



Putting

Families First



Welcome!



Wendy Henderson
Administrator



John Elliott
Deputy Administrator




A top-down view of several hands of different skin tones holding white rectangular cards on a wooden floor. The hands are arranged in a circle, and the cards are also arranged in a circle, some overlapping. The background is a dark, blue-tinted wooden floor.

Vision

All Wisconsin children and youth are safe and loved members of thriving families and communities.

**We strive for justice in the
child welfare system
through addressing
systemic oppression,
inequity and racism.**

A group of diverse children, including a boy with a beard, a girl with blonde hair, a girl with dark hair, and a girl with dark skin, are huddled together, looking up at the camera with joyful expressions. The background is bright and slightly blurred, suggesting an outdoor setting.

**Putting Families First means
keeping families together and
children with those who know
and love them.**

In Wisconsin, relative placements represent **one half** of family setting placements.



**Children first placed
with relatives are
more likely to be
placed **with their
siblings . . .****



To have **fewer**
placements moves . . .



And 9 out of 10 children placed with relatives achieve permanency with family.

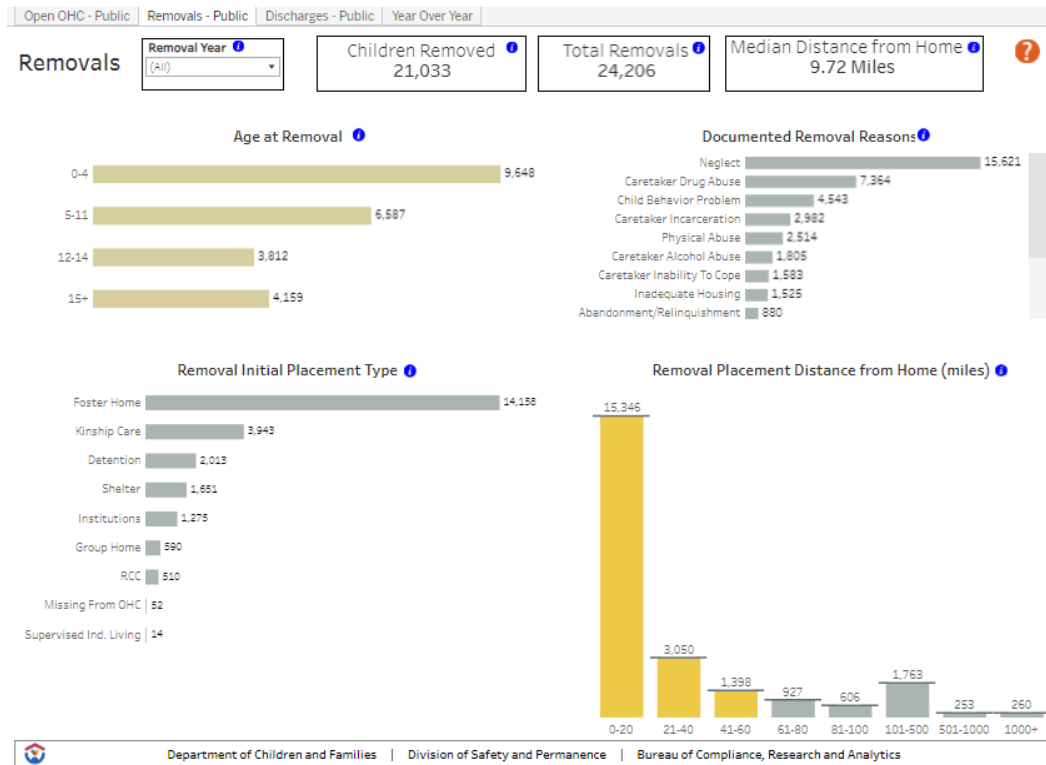


How is Wisconsin doing?

Out-of-Home Care (OHC) Dashboard

Information on current Out-of-Home care (OHC) placements, a map of the physical placements of children in OHC, children removed to OHC in the reporting period, and children who discharged from OHC in the reporting period.

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Take a look at the Out-of-Home Care (OHC) Dashboard on DCF's website, which features information on current OHC placements, including initial placement information.

You can access the dashboard here: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/dashboard/ohc>.



**Partnering with
families.**





Samantha

Five-year-old Samantha is being removed from her mother, Crystal's, care.

While Crystal has no family that could take Samantha, Samantha's family friend Mary is ready and willing to take placement. Samantha is a regular at Mary's home and often comes over for sleepovers. Mary hasn't missed a birthday or school event since Samantha was born.

While Samantha calls Mary "Auntie Mary," they are not blood relatives.

Under current Wisconsin law, Mary would not be considered a long-term placement option and would receive no financial support because she is not considered a "relative." Instead, Samantha may be placed with a family she does not know.



Let's take a moment . . .



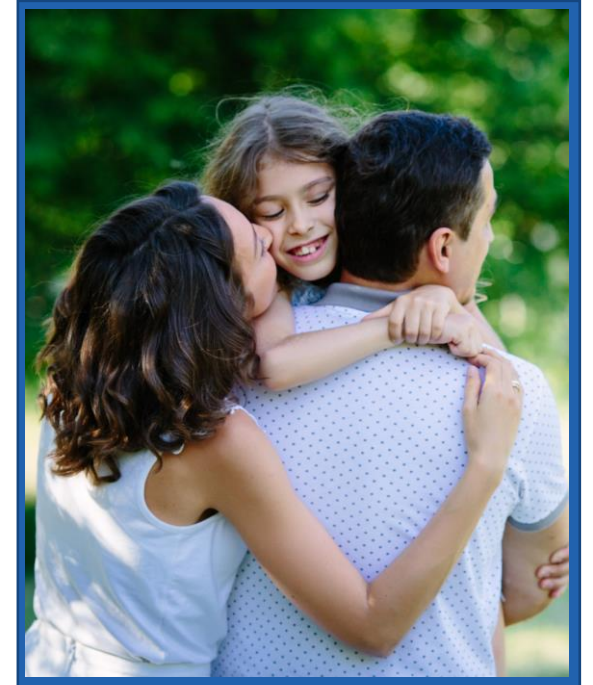
Supporting Families through Kinship Legislation

- **Current law** limits who is considered a “relative” under state statute.
- **Proposed legislation** would expand definition of a “relative” to include “first cousin-once removed” and “like-kin.”
 - Would impact voluntary and court-ordered kinship.
 - For court-ordered kinship, child welfare agencies could consider like-kin caregivers as long-term placement option even if the provider is unable to become licensed.



Supporting Families through Kinship Legislation

- 48.02 (12c) “Like-kin” means an individual who has a significant emotional relationship with a child or the child’s family that is similar to a familial relationship . . . For an Indian child, “like-kin” includes individuals identified by the child’s tribe according to tribal tradition, custom or resolution, code, or law.
- “Kinship care provider” was altered to include an Indian child’s extended family according to the law or custom of the Indian child’s tribe.
- Federal rule – Separate Licensing or Approval Standards for Relative or Kinship Foster Family Homes – effective November 2023.



Here's how you can help:



Take a look at the Kinship Definition Legislation Summary.

- Find it here: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/familyfirst/expanding-the-kinship-definition.pdf>.



Have conversations with your legislators.

- Write a letter of support or request a meeting.
- Find your legislator here: <https://legis.wisconsin.gov/>.



Share your stories with us!

- Email us: FamilyFirst@wisconsin.gov.



Targeted Safety Support Funds (TSSF)

- Flexible funding to support children remaining in their homes.
- Funding expanded in 2022.

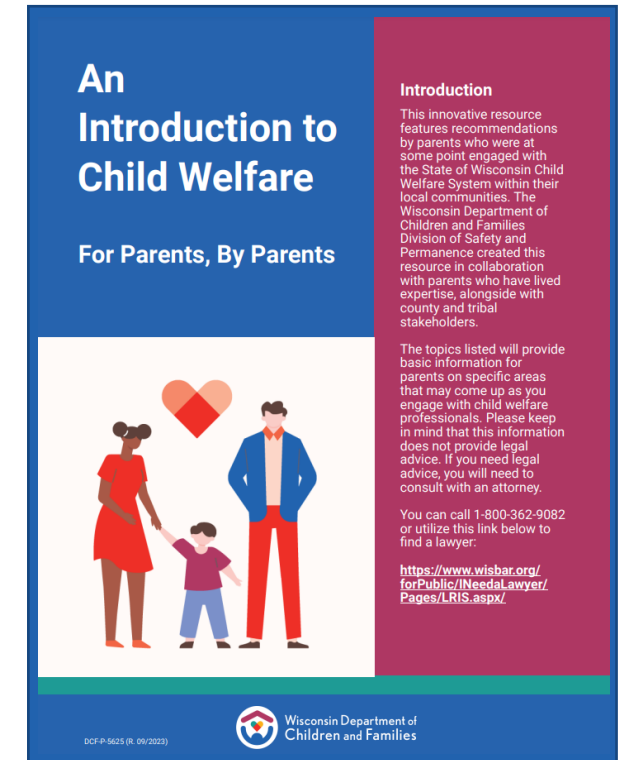


Exploring expansion of target population to include **youth justice** and **kinship/relative families**.



Elevating Lived Experience

- Improving our communication.
 - Updated Lived Experience webpage.
 - New resources for parents:
 - “An Introduction to Child Welfare For Parents, By Parents”: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/5625.pdf>.
 - “Understanding the Language of Child Welfare – A Resource for Parents”: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/5626.pdf>.
- Continued calls to recruit and engage lived experience partners.
 - Including youth with lived experience!
 - Get involved at: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/family-first/lived-experience>.





**Partnering with the
community.**

Family Legal Advocacy and Supports (FLAS) Clinic



Helping stabilize families through legal and social services.

- Collaboration between the UW Law School, Sandra Rosenbaum School of Social Work and DCF.
 - Takes referrals in Dane, Rock, Jefferson and Sauk Counties.
- Law and social work students collaborate to provide legal and non-legal services to clients.
- Assistance with:
 - Family law procedures and direct representation in some family law cases.
 - Social support needs.



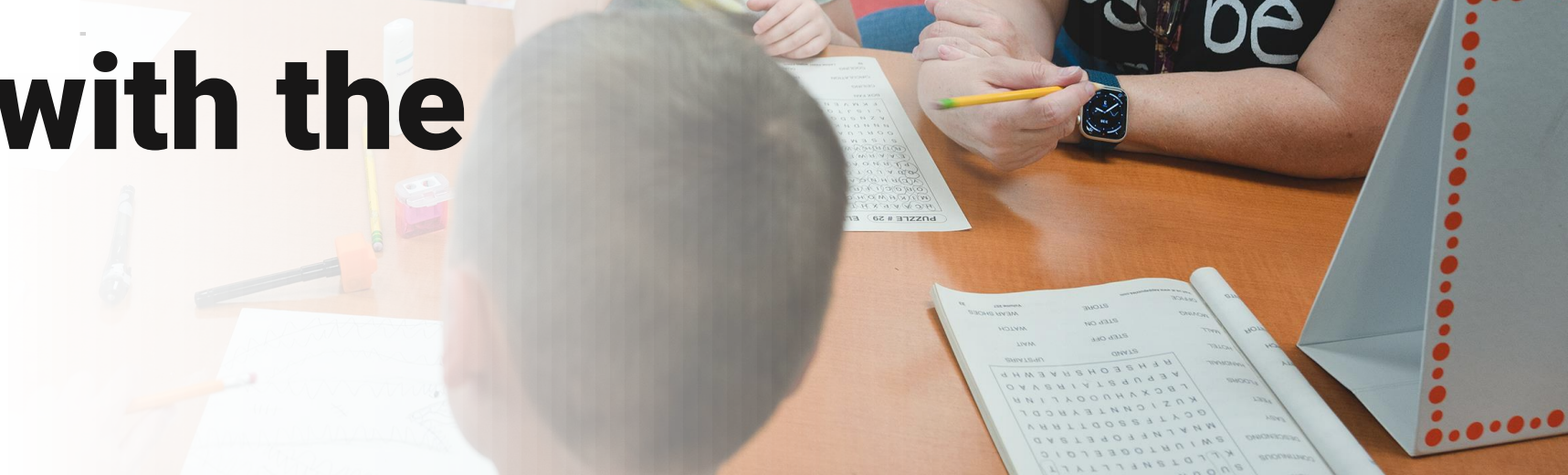
Supporting Partnerships with Courts and Schools

- Tailored Dispositional Orders project:
 - Collaboration between DCF and the Children's Court Improvement Program.
 - Research-based approach to setting conditions that effectively focus on behavior change.
- DCF and DPI continue a strong partnership responding to school attendance and truancy:
 - Published companion issue briefs issued for youth justice and school personnel.





**Partnering with the
workforce.**



Partnering with Tribes for Children

- June 2023: Access and IA Standards were updated to add the requirement for local child welfare agencies to notify tribes of child welfare services reports involving Indian children.
 - Priority following the May 2022 Tribal Consultation.
- Automated notification went live in June 2023.
- Automated notification is meant to support collaboration between local county agencies and tribes.



Youth Assessment Screening Instrument

- Youth Assessment Screening Instrument (YASI) Standards have been published and came into effect October 1, 2023.
 - Practice standards for risk assessment administration, court recommendations, case planning, training and supervisor duties.
 - Requires collaboration with youth, families and among local court system stakeholders.



Improving Child Welfare

Initial Assessment Improvement Project (IAIP)

Reducing redundancies and providing clearer guidance on documentation

Safety Revisions (SR)

Creating a process that is streamlined, easier to implement, leads to greater statewide consistency

Quality Case Planning (QCP)

Simplifying and supporting case planning so families and child welfare professionals report plans meet their needs

Independent Living Transition to Discharge (ILTD) Plan

Refining the plan to make it more user-friendly, relevant to the needs of young people and rooted as a youth-driven and -centered process

Streamlined work to increase engagement with families.



Putting Families First Communication Tools

For these resources, visit:

www.dcf.wisconsin.gov/family-first/toolbox.



Town halls



“Understanding Wisconsin’s Child Protection System” – a new resource



Putting Families First Newsletter



Putting Families First Playbook



Wisconsin is transforming – let's keep going!



Share your stories with us!



Reach out to your legislators.



Continue to support families and seek innovative partnerships – because we're **stronger together**.



Questions?



Thank you!

Have additional questions? Don't hesitate to reach out!

Putting Families First

Wisconsin Department of Children and Families

www.dcf.wisconsin.gov

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