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Recognizing Family Strengthening Month

State and local agencies continue to build strong and thriving communities

MADISON – Child abuse and neglect are pervasive – yet preventable – issues affecting communities across Wisconsin. To raise awareness and acknowledge the collective efforts of families, caregivers, communities, and agencies preventing child maltreatment, Governor Tony Evers has [proclaimed](#) April as Family Strengthening Month.

“Every child deserves to grow up in a safe, stable, and nurturing environment,” said Department of Children and Families (DCF) Secretary Emilie Amundson. “To achieve this, we need to ensure that every family has the necessary supports needed to thrive. That is why DCF and its state, county, tribal, and community partners have been working to transform our child welfare system into one that uplifts and empowers families.”

Over the last decade, bi-partisan support for child welfare reform has increased as research continues to show that children and families who are supported together have stronger outcomes. This support led to the passing of the [Family First Prevention Services Act](#) (FFPSA) in 2018, which shifts the way federal government allocates funds to the child welfare system – putting more emphasis on building preventive programs and services that keep children and families connected and in home-like settings whenever possible.

One of the ways in which the state is helping reduce child maltreatment and keep more families connected within their homes is through the Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services (DMCPS) new Stronger Families Milwaukee program, which launched April 1, 2022. The family-centered, strength-based program uses a combination of case management services and peer support to assist families in finding local supports that fit their needs and help them thrive in-home.

“We appreciate Community Advocates for agreeing to serve as the lead agency on this program, as well as Neu-Life Community Development and The Parenting Network for their support,” said Sarah Henery, DMCPS administrator. “We are extremely excited about this partnership and look forward to helping strengthen families, so every child has a bright future.”

The Stronger Families Milwaukee program is just one of the [many strategies](#) to reduce child abuse and neglect that succeed due to cross-agency partnerships. DCF works alongside the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board (Prevention Board) to recognize the importance of these relationships and to lift up local efforts. Through a competitive grant process, the Prevention Board awards more than \$2 million each year to support community-based primary prevention services that further strategies outlined in their [strategic plan](#).

“All families face challenges, especially during a global pandemic,’ said Rebecca Murray, executive director of the Prevention Board. “Families also have strengths that they can draw upon during difficult times and it’s important for parents to know that it is okay to ask for help.”

Families who are in need of support are encouraged to contact their local [Family Resource Center](#), call [2-1-1 Wisconsin](#), or visit the Prevention Board’s Five for Families [website](#).

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