

Summary of Changes to the Wisconsin's Ongoing Service Standards March 2026

This document provides an overview of the most notable changes to Ongoing Service Standards, related to the DCF 56 administrative rule revision, including a relative/like-kin licensing pathway, and reflects alignment with the Access/IA Standards revisions made in October 2024 and Child Protective Services Safety Intervention Standards in February 2025. Included is a side-by-side comparison of pertinent changes. *Disclaimer: This document does not include all proposed revisions to the October 2025 Wisconsin Ongoing Service Standards. This document is a summary document.*

General updates and clean-up:

- Corrected identified spelling and grammar errors
- Incorporated existing policy requirements previously released in memo but never included in a standards update

Major notable language changes:

- **Non-custodial** or **absent parent** is now referred to as **non-household parent** (only in specific instances referring to legal custody does the non-custodial identifier remain).
- **Case** is no longer used broadly and now refers to a case note or a case plan throughout the document.
- All previous references that identify parents and guardians, now include **Indian custodians**.
- All references to **ICWA** and/or **WICWA** have been updated to **ICWA/WICWA** as they are separate acts that both need to be adhered to.
- Added definitions for **Indian Child's Tribe**, **Indian Custodian**, and **Indian Tribe**.
- All references to State Permanency Consultants have been removed, as this role no longer exists.
- Language changes that were made in Access and Initial Assessment or Safety Standards have been included.

Areas of notable practice changes

- Reasonable and prudent parenting standard language updates to reflect best practices.
- Face to face contact requirements for children in out of home care are clarified and increased based on the level of care of the placement.
- Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children updates to align with federal requirements.

TOPIC AREA: Reasonable and Prudent Parenting

Summary: The reasonable and prudent parenting standard is revised in Chapter 56 administrative rule revisions. The standards updates reflect the changes in the proposed administrative rule, including consent requirements for haircare.

PREVIOUS ONGOING SERVICE STANDARDS	REVISED ONGOING SERVICE STANDARDS	LOCATION IN THE REVISED ONGOING SERVICE STANDARDS
<p>Reasonable and prudent parenting standard: is a standard for an out-of-home care provider making decisions concerning a child’s participation in age or developmentally appropriate extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities that is characterized by careful and sensible parental decisions that maintain the health, safety, cultural, religious or tribal considerations, and the best interests of the child while at the same time encouraging the emotional and developmental growth of the child.</p> <p>When making a decision using the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard, out-of-home care providers shall, at a minimum, consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child specific considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The child’s wishes o The age, maturity, and development of the child, 	<p>Reasonable and prudent parenting standard: A standard for use in making decisions concerning participation of a foster child’s participating in age or developmentally appropriate extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities that maintain the health, safety, best interests, and cultural, religious, and tribal values of the foster child while at the same time encouraging the emotional and developmental growth of the foster child.</p> <p>When applying the reasonable and prudent parenting standard, the out of home care provider shall consider all of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The health, safety, and best interests of the foster child. 2. The physical and emotional developmental level of the foster child. 3. The foster child’s wishes, as gathered by engaging the foster child in an age-appropriate discussion about participation in the activity. 4. The cultural, religious, and tribal values of a foster child and the foster child’s family. If reasonably possible to do so, the foster parent shall consult with the foster child’s parent, guardian, legal custodian, or Indian custodian 	

<p>o Whether the activity is in the best interest of the child,</p> <p>o The child’s behavioral history,</p> <p>o Court orders and other legal considerations for the child,</p> <p>o Cultural, religious, and tribal considerations of the child and the child’s family.</p> <p>• Activity specific considerations:</p> <p>o Any potential risk factors of the situation;</p> <p>o How the activity will help the child grow;</p> <p>o Whether the activity will encourage a family-like living experience.</p> <p>• Other considerations:</p> <p>o Other information obtained from the parent/guardian;</p> <p>o The restrictiveness of the setting.</p> <p>Reasonable and prudent parenting decisions may not violate existing court orders or rulings, or other services that are a part of the</p>	<p>about the foster child’s participation in extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities and the foster child’s cultural, religious, and tribal values, in making decisions concerning the foster child’s participation in those activities, but is not required to consult with the parent, guardian, legal custodian, or Indian custodian about every decision affecting the foster child. If the foster parent is unable to consult with the foster child’s parent, guardian, legal custodian, or Indian custodian, they shall consult with the supervising agency about any cultural, religious or tribal values to be considered.</p> <p>5. Court orders and other legal considerations affecting the foster child, including the prohibitions in par. (g).</p> <p>6. Potential risks of the activity under consideration.</p> <p>7. Whether participating in the activity will provide an experience that is similar to the experiences of the foster parent’s children and other children in the home.</p> <p>8. Developmental activities of peers.</p> <p>9. Information on the forms required under ch. DCF 37.</p> <p>Additions to the Standard:</p> <p>If the foster child is an Indian child, the supervising agency shall ask the foster child’s parent, guardian, or Indian custodian and the Indian child’s tribe about specific tribal values and customs and provide this information to the foster parent.</p> <p>Foster child’s hair.</p> <p>1. If a foster child is under 12 years of age, the following provisions apply regarding the foster child’s hair:</p> <p>a. The foster parent may not authorize any significant changes to the foster child’s hair, such as haircuts or style or color changes, without permission from the foster child’s parent, guardian, legal custodian, or Indian custodian.</p> <p>b. The foster parent may authorize hair care services needed to maintain the style, cut, and color of a foster child’s hair.</p> <p>2. A foster child who is 12 years of age or older may make their own hair care decisions without authorization from the foster parent or the foster child’s parent, guardian, legal custodian, or Indian custodian.</p> <p>Prohibitions. A foster parent may not do any of the following:</p>	
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<p>child's permanency plan, including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Court-ordered family interaction, • Medical approvals/other medical laws • Medication authorizations or approvals • Confidentiality laws • Educational-related decisions based on statute. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Permit the foster child to participate in an activity that would violate a court order or any federal or state statute, rule, or regulation. 2. Make a decision that conflicts with the foster child's permanency plan or family interaction plan. 3. Consent to the foster child's marriage. 4. Authorize the foster child's enlistment in the U.S. armed forces. 5. Authorize medical, psychiatric, or surgical treatment for the foster child beyond the terms of the consent for medical services authorized by the foster child's parent, guardian, legal custodian, or Indian custodian. 6. Represent the foster child in a legal action or make a decision of substantial legal significance. 7. Determine which school the foster child attends or make a decision for the foster child regarding an educational right or requirement that is provided in federal or state law. 8. Require or prohibit a foster child's participation in an age or developmentally appropriate extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, or social activity solely for the foster parent's own convenience or based solely on the foster parent's own values. 	
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TOPIC AREA: Adoption Case Transfer

Summary: The department added specific reference to a form that must be used during case transfer processes and added guidance for case transition post-TPR.

PREVIOUS ONGOING SERVICE STANDARDS	REVISED ONGOING SERVICE STANDARDS	LOCATION IN THE REVISED ONGOING SERVICE STANDARDS
<p>Achieving Safety, Stability, and Permanence, Adoption Criteria and Process, transfer process makes reference to the Permanency Readiness Referral form (DCF-F-CFS2370-E). pp. 85 & 146</p>	<p>Transfer process makes reference to the renamed Adoption Readiness and Referral form (DCF-F-CFS2370-E), the case collaboration process now outlined on the Adoption Readiness and Referral form, and the Public Adoption Case Transition Checklist (DCF-F-5056-E).</p>	<p>pg.74 & pg.125</p>

<p>State Permanency Consultants</p> <p>Requirements for All Cases, The Case Transition Process, references the case transition process from the county to public adoption program. Pg. 3</p>	<p>Forms have been updated to include a new case collaboration process; this process is completed through collaboration between county ongoing professionals and public adoption professionals and is documented on the form by public adoption professionals.</p> <p>All references to State Permanency Consultants have been removed.</p> <p>Added guidance for case transition back to the county from the contracted public adoption agency if adoption has not finalized within 2-years post-TPR.</p>	<p>pg.6</p>
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TOPIC AREA: Independent Living

Summary: The department revised the Independent Living sections for concise language, removed outdated requirements, provided updates to reflect changes in federal and state policies and memoranda, and clarified roles and responsibilities.

PREVIOUS ONGOING SERVICE STANDARDS	REVISED ONGOING SERVICE STANDARDS	LOCATION IN THE REVISED ONGOING SERVICE STANDARDS
<p>Eligibility for independent living (IL) services for those ages 14 or older by completing and updating the youth’s independent living assessment and plan. Also cited independent living eligibility criteria. pg. 28 (PDF version), pg. 17 (Print version)</p> <p>Unclear Independent Living Transition to Discharge (ILTD) planning expectations for those 17.5 missing from out-of-home care (OHC) and/or those who plan to remain in OHC beyond age 18.</p>	<p>Removed to streamline independent living information and include only in sections where independent living is relevant (ex. independent living does not apply for youth served in-home)</p> <p>The ILTD is required if a youth is missing from care at age 17.5 or later; the ILTD is also required even if the youth remains in care after age 18 and should be started no later than age 17.5 and updated on a regular basis to reflect the evolution of the youth’s independent living needs and goals and transition planning, leading up to the termination of their court order or Voluntary Transition to Independent Living Agreement. This applies to youth in extended care.</p>	<p>pg.18</p> <p>pp. 189-206</p>

<p>50%) of the fact-to-face contacts must be in the child's out-of-home placement. pp. 61-64</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 50% of these contacts must occur in the child's out of home placement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The in-placement visits must occur at least every other month. <p>Level 3 or 4 Foster Home Placement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child welfare professional or designee must have at least one face-to-face contact with the child every other week. • At least one contact per month must occur in the child's out of home placement. 	
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TOPIC AREA: Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC)

Summary: The department revised ICPC requirements to reflect federal and state policy revisions, including word choices from 'illegal placement' to 'placements in violation of ICPC', updated the face-to-face requirements for meeting with children who return to Wisconsin from out of state, updated tribal ICPC and ICWA information, clarified placement and form requirements at placement, and clarified language for understanding.

PREVIOUS ONGOING SERVICE STANDARDS	REVISED ONGOING SERVICE STANDARDS	LOCATION IN THE REVISED ONGOING SERVICE STANDARDS
<p>Child Welfare Professional Face-to-Face Contact Requirements. pg. 202</p> <p>No mention of like-kin and 'case worker' used to describe a child welfare professional. pg. 245</p> <p>Illegal Placement. pp. 246-247</p>	<p>Changed Deputy Compact Administrator to ICPC specialist and clarified supervision report completion timeframe.</p> <p>Added like-kin and changed 'caseworker' to child welfare professional (CWP).</p> <p>Added definition of placement resource.</p> <p>Added ICPC and ICWA/WICWA section.</p>	<p>pp.213+</p>

<p>Purpose. pg. 247</p> <p>ICPC Office Responsibilities. pg. 248</p> <p>Wisconsin Local Agency Responsibilities. pg. 249</p> <p>Making an ICPC Request for Out-of-State Placement. pg. 250</p> <p>Required Documentation for ICPC Requests and Placements. pp. 250-252</p> <p>Kinship and Licensing Requirements. pg. 253</p> <p>Regulation 1. pp. 253-255</p> <p>Regulation 2. pp. 255-256</p>	<p>Changed title to “Placements in Violation of the ICPC” and removed references to “illegal placement” and changed wording to “in violation of the ICPC.”</p> <p>Removed references to Wisconsin court orders and revised language.</p> <p>Added Deputy Compact Administrator role. Revised language to better summarize the ICPC Office’s responsibilities.</p> <p>Added the ICPC requirement regarding the first face-to-face contact occurring within 30 days of notification of placement. Added ICPC requirement of 5 working days for a child to return to Wisconsin upon a placement disruption.</p> <p>Clarified language on how to make an ICPC referral. Added clarification on Public Adoption Home Study request process.</p> <p>Removed language regarding a child’s legal status for ICPC referrals (instructions vs. standards), added information on some states requiring relative licensure, added information on Cover Letter requirements, added language regarding concurrence for closure from the receiving state as required by ICPC, and moved the tribal ICPC form information to the new ICPC and ICWA section.</p> <p>Reworded the title and changed “the kinship care provider must go through the licensing process” to the <i>placement resource</i> must apply for the foster care licensing process in order to receive Kinship benefits.</p> <p>Clarified individuals identified as approved resource, added 100A and Worker Statement address requirement, clarified birth certificate and Social Security card requirements, removed information on not making placement without the approved 100A, as Regulation 1 allows the child to move with the placement resource right away, and added clarifying language regarding Receiving State’s approval or denial of a referral.</p>	
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<p>Regulation 4. pp. 257-258</p>	<p>Added clarification on information that should be provided in a referral, including Proof of Paternity which is required by ICPC for fathers and paternal relatives, clarified birth certificate and Social Security card requirements.</p>	
<p>Regulation 7. pp. 258-261</p>	<p>Added clarification regarding ICPC required documentation for residential requests, and deleted Regulation 7 emergency placement request for Regulation 4, as this is not in the ICPC rules.</p> <p>Deleted 100B as a child cannot already be in a home for a Regulation 7 request to be processed, specified court orders needed, clarified birth certificate and Social Security card requirements, removed TPR petition or order, as that does not apply to Regulation 7, and added and clarified language regarding provisional placement requests.</p>	
<p>Regulation 12. pg. 261</p>	<p>Added the APHSA/AAICPC website link</p>	
<p>Out-of-State Visits. pg. 262</p>	<p>Provided clarification on when child and family visits apply, as well as how ICPC defines a placement vs a visit.</p>	
<p>Conducting the Home Study. pp. 263-265</p>	<p>Added information that the home study should not be sent directly to the Sending State, clarified language, clarified background checks required, removed statement that the Sending State can request other background checks, removed statement that the home study agency may conduct additional background checks, removed information regarding the use of the SAFE Home Study tool with relatives, since Wisconsin is adopting a new relative/like-kin licensing assessment for this purpose.</p>	
<p>Placement. pp. 266-267</p>	<p>Clarified placement cannot occur until the 100A has to be signed by the Receiving State ICPC Office and received by the Sending State ICPC Office and moved information out of the <i>required boxes</i>.</p> <p>Removed references to illegal placement used the term “violation of the ICPC”, added ICPC’s requirement of the initial face-to-face contact occurring within 30 days of notification of placement, addressed Wisconsin’s CSE requirements vs. ICPC’s 30-day initial face-to-face contact requirement, added information regarding closure of WI Foster Care Medicaid upon placement</p>	

<p>Reconsideration of a Denial. pg. 268</p> <p>Placement Ending. pp. 270-271</p> <p>Child abuse and neglect. pp. 271-272</p> <p>Other Compacts. pp. 272-273</p>	<p>with a possible exception for placements in a bordering state, and clarified procedure for requesting placement after the 100A approval expires (extension or new request). Changed the example given for a possible Request for Reconsideration and clarified the process for a Request for Reconsideration.</p> <p>Added guardianship as a reason for closure documented on the 100B, added ICPC requirement of 5 working days for a child to return to WI upon a placement disruption, added requirement of supervision to continue until the Receiving State receives the 100B form from the Sending State.</p> <p>Clarified the procedure for when a CPS report is made on a child living in WI through an approved ICPC.</p> <p>Removed the requirement boxes, therefore making it best practice.</p>	
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TOPIC AREA: Relative Searches

Summary: The department provided updates to reflect current policy memos and included guidance regarding background checks.

PREVIOUS ONGOING SERVICE STANDARDS	REVISED ONGOING SERVICE STANDARDS	LOCATION IN THE REVISED ONGOING SERVICE STANDARDS
pp. 23-24 and pp.181-190	<p>Removed reference to DCF Numbered Memo 2004-13B and Informational Memo 2006-19 as these refer to confidentiality and the confidentiality statement that remains is encompassing.</p> <p>Added like-kin to all sections referencing diligent efforts to search, except for the requirements sections as like-kin are not required to be noticed per state and federal laws.</p>	pp. 57, 110, 158-167

	<p>Added reference to Appendix III, “Identification and Engagement Tools for Locating Non-Household Parents, Relatives and Like-kin” as part of continuing search efforts.</p> <p>Included guidance about utilizing criminal history and incarceration websites as part of search efforts as the focus when using these websites for relative searches should be promoting relationships, connections, and gathering information about a child’s family network and support system.</p>	
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TOPIC AREA: Educational Considerations

Summary: The department included the federal Every Student Succeeds Act information for quick reference and guidance.

PREVIOUS ONGOING SERVICE STANDARDS	REVISED ONGOING SERVICE STANDARDS	LOCATION IN THE REVISED ONGOING SERVICE STANDARDS
Requirements When Children Are Placed in OHC – Educational Considerations p.162	Added ESSA requirements for students in out-of-home care. Requirements are currently part of practice but were not previously included in standards.	pg.140

TOPIC AREA: Appendices

Summary: The department revised and removed appendices that were either included in DCF 56 rule or no longer relevant.

PREVIOUS ONGOING SERVICE STANDARDS	REVISED ONGOING SERVICE STANDARDS	LOCATION IN THE REVISED ONGOING SERVICE STANDARDS
Appendix III: Locating Non-Custodial Parent / Relatives – Search Tools	Changed title: Identification and Engagement Tools for Locating Non-Household Parents, Relatives and Like-kin, and updated all use of reference to include the new title.	

<p>Appendix VI: Permanency Options</p> <p>Appendix VII: Relative Notification Acknowledgement</p> <p>Appendix VII: Relative Search Record</p> <p>Glossary</p>	<p>Revised the entire appendix to include updated guidance and website links for search and engagement tools</p> <p>Removed the entire Appendix VI as permanency options are addressed in Standards sections.</p> <p>Removed the entire Appendix VII as this section was solely placement focused and did not include the various other options relatives can do to support children/families, and revisions to Act 79 letter are in progress and include a response form.</p> <p>Removed the entire Appendix VII as the information is this is tracked in eWiSACWIS Relative/Non-Relative Search.</p> <p>Added definitions for Indian Child’s Tribe, Indian Custodian, and Indian Tribe.</p>	
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