



Putting

Families First



Welcome!



John Elliott
Administrator



Shelby McCulley
Deputy Administrator



A top-down view of several hands of different skin tones holding small, white, rectangular cards on a dark wooden floor. The hands are arranged in a circle, and the cards are scattered around them, some held and some on the floor. The overall image has a blue-tinted overlay.

Vision

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

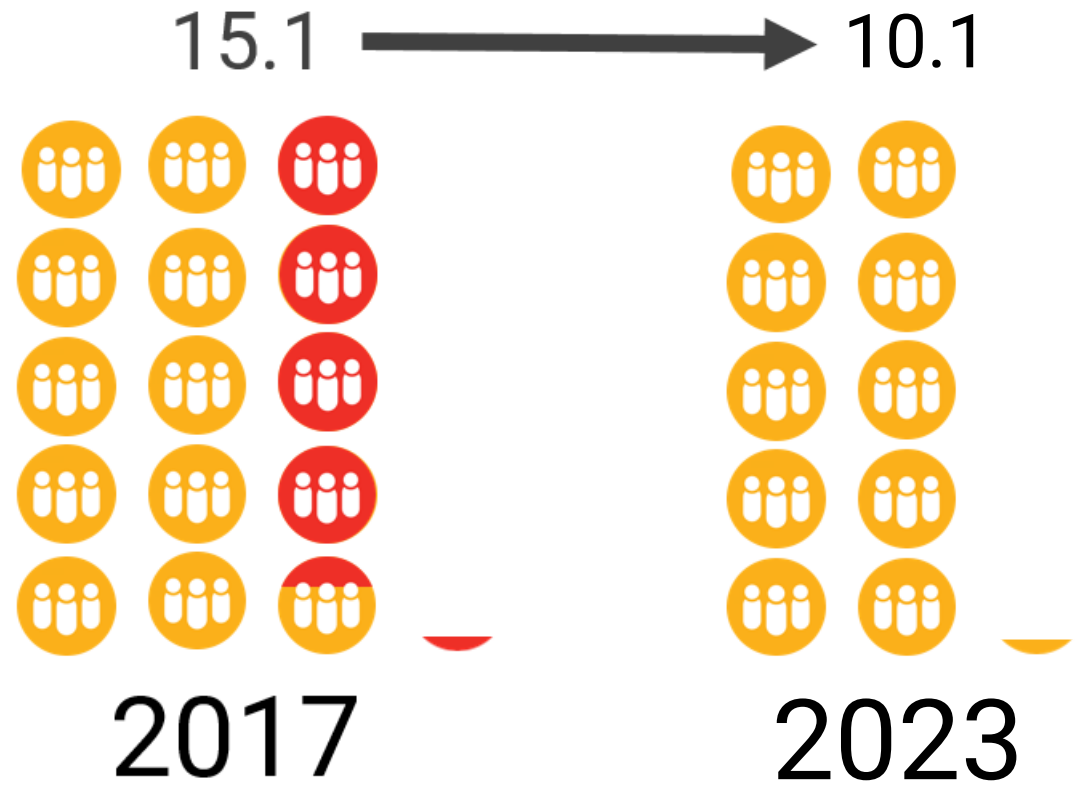
**We strive for justice in the
child welfare system
through addressing
systemic oppression,
inequity and racism.**

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

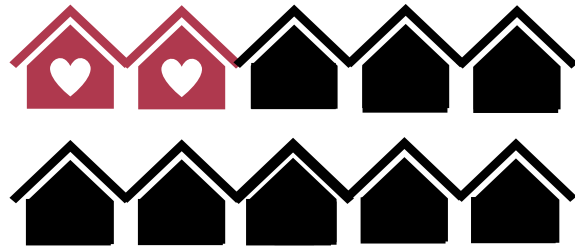
**Wisconsin is
transforming.**

5

fewer children
removed **per day**
since the peak in 2017.

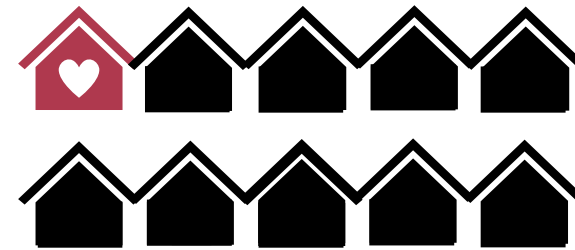


Decrease in children in out-of-home care (OHC), 2017 – 2023



24%

decrease in white children
in OHC

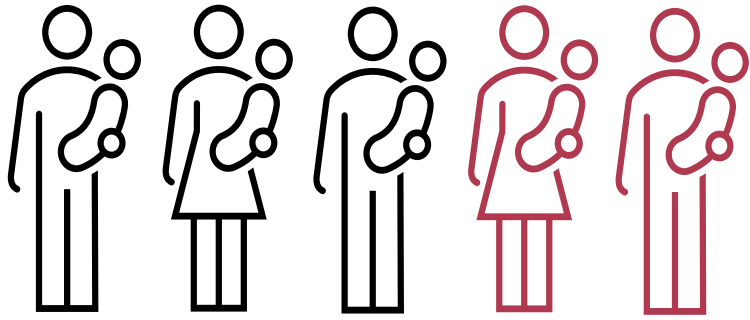


19%

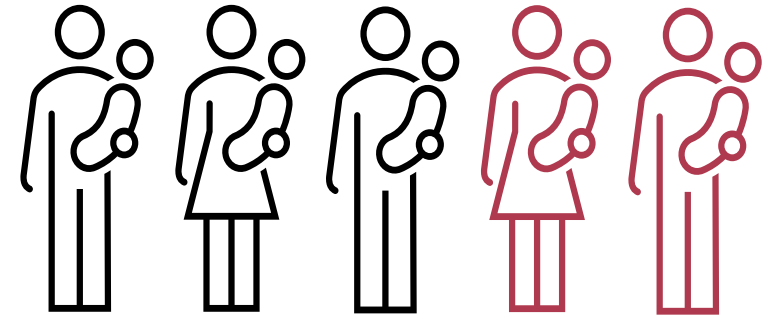
decrease in Black children
in OHC



In 2023 . . .



60% of children in out-of-home care were not placed with **relatives**.



63% of Black children in out-of-home care were not placed with **relatives**.





**Wisconsin is
transforming – and we're
ready to **keep moving.****



New: The Putting Families First Awards!

- We're restructuring and expanding our awards ceremonies to **celebrate more key partners of Putting Families First efforts**, including:
 - Child welfare professionals.
 - Parents with lived experience.
 - Community partners.
- Inaugural ceremony will be held on April 23!





New: Putting Families First Grants

County and tribal child welfare agencies have stressed the importance of **flexible, ready funds** in keeping families together.

- This month, DSP is launching a non-competitive application process for a one-time, time-limited allocation.
 - Can be used to cover costs of providing supports or services, addressing child, youth and family resource needs, and more.
 - Contract will be for the July 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025 period.



Supporting families through legislation: Like-kin definition & Kinship Care program

- SB 520 – now 2023 Wisconsin Act 119 – was signed into law in March.
- Two impact areas in child welfare:
 1. Placement with a like-kin caregiver.
 2. Financial support through the Kinship Care benefit program (DCF 58).
- Informational resource available here:
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/family-first/toolbox>.



Photo courtesy of the office of Representative Dave Considine.



Chapter 56 Revisions (Foster Care Licensing Rule)

- Opportunity to **update and align** with federal model standards:
 - Removing requirements that are no longer relevant.
 - Clarifying the rules (reducing annotations).
 - Making it possible for more families to be licensed appropriately to their needs.
- Agency **authority** over placement decisions and safety-related rule requirements will not be changing.



Partnering with Tribes for Kinship Care

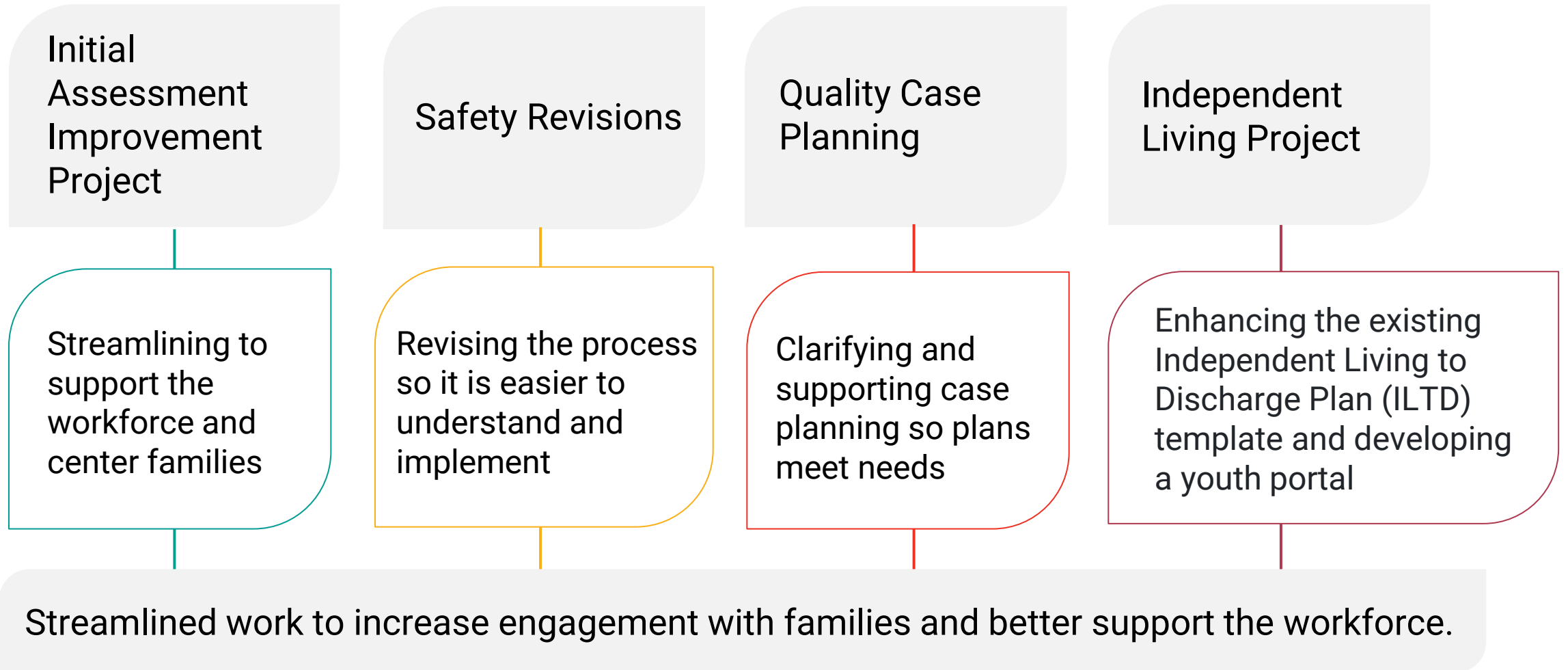
- During the August 2022 Kinship Care Tribal Consultation, Kinship Care was identified as a priority area by the Tribes.
- Request was to **streamline the Kinship Care application** to:
 - Make it more easily understood.
 - Reduce the amount of duplicate information.
 - Improve user accessibility.
- Partners have provided DCF with feedback.



**Supporting the
workforce.**



Improving Child Welfare



For more details, visit: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/newsletter/02-16-improving-child-welfare>.



Initial Assessment Improvement Project

- Supporting the CPS workforce:
 - Streamlining documentation in eWiSACWIS.
 - Supporting and promoting best practice through a single statewide pathway.
 - Collaborating with tribes, as applicable.
- Supporting families:
 - Partnering with parents and caregivers.
 - Providing information about CPS and the IA process.



Initial Assessment Improvement Project

Timeline:

eWiSACWIS:

- Development began February 19.
- Scheduled for June 22 release.

Access and Initial Assessment standards:

- 45-day review scheduled to begin April 19.

Training and support for supervisors and staff:

- PDS webinars on both eWiSACWIS and standards scheduled for late May.
- Appropriate updates being made to Pre-Service, WiLearn, Foundations.
- Launch support.



Safety Revisions

- Purpose:
 - Supporting the workforce.
 - Engaging and centering families.
 - Reducing disparities, where possible.
- Central to the work:
 - Stakeholder perspectives and input, data and research.
 - Elevating Parental Protective Capacities (PPCs) .
 - Leveraging parents'/families' roles in keeping children safe.
- Currently exploring:
 - Possible eWiSACWIS enhancements for February 2025.



Quality Case Planning

- Purpose:
 - To clarify and standardize case planning (starting with in-home).
 - To build the structure so families and child welfare professionals report plans meet their needs.
- Goals:
 - Identify case planning tools that can be utilized consistently across practice (Youth Justice, CPS out-of-home care plans, etc.).
 - Monitor safety and behavioral/condition changes in one place.
 - Implement strategies to reduce/fill data gaps.



Independent Living Project

The Independent Living Project has two focuses:

1. Enhancing the existing Independent Living Transition to Discharge (ILTD) template in eWiSACWIS.

2. Developing a youth portal to provide young people direct, controlled access to information about themselves in eWiSACWIS.

Next steps:

- Goal: Updated ILTD in February 2025 eWiSACWIS release, youth portal completed in 2025.



Engaging Lived Experience

By the numbers:

105

attendees for lived experts trainings – and more than **210** training hours total.

13

new Lived Experience relative caregivers onboarded.

205

child welfare professionals educated.

100%

Youth Advisory Council has **full board** of officers.

32

Youth Leadership Team members participated in this year's meetings.



Engaging Lived Experience

- Lived Experience Summit:
 - Planned in collaboration with LE experts.
 - Supporting capacity building and investment in LE experts.
 - Topics include mental health, career exploration, expanding networks and more.
- Other accomplishments:
 - Partnership with Office of Children's Mental Health.
 - Awarded RFP to Public Knowledge.



Lived Experience Communications Resources

For these resources, visit:

dcf.wisconsin.gov/family-first/lived-experience.



“Understanding the Language of Child Welfare – A Resource for Parents”



“An Introduction to Child Welfare – For Parents, By Parents”



“A Guide for Youth in Out-of-Home Care Placements in Wisconsin”



Lunch-and-learns



Putting Families First Newsletter



Let's keep transforming **together!**



April is Family Strengthening Month.



Check out DCF's communication tools.



Take a look at your local data.



Keep doing the **incredible work** you're doing!



Questions?



Thank you!

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

Putting Families First

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