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Governor Scott Walker
Secretary Eloise Anderson

Secretary's Office

February 5, 2016

Linda Davis
Chairperson
Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership Council
127 East Trillium Court
Thiensville, WI 53092-6100

Dear Ms. Davis,

Thank you for your submission of the Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership Council annual report which was transmitted on January 5. I value the views of the Partnership Council.

I have reviewed your annual report and commend the Partnership Council on another active and productive year. I concur with the recommendations in the report; as described below the Department of Children and Families (DCF) has implemented or is in the process of implementing all of the recommendations:

- All recommendations from critical incident reviews in 2015 have been implemented.
- The DCF is committed to expanding services to sex trafficking victims, many of whom run from placement. DCF, in collaboration with the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ), established in the fall of 2015 a state-wide human trafficking task force, co-chaired by DCF and DOJ and composed of a broad range of stakeholders. The purpose of the Task Force is to develop a cross-system, coordinated, comprehensive, trauma-informed culturally competent victim-centered approach to serving minor victims of sex trafficking. The Task Force will oversee five workgroups, one of which is focused on Placement and Services.
- The DCF concurs with the importance of monitoring and strengthening staff recruitment and retention rates. In the past year, the following measures have been undertaken to advance this goal: (a) recruitments for Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services (DMCPS) Initial Assessment Staff are being undertaken at a more frequent basis of every 2 months; (b) reimbursement for on-call hours was increased; and (c) Case Aides and student interns continue to be used to relieve Initial Assessment staff of the more routine tasks.
- In collaboration with the Department of Health Services, DCF will continue to monitor the Care4Kids program through the quarterly and annual performance metrics established for the program. We are pleased that this program provides the opportunity to strengthen the quality, coordination, access, and timeliness of health care services for children in out-of-home care.
- Consistent with the Partnership Council recommendation, DCF will be monitoring the outcomes of the new policy, which became effective in August 2014, of extending out-of-home care for certain youth until age 21. We are hopeful that this new policy will help vulnerable foster youth achieve improved educational, employment, housing, and socio-economic outcomes.

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I also support the Partnership Council's plan to focus on the following issues in 2016, as these are all critical issues to maintaining a robust child welfare system: diversity hiring, security training, conversion to a Division, and enrollment of out-of-home children in Head Start/Early Head Start programs. With respect to the last item, I thank you for your personal commitment and leadership in facilitating discussions among DMCPs and Head Start programs to develop stronger referral and linkages between the Milwaukee child welfare system and Head Start programs.

I thank you and all members of the Partnership Council for your work this past year and for your continued interest and dedication to improving the lives of vulnerable children and families in the Milwaukee community.

Sincerely,



Eloise Anderson
Secretary