

Child Welfare Strategic Transformation

Putting Wisconsin's families first



Family First Newsletter | March 2022| Issue 8

Caring for Kids Award Recipients

In recognition of Gov. Tony Evers proclamation declaring March as Social Work Month in Wisconsin, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) is honoring the efforts of five human service professionals with the 2022 Caring for Kids award.

Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) Secretary Amundson will present the awards virtually on March 22. The five professionals across various Wisconsin counties are being honored for their exceptional dedication to serving the people of their communities and putting families first. Big congratulations to:

1. LaTasha Perry, Wellpoint Care Network
2. Kathleen Peters, Winnebago County Department of Human Services
3. Elizabeth Sinclair, Waukesha County Department of Health and Human Services
4. Jenica Slavek, Dane County Human Services
5. Stephanie Wanserski, Wood County Human Services Department

Recipients of the award were selected based on years of experience, their commitment to putting families first, leadership, and proven record of ensuring the well-being of children and families.

Announcing WiLearn, the New Workforce Training Program

We are excited to announce the name of our new workforce training program, WiLearn! The program will launch in early 2023.

WiLearn prepares new child welfare professionals for a confident and competent start to their work. During their first six months on-the-job, new professionals will spend the majority of their time learning and applying what they learn at their agencies. The topics taught will be offered in a logical sequence, building skills and making connections through discussions and application activities.

In addition, WiLearn also emphasizes the supervisor's role in supporting new child welfare professionals with in-agency activities.

Find out more about the exciting features of [WiLearn](#).



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Agency Spotlight: Racine County BOOST Program Success!

Beginning this month, Agency Spotlight will focus on highlighting agency level successes related to child welfare professionals, families, and programming. This month, the Family First team talked with Steve Bedwell from Racine County Human Services to talk about the Racine County BOOST Program. This program is being highlighted for having a strong, positive impact on the community.

The Racine County BOOST Program provides support to families who have requested assistance for an unmet need. These can include risk of maltreatment, difficulty managing child behaviors, multisystem navigation, and support for children with special needs. The Boost Program uses a child centered, family-focused approach in working with families and is predicated on a close working partnership with the family and caregivers. The program commits to empowering families, instilling hope, and helping families to set and achieve their own priorities and goals.

The program operates similar in practice to the Safety Support Program. The team focuses on using motivational interviewing, family teaming, connecting families to community resources, and providing one-on-one in-home parenting curriculum where needed. The goal is to have weekly face-to-face contact with families and have team meetings on an every-other-week basis and try to allow the family to drive what frequency/intensity of service they may need or find helpful. The BOOST Program establishes a plan of care and allow that to drive the work.

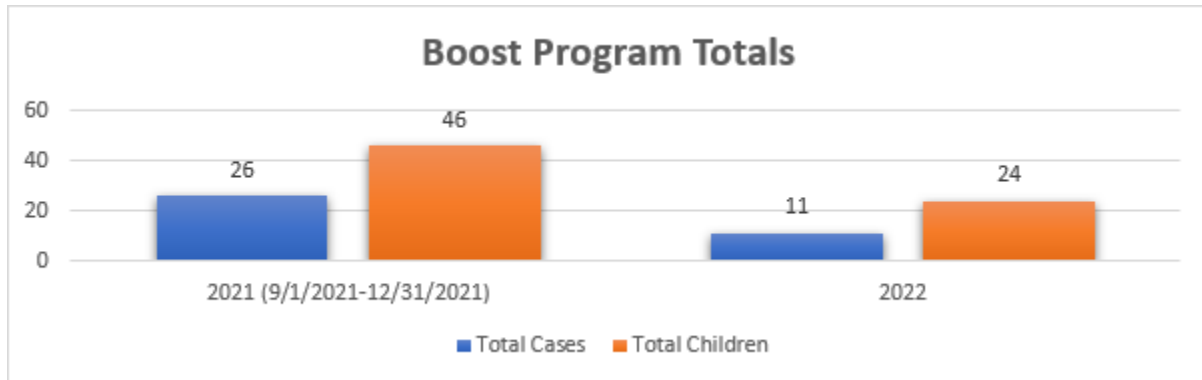
The program began on September 1, 2021, and the goal is to have families reach out for support/assistance. The team also takes referrals from others, including school personnel, law enforcement, and others. The team only had one worker to start the program with and it didn't take long to become busy. A lot of focus is targeted on parents who struggle managing their children's behaviors and the hope is to prevent parents from becoming overwhelmed where they seek placement for their child. Since September, there have already been nine cases with the referral reason due to youth behaviors. Three of these referrals came directly from parents. Funding is currently provided by county dollars and beginning next year the agency will also allocate the Promoting Safety and Stable Families funding (PSSF) to support the programming.

The BOOST Program provides parents with the time and support to work through what is occurring in their family. The engaging approach as a "non-system" service guides parents to achieve an alternative solution or desired outcome. The below chart documents the cases the BOOST program has serviced.



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April is Family Strengthening Month

Every family faces challenges, but they also have strengths to draw upon during these difficult times. Helping families and communities build upon these strengths in 5 essential areas can help families feel more confident, less stressed, and better connected.

1. Connecting with others
2. Parenting as children grow
3. Building inner strength
4. Knowing how to find help
5. Helping kids understand feelings

The “Five for Families” campaign was developed to help increase knowledge of the Protective Factors Framework, by taking a strengths-based approach to child maltreatment prevention and family well-being.

Please join us during Family Strengthening Month this April to help strengthen all Wisconsin families by promoting Five for Families in your community. Connect families with resources and information at www.FiveForFamilies.org and provide tools that families can use to take these small but meaningful steps to implement the 5 Strengths into their daily life. Remember the 5 Strengths and check out the “5 in 5 Challenge” digital toolkit for ways to engage in your community.

- Social Post Series for Facebook and Instagram
- Campaign Promo Website Graphics and Copy



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- Prevention Month Five for Families Press Release Template
- Print Ads/Posters
- Billboards
- :30 Produced Radio Spots
- :15 and :30 Broadcasters' Live Read Scripts

[Five for Families Toolkit](#)

[Family Strengthening sample content calendar](#)

[Five for Families Prevention Month Download Materials](#)

If you have any questions about media material content, please send an email to lamia.kosovic@wisconsin.gov.

WAFCA to Launch Pilot Focused on Serving Wisconsin Children In-State

From 2014-2020, residential care center (RCC) capacity in our state declined 32%. Placement data shows that the number of children placed out-of-state grew from 44 in 2016 to 119 in 2020. By the end of 2020, a total of 250 children from 46 different counties had experienced an out-of-state placement. The pandemic has exacerbated the placement crisis and is destabilizing our workforce. Now is the time to try something new.

In response, WAFCA will pilot Resource Connection Sessions beginning April 2022. The vision is to create a centralized process that brings placing agencies and providers together to locate in-state treatment and services for children at-risk of out-of-state placement. The goal of each session is to identify all possible treatment options available for the child and/or family and equip the placing agency with contact information for the identified options so they can immediately begin to coordinate the child's care.

In order to be successful, WAFCA will need to draw on the full continuum of providers (those providing: in-home services, behavioral health services for children, and out-of-home care services, including treatment foster care). The team is asking that all available providers to [sign up](#) and take part in connection sessions whenever possible.

Placing agencies in need of a connection session can learn more [here](#). Visit WAFCA's Pilot [webpage](#) to learn more.



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New Families First Training Video

Family First training videos are available on the [website](#). To view all trainings, use the [link](#) and scroll to the training section of the page. Two new options of training are available here:

1. A new e-learning activity for QRTP has been released on the CCIP training website. For information on QRTP and how to implement requirements of QRTP, visit the [training link](#).
2. Family First Prevention [Services Training Meeting](#) for child welfare professionals with captioning is now available (created on March 3, 2022).

QRTP Branding Logo

A few more facilities were added to the QRTP certification list on the webpage the second week in March. As this list continues to grow, please watch for the QRTP logo to easily indicate a certified facility. All facilities certified as a QRTP earn the distinctive QRTP certification logo to brandish on their website and social media informing others of their unique status.

If you're a certified facility and would like logo permissions, please reach out to FamilyFirst@wisconsin.gov.

Save the Date! Spring Town Hall Meeting Schedule

The Town Halls will cover a variety of subjects related to the Strategic Transformation and Family First. Please send questions to FamilyFirst@wisconsin.gov.

If you would like to attend one of the meetings listed below and have not received information on it, or a zoom link, please contact FamilyFirst@wisconsin.gov for a link.

- Town Hall for Legal Partners and Directors | April 18, 2022
Held via Zoom | [Zoom invitation](#) Meeting ID: 826 9997 5194 Code: 741754 | 3:30 p.m. - 4:20 p.m.
- Town Hall for Tribal Child Welfare Agencies | April 19, 2022
Held via Zoom | [Zoom invitation](#) Meeting ID: 825 9316 9589 Code: 707470 | 2:00 p.m. - 2:50 p.m.
- Town Hall Meeting for CW Professionals | April 26, 2022
Held via Zoom | [Zoom invitation](#) Meeting ID: 862 4805 5176 Code: 427214 | 2:00 p.m. - 2:50 p.m.

For those who were not able to attend the most recent Fall Town Halls, you can view the recordings on the [Family First website](#).



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Communications Update

As transformation efforts continue, check the [transformation web page](#) for updates and additional resources. Articles within this newsletter are hyperlinked to the newest information available on the DCF Family First website.

Over the next few months, we will highlight some of the successes across the state around Family First efforts. The goal is to help with idea sharing since there are many agencies implementing Family First and initiatives in a variety of ways. Creativity is key!

If you have a good news story that you'd like to share, please send it to FamilyFirst@wisconsin.gov.

