

Wendy's Wonderful Kids

MALORIE PETER, OUT OF HOME CARE PROGRAM MANAGER, CHILDREN'S WISCONSIN

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Wendy's Wonderful Kids

- WWK is a signature program of the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption (DTFA) specifically designed for children in out-of-home care
- Staff known as “Recruiters” are assigned to cases of youth who are determined to be most at risk of aging out of foster care without permanency
- Recruiters use an evidence-based, child-focused recruitment model in order to find permanency for every youth
- A rigorous, five-year national evaluation revealed that older youth and those with significant special needs referred to Wendy's Wonderful Kids are **up to 3x more likely to achieve legal permanency.**

Wendy's Wonderful Kids

- All Recruiter and Supervisors are trained in the evidence-based WWK Model by the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption
- Recruiters use a family-centered approach to engage relatives and like-kin connections of a youth/youth's family to create a network of informal support people. **Youth and family voice is a central component of this work.**
 - Physical and electronic file mining (Case Record Review)
 - Family Finding model
 - Tools and activities to engage the youth at every step of the process – Recruitment Plan every 90 days, Tree of Life, Mobility Mapping, Genogram, Three Houses, etc.
- Monthly face-to-face contact is required minimally for all active youth, as well as two-way reciprocal contact with the youth's case manager
- Active monthly monitoring of the program is conducted by DTFA to ensure fidelity to the model

Wendy's Wonderful Kids at Children's Wisconsin

- Children's has held the WWK grant for Wisconsin since 2010.
- Strong alignment with Family First, with a specific focus on restoring families and connections
- We provide child-focused permanency recruitment to the entire state, **at no cost to other counties or agencies**. Our funding streams includes grants, funding from the state budget and internal Children's program dollars.
- We focus on youth who are identified to be the most likely to age out of care, which include kids age 12+, children with significant special needs, children who have been in foster care for multiple years, children who have experienced multiple placements, and children who have been in foster care more than once.
- 42 youth identified as being on track to aging out of foster care found legal permanency through WWK

Wendy's Wonderful Kids at Children's Wisconsin

- 5 full-time permanency recruitment specialists, 1 full-time supervisor
- Counties currently served: Milwaukee, Portage, Fond du Lac, Walworth, Wood, Manitowoc, Polk & Racine
- Caseloads average 12-15 active youth
- As of May 2022, 59 youth open in the program
- 2 of the permanency recruitment specialists are currently designated for Milwaukee County youth only
- We have never had a youth re-enter foster care after achieving legal permanency with a matched family through WWK

Wendy's Wonderful Kids at Children's Wisconsin

- **Questions? Comments?**
- “Unacceptable” video: <https://www.davethomasfoundation.org/library/video-unadoptable-is-unacceptable/>
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