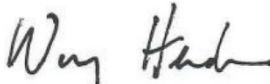


To: DCF/DMCPS Administrator  
DCF Area Administrators  
Child Placing Agency Directors  
Child Welfare Agency Directors  
County Departments of Community Programs Directors  
County Departments of Human Services Directors  
County Departments of Social Services Directors  
Group Home Providers  
Tribal Social Services/Indian Child Welfare Directors  
Private Child Placing Agencies  
Residential Care Center Providers  
Shelter Care Providers  
Tribal Chairpersons

From: Wendy Henderson  
Division Administrator 

Re: **Present and Impending Danger Threat Language Updates June 2022**

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this memo is to notify local child protective service agencies of updates to certain Present and Impending Danger Threat language. It will describe the purpose of the changes and provide an overview of the language updates, effective on June 11, 2022. These language changes do not represent substantive changes to current policy or practice expectations.

## **BACKGROUND**

As part of the Putting Families First initiative, the Division of Safety and Permanence (DSP) convened a workgroup charged with identifying opportunities to support child protective services intervention, practice approaches and strategies in order to serve more children in their family homes. Based on the results of this workgroup's efforts, as well as input from various stakeholders, various shorter-term and longer-term improvements to the current safety planning and assessment process have been identified. This workgroup, referred to as the [Safety Revisions Workgroup](#), is comprised of representatives from the local child welfare agencies across the state, Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System (WCWPDS), and DSP's Bureau of Safety and Well-Being (BSWB).

The workgroup's first and shorter-term task was to identify danger threat language changes to serve as a necessary first step to addressing racial disproportionality that families and people of color experience in our state's child welfare system. Racial disparities occur at nearly every major decision-making point along the child welfare continuum. Both nationally and in Wisconsin, there is an overrepresentation of certain racial and ethnic groups in the child welfare system relative to their representation in the [general population](#). The longer-term scope of the workgroup efforts is to identify ways to enhance the current safety model in order to support

child protective services (CPS) professionals in identifying and documenting danger threats and protective capacities and creating comprehensive safety plans with and informed by families.

Consistent with the workgroup's short and long-term goals, improvements to the safety assessment and planning process will occur via a phased approach. The first set of language improvements will be introduced with the [June 2022 eWiSACWIS release](#) and are focused on refining the safety assessment process and danger threat language to be more culturally responsive, equitable and just. These initial changes to danger threat language were substantively informed by the [Capacity Building Center for States article](#) noting the harm that results from language and buzzwords that "can be misleading and damaging when used to describe individuals and families in child welfare settings."

The workgroup's efforts were also supported by input and feedback from a variety of stakeholder groups including the Wisconsin County Human Services Association (WCHSA), the Intertribal Child Welfare (ICW) Committee, the Department of Children and Families' (DCF) Equity and Inclusion Committee (EAIC), and the Parent Leaders in Child Welfare group.

Additional changes will be coming out in 2023 and 2024 that will also focus on danger threat language and process enhancements. These safety process enhancements will be considered by the workgroup and as part of a more formal business process reengineering (BPR) approach that kicked off in January of 2022.

### **INFORMATION SUMMARY**

Based on the Safety Revisions Workgroup's initial efforts, minor language changes were made to twelve (12) Present and Impending Danger Threats. Changes to language do not change the original intent of danger threat. As such, there should not be a substantive impact on current case practice or documentation, but, as noted above, does address the following important initial language changes:

- Removing buzzwords
- Including objective behavioral statements
- Modifying language to be person-centered

See the [Safety Revisions June 2022 Update: Danger Threat Language Changes](#) and [Child Protective Services Safety Intervention Standards](#) linked at the end of this memo for additional information.

Documents, templates, detail flairs and other language in eWiSACWIS will be updated to reflect the language changes to the Present and Impending Danger Threats. This eWiSACWIS enhancement will occur on June 11, 2022, along with the updates to [Child Protective Services Safety Intervention Standards](#). Additionally, Appendix II of [Wisconsin's Ongoing Services Standards](#) will be updated to replace the Impending Danger Threats language with links to the danger threat appendices in the Child Protective Services Safety Intervention Standards. This is the only change to Wisconsin's Ongoing Services Standards and ensures consistency with these and any future language changes. DSP is working closely with WCWPDS to implement language changes within training curriculums.

The [Safety Assessment and Planning Revisions website](#) will continue to be updated regularly. A [recorded video](#) detailing the changes to each danger threat is also available. DCF will continue to provide outreach and communication on the details of the Present and Impending Danger Threat language updates through meetings with supervisors and directors, the Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services (DMCPS), the Children's Court Improvement Project (CCIP), and other stakeholders.

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MEMO WEB SITE: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/policy>

LINKS:



[Language Changes](#)

[Safety Revisions June 2022 Update: Danger Threat](#)

[Child Protective Services Safety Intervention Standards](#)  
[Safety Process Improvements June 2022 Updates](#)  
[eWiSACWIS Release Notes – June 11, 2022](#)  
[Safety Assessment and Planning Revisions](#)