

## Improving Child Welfare

Four projects focused on supporting the workforce and centering children, youth, and families.



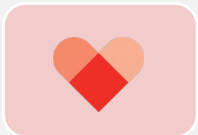
Initial Assessment Improvement Project



Safety Revisions



Quality Case Planning



Independent Living Project

# Initial Assessment Improvement Project (IAIP)

May-June 2024

## Elevating Good Social Work Practice

Child Protective Service (CPS) professionals understand the importance of effectively engaging and working with parents and caregivers. The CPS Access and Initial Assessment (IA) Standards are being updated in June 2024 to reflect practices that promote family engagement. Changes include:

- Clarifying that IA professionals can contact parents/caregivers before interviewing children. Practice should aim to begin with engaging parents/ caregivers, and CPS staff and supervisors are encouraged to use professional discretion to decide when it is necessary to interview children first, ahead of contacting the family.
- Providing information about the IA process to every family at the first point of contact. A DCF document will be available for agencies to use, if they do not currently have information that is regularly shared with parents/caregivers.
- Creating a statewide IA pathway that encourages family-first engagement and reflects best practices that are already happening. Elements of Alternative Response (AR) and Traditional Response practices along with Actuarial documentation have been incorporated into a single statewide pathway.

Local CPS agencies that were part of the Alternative Response (AR) pilot will continue to have the option to use the “Services Needed” or “Services Not Needed” determination. The AR addendum will be updated with new guidance for using the services needed/not needed determination.

## eWiSACWIS

The June release will remove redundancies and improve the workflow of the IA template. Other changes include:

- A new Safety Tab that prefills from the Safety Assessment and Plan.
- Selectable family conditions, individual characteristics, needs and strengths.
- New narrative boxes to document collaborative efforts with tribes, information about non-household parents, and the CPS response.

**IA changes  
are coming  
June 22,  
2024**

## Purpose

The primary goals of the IA improvements are to:

- 1) Streamline IA documentation and processes.
- 2) Center parents, caregivers, and family voice in the IA process.





## 2024 Timeline

- May 20** Trainings and support materials pushed out to supervisors; eWiSACWIS testing begins
- May 28** Training webinars pushed out to the existing workforce; eWiSACWIS release preview
- June 22** **Updated Access and Initial Assessment Standards; eWiSACWIS release\***
- June 26** Twice weekly post-launch support sessions offered for three weeks following the launch
- July 18** Weekly post-launch support sessions through the end of August

**\* Any IA that is created in eWiSACWIS before the launch will be completed in the old template. Any new IA that is initially created in eWiSACWIS after June 22 will use the new template.**

## Training and Post-Launch Support

To ensure IA professionals and supervisors are prepared:

- The Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System (PDS) will send supervisors two training webinars (one on eWiSACWIS changes, the other on standards changes) and a Supervisors Guide on May 20.
- Training webinars will be available to the existing workforce on May 28 and will be available online to review, as needed.
- PDS is updating Pre-Service, WiLearn, and other relevant trainings.
- The eWiSACWIS User Guide is being updated.
- DSP will provide an eWiSACWIS release preview on May 28, with an overview of the updates, a walkthrough of the workflows, and time for Q&A.
- DSP will hold a series of technical assistance sessions to provide post-launch support.
  - Sessions will be offered twice a week from the launch through mid-July.
  - One session per week will be offered from mid-July through the end of August.
  - Each session will cover a specific topic with time for discussion and questions. There will also be time for open Q&A related to the IA updates.

## Acknowledgements

The IAIP team incorporated input from stakeholders across the state, including IA and Ongoing CPS professionals and supervisors, tribal child welfare leadership, and parent leaders with child welfare experience. Workforce surveys, a Business Process Re-Engineering study, and a Continuous Quality Improvement Advisory IA subgroup consisting of local CPS agency professionals and leaders, the Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services, representatives from the Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System, and state staff also contributed to this work. We are grateful to these individuals for the time, effort, and expertise they have generously shared. Our work is better as a result.