

Child Welfare and Program Definitions

Access means a component of the CPS casework process that involves the identification of possible child maltreatment and initiates the assessment of child safety and risk of maltreatment.

Adjudication means the determination by the court that a child is in need of protection or services. The court can withhold adjudication for one 90-day period and dismiss a case if both parents and child have complied with the terms of the agreement.

Adoption means the method provided under ss. 48.81 to 48.975, or if applicable, the laws of another state or jurisdiction, to establish the legal relationship of parent and child between persons who are not related by birth, with the same mutual rights and obligations that exist between children and their birth parents.

Adoption Assistance means assistance provided by the Department of Children and Families (DCF), as provided under ss. 48.975 and relevant administrative code, to the prospective parents of a child placed for adoption.

Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) collects case-level information from state and tribal title IV-E agencies on all children in foster care and those who have been adopted with title IV-E agency involvement. Title IV-E agencies are required to submit AFCARS data twice a year.

Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) PL 105-89 was signed into law on November 19, 1997. It focuses on balancing family preservation and family reunification with the safety of the children. ASFA sets timelines for reunification, the prominent one being that if a child is in out-of-home care for 15 of the past 22 months, a termination of parental rights must be filed or an exemption recorded for specific reasons as indicated in the law.

Adoption Exchange means an organization that contracts with the state to photo list all children available for adoption and needing an adoptive or foster/adopt home. If no placement is identified for the child within 90 days of listing or if the needs of the child require a unique home then the adoption exchange will list the child on the National Adoption Network.

Adoption Study is a written document that is presented to the court or other parties as the basis for approval or denial as a prospective adoptive parent. It involves several contacts between the family and the social worker, a visit to the family home and interviews with all family members, including the children. A family assessment must be completed by a representative of a licensed child placing agency or county social service agency.

Adoptive Placement means the placement of a child who is legally free for adoption in an approved prospective adoptive family which has been approved for placement with a signed adoptive placement agreement as required by s.48.64 (1m) Stats. or 48.833, Stats.

AdoptUSkids means an organization which contracts with the Federal Government to assist in finding homes for children available for adoption. This listing is done on a national level so that a larger number of potential resources can be identified.

Aging out means a child in foster care reaches the age of majority and is not longer eligible for services within the foster care system. This may be 18 or 19 if the child still in high school.

Allegation is an assertion that must be proved and supported with evidence.

Alternative Response is a two-track system of responding to reports of child abuse and neglect that allows DCF social workers and supervisors the flexibility to engage families in a way that is best suited to the needs of the family. Calls are screened in for a response due to the child being unsafe, however, the protocol for assessment varies in that the social worker will meet with the family unit rather than individuals. Cases may revert to a traditional response at anytime Cases involving physical abuse are not appropriate for Alternative Response.

Best Interests of the Child refers to the guiding principle of the child welfare statutes that the primary consideration in making decisions is what will serve the child's best interests. Best interests is not the legal standard for determining when child welfare authorities may intervene to protect a child. Child welfare authorities do not intervene in a family situation until there is demonstrated parental unfitness so as to justify and necessitate intervention. Best interests then guides the decisions made by the child welfare agencies and courts when dealing with a family who is in the system. For example, in Wisconsin, a termination of parental rights trial includes a hearing phase specifically focusing on what is in the child's best interests.

Child means a person who is under the age of 18, or is a person aged 18 years who came into the supervision of the agency when under the age of 18, remains under the jurisdiction of the court, and is enrolled full-time in a high school program or its vocational or technical equivalent and is expected to graduate or complete his or her course of study by age 19.

Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) is the key federal legislation addressing child abuse and neglect. The law sets forth a minimum definition of child abuse and neglect. CAPTA provides federal funding to states in support of prevention, assessment, investigation, prosecution, and treatment activities and also provides grants to public agencies and nonprofit organizations for demonstration programs and projects.

Child and Adolescent Needs Assessment (CANS) a comprehensive assessment of the needs of each child placed in out-of-home care. Wisconsin has chosen a comprehensive version of the CANS that provides and opportunity to assess a child's strengths and needs across several life domains. In addition to looking at the child, the Wisconsin version of the CANS assesses the child in relation to the current caregiver and the identified permanent resource. The information is used to inform placement decisions, to identify services that may need to be put into place, or to identify specific items that may need to be planned around.

Child Advocacy Centers are child-focused facilities for coordinating of investigations of child abuse cases. Those responsible for the assessment of the child and investigation of the circumstances (child welfare, police, specially trained medical staff) work together to minimize

trauma to the child and support the family. CACs are also a resource for physicians and other professionals on identification of injuries indicative of abuse/neglect.

Child and Family Services Review's Program Improvement Plan (PIP) means the Wisconsin response to the federal Children and Family Services review for the purpose of measuring child welfare program performance in the areas of safety, permanency and well-being.
<http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwreview/cfsr.htm>

Child Death and Serious Injury are defined as an incident in which a child has died or been placed in serious or critical condition, as determined by a physician, as a result of any suspected abuse or neglect or in which a child who has been placed outside the home by a court order is suspected to have committed suicide.

Child in Need of Protection or Services (CHIPS) means the legal proceeding available to individuals under age 18 who have been victims of parental/caregiver abuse or neglect that provides services to the family to ensure child safety.

Child Placing Agency (CPA) means a child welfare agency licensed under s. 48.60, Stats. and Ch.DCF 54, Adm. Code, to place children in out-of-home care.

Child Protection Center (CPC) is the name of the Child Advocacy Center operated for Milwaukee County by Children's Hospital and Health Services. It provides physical assessments of children who are victims of alleged abuse or neglect. It also provides health screenings for children entering out-of-home care.

Child Protective Services or CPS means specialized services provided to families, which are designed to control for the safety of children who have been maltreated or who are at risk of maltreatment, to ameliorate the effects of maltreatment, and to alter the conditions that create the risk of child maltreatment.

Child Welfare refers to the set of services designed to protect children and young people who are underage and to encourage family stability. These typically include foster care, adoption services, services aimed at supporting at-risk families so they can remain intact, and investigation of alleged child abuse.

Children and Family Services Review (CFSR) enable the US Dept. of Health and Human Services Children's Bureau to ensure conformity with federal child welfare requirements, to gauge the experiences of children, youth, and families receiving state child welfare services, and to assist states as they enhance their capacity to help families achieve positive outcomes.

Children's Long-Term Support Waiver or CLTS means providing funding to support children with disabilities who have long-term support needs at home and in the community. Funding can be used to support a range of different services that are selected on the basis of an individualized assessment of the child and his or her needs.

Citizen Review Panel refers to a group of volunteer citizens that examines how effectively local welfare agencies are discharging their child protection responsibilities by reviewing reports,

documents, policies and procedures and by conducting interviews and observing what works well and recommending what needs to be improved to make sure children are safe from abuse and neglect.

Community and Neighborhood-Based Services means services which are advanced from and within local resources; such services rely upon locally designed and implemented, deliberate and structured arrangements at the service site or other local level among public and private agencies, both informal and formal; services are designed for the purpose of responding more immediately and flexibly to family needs in order to improve the safety, health, functioning, success, and overall well-being of children and families.

Comprehensive Assessment in child welfare refers to assessing family functioning in relationship to the report of child abuse/neglect rather than only the incident that led to the report.

Concurrent Planning means an approach to permanency planning for children placed in foster care which involves a dual focus throughout the care episode to allow timely movement towards termination of parental rights and adoption if reunification is not accomplished promptly.

Consortium means an agreement, combination, or group of agencies formed to submit a proposal in response to this RFP as the vendor, including a designated lead agency and fiscal agent.

Consultation means responsibilities will support the quality and timeliness of permanency by developing and maintaining supportive, informative working relationships with local child welfare agency staff, court representatives, service providers, and families.

Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), is a community volunteer appointed by the judge to speak on behalf of a child on a CHIPS order. In Milwaukee, the CASA program is administered by Kids Matter, Inc., which provides extensive training and guidance to the advocates.

Crisis Response Team (CRT) refers to the BMCW unit that takes calls and responds to emergencies between the hours of 4:30 p.m. and midnight.

Custody refers to the legal relationship of the child and caregiver. A caregiver with legal custody is able to make decisions for the child, such as medical decisions, educational decisions, living arrangements, etc. Physical custody refers to where the child actually lives, eats, and sleeps.

Egregious Incident is defined as an incident of suspected abuse or neglect involving significant violence, torture, multiple victims, the use of inappropriate or cruel restraints, exposure of a child to a dangerous situation, or other similar, aggravated circumstances.

eWISACWIS means Wisconsin's automated child welfare database and case management system.

Expedited TPR (Fast Track) means the termination of parental rights process within a shortened period of time.

Families in Need of Supportive Services (FISS) program means providing assessment and intervention services for adolescents and their families to assist them in avoiding unnecessary juvenile court involvement.

Family means a group of individuals who share common life experience and form connections with one another and defines itself as a family. Family may include a child and his or her biological, adoptive, or temporary foster parents, plus siblings, extended family, significant others and any other blood and in-law relatives as defined by the family.

Family Assessment means a component of the CPS casework process in which the ongoing caseworker engages the family in a study and analysis of concerns contributing to safety in order to arrive at a case plan that will reduce the risk of maltreatment and eliminates the threat to safety or controls for safety. The caseworker must make attempts to engage the family. To the greatest extent possible, the assessment should reflect the judgments of the family and caseworker together.

Family-Based Services means the assessment, treatment, and case management services which 1) have a family focus and consider the family as a unit; 2) use an ecological or systems theory approach to service delivery; 3) are committed to family preservation unless child safety cannot be assured; 4) are community and home-based; 5) are predicated on a close working partnership with the family; and 6) are committed to empowering families, instilling hope, and helping families to set and achieve their own priorities and goals.

Family Case Manager/Ongoing Case Manager (FCM/OCM) refers to staff assigned to families receiving services under a Child in Need of Protection and Services (CHIPS) order.

Family Interaction means the interpersonal dynamics of the members of a family in a variety of environments and activities.

Family-Managed Safety Planning means the process of moving the family toward self management of the child safety factors. There are three phases of family-managed safety planning: control, family stabilization and self-management.

Family Teaming means a planning process that brings people together to help families care for their children and make families stronger. On a volunteer basis, a family works with a case manager to choose people in the family's life to form a team. The case manager helps the family work with their team to develop and take action on a family plan.

Fit and Willing Relative means a fit and willing relative is a relative of the child who successfully completes a background check under s. 48.685, who has expressed a willingness to provide care for the child until the child is 18 years of age, and who has the capacity to provide for the child until the child's 18th birthday.

Foster home means any facility operated by a person required to be licensed under

s. 48.62(1)(a), Stats., and Ch. HFS 56, Adm. Code, in which care and maintenance are provided for no more than 4 foster children or up to 6 in the case of foster children who are siblings.

Foster Home Conversion means the adoption of a child by a family that served as the foster family of the child before the child was freed for adoption, and that was subsequently selected as the best potential adoptive placement.

Foster parent means a person licensed under s. 48.62(1)(a) or (b), Stats., and Ch. DCF 56, Adm. Code, with primary responsibility for the care and supervision of foster children placed in his or her home, or a parent in a family-operated group home licensed under s.48.625, Stats., and Ch. DCF 57, Adm. Code.

Guardian ad Litem (GAL) is the attorney for a child under the age of 12.

Guardianship is a legal relationship between the child and caregiver. The guardian has the right to make decisions regarding the child's care, including medical decisions and decisions related to mental health treatment.

Impending Danger means a foreseeable state of danger in which family behaviors, attitudes, motives, emotions and/or situations pose a threat which may not be currently active, but can be anticipated to have severe effects on a child at any time in the near future and requires safety intervention. The danger may not be obvious at the onset of CPS intervention or occurring in a present context, but can be identified and understood upon more fully evaluating individual and family conditions and functioning.

Independent Living means the transitional necessary services, supports and opportunities provided to assist youth in transition when leaving out-of-home care to independent living in order to maximize their ability to become self-sufficient, productive, and healthy adults.

Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) refers to a federal law passed in 1978 that guides states in their process for placement of an Indian child that is in their custody. This act was passed in response to the alarmingly high rate of Indian children being removed from their homes unnecessarily. It requires that states seek placement for the child with that child's family, tribe, and other American Indian homes before looking elsewhere. It generally does not apply to divorce proceedings, intrafamily disputes, juvenile delinquency cases, or cases under tribal court jurisdiction.

Informal Disposition Agreement means a written agreement between a court intake worker, a child (age 12 or older), the parent(s)/guardian/legal custodian of a child, or, an expectant mother who is alleged to have been abused and/or neglected. In the case of an expectant mother, it is the unborn child who is alleged to be in need of protection or services. The purpose of the agreement is to defer the filing of a CHIPS petition while services and supervision are provided to the child, expectant mother and his/her family.

Initial Assessment means a component of the CPS casework process that involves problem validation, initiates service provision, and begins the establishment of a working relationship between CPS and the family.

Intensive In-Home Case Management consists of specialized services utilized following the completion of an analysis of child safety and intended for the sole purpose of controlling for safety, stabilizing the family, and assisting the family in developing linkages to informal, formal, and natural supports in order to safely care for children in the home without further child protective or safety services program involvement.

Intensive In-Home Services Program means an approach that diverts families from out-of-home care placements. The program provides short-term (usually 3 to 6 months), concentrated, in-home services to families in the child protective services (CPS) system so that they may remain safely together, averting the need for court intervention and placement of their child(ren), whenever possible.

Intensive In-Home Specialist is the case manager responsible for engaging families to ensure child safety and family stability, and for developing and coordinating connections to formal and informal supports within the community in order to safely care for children in the home without further child protective services involvement.

Intensive In-Home Services Providers are professionals, paraprofessionals, and volunteers of the intensive in-home lead agency and/or organizations or programs with whom the lead agency has developed sub-contractual or other formal arrangements to deliver specific safety services to children and families in their own homes or other natural setting.

Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) refers to agreements between states to ensure the safe placement of children in out-of-home care when the case is in the court of one state and children are placed in another.

Jeanine B. Settlement Agreement means the outcomes and goals specified in the lawsuit settlement between Jeanine B., by her next friend Robert Blondis, et al., and the State of Wisconsin that are included in this Contract by reference.

<http://DCF.wisconsin.gov/bmcw/progserv/AboutBMCW/generalinfo/Settlementdescription.htm>

Juvenile in Need of Protection and Services (JIPS) In Wisconsin, the Court has jurisdiction over juveniles (age 12-18) alleged to be in need of protection or services. The following are situations where JIPS orders may apply:

- Uncontrollable - The juvenile's parent or guardian signs the petition requesting jurisdiction because they are unable to control the juvenile.
- Habitually truant from school and efforts to remedy the problem have failed.
- School dropout.
- Habitually truant from home. The parent/caregiver requests the Court take jurisdiction and attests that reconciliation efforts have been attempted and failed.
- Delinquent act before age 10. The juvenile is under 10 years of age and has committed a delinquent act.
- Not responsible or not competent. The juvenile has been determined to be not responsible for a delinquent act by reason of mental disease or defect.

Kinship Care means a program designed to support a child financially who resides out of his or her home either temporarily or long term with a relative. Placement of the child may be

voluntary or by court-order. The Kinship Care Program is described under S.48.57(3m) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Legal Guardianship means a judicially created relationship between child and caretaker, which is intended to be permanent and self-sustaining as evidenced by the transfer to the caretaker of the following parental rights with respect to the child: protection, education, care, and control of the person, custody of the person, and decision-making. The term legal guardian means the caretaker in such a relationship.

Legal Risk Placement means a foster care placement of a child who is not yet legally free for adoption. The child welfare agency has established a permanency plan of termination of parental rights for adoption. The foster is approved as an adoptive family, the family is aware of the legal risks and the family currently states a willingness to adopt the child if the child is freed for adoption. A legal risk placement cannot be an adoptive placement unless the legal risk is an appeal of a completed termination of parental rights.

Maltreatment means the negative physical, emotional, or sexual treatment of a child in such a manner that the child's emotional, cognitive, or physical development is or will be impaired. Physical and sexual abuse and emotional damage are defined at s. 48.02(1), Stats., and neglect is defined at s. 48.981(1)(d), Stats.

Mandated Reporter refers to a group of individuals identified in law that are required to report suspected abuse and neglect to a child protection agency. This includes all school personnel, medical professionals, clergy, day care providers, and others who have frequent contact with children.

Medical Home refers to a family-centered care team that works in partnership with a patient to assure that all of the medical needs of the patient are met.

Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT), a group of professionals and paraprofessionals representing an array of disciplines (e.g., medical experts, service providers, law enforcement, juvenile courts and other community organizations) who interact and coordinate efforts with parents and families, pooling their skills to offer comprehensive, coordinated services.

Nurse Family Engagement Program means the provision of health care coordination and periodic in-home health supervision by experienced registered nurses.

Ongoing Caseworker means a staff person who actively regulates assistance provided to children and families. As part of child protective services case management, the ongoing caseworker directs the child protective service case process including the continuous assessment of child safety, development of plans and use of services to ensure child safety, completion of a family assessment, development of a case plan, coordination of treatment services, evaluation of case progress, and movement toward case closure.

Out-of-Home Care (OHC) means care provided to a child removed from his or her home; this care could be provided through a relative, a foster home, shelter care, a group home, or a residential care center for children and youth.

Outcome means a positive result or change in behavior, emotion, cognition, role performance, interactions of family members, or environmental circumstances which, when achieved, reduces the risk of maltreatment.

Parent or Caregiver Protective Capacities refers to personal and parenting behavioral, cognitive, and emotional characteristics that can specifically and directly be associated with a person being protective of his or her child. A protective capacity is a specific quality that can be observed, understood and demonstrated as a part of the way a parent thinks, feels, and acts that makes her or him protective.

Partnership Council means a group of representatives who are responsible for providing program and policy suggestions, recommending evaluation measures, funding opportunities and priorities, systems coordination and capacity building. The formation of this council and its composition are described in statute established under 1995 Wisconsin Act 303.

Permanence Goals means the desired outcome of intervention and service that is consistent with the health, safety, well-being, and best interest of the child.

Permanency Consultation means an approach to permanency planning, ensuring prompt, safe, quality permanence outcomes for children who are placed in out-of-home care.

Permanency Options include reunification with birth parents, adoption, transfer of guardianship and subsidized guardianship.

Permanency Plan means a specific plan for a child placed outside of his or her home, required under s. 48.38, Stats., for promptly reuniting a child with his or her family or arranging for a permanent home.

Permanency Planning means exploring all options for permanence beginning at the point a child enters out-of-home care and continues throughout the life of the case to allow for expedited and safe permanence.

Present Danger Threats means immediate, significant and clearly observable family condition that is actively occurring or in process of occurring at the point of contact with a family and will likely result in severe harm to a child.

Protective Plan means an immediate, short term action that protects a child from present danger threats in order to allow completion of the initial assessment/investigation and if needed, implement a safety plan.

Reunification means a safety decision to modify an out-of-home safety plan to an in-home safety plan based on an analysis that a) impending danger threats can be controlled; b) parent/caregiver protective capacities have been sufficiently enhanced; and c) parent/caregivers are willing and able to accept an in-home safety plan.

Safe Haven means 2005 Wisconsin Act 293 by which a parent can relinquish custody of child up to 72 hours after birth.

Safe Home means the required safety intervention outcome that must be achieved in order for a case that involves an unsafe child to be successfully closed. A safe home is a qualified environment and living circumstance that once established can be judged to assure a child's safety and provide a permanent living arrangement. A safe home is qualified by the absence or reduction of threats of severe harm; the presence of sufficient parent or caregiver protective capacities; and confidence in consistency and endurance of the conditions that produced the safe home. The term safe home is used in the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) as the objective of CPS intervention.

Safety means the absence of present or impending danger to a child or routinely demonstrated parent or caregiver protective capacities to assure that a child is protected from danger.

Safety Analysis means an examination of safety intervention information; impending danger threats as identified by the safety assessment; and parent/caregiver protective capacities.

Safety Assessment means the identification and focused evaluation of impending danger threats as part of the initial CPS intervention and continues throughout the life of the case.

Safety Intervention means all the actions and decisions required throughout the life of a case to a) assure that an unsafe child is protected; b) expend sufficient efforts necessary to support and facilitate a child's parents/caregivers taking responsibility for the child's protection; and c) achieve the establishment of a safe, permanent home for the unsafe child. Safety intervention consists of identifying and assessing threats to child safety; planning and establishing safety plans that assure child safety; managing safety plans that assure child safety; and creating and implementing case plans that enhance the capacity of parents/caregivers to provide protection for their children.

Service Provider Network means a community-based system of service providers identified by the Contractor to provide treatment services designed to ameliorate the need for CPS involvement.

Severe Harm means detrimental effects consistent with serious or significant injury; disablement; grave/debilitating physical health or physical conditions; acute/grievous suffering; terror; impairment; even death.

Subsidized Guardianship means transfer of legal responsibility for a minor child to a relative who is licensed as a foster parent and is provided a monthly subsidy payment for the care and support of the child. The transfer of legal responsibility removes the child from the child welfare system, allows the relative to make important decisions on the child's behalf, and creates a long-term permanency option for the child.

Sustaining Care means a legal contractual relationship established by a court. DCF maintains guardianship, the county is granted custody and the court grants certain rights and responsibilities, subject to the authority and responsibilities of the guardian and legal custodian, to a licensed foster parent or kinship care relative following the termination of the parental rights of the parents of the child. The court further determines that the child is unlikely to be adopted or that adoption is not in the best interest of the child.

Temporary Physical Custody (TPC) means removing a child from the parent/caregiver to ensure safety. The Court must grant authority for a CPS agent to take TPC.

Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) means a court procedure which ends the parental rights of one or both parents of a child, informs the birth parent(s) of the adoption records provisions of the statutes and, if the rights of both parents are terminated, transfers guardianship and custody of the child.

Threat to Child Safety means specific conditions, behavior, emotion, perceptions, attitudes, intent, actions or situations within a family that represent the potential for severe harm to a child. A threat to child safety may be classified as present danger threats or impending danger threats.

Title IV-E a federal program that subsidizes the cost of children in foster care, including foster care payments, administration costs, and some training.

Treatment Foster Care (TFC) refers to advanced training and licensing for foster parents in managing medical or behavioral health challenges.

Treatment Services means specialized services identified in the assessment utilized to address the core conditions causing risk of maltreatment. Treatment services are intended to achieve the outcomes identified in the case plan, to alleviate core conditions warranting CPS intervention, and to ameliorate any effects resulting from maltreatment.

Unsafe means the presence of present or impending danger to a child and insufficient parent or caregiver protective capacities to assure that a child is protected.

Wraparound means an individualized, empowerment approach to service delivery emphasizing community, family, and strength based service approaches that are flexible, categorically unconditional, and culturally competent, and which rely on measurable objectives.

Related Acronyms

ADA – Assistant District Attorney

AWOL - Absent without Leave, referring to youth who run away from placement.

BMCW - Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare.

CARES – Client Assistance, Re-employment, Economic Support database indicating public benefits the family receives, such as W-2, food stamps, etc.

CHWCS – Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin Community Services, a BMCW contracted agency

DCF- Department of Children and Families

DOC – Department of Corrections

DPI – Department of Public Instruction

DSP – Division of Safety and Permanence

DV – Domestic Violence

IFS – Integrated Family Services, a BMCW contracted agency

IEP – Individualized Education Plan

KIDS – Kids Information Data System

ME – Medical examiner

MPD – Milwaukee Police Department

MPS – Milwaukee Public Schools

PD – Public defender

PP – Parole officer

SSI – Supplemental Security Income (disability related)

Title 19/MA – Medical care coverage, BadgerCare

WIC – Women, Infant, and Children program providing pre- and post-natal care.

W-2 – Wisconsin Works, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program