



Putting

Families First

Putting Families First Newsletter | September 2022 | Issue 14

September is Kinship Care Month

September is Kinship Care Month! We recognize relatives, members of tribes and clans, and non-related extended family members who provide round the clock care and nurturance for their younger family members. Keeping children with relatives can help them maintain connections to family, community, and culture. In addition, children in kinship care generally have better mental and physical health, fewer behavior problems, higher levels of competence, higher levels of placement satisfaction, and better outcomes as adults.

Whether informally arranged among family members or formally supported by the child welfare system, it is essential to affirm and support the considerable contributions of kinship caregivers.

Thank you for all you do to support families and communities!

Mark Your Calendars – Fall Town Halls Are (Almost) Here!

Fall is here, and you know what that means—town halls! (And, yes, pumpkin spice lattes.) These town halls are part of our ongoing communication efforts to share important information about our child welfare strategic initiatives and the Putting Families First transformation.

Town Hall for Legal Partners | October 12, 2022 | 12:00 p.m. – 12:50 p.m.

- Held via Zoom | [Zoom invitation](#) | Meeting ID: 817 3196 6553 | Passcode: 357096



Putting

Families First

Town Hall for Child Welfare Professionals | October 13, 2022 | 10:00 a.m. – 10:50 a.m.

- Held via Zoom | [Zoom invitation](#) | Meeting ID: 880 9629 1486 | Passcode: 067348

For those who were not able to make the virtual spring town hall meeting, the recorded version is now [available in the Putting Families First Communication Toolbox](#). A PDF of the presentation is also available to review [here](#).

Can't make the fall session? No worries—the town hall will be recorded, and the recording and PDF will be published to the [Putting Families First Communication Toolbox](#). Questions about the town hall can be sent to FamilyFirst@wisconsin.gov.

Agency Spotlight

One way agencies are bringing innovation to their work is through community partnerships. We know a key part of Putting Families First is about supporting the workforce, and one way this happens is through building these connections with local partners. Several agencies are doing this by partnering with the University of Wisconsin – Green Bay (UWGB) to strengthen workforce recruitment and retention.

In partnership with the agencies, UWGB is developing new curriculum to encourage students to consider a career in child welfare.

This university is hoping to create and approve a Child Welfare Certificate for undergraduate students who are not majoring in social work. This certificate would provide students specialized social work education and training and open many career opportunities to them.

This partnership is also hoping to develop a child welfare-related seminar for first-year students. Introducing students to child welfare and social work early in their education will hopefully encourage them to consider a career in this field and continue the important work of Putting Families First.

In addition to education, this partnership is focused on strengthening outreach efforts. UWGB's social work program now has a Facebook page to highlight job openings, share promotional videos, and—hopefully—connect some folks to a career in child welfare.



Putting

Families First

These efforts highlight how crucial and impactful connections are between agencies and local partners. Because we know a key part of Putting Families First is ensuring that agencies have the support they need to do this important, transformational work.

We're always eager to recognize and celebrate good practice! If your agency would like to share how you're Putting Families First, please connect with us at FamilyFirst@wisconsin.gov.

Get Involved with Lived Experience!

In partnership with the Office of Children's Mental Health, DSP staff will host a fall Lunch and Learn series for counties to learn about the Lived Experience journey. Through these lunch and learns, individuals will gain a better understanding of why Lived Experience is so essential for system change and how we at DCF will continue to move towards expansion of the Lived Experience work.

We invite you to attend one of the lunch and learns to stay connected with the most current happenings around Lived Experience. Complete [this survey](#) to RSVP for a session.

If you're interested in learning more about Lived Experience, we encourage you to check out the [Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative](#) website to learn various strategies for engaging family voices in child welfare. Any questions relating to these sessions or lived experience can be sent to [Bregetta Wilson](#).

Child Welfare Professional Training Update

On September 15, an institute was held on the WiLearn training program at the Public Child Welfare Fall Conference at the Kalahari Resort and Convention Center in Wisconsin Dells. Participants learned about Wisconsin's changes to initial staff training and enhancements to the learning experience of our child welfare professionals. The Wisconsin Child Welfare Development System (WCWPDS) also showcased components of a WiLearn Toolkit that is being developed for individuals who directly provide support to new professionals during training.



Putting

Families First

Are you a child welfare supervisor, manager, or director? Do you have burning questions about the ins and outs of WiLearn? We want to hear from you!

In the coming months, DCF will periodically release information in preparation for the rollout of WiLearn on January 1, 2023. To prepare our county and agency partners for the changes to initial staff training, DCF will be holding three live information sessions. Participants can drop in for an open-ended question-and-answer session on all things related to WiLearn, including the learning components, delivery, and logistics.

WiLearn Information Session | October 10, 2022 | 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

- Held via Zoom | Zoom invitation ID: 896 3705 4412 Code: 067919

WiLearn Information Session | November 14, 2022 | 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

- Held via Zoom | Zoom invitation ID: 894 8867 9243 Code: 023653

WiLearn Information Session | December 12, 2022 | 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

- Held via Zoom | Zoom invitation ID: 894 2306 4758 Code: 410017

Unable to join us for a live WiLearn information session?

Submit your questions and comments to:

dcfmbchildwelfarewilearntraining@wisconsin.gov

WiLearn Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)—coming soon!

An FAQ document for quick access to common questions and answers is coming soon to our [WiLearn webpage](#).

Upcoming Events

We're almost at September's finish line, but there is still time to celebrate your and your colleagues' achievements, reflect on your work, and recharge for the year ahead this Workforce Development Month. The National Child Welfare Workforce Institute is hosting [celebration activities](#) through the end of the month, including webinars about leadership and building resiliency.

Fall town halls are just around the corner! For more information, check out our article on the first page of the newsletter.



Putting

Families First

Let's Keep in Touch!

Join our mailing list! Are you interested in receiving monthly Putting Families First updates? Click [here](#) to join our mailing list. A confirmation email will be sent to you, so be sure to check your email after you sign up! Any questions can be sent to FamilyFirst@wisconsin.gov.

Follow us on social media! Don't want to wait another month to hear how we're Putting Families First? Follow @WisDCF on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) to see updates, announcements, and more on your timeline.

Trivia

How Wisconsin are you? The first response back to the Family First email inbox will win a high-five mention in the next newsletter and have the chance to submit a themed question for our trivia section next month!

Q: Despite having a population of (roughly) 400 people, this Wisconsin village hosts the world's largest cranberry festival. What village is this?

High-five! The first correct response to the Family First inbox was received from Rachel Belanger, a Parent Partner with the Parents Supporting Parents Program in Rock County. She guessed Warrens, WI, which is correct!

Warrens Cranberry Festival receives [more than 120,000 visitors each year](#) and is being held this weekend, Sept. 23–25. So, if you need plans this weekend, you know what to do—and admission is **free!**

Thanks for participating! Here is the new trivia question:

Q: Many Wisconsinites support the Green Bay Packers, but real fans will know the answer to this question: Before they became the "green and gold," what were the team's original colors?

Your best guess can be sent to FamilyFirst@wisconsin.gov.