



Division of Safety and Permanence

DSP Type Memo Series 2023-18i

September 11, 2023

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  
Private Child Placing Agencies  
Residential Care Center Providers  
Shelter Care Providers  
Tribal Chairpersons

From: Wendy Henderson  
Administrator

Re: ***Lived Experience Impacts - Resources for Families***

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this memo is to inform stakeholders about two new resources for families that child welfare professionals can provide during a safety assessment and/or while providing ongoing safety services. [An Introduction to Child Welfare – For Parents, By Parents](#) and [Understanding the Language Child Welfare – A Resource for Parents](#) are available to help educate families about their involvement with their local Child Welfare agency.

**BACKGROUND**

Lived Experience, the practice of incorporating the experiences and perspectives of individuals impacted by a system, is essential for Wisconsin’s Child Welfare transformation which aims to support more children and families in-home with services. By gaining a deeper understanding of systems needs and services gaps in child welfare these resources created by those with lived experience help promote best practices around engaging families.

In collaboration with the [Office of Children's Mental Health](#), DCF launched the Parent Leaders in Child Welfare Stakeholder Group in January 2021. The Parent Leaders of Child Welfare Group is a group of parents who, at some point, had an active open case within their local Child Welfare agency. Parents have varied experiences with child welfare, including having children in out-of-home care, on an in-home safety plan, adopted, or in kinship placements. This group has been influential in raising awareness from a parent’s perspective. Parent Leaders support various initiatives that enhance and elevate parents’ voices within system change.

The Parent Leaders recognized the gap in information for families involved in the child welfare system and recommended that DCF create materials for parents to demystify the child welfare system and process.





## INFORMATION SUMMARY

In collaboration with Parent Leaders, and county and tribal stakeholders, DCF created [An Introduction to Child Welfare - For Parents, By Parents](#) and [Understanding the Language of Child Welfare - A Resource for Parents](#). These resources provide information explaining why a family may be contacted or involved with their local child welfare agency. The resources are tailored to parents, providing information on the basics of the child welfare system, the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) if one is a parent of an Indian child, what parents can expect from the child welfare system and child welfare professionals.

Agencies should use the [An Introduction to Child Welfare - For Parents, By Parents](#) and [Understanding the Language of Child Welfare - A Resource for Parents](#) to educate families about their involvement with their local Child Welfare agency. Agencies are encouraged to provide this resource to families to support relationship building, communication, and awareness of child welfare in your agency.

For more on how DCF is actively engaging, creating strategies, and providing opportunities for those with Lived Experience to support system change, please visit DCF's Lived Experience website at: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/family-first/lived-experience>.

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