

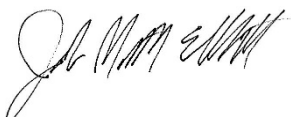


Division of Safety and Permanence

DSP Numbered Memo Series 2024-10

June 22, 2024

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: John Elliott  
Administrator 

Re: **Updates to the Child Protective Services Access and Initial Assessment Standards and the eWiSACWIS Initial Assessment Functionality**

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this memo is to communicate revisions to the [Child Protective Services \(CPS\) Access and Initial Assessment Standards](#), which are effective as of June 22, 2024, along with changes to Initial Assessment (IA) functionality in eWiSACWIS as part of the June 2024 eWiSACWIS release.

In addition to other practice improvements, these changes integrate beneficial learnings from our state’s pilot of the Alternative Response (AR) pathway along with the best aspects of Traditional Response and Actuarial practice and documentation into a single IA pathway.

**BACKGROUND**

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is responsible for developing, implementing, and monitoring practice via our state’s CPS standards and for maintaining the state’s eWiSACWIS data system, in accordance with statutory authority under section 48.981(3)(c)1.a. of Wisconsin Statutes and as required by federal laws and regulations, including the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) and Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) requirements.

DCF has relied on data and information gathered from variety of sources and has worked with local CPS agencies, parents with previous CPS experience, tribal child welfare agency leaders,





and other key stakeholders to identify ways to strengthen, streamline, and improve the IA process (see Attachment 1).

## **POLICY AND PROCEDURE REQUIREMENTS**

Effective **June 22, 2024**, the *CPS Access and Initial Assessment Standards* and corresponding eWiSACWIS functionality will do the following:

- Streamline and strengthen the Initial Assessment into a single statewide practice process.
- Promote family engagement throughout an Initial Assessment, including providing information to families about CPS and the IA process.
- Support collaboration with tribal child welfare professionals, when applicable.

Attachment 2 summarizes the standards changes related to IA responsibilities and practices.

## **eWiSACWIS DOCUMENTATION**

As of **June 22, 2024**, the eWiSACWIS functionality will reflect the above IA practice changes and improvements to the streamlined IA documentation functionality. All IAs started in eWiSACWIS before this date will be completed using the functionality that was in place at the time the IAs were created. All IAs created in eWiSACWIS as of the June 22, 2024 release will use the new IA functionality.

## **ACTION SUMMARY**

Revisions to the *CPS Access and Initial Assessment Standards* and enhancements to the corresponding eWiSACWIS IA functionality are effective as of **June 22, 2024**.

Two recorded [training webinars](#) are available for all CPS professionals performing IA functions, their supervisors, and local CPS agency leadership. These webinars provide information on the changes to *CPS Access and Initial Assessment Standards* and the eWiSACWIS IA functionality. Training content to support new CPS professionals or CPS professionals who begin to carry out IA responsibilities after June 22, 2024, will be integrated into Pre-Service, WiLearn, and related Foundation courses.

In addition to providing updates at regularly scheduled opportunities, such as the DCF Bureau of Regional Operations supervisor meetings and other appropriate shared learning forums, DCF technical assistance (TA) is available through a series of virtual post-launch support sessions. These weekly support sessions will take place between the end of June and August 2024, and details regarding the dates and times will be provided to all staff and their supervisors who are identified to have IA responsibilities in the DCF Random Moment Time Study Staff Roster application.

Finally, resources for CPS professionals and supervisors can be found in the [Worker Portal on the DCF website](#).



REGIONAL OFFICE CONTACT: DCF Area Administrator

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

Attachments Summary of Key Learning Opportunities and Stakeholder Engagement  
Summary of Revisions to the Wisconsin *Child Protective Services Access  
and Initial Assessment Standards*



## Attachment 1

### Summary of Key Learning Opportunities and Stakeholder Engagement

Data and input from a variety of stakeholders and workgroups have identified issues and inefficiencies in Initial Assessment (IA) practice and documentation that have been used to inform the June 2024 updates to *CPS Access and Initial Assessment Standards* and IA functionality in eWiSACWIS.

Supporting information and data sources included:

- [IA case review](#) results and analysis
- Alternative Response [Evaluation](#) and Think Tank [Recommendations](#)
- [Child Welfare Workload Study](#)
- Results from the IA Workforce Survey conducted in February 2022
- IA Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) study completed in February 2023

Sources of key stakeholder input included:

- Child Welfare Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Advisory Committee
- CQI IA Advisory Committee Subgroup
- Local Child Protective Service Agency staff and leadership
  - Wisconsin County Human Service Association (WCHSA)
  - WCHSA Children, Youth, and Families Policy Advisory Committee
  - Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services (DMCPS)
- Intertribal Child Welfare Committee
- Parent Leaders in Child Welfare lived experience group



## Attachment 2

### Summary of Revisions to the Wisconsin *Child Protective Services Access and Initial Assessment Standards*

Section	Item	Page	Changes
IV.C.1	Newborn Relinquishment - definition	21	Updated the statutory reference to safe haven that is cited in this section.
Section 2	Primary Assessments	37	Made more family-oriented to focus on collaborating with family, centering family voice, addressing needs, etc.
Section 2	Secondary/ Non-Caregiver Assessments	37	Added language around when to use secondary and non-caregiver assessments.
XII.A.	Role of the CPS Professional (Previously Safety Intervention)	38	Re-purposed "Safety Intervention" section to include the Role of the CPS Professional as in-the-box guidance. Covers elements of an IA, including family engagement, cultural responsibility, ICWA/WICWA compliance guidance, and collaborating with tribes.
XII.A.1.	Role of the CPS Initial Assessment Professional: Indian Child Welfare Act (New)	39	Moved ICWA/WICWA information from introduction into a box under the role of the CPS professional. Added information about collaborating with tribes.
XII.C.	Cultural Practices	41	Further developed/expanded guidance, using WiLearn Cultural Responsibility curriculum to inform updates.
XII.D.	Working with Individuals with Alternative Communication Needs	42	Added language to emphasize that engagement efforts should be the same across families, regardless of individual communication needs.
XIV.C.	Interview Contacts	54	Clarified that the list of interview contacts is not a prescribed order for conducting interviews. Added non-custodial parent interview information (moved from a section further down) and changed language from "non-custodial parent" to "non-household parent." Added guidance around informing the household parent of the need to contact the non-household parent. Added guidance around not needing to contact non-household parents of children who are not alleged victims, unless as a collateral contact.
XIV.D.	Required Information from Collateral Contacts (Previously Interviewing Non-Custodial Parents)	55	Repurposed section to focus on collateral contacts. Clarified the expectation that information gathered from collateral sources should be specifically related to child safety and the alleged maltreatment. Previous content on interviewing non-custodial parents was moved to section XIV.C.



Section	Item	Page	Changes
XIV.E	Information that Must be Gathered and Analyzed	56	Removed examples that appear in Appendix 1. Emphasized that the information gathered needs to be sufficient and relevant to case determinations (i.e., maltreatment, safety, and case disposition). Added language about documenting a child's Indian status.
XIV.F.	Conclusions of the Initial Assessment	57	Reorganized and edited in-the-box guidance for clarity. Added out-of-the-box guidance about family engagement, tribal collaboration, and using the least intrusive measures necessary.
XIV.H.	The Case Transition Process	59	Added language about ensuring the family has received information regarding the CPS process. Added link to Parent Information documents.
XVIII.D.	Secondary Assessments: Information to be Gathered and Analyzed	69	Added documentation of child's Indian status.
XIX.D.	Non-Caregiver Assessments: Information to be Gathered and Analyzed	72	Added documentation of child's Indian status.
XXIV.A.	Newborn Relinquishment	79	Edited to mirror definition of newborn relinquishment under IV.C.1.
Appendix 1	Information to be Gathered and Analyzed in Primary Assessment Cases	91	Revised for clarity, focusing on gathering sufficient relevant information to make determinations. Added language about engagement and cultural responsibility. Revised so language doesn't presume maltreatment occurred.
Appendix 4	Coordination and Collaboration with Law Enforcement Agencies: Conducting Interviews	112	Made minor edits to keep in alignment with Interview Contacts (XIV. C.).
Appendix 12	Engaging Families in the Initial Assessment Process	148	Created new appendix on family engagement. Provides guidance and links to resource documents to share information about CPS and IA to families at first contact. Includes information on culturally responsible practice and connecting families to resources.