code Chapter DCF 56. Individuals must pass background checks, physical checks of the home, and complete an assessment process with the licensing agency in order to become a licensed foster home. DCF OHC staff are responsible for training licensing staff across the state, providing technical assistance, and reviewing licensing situations as requested.

Over the past five years, DCF continued to monitor licensing compliance utilizing eWiSACWIS reports.

REQUIREMENTS FOR CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS (ITEM 34)

How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system functioning statewide to ensure that the state complies with federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements, and has in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children?

Over the past five years, Wisconsin has continued to comply with federal requirements for criminal background clearances that relate to licensing or approving foster and adoptive placements.

FOSTER AND ADOPTION RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PLAN (ITEM 35)

Item 35 is considered Wisconsin's Foster and Adoptive Recruitment Plan that was included in Wisconsin's 2025 – 2029 Children and Family Services Plan.

INTERSTATE COMPACT FOR THE PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN (ICPC) (ITEM 36)

How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system functioning to ensure that the process for ensuring the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children is occurring statewide?

DSP is responsible for processing requests for the placement of children across state lines under the Interstate Compact of the Placement of Children (ICPC) and Wisconsin law. The proposed ICPC section, Wis. Stat. s. 48.99, has been codified into Wisconsin Statute, but will not be effective until 35 states codify it into their statutes, which hasn't yet occurred. Accordingly, there are two references in statute - Wis. Stat. s. 48.988 is the current ICPC section and Wis. Stat. s. 48.99 is the new, but not active, section. The Wisconsin ICPC specialists work with other states, as well as Wisconsin's local agencies to process incoming and outgoing requests.

Over the past five years, DCF has focused on the provision of technical assistance and updated program guidance to facilitate timely placement of children in and out of Wisconsin.

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention (Items 34 – 36) Brief Assessment of Progress Toward Outcomes

Over the past five years, data has DCF continued to build on overall efforts to recruit and support foster parents, while utilizing eWiSACWIS to monitor compliance and identify areas for improvement.

3. Final Update to the Plan for Enacting the State's Vision

The 2020 – 2024 CFSP goals were drafted in response to the 2018 CFSR, though over the past five years have reflected Wisconsin's Putting Families First approach and supported ongoing efforts to implement FFPSA:

1. To improve the quality, effectiveness, and availability of safety services.
2. To improve the quality and effectiveness of permanency services for children and families.
3. To engage children and families in more effective and meaningful ways.
4. To improve access to services and supports for youth and families by building community capacity.
5. To assure a healthy, stable, inclusive, and strong child welfare system and infrastructure that improves the safety, well-being, and permanency of families.

On December 14, 2022, the Children's Bureau acknowledged Wisconsin's successful completion of all required Program Improvement Plan goals and strategies. This report serves as DCF's final update regarding the CFSR Round 3 process.

Goal 1: Improve the quality, effectiveness, and availability of safety services for children and families.

Objective 1.1 To improve safety supports for children being served in the home (Name has changed from Safety Services to Targeted Safety Supports Funding (TSSF)) (Addresses Items 2, 3 and 12, 29 and 30). (2020 PIP)

Implementation & Program Supports	Progress Made to Improve Outcomes	Progress Measures & Benchmarks	Feedback Loops
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New program guidance • Local agency technical assistance (TA) & training through the Professional Development System (PDS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concrete family resources and support • Flexible funding to meet unique family needs • Strengthened Safety and Protective Planning processes • Increased child welfare professional confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of application • Participation of all county and tribal child welfare agencies • Increased funding • Annual fidelity monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wisconsin County Human Services Association Policy Advisory Council (WCHSA PAC) • Indian Child Welfare Committee • TSSF Practice Group • Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Advisory Council • Bureau of Region Operations (BRO)

Objective 1.2 Enhance use of technology to promote timely initiation of safety investigations. (2020 PIP)

Implementation & Program Supports	Progress Made to Improve Outcomes	Progress Measures & Benchmarks	Feedback Loops
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff training and quarterly calls • Local agency targeted TA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TA increases successful Initial Face to Face contacts • Local agencies monitoring own compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial assessment timeliness dashboard • Monthly monitoring reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Advisory Council • BRO

Goal 2: To improve the quality and effectiveness of permanency services for children and families.			
Objective 2.1 To develop a tailored dispositional orders and conditions for return project for timely permanence. (Items 2, 3, 5, 6, 12, 21 and 23). 2020 PIP			
Implementation & Program Supports	Progress Made to Improve Outcomes	Progress Measures & Benchmarks	Feedback Loops
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot counties • Ongoing TA • Incorporation within foundation training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Summary Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final project evaluation • Statewide rollout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCHSA PAC • CQI Advisory Council • Judicial Workgroup • Judicial Committee on Child Welfare • University of WI Institute for Research on Poverty (IRP)
Objective 2.3 To implement claiming procedures for legal fees using IV-E Funding (Items 5,6, 22, 23, 24)			
Implementation & Program Supports	Progress Made to Improve Outcomes	Progress Measures & Benchmarks	Feedback Loops
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program instruction • Ongoing TA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased county utilization and participants served 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCHSA PAC • Wisconsin County Human Services Financial Managers Association (WHSFMA) • BRO

Goal 3: Engaging children and families in more effective and meaningful ways.			
Objective 3.1 To expand Family Find and Engagement (FFE) statewide. (Items 7, 9, 10, 11) 2020 PIP			
Implementation & Program Supports	Progress Made to Improve Outcomes	Progress Measures & Benchmarks	Feedback Loops
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statewide training Ongoing TA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High rate of placement with relatives (Item 10) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statewide rollout Monitored through Onsite Review Instrument (OSRI) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WCHSA PAC Foster Parent Advisory Council
Objective 3.2 To improve the quality of caseworker engagement with families through use of improvement science and rapid-cycle change (e.g., Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) cycles) (Addresses 2, 3, 4, 5, 12, 13, 14 and 15 and service array). 2020 PIP			
Implementation & Program Supports	Progress Made to Improve Outcomes	Progress Measures & Benchmarks	Feedback Loops
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PDSA toolbox Ongoing TA Innovation zones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PDSA final report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborative surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CQI Advisory Committee
Objective 3.4 To establish a parent voice model through parent mentoring and leadership development called Parents Supporting Parents (PSP) Model. (Items 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 29 and 30 and Service Array) – 2020 PIP			
Implementation & Program Supports	Progress Made to Improve Outcomes	Progress Measures & Benchmarks	Feedback Loops
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training through PDS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PSP client satisfaction Increased PSP referrals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued expansion of lived experience efforts statewide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statewide Advisory Council
Objective 3.5 Increase support and engagement for relative caregivers. Addresses 4, 5, 6, (8?) 9, 10 and 11 (P 1, WB 1) 2020 PIP			
Implementation & Program Supports	Progress Made to Improve Outcomes	Progress Measures & Benchmarks	Feedback Loops
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training materials Web-based client portal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Attachment 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Attachment 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relative Caregiver Workgroup
Objective 3.6 To further strengthen and build youth voice and engagement through state and local Youth Advisory Councils and Youth Leadership Teams.			
Implementation & Program Supports	Progress Made to Improve Outcomes	Progress Measures & Benchmarks	Feedback Loops
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing TA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued youth involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth evaluations Youth participation during legislative processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Advisory Council Youth Leadership Teams

Objective 3.7 Assess the timeliness of six-month Permanency Reviews and improve the quality of administrative review panels conducting permanency reviews. (Items 4, 5, 21) 2020 PIP			
Implementation & Program Supports	Progress Made to Improve Outcomes	Progress Measures & Benchmarks	Feedback Loops
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training materials • Timeliness report • Ongoing TA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent review panel roles • Performance data utilized by the Children’s Court Improvement Project (CCIP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly review process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCHSA PAC • BRO

Goal 4: Improve access to services and supports for youth and families by building community capacity.

Objective 4.1 Better understand the landscape for prevention services through assessing the current array of prevention services for children and families in the child welfare system. (Items 1, 12, 17, 18, 29 and 30)			
Implementation & Program Supports	Progress Made to Improve Outcomes	Progress Measures & Benchmarks	Feedback Loops
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention scan report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local external partners
Objective 4.3 Better understand needs and services of youth and families in child welfare system (Item 12, 13 and Service Array) 2020 PIP			
Implementation & Program Supports	Progress Made to Improve Outcomes	Progress Measures & Benchmarks	Feedback Loops
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training through PDS • eWiSACWIS system changes • Updated legal forms • Ongoing TA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to Safety Assessment Process • Increased usage of danger threats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive statewide rollout plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intertribal Child Welfare Committee • Parent Leaders Advisory Group

Goal 5: The safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families is improved assuring a healthy, stable, inclusive, and strong child welfare system.			
Objective 5.1 To establish an overall vision and strategies to transform the child welfare system to support a more robust in-home infrastructure, and infrastructure and workforce through a comprehensive strategic planning process (Items 29-30/Service Array; 31-32 – Agency Responsiveness, 25-Quality Assurance)			
Implementation & Program Supports	Progress Made to Improve Outcomes	Progress Measures & Benchmarks	Feedback Loops
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More information on Wisconsin’s Putting Families First approach can be found at: https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/family-first 			
Objective 5.2 To assess workload and caseload for the state child welfare system through collaboration with counties and tribes to complete a workload study to better understand system needs and direct future planning efforts. (Items 1, 2, 4, 5, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30)			
Implementation & Program Supports	Progress Made to Improve Outcomes	Progress Measures & Benchmarks	Feedback Loops
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing tool • Webinar training • Ongoing TA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased local caseload analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local county and tribal agencies • External partner mailbox
Objective 5.3 Assure child welfare staff are prepared through an improved training monitoring system. Added for alignment with the 2020 PIP (Training and Management Information System Systemic Factors)			
Implementation & Program Supports	Progress Made to Improve Outcomes	Progress Measures & Benchmarks	Feedback Loops
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More information regarding WiLearn, the innovative training program for new child protective services (CPS) professionals can be found under Item 26 Initial Training Initiatives. 			

4. Quality Assurance System

See the Quality Assurance Systemic Factor.

5. Final Update on the Service Description

The following section describes how DCF uses specific federal funding streams to support the state child welfare system in alignment with federal rules and policies and DCF's strategic plan.

Stephanie Tubbs Jones Child Welfare Services Program

IV-B, Subpart 1 - Homeless and Runaway Youth Funding

The goal of the Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) Program is to prevent and reduce the number of youth experiencing homelessness in Wisconsin by ensuring that youth and their families have the services and supports that they need. The target population of the RHY Program is youth and young adults ages 12-21 that have run away, are at-risk of running away, who are homeless, or who are at imminent risk of becoming homeless.

Over the past five years, DCF has recognized the needs of RHY program participants are varied, and as such identified outcomes that respond to the unique needs of different subsets of the RHY population. Key initiatives over this period included a state budget request to combat youth homelessness, expansion of Permanent Connections, Academics, Training and Employment, Housing, and Social-and Emotional Well-being (PATHS) efforts to expand rural service provision and the allocation of American Rescue Plan Act funding to mitigate the impact of COVID-19.

Services for Children Adopted from Other Countries

Over the past five years, DSP has maintained a limited role in international adoptions. Parents adopting children internationally can access services through their county department of human services, their private insurance, and the Wisconsin Family Connections Center (WiFCC) contract.

One significant change during this period was that DCF combined the statewide Wisconsin Adoption and Permanency Supports (WiAPS) and the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center (FCARC) individual programs. On July 1, 2023, WiFCC became the unified service array for all families pre- and post-adoption. This contract offers statewide and regional services for reunified, adoptive, guardianship, and kinship families. Services include resources, training, education, short-term post-permanency case management, and support groups. It is currently funded through federal title IV-E and state General Purpose Revenue (GPR) funds in Wisconsin. More information is available at <https://wifamilyconnectionscenter.org/>.

Services for Children under the age of 5

Over the past five years, Wisconsin continued to follow Wisconsin's Act 181, "Best Outcomes for Children" legislation, which went into effect in 2012 and provides for better case planning to

reduce the length of time that children under the age of five in foster care are without a permanent family. The act established procedures regarding concurrent planning and requires that the child welfare agency determine whether concurrent planning should be used in a particular case. In addition, in certain cases, the agency must engage in concurrent planning unless the court orders the agency to do otherwise.

DCF continued its birth to five efforts to provide focus on the continuum of services for that age group in recognition of the critical window of opportunity during children's early years for healthy brain development and how investment in those years supports the state's goal to reduce children in OHC and ensure more children are served in their family home. These efforts align with the Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act that requires states to expand information relating to health care coordination and oversight for children in foster care.

MaryLee Allen Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program

Wisconsin's Promoting Safe and Stable Families program (PSSF) is administered by the Division of Safety and Permanence (DSP) and has four components – family preservation, family support, time limited-reunification services, and adoption promotion and support. Each of these components receives at least twenty percent of funds annually for service delivery.

Over the past five years, in support of the Putting Families First initiative, DCF allocated PSSF funds to local child welfare agencies to prevent maltreatment, enable children to remain safely in their homes, and promote and support adoption as a permanency outcome.

For detailed service data and population estimates, please see the PSSF Section of Wisconsin's 2025 – 2029 Children and Family Services Plan.

Population at Greatest Risk of Maltreatment

Under section 48.981(9) of the Wisconsin Statutes, DCF provides an annual report to the governor and the legislature on child abuse and neglect; this is called the Wisconsin Child Abuse and Neglect Report. The report includes information about which populations are at the greatest risk of maltreatment, as identified by substantiated maltreatment claims. Each section of the report also includes information concerning identification and services to at-risk populations. Reports for the last five years can be found at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/reports>

Section 5, Services for Birth to Five, describes how DCF and its partners have identified, provided, and coordinated services to meet the needs of vulnerable children under the age of five, including both children in foster care and those served in-home or in a community-based setting over the past five years. The increase in parental drug addiction and use has been growing concern over this period and continues to frame many of these efforts. More information about DCF's efforts focused on drug affected children is included in the CAPTA section of this report.

Kinship Navigator Funding

DCF was awarded \$238,967 from the Children’s Bureau to continue developing, enhancing, and evaluating the state’s IV-B Kinship Navigator Program for FY 2024. Attachment 1 of this report describes Wisconsin’s Kinship Navigator program design and how DCF used the Kinship Navigator funding during the past five years to achieve the program goals of connecting relative caregivers to resources available to them. DCF has only applied for title IV-B, subpart 2 funding for FY 2020 – 2024 to continue the resources and services under this program. DCF does not intend to apply for funding under title IV-E Kinship Navigator program at this time.

Monthly Caseworker Visits

Over the past five years, DCF continued to follow the standards established in the 2006 Child and Family Services Improvement Act to report on monthly caseworker visits.

During COVID-19, DCF developed guidance around acceptable standards during the pandemic, these can be found at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/guidance>.

Monthly caseworker grant funds were used to support a workload study described in Goal 5: The safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families is improved assuring a healthy, stable, inclusive, and strong child welfare system. The workload study was undertaken with the increasing recognition at the local, state and national levels that a more manageable and data driven caseload size will result in more time spent with families. This increased time with families would then allow for more meaningful engagement and planning with families, which supports the quality of decision making and better outcomes for children and families. The workload study (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/workload-study>) was completed in late 2021 and included the development of a staffing tool that can be used by county agencies to better understand workforce needs at the local levels. The study also provides some initial suggested caseload sizes based on the six main practice areas of child welfare - CPS Access, Initial Assessment and Case Management, Youth Justice Intake and Case Management, and Out-of-Home Care Recruitment, Provider Licensing and Management. The study also identified considerations for operational efficiencies, including organizational and process improvement, and practice improvements.

In March of 2022, DCF issued a memo (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cwportal/policy/pdf/memos/2022-07i.pdf>) to inform local child welfare agencies of the results of the workload study, introduce the new staffing tool, and offer DCF hosted trainings throughout the Spring of 2022. A recording of that training can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mhJca-0sMYM>. Other funding initiatives since Wisconsin’s last report include coordination with the Department of Health Services (DHS) on their Coordinated Services Teams (CST) Initiatives to provide a complete, personalized system of care that focuses on children with complex behavioral needs and the Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System contract that trains caseworkers on safety.

Adoption and Legal Guardianship Incentive Payments

DCF intends to continue providing services that were provided last year in the coming FFY. Specifically, DCF plans to continue using these resources for the following activities:

Annual membership dues and conference participation, including:

- American Association for the Interstate Compact for the Protection of Children (AAICPC).
- National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise (NEICE) project.
- Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance (ICAMA).

Participation of DCF staff in leadership meetings and conferences, including:

- Deputy compact administrator attending the annual ICAMA conference and board meeting.
- Deputy compact administrators attending the annual ICPC conference and board meeting.
- Adoption and post-permanency supports section staff attending the North American Council on Adoptable Children Conference.

Supporting program functions including:

- Support for the statewide Wisconsin Family Connections Center (WiFCC) to support post-adoption and guardianship placements.
- Funding internet searches for the Family Find and Engagement programs.
- Funding portions of the Kinship Navigator Program and relative caregiver supports.
- Funding contract support to determine Adoption eligibility.

Supporting DCF conferences and training:

- DCF has an annual Wisconsin Adoption Professionals Conference for professionals that work in the area of adoption. Approximately 150 professionals attend the conference each year.
- Funded SAFE trainings for licensors and supervisors.
- Funded the ongoing statewide rollout of the Family Find and Engagement training.
- Funded the development of the new Pre-Adoptive Parent training.

Adoption Training Program

The Public Adoption Program recognizes that there are several options for families to receive adoption training and, when possible, gives credit when a family completes training through another avenue. This limits the number of required extra hours of training hours that a family must complete while also allowing the Program to advise them on what training topics must still be covered.

Adoption Savings

In the next year, Wisconsin expects to continue the use of Adoption Savings funds for services provided under the Wisconsin Family Connections Center (WiFCC) and Public Adoptions contracts.

DCF contracts with agencies under WiFCC to provide statewide (Coalition for Children, Youth, and Families) and regional (Catholic Charities of the Diocese of LaCrosse) services to support

Wisconsin adoptive and guardianship families. Family service needs following adoption finalization or guardianship vary, so WiFCC provides a continuum of post-adoption and post-guardianship services, such as support and networking groups, referrals to mental health providers and therapists, and access to training opportunities, among other supports.

The Public Adoption services contract with Lutheran Social Services and Children's Service Society supports permanency for children and youth under the guardianship of the State of Wisconsin. Services for pre-adoptive families include information meetings, supporting training requirements, completing screening, home studies, licensing, providing case management, and completing adoption assistance agreements and amendments.

Challenges in Accessing/Spending Previous and Future Funds

DCF received additional state funding in the current 2023 – 2025 biennial budget to support these services and meet federal Adoption Savings spending requirements and does not anticipate having any unspent Adoption Savings funds. DCF will continue to request from the Legislature sufficient state funding for these services to meet the federal requirements.

Family First Prevention Services Act Grants

Over the past five years, DCF continued to make significant progress on its plan for Putting Families First. Family First Transition Act funding was a critical resource to build a culture for change, information gathering for implementation, and support of leadership and planning to move forward. Priorities for FFPSA were focused on transforming the child welfare system to more of an emphasis on serving children in the home, identifying needed workforce and training improvements, expanding lived experience, and determining how to develop the Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP).

John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood

Chafee Program (Chafee) and Educational and Training Voucher (ETV) program:

Wisconsin's Independent Living (IL) Program is designed to help system-involved youth aged 14 and older develop crucial life skills and achieve outcomes like their non-system involved peers. The Positive Youth Development philosophy is embedded in all services available in the Chafee program. In addition to the IL supports young people receive while in out-of-home care (OHC), youth who exit OHC at age 18 or older, or after age 16 via an adoption or court-ordered Ch. 48.977 guardianship, are supported by the program until age 23. The department also receives approximately \$740,000 in Chafee Education and Training Voucher (ETV) funds annually to support youth in achieving their postsecondary goals. IL eligible youth can access this funding for five years or up to age 23, whichever occurs first. Services provided are in alignment with the requirements of the federal John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for the Successful Transition to Adulthood. This plan addresses both Sec. 477 (42 U.S.C. 677) (a) of the Social Security Act and Wisconsin's progress on the Children and Family Services Plan (CFSP) goals.

SUPERVISION AND ADMINISTRATION

The past five years were important years for Wisconsin's independent living program because the program was still very new and had recently undergone a full restructure. In 2016, the department intentionally shifted the use of Chafee funds from the county human services agencies to regional Transition Resource Agencies (TRAs) to provide eligible youth with continued support after exiting OHC. The implementation of this regional model was phased, with the last regional agency becoming operational January 2019.

The COVID-19 public health crisis and the special federal laws and permissions in effect during that time were the top priorities from early CY 2020 through much of CY 2022. Wisconsin met the requirements of the Consolidated Appropriations Act and fully expended its Division X funding primarily through direct financial assistance (DFA) to IL-eligible youth who aged out of care. Additionally, DCF temporarily increased program eligibility to age 23 which became permanent in January 2023 based upon input from youth and program partners.

Another area of focus over the past five years has been to expand IL work with tribal IL programs. Prior to 2018, DCF provided Chafee funding to three tribal IL programs and has now expanded to six. DCF staff continue to work closely with all tribal IL partners to identify areas of opportunity and improvement.

DESCRIPTION OF ELIGIBILITY, CONTINUUM OF SERVICES AND LINKAGES TO OTHER SERVICES

Over the past five years, Wisconsin's IL program eligibility remained largely the same, except for the change to serving youth up to age 23. During this period Bureau of Youth Services (BYS) staff focused on the provision of local technical assistance regarding IL assessment tools.

For a more detailed description of eligibility, continuum of services and linkages, please see the related Section of Wisconsin's 2025 – 2029 Children and Family Services Plan.

PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

The overarching goals of Wisconsin's IL program to see youth thrive in adulthood remain unchanged over the past five years and are outlined in the Youth Services Framework. They include a commitment to elevating youth and working towards more positive outcomes and stability in the areas of permanent connections, education, employment and financial stability, health and well-being, and housing.

The emphasis on these need areas is the cornerstone of Wisconsin's IL program and drove DCF's development of resources and training materials over the past five years that were rooted in positive youth development the incorporation of youth voice.

Services and Outcomes Data

Over the past five years, DCF IL staff continued to collect, record, and report IL program data via information documented in eWiSACWIS, TRAs' and tribes' biannual outcomes reporting, and

NYTD survey data. Moving forward, services and outcome data will be an area of focus given the findings provided from the 2023 NYTD federal review.

Has the state noted any challenges with the NYTD data collection and/or data entry processes that may warrant attention?

While DCF staff created and revamped NYTD resources, reports, and processes during the past five years, some of the data challenges shared in prior APSRs persist.

For more information regarding specific challenges can be found within Wisconsin's NYTD Review Final Report:

https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/WI_NYTD_Final_Report.pdf

Are findings routed back to the CQI advisory committee for review as part of the state's broader efforts to address programmatic or systemic issues?

Historically, DCF's CQI committee has not reviewed NYTD data. Wisconsin's Child Welfare CQI Advisory Committee is a group comprised of state and local child welfare agency leaders, as well as important partners from the Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System, UW-Madison, and Children's Court Improvement Program. The committee meets quarterly with a focus on large-scale initiatives to support and improve Wisconsin's child welfare system (which includes both Child Protective Services and Community-Based Youth Justice). As needed, DCF has presented NYTD data to a variety of external partners, including the Wisconsin County Human Services Association Policy Advisory Committee (WCHSA PAC), to request feedback on NYTD specific asks.

IV-E Foster Care Assistance After Age 18

Over the past five years, Wisconsin's extended care eligibility criteria remained unchanged. Effective 2014, a youth must not yet have their high school diploma, be a full-time secondary school student, and have an IEP to qualify for extended OHC.

Coordination and Consultation with Public and Private Stakeholders

DCF's efforts to best execute its IL program over the past five years required consistent and diverse collaboration with various levels of government, educational systems, community programs, and individuals in the youth's life. Some key partnerships included, but are not limited to:

- Youth Advisory Councils and Youth Leadership Team
- Tribal and county CWAs
- Transition Resource Agencies
- UW Survey Center
- Intra- and interagency workgroups, consultations, and specific project collaborations
- Consultation with other states to transfer youth in/out of Wisconsin's IL program and become familiar with other states' IL supports and eligibility criteria

Overarching priorities during this CFSP:

- Elevating and learning from individuals with lived experience
- Expansion of and evolving support for tribal IL programs and partnerships
- Coordination of DCF efforts when serving similar youth
- Development and expansion of CWA and TRA IL overviews
- Collaboration with other federal and state agency partners on key initiatives available to or impacting current and former foster youth

Coordination and Consultation with Tribes

Of the 11 federally recognized tribes headquartered in Wisconsin, six currently receive IL funding. They are the Bad River, Ho-Chunk, Lac Courte Oreilles, Menominee, St. Croix, and Red Cliff tribes.

Over the past five years, DCF continued to offer this funding opportunity to other tribes in the state, should they also be interested in starting an IL program. This was communicated at Intertribal Child Welfare (ICW) Committee meetings as well as via email notification. All tribes receiving IL funds have access to the eWiSACWIS Independent Living page, should they choose to look at service information entered by county and TRA providers for their youth. Like the TRAs, they also submit data outcome information to DCF twice a year.

Health Care Coordination for Youth Aging Out-of-Care

Over the past five years, ensuring youth have access to high-quality and affordable healthcare has been a primary goal within the IL program and DCF continued to collaborate with DHS to make sure that Wisconsin meets the Medicaid requirements for youth currently and formerly in foster care.

Education and Training Vouchers (ETV)

In Wisconsin, ETV is called Brighter Star and program eligibility remained the same over the past five years.

During the public health crisis, the provision of additional ETV funding allowed Wisconsin to temporarily increase per-student funding to \$12,000 per academic year to promote postsecondary success.

Chafee Training

Over the past five years, training efforts focused on the IL program restructure, tribal IL expansion, and support through the public health crisis.

6. Consultation and Coordination with Tribes

Over the past five years, DCF has strived to maintain strong government-government relationships with all Tribal nations in Wisconsin through a variety of means, including, participating in bimonthly Indian Child Welfare Committees (ICW) and annual tribal consultations. DCF will reinforce those efforts in its next five-year plan.

For a more detailed description of specific processes used to gather input from Tribes and how Wisconsin complies with ICWA, please see the Consultation and Coordination with Tribes Section of Wisconsin's 2025 – 2029 Children and Family Services Plan.

Section D CAPTA Requirements and Updates

2023 Annual CAPTA Report

Substantive changes, if any, to state law or regulations that could affect the state's eligibility for the CAPTA State Grant

Legislation was passed in 2021 and that went into effect on May 23, 2021, related to good faith immunity. [2021 Wisconsin Act 41](#) updated state law to conform with the amendments to section 106(b)(2)(B)(vii) of CAPTA to provide immunity from civil and criminal liability for people who make good-faith child abuse or neglect reports or who provide information or assistance, including medical evaluations or consultations, in connection with a report, investigation, or legal intervention pursuant to a good-faith report of child abuse or neglect.

During the last year, no new substantive changes to state law or regulation were made that would affect the state's CAPTA grant eligibility.

Significant changes from the state's previously approved CAPTA plan

There have been no significant changes from the state's previously approved CAPTA plan in how the state proposes to use funds to support the 14 program areas enumerated in CAPTA.

How CAPTA Funds Used

In the last year, DCF has continued to support the Parents Supporting Parents program. This initiative is part of Wisconsin's PIP and is shaped by the department's goal to comprehensively and systematically incorporate the voices of those who experienced the child welfare system. This initiative is further described under Objective 3.4 of Goal 3 in Section 3.

In addition, DCF used this funding to provide sponsorships to support two annual conferences related to child maltreatment, child development, and child and family well-being: the Together for Children and Circles of Life Conferences. Additionally, April is designated as Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month and DCF partnered with the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board to celebrate April as Family Strengthening Month. Further detail regarding these efforts is offered later in this section.

DCF regularly interacts with various partners, including the Child Welfare Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Advisory Committee, Indian Child Welfare (ICW) Directors Committee, Child Welfare Parent Leaders and other workgroup members related to program opportunities and funding needs. These partners assist in identifying and prioritizing the use of funds to advance initiatives and projects. DCF will continue to gather input regarding the use of funding with partners during regularly scheduled meetings.

Supplemental CAPTA Funding (American Rescue Plan)

DCF uses supplemental funding to support the purposes of the CAPTA act with an emphasis on plans of safe care. Specifically, DCF has increased its ability to leverage lived experience expertise toward the improvement of child protective services practices including

responsibilities related to safety assessment and planning. Additionally, DCF is supporting lived expertise to provide further guidance in the state's efforts to better serve a child in their family home with the support of family members, kin, and like-kin who know and love them.

Additional uses of CAPTA funds in FFY 2023 consistent with the purpose of CAPTA include the following:

Wisconsin Act 78 and Systems Change Review

CAPTA funds continue to support the Wisconsin Systems Change Review process that is detailed in the "Efforts to Track and Prevent Child Maltreatment Deaths" section of this Final Report.

Wisconsin Child Welfare Model for Practice

CAPTA Funds are used to support the Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System and its role in the development and delivery of training and professional opportunities that support and advance local practice in alignment with the Child Welfare Model for Practice.

Multi-Disciplinary Outreach, Consultation, and Coordination

In addition to the initiatives listed on the following pages, review the collaboration section for additional information about DCF's many collaborations over the past five years.

CPS and Law Enforcement Agencies

DCF continues to be a member of the Wisconsin Alliance for Drug Endangered Children (WIDEC) and the DEC Steering Committee. WIDEC is a multidisciplinary partnership, led by the state's Department of Justice, that assists communities in assessing service needs, coordinating efforts, and keeping children safe and free from exposure to dangerous drug environments. Efforts are focused on assisting with training development and sharing resources. DEC efforts in Wisconsin exist on three levels - county/tribal, state, and national. As a member of the DEC Steering Committee, DCF collaborates with partners from local, state, and federal agencies, including child protective services, district attorney offices, prevention services, law enforcement, health departments, American Family Children's Hospital, the WI Department of Justice, WI Department of Health Services, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The WIDEC supports local DEC programs to better serve the children in Wisconsin by expanding DEC resources and supports, offering basic DEC training, and providing an annual DEC conference. In addition to serving as a Steering Committee member, DCF allocates CAPTA funding to support the conference each year. The DEC Steering Committee organizes the statewide conference where local DEC programs are formally recognized. National and state experts are brought in to educate Wisconsin on current issues and promising practices.

CPS and Child Abuse Prevention

DCF serves as a member of the Child Abuse Prevention Month workgroup; this is in partnership with the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board (CANPB) and the Prevent Child Abuse Wisconsin program through Children's Hospital. In April 2023, Family Strengthening Month, previously known as Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month, was recognized and the 2023

Family Strengthening Month Toolkit (<https://childrenswi.org/-/media/chwlibrary/files/childrens-and-the-community/pcaw/resources/april2022-family-strengthening-month-toolkit.pdf>) was developed to provide resources for counties, ideas of how to promote the month, and local strategies to address prevention. In 2023, the governor issued another proclamation recognizing April as Family Strengthening Month.

Together for Children Conference

CAPTA funding continues to support the Together for Children Conference, the annual Wisconsin child abuse and neglect prevention conference. The conference, which DCF regularly sponsors and helps plan, strives to improve prevention, treatment, investigation, and prosecution of child abuse and neglect by providing training that addresses emerging issues and increases the knowledge and skills of attendees. A hybrid conference was held in April 2023 which allowed participants to join virtually or in person. The conference focused on providing information and skills that support a multidisciplinary approach to improve prevention, treatment, investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect. Similar to the 2023 conference, DCF led seminar sessions highlighting the department's efforts to elevate and amplify effective practice with diverse populations and leveraging lived experience expertise of parents and caregivers who had received child welfare services in system improvement efforts at the most recent Together for Children conference in April of 2024.

CPS and Domestic Abuse Programs

There is a well-established overlap between domestic abuse and the maltreatment of children both in literature and practice experience in Wisconsin. In addition to continued efforts to support the development of memorandum of understandings (MOU) between counties and domestic abuse programs to permanently elevate collaboration between child protective services agencies and domestic abuse programs, DCF has continued to work with the state's Domestic Violence (DV) Coalition and End Abuse of Wisconsin to roll out an updated DV Handbook for Child Protective Services that was completed in the Fall of 2023.

This handbook, which was incorporated into the Preservice training program that is required for all new CPS professionals, was updated to prioritize the following revisions and enhancements:

- Use more inclusive language (e.g., non-binary);
- Utilize a racial justice lens that addresses disparities in how Black, Indigenous or People of Color (BIPOC) survivors experience systems;
- Make the handbook more accessible and straightforward for child welfare professionals; and,
- Consider how to gather updated information from families with lived experience to inform additional improvements.

CPS and Health Care Professionals

DCF continues to use CAPTA funding to support the Wisconsin Child Abuse Network (WI CAN), an inter-disciplinary public-private partnership formed in 2009 and dedicated to improving the accuracy of child abuse investigations. It is led by representatives of The Medical College of

Wisconsin; Child Advocacy Centers of Wisconsin; Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin; the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault; the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board; and the departments of Children and Families, Health Services, and Justice.

WI CAN works to improve interagency responses to child maltreatment through ongoing education and a web-based peer review network. It connects professionals statewide to medical expertise to improve access to medical input in child maltreatment investigations.

The WI CAN Educational Series consists of statewide, web-based lectures and case-based discussions on various topics related to child maltreatment delivered and led by subject matter experts. The target audience consists of physicians, advanced practice providers, nurses, other allied health professionals, law enforcement officials, social workers, and attorneys. The goal of the educational series is to help health care professionals improve their recognition of child maltreatment and management of cases when child maltreatment is a concern. Webinars are held on the third Friday of each month. DCF continues to support the effort through the WI CAN Educational Series. WI-CAN established a website, which can be viewed at <http://www.wichildabusenet.org/>.

Support for Legal Preparation and Representation

DCF is using IV-E funding for this effort and more information can be found in Section 3.

CPS and Tribal Child Welfare Agencies

Tribal coordination efforts are described in several places of this report, though the most detailed description is in the Consultation and Coordination with Tribes Section of Wisconsin’s 2025 – 2029 CFSP.

CPS and the Judicial System

Please see the Collaboration Section for an update on DCF’s collaborative efforts with the judicial system as well as the case review system descriptions for Items 21-24.

Citizen Review Panels

Citizen Review Panels are also supported through Wisconsin’s CAPTA. They are described in detail in the collaboration section of Wisconsin’s 2025 – 2029 CFSP.

Update on the state’s continued efforts to support and address the needs of substance-exposed infants

The following section describes the continued efforts to support and address the needs of infants born that are identified as being affected by substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure, or a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Information follows about how the state is following requirements of CAPTA that were included as amendments to the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA). These efforts include:

- Information on the current monitoring processes for plans of safe care to determine whether and in what manner local entities provide referrals to and delivery of appropriate services for substance-exposed and affected family members and caregivers.

- Processes for ongoing monitoring of the plans of safe care.
- Challenges in implementing the provisions of CARA and any technical assistance the state has determined is needed to remove or mediate those challenges.

OVERVIEW OF POLICY AND PRACTICE

Effective June 25, 2004, DCF issued an addendum, “Assessing the Safety of Drug Affected Infants,” to the Child Protective Services (CPS) Access and Initial Assessment Standards. This policy required Wisconsin CPS agencies to develop a plan of safe care for an infant born and identified as being affected by illegal substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms. The policy includes procedural instructions, directing CPS agencies to screen in these reports for child welfare services rather than child protective services cases, unless the report is accompanied by allegations of abuse or neglect. The policy also references section 46.238 of Wis. Stats., which states the county department shall offer to provide appropriate services and treatment to the child and the child’s mother. In compliance with federal laws, DCF has policies and procedures in place to address the needs of drug-affected infants. In April 2014, 2013 Wisconsin Act 260 was enacted, bringing state statutes in compliance with CAPTA requirements regarding the evaluation of infants for fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD) and the requirement that CPS agencies offer to provide, or make arrangements for, the provisions of those services and treatment to the infant and the infant’s mother.

The legislation requires a physician to evaluate an infant if there is a serious risk that an infant has FASD. If FASD is diagnosed, the physician is required to report that diagnosis to the CPS agency. In addition, Wis. Stat. s. 146.0255 requires health care providers of substance-exposed infants to notify CPS of the infants’ condition. The CPS agency is required to offer, provide, or arrange for the provision of services and treatment for the infant and the infant’s mother.

The CPS Access and Initial Assessment Standards, and the CPS Safety Intervention Standards issued by DCF include requirements and guidance regarding CPS agencies’ responsibility for the development, monitoring, and follow-up of a plan of safe care (safety plan) for a drug-affected infant or an infant with FASD known to the child welfare system. At this time, DCF has not identified any technical assistance required to improve practice and implementation to address the needs of drug affected infants.

Wisconsin’s Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information Systems (eWiSACWIS) allows for data collection related to the monitoring of the safe plan of care for families involved in the state child welfare system. eWiSACWIS allows agencies and the state to gather information documented in the case record (i.e., Access/Intake Report and Safety Plan) as to the reason why the case is open and service type categories identified for the families. Inclusive of CARA monitoring requirements, DCF has conducted case reviews of the state’s Access, Initial Assessment, and Ongoing Services practices and continues to conduct additional practice or program specific targeted reviews to better understand the reasons for and results related to CPS Interventions. Results of these reviews, including cases which presented with concerns related to caregiver substance misuse, as well as eWiSACWIS administrative data, inform

system improvements in the areas of CPS reporting, including refinements to the state’s mandated reporter training, Initial Assessment practices, and Safety Assessment and Planning decision-making.

UPDATES TO PRACTICE

Case review and monitoring results continue to inform refinements to the state’s safety assessment decision-making practice requirements and guidance, including the assessment factors that are associated with caregiver substance misuse and child vulnerability. Resulting changes to the practice requirements and guidance, as well as to those related to the corresponding state’s eWiSACWIS documentation functionality and professional development system training content, began in June 2022 and the first of several changes will be introduced in February 2025. These changes will focus on enhancing the identification of parent/caregiver strengths and protective capacities in the safety assessment, decision-making, and planning processes.

MONITORING PLANS OF SAFE CARE

As a county-administered state, monitoring of processes of plans of safe care continues to be a function that county agencies perform consistent with policy and training support from the state. This function includes determining whether and in what manner local entities provide referrals to, and delivery of, appropriate services for substance-exposed infants and affected family members and caregivers. As noted above, DCF conducts case reviews of the state’s Access, Initial Assessment, and Ongoing Services practices. These reviews include documentation contained in our state’s eWiSACWIS system related to plans of safe care for infants and their families served by the state’s local CPS agencies. Results of these reviews, including cases which presented with concerns related to caregiver substance misuse, are being used to inform system improvements in the areas of CPS reporting, including refinements to the state’s mandated reporter training, Initial Assessment practices, and Safety Assessment and Planning decision-making.

CHALLENGES TO IMPLEMENTATION

As noted throughout this report, the ability to prescribe policy can be challenging. This is especially true in a county-administered, state-supervised state like Wisconsin where responses rely even more heavily on individual county, community, family, and child circumstances, as well as on local service systems and interests. Given these challenges, DCF continues to prioritize high-quality and comprehensive collaboration with systems partners and external partners, especially the voices of those with lived experience.

Use of CQI

Wisconsin completes regular and targeted case record reviews related to child protective services practices, including those related to substance exposed infants, and uses the results of these reviews to analyze case practice trends. This analysis, along with feedback from other key external partners including parents, relatives, and youth with lived experience informs

discussions related practice improvement with the state's Child Welfare Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Advisory Committee and other key system partners.

CHILDREN'S BUREAU (CB) SITE VISIT

The state has not participated in a Children's Bureau site visit regarding the development of plans of safe care for infants born and identified as being affected by substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure, or a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

Supplemental CAPTA Funding – American Rescue Plan

DCF has begun to deploy available one-time and ongoing CAPTA resources to support ongoing efforts related to plans of safe care and other areas of CAPTA programming that align with Wisconsin's Putting Families First approach. Currently, CAPTA rescue funds, in addition to the state's base CAPTA allocation, support lived experience investments, as described earlier in this section, to assist DCF in system improvement and direct service supports in several local child welfare agencies.

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Section F: Statistical and Supporting Information

CAPTA Annual Data Report Items

This section provides annual updates to the CAPTA Annual State Report as required Program Instruction 24-02.

Child Welfare Workforce Data

Table 40

<i>Target Group</i>	<i>Primary Employees</i>	<i>All Employees</i>
Child Protective Services (CPS)	1,576	3,638
Child Welfare	498	735
Youth Justice (YJ)	436	795
2023 Worker Total	2,510	5,168

Table 41

<i>Function</i>	<i>Primary Employees</i>	<i>All Employees</i>
CPS Access	121	1,150
CPS Initial Assessment	483	964
CPS Ongoing	697	1,147
CPS Supervisor	275	377
Foster Care Coordinator	177	414
Case Aide/Management	321	321
YJ Worker	373	613
YJ Supervisor	63	182
2023 Worker Total	2,510*	5,168*

*These numbers are based on projections informed by data collected by the WCWPDS Online Learning Management System. Not all staff represented are assigned to child welfare related functions as a full-time employee, particularly in medium and smaller sized counties; in these jurisdictions some or all of child welfare staff also perform other human or social service functions not specific to child welfare. Individual professionals may also provide more than one function within the child welfare service array.

Information on Child Protective Services Workforce

Wisconsin is a state-supervised, county-operated child welfare system for all counties other than Milwaukee where the state administers the child welfare system through the Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services. As a result, the processes to recruit, hire, and make case

assignments are based on agency specific human resource policies and procedures. The Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services must follow the process outlined by the Wisconsin Office of State Employee Relations.

Wisconsin child welfare professionals are not required to have a social work degree and have experience from a variety of fields. To have the title “social worker” in Wisconsin, staff must hold a valid certification through the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services.

As in the past, Wisconsin does not track statewide data on the supervisor to worker ratio, staff turnover or vacancy rates, or caseload size for the balance of the state outside of Milwaukee County. DCF contracted with ICF, Inc., to conduct a workload study to better understand workforce needs at the local level. The study was completed in late 2021 and additional details can be found in the section on Monthly Caseworker Visits and the Executive Summary and Final Report at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/workload-study>. As a county-administered state, there are no statutory requirements and CPS Practice Standards do not include requirements or guidance regarding the agencies’ staff ratios, caseloads, or other workload management. Within the county-administered child welfare system, the size, and population of each county impacts the local agency’s staffing needs and caseload ratios.

Duties for the local child welfare workforce also vary based on the needs of the agency and community. For example, in a smaller county, the supervisors, social worker, caseworker, and/or other paraprofessional staff are likely to have other child welfare program responsibilities in addition to CPS duties. Workers in a larger county may be assigned to one specific function within the local agency, rather than assume responsibilities across the entire scope of child welfare and/or human service areas.

In Milwaukee County, where child welfare services are administered by DCF through DMCPs, a performance monitoring metric per child has been established for Contracted Case Management Agencies where at least 65% of child welfare professionals will have 15 children or fewer on their caseload. Caseload size also depends on the acuity of concerns within the family being served and team composition. The ratio of supervisors to child welfare professionals is 1:6 dependent upon staffing levels.

Demographic Information of the Workforce

WCWPDS collects a wide range of information for the workforce which includes the information in the screenshot on the following page.

Qualtrics Form Data

Are you required to complete Basic Intake Worker training?: No	Do you perform after hours/on-call duties that require you to attend child welfare training?: No
Birth to Three: Yes	CLTS: Yes
CPS Access: No	CPS Initial Assessment: No
CPS On-going: No	CPS Supervisor/Manager (Access, Initial Assessment, On-going): Yes
Foster Care Coordinator: No	Foster Care Supervisor/Manager: No
Home Visitor Supervisor: No	Home Visitor Worker: No
ICW: No	Support Staff: No
Youth Justice Supervisor/Manager: Yes	Youth Justice Worker: No
Kinship Care Coordinator: No	4E Stipend Program: No
Certified Licensed SW in WI: Yes	Employer Name: Crawford County Health & Human Services
Highest Education Level: Bachelors	Highest Social Work Degree: BSW
Sex: Male	Year of Birth: 1971
Form Filled - dropdown: Yes	Are you a Pre-Adoptive Parent?: No

In 2020 DCF, in partnership with the University of Wisconsin, collected additional workforce information using flash surveys. For example, the Child Welfare and Youth Justice Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Workforce Surveys covered a wide range of topics pertaining to case workers and supervisors in Wisconsin. Survey responses went to a centralized database managed by University of Wisconsin-Madison Survey Center (UWSC), where they were aggregated and kept confidential.

These flash surveys were intended to be very brief and designed to gauge:

- Workforce knowledge of specific issues or topics
- Professional needs and challenges
- Strengths and gaps in practice and policy areas

The purpose of these flash surveys was to identify:

- Strengths and challenges faced by the child welfare/youth justice workforce in Wisconsin
- Ensure this information is representative of the workforce as a whole

The input and feedback helped DCF:

- Identify and refine priorities
- Influence policy development and implementation efforts
- Provide input into developing other initiatives to improve the child welfare system.

Youth Justice Transfer

The CAPTA Amendments of 2003 require states, to the extent possible, to collect information on children under the care of the state child protective services (CPS) system who are transferred to the custody of the state youth justice (YJ) system. In Wisconsin, under the supervision of the Department of Children and Families (DCF), county human service departments and DMCPs operate the child protective services (CPS) system. DCF has programmatic oversight of the county human services-administered community-based youth justice system. DCF's responsibilities include the development of standards of practice, training of county YJ staff, data collection and analysis, program monitoring, technical assistance to counties, and fiscal administration of Youth Aids funding. The Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) retains responsibility for youth correctional facilities as well as aftercare programs for certain youth offenders.

Wisconsin counties are required to use the eWiSACWIS system to record all activity for child protective services cases. Counties are also required to record information related to YJ referrals, intake, and case outcomes within eWiSACWIS. DCF continues to develop youth-specific case management functionality in eWiSACWIS, which will be used for collecting and tracking all youth justice system activity – including youth justice program activity related to the Youth Assessment Screening Instrument (YASI), a risk-needs-responsivity assessment tool that is used during the YJ intake and court process and supports case planning for youth on county supervision. The only youth justice placements counties are required to record in eWiSACWIS are detention placements in settings where the placements are subject to federal title IV-E and AFCARS reporting requirements.

For a child to transfer from the custody of the state child protection system to the custody of the state youth correctional system, the child would have to be placed in a youth correctional facility immediately after having been in an out-of-home placement in an open CPS case. Most of the children placed in DOC custody have delinquency activity and youth justice-related services at the county level before being transferred from the county agency to youth correctional facilities.

To calculate an estimated number of children under the care of the CPS system who transferred into the custody of the state youth justice system, eWiSACWIS records for Calendar Year 2023 were queried to identify children who were placed in a youth correctional facility (using the service ending reason in eWiSACWIS) after having been in out-of-home placement in an open CPS family case. This method used for the prior CFSP annual update identified 19 children meeting the transfer criteria.

Education Training Voucher

As per Program Instruction 24-02, please see Children's Bureau Attachment D of this report.

Adoption Disruptions and Dissolutions

There were 16 international adoptions finalized in fiscal year 2023. Data for Federal Fiscal Year 2023 of disruptions and dissolutions follows.

Between October 1, 2022, and September 30, 2023, nine internationally adopted children entered OHC. Of these nine children, zero adoptions dissolved.

Country of Birth	Number of children
Nepal	1
Ethiopia	1
Lesotho	1
Guatemala	3
Columbia	2
Central African Republic	1
Adoption Agency	
EVOLVE Adoption and Family Services International	1
Lifelink International Adoption	1
Unknown	7
Primary Reason for disruption	
Mental Health/Substance Abuse Treatment	4
Delinquency/Runaway	4
Aggression and violence towards family	1
Plans for the child	
Reunification	5
Reunified	4

There were nine disrupted international adoptions in federal fiscal year 2023:

- The first disruption occurred on October 25, 2022, when the child became involved with youth justice and was placed in secure detention. This child was adopted from Nepal through an undisclosed private adoption agency. The child has since reunified.
- The second disruption occurred on March 17, 2023, when the child needed additional services and support due to behavioral health symptoms. This child was adopted from Ethiopia through an undisclosed private adoption agency. The plan is reunification.
- The third disruption occurred on April 6, 2023, when the child became involved with youth justice and was placed in shelter care. This child was adopted from Lesotho through Lifelink International Adoption. The plan is reunification.
- The fourth disruption occurred on May 17, 2023, when the child became involved with youth justice and was placed in secure detention. This child was adopted from Guatemala through EVOLVE Adoption and Family Services International. The child has since reunified.
- The fifth disruption occurred on May 26, 2023, when the child became involved with youth justice and was placed in secure detention. This child was adopted from Guatemala through an undisclosed private adoption agency. The child has since reunified.

- The sixth disruption occurred on June 15, 2023, when the child was confirmed having sexual contact with a sibling. This child was adopted from Columbia through an undisclosed private adoption agency. The child has since reunified.
- The seventh disruption occurred on June 18, 2023, when the child was placed in a qualified residential treatment program at a residential care center due to difficulty managing his behaviors. This child was adopted from Guatemala through an undisclosed private adoption agency. The plan is aging out of care or reunification.
- The eighth disruption occurred on July 17, 2023, when the child was placed in foster care due to being a victim of sexual assault. This child was adopted from Columbia through an undisclosed private adoption agency. The plan is reunification.
- The ninth disruption occurred on July 24, 2023, when the child was placed in a foster care placement at his parents' request due to his mental health symptoms. This child was adopted from Central African Republic through an undisclosed private adoption agency. The plan is reunification.

Monthly Caseworker Visits

As per 2024 Program Instruction 24-02, DCF will provide this data to the Children's Bureau as required on December 15, 2024.

Attachment 1 – Kin Navigator Annual Report

Type	Resource	Detail
Information and Referral	<i>Kinship Navigator Portal</i>	With the funding provided in FY 2020 - 2024 DCF developed and launched Wisconsin's Kinship Navigator Portal (https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/kinship/navigator) on January 15, 2020. Since then, DCF has utilized a portion of this funding to enhance and maintain the online portal that provides caregivers with comprehensive information about resources and state-sponsored services based on their specific caregiving situation. Between January 15, 2020 - February 2024, there have been 8,077 unique visits to the portal.
	<i>Relative Caregiver Guided Search</i>	With the funding provided in FY 2022 - 2024 DCF has contracted with United Way – 211 Wisconsin to create and support the annual maintenance of a relative caregiver guided search (https://211wisconsin.communityos.org/relativecaregiversearch). The guided search is an electronic database for caregivers to access information and referral services specific to their family's needs that are available in their local community. Between April 1, 2021 - February 29, 2024, there have been 1,660 individual searches made through the relative caregiver guided search.
	<i>Informational Materials</i>	With the funding provided in FY 2020 – 2024 DCF has created and made ongoing updates to informational materials for relative caregivers including six fact sheets and a Kinship Navigator Guidebook (https://wifamilyconnectionscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/kinshipnavigatorguide7-2023.pdf) that outlines common questions and information related to the child's healthcare coverage, education, permanency options, child care options, child support, and legal assistance. Electronic copies of these resources are available on the Kinship Navigator Portal and the Wisconsin Family Connections Center website. Physical copies of these resources have been made available upon request. Between October 1, 2019 – March 4, 2024, these resources have been individually accessed over 800 times.
Caregiver Education	<i>Kinship Navigator Training for Relative Caregivers</i>	The web-based course Kinship Navigator Training for Relative Caregivers (https://media.wcwpds.wisc.edu/related-training/Kin-Nav/Caregiver/story_html5.html?lms=1) is available to caregivers through the Kinship Navigator Portal, various pages of DCF's general website, and the Wisconsin's Child Welfare Professional Development System (WCWPDS) website. This training seeks to normalize a relative caregiver's complex feelings about their caregiving role and support them by providing information about services and resources available to them. Between October 1, 2020 – February 29, 2024, this training was viewed 923 times.
	<i>Families Like Mine: Wisconsin Relative Caregivers</i>	With the funding provided in FY 2020 – 2024 DCF has sponsored five free conferences for relative caregivers of minor children across Wisconsin to attend. The conferences are a blend of presentations and unstructured time for caregivers to connect with one another. The presentation topics are informed by the

	<i>for Children Conference</i>	Relative Caregiver Stakeholder Group (described below) and feedback from previous conference attendees. Previous topics include legal options for relative caregivers and understanding the court process, trauma responses and regulation, child mental health, talking to children about their parent’s addiction and incarceration, and a generational history of American Indian families.
Caregiver Support	<i>Relative Caregiver Support Grants</i>	<p>With the funding provided in FY 2020 – 2022, DCF awarded county, tribal, and community non-profit agencies with a total of 53 grants to develop and maintain relative caregiver support groups throughout the state.</p> <p>With the funding provided in FY 2023 – 2024, DCF broadened the scope of these grants for agencies to submit proposals with activities that assist relative caregivers throughout the state in learning about, finding, and using programs and services to meet their needs and the needs of the children they are raising. DCF awarded county, tribal, and community non-profit agencies with a total of 44 grants to fund approved activities including assisting relative caregivers with legal representation to address housing concerns and pursue permanency through guardianship, developing community resource and legal clinics, coordinating relative caregiver support groups, and providing relative caregivers with concrete supports for food, clothing, and transportation.</p>
Caseworker Education	<i>Kinship Navigator Training for Caseworkers</i>	The web-based course Kinship Navigator Training for Caseworkers (https://wcpds.wisc.edu/web-based-courses/kinship-navigator-training-for-caseworkers/) is available to child welfare professionals on various pages of DCF’s general website and through the Wisconsin’s Child Welfare Professional Development System (WCWPDS) website. This training seeks to recognize the unique circumstances of relative caregiving and how child welfare professionals can build partnerships with caregivers through supportive and affirming practice. Between October 1, 2020 – February 29, 2024, this training was viewed 236 times.
Outreach and Evaluation	<i>Relative Caregiver Stakeholder Group</i>	DCF created a lived experience group of relative caregivers across Wisconsin to advise on the implementation of Wisconsin’s Kinship Navigation program in 2018. In the past two years, DCF increased recruitment efforts in hopes that more Black, Latino, Indigenous and Native American caregivers join the group to expand the diversity of voice and experience that is being elevated. This lived experience team currently consists of 27 caregivers with various types of caregiving situations and different levels of child welfare system involvement. DCF facilitates quarterly group meetings in which the members offer recommendations, feedback, and guidance on DCF’s strategic

		<p>initiatives and evaluate their impact on relative caregivers in Wisconsin. With the funding provided in FY 2020 – 2024, DCF has been able to offer in-person meetings and travel accommodations for group members. With the funding provided in FY 2023 – 2024, DCF has provided the group members a stipend for their time, expertise, and advocacy.</p>
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**Children's Bureau Attachment D – Annual Reporting of Education
and Training Vouchers**

Annual Reporting of Education and Training Vouchers (ETVs) Awarded

Name of State/Tribe:

Wisconsin

	Total ETVs Awarded	Number of New ETVs
<u>Final Number</u> : 2022-2023 School Year (July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023)	168	78
2023-2024 School Year* (July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024)	156	76

* The 2023 – 2024 School Year number is as of 4/9/2024. It is likely an undercount of the total number of ETV recipients in the 2023 – 2024 School Year due to reporting taking place before the end of the academic year.