The Department of Children and Families is an equal opportunity employer and service provider. If you have a disability and need to access services, receive information in an alternate format, or need information translated to another language, please call (608) 266-8787. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind or speech disabled can use the free Wisconsin Relay Service (WRS) – 711 to contact the department.
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WELCOME TO FOSTER PARENTING IN WISCONSIN

This handbook is intended to give basic information about foster care in Wisconsin to newly-licensed foster parents and to serve as a refresher for experienced foster parents. In it, foster parents will find an overview of the foster care program, information about what is expected of foster parents, a discussion about the care of children in foster care, an explanation of the critical need to work cooperatively with birth families, and an emphasis on the importance of foster family self-care. This handbook also provides additional tools and resource lists if foster parents want to learn more about a specific topic.

It is important to understand that this handbook is not intended to replace Wisconsin foster parent licensing requirements included in state statutes, Ch. DCF 56, Adm. Code, “Foster Home Care for Children.” Foster families should always consult the State of Wisconsin’s licensing rules for specific information about licensing standards. Appendix 2 in Section 6 of this Handbook contains a web link to access Ch. DCF 56, Adm. Code, if foster parents want to review licensing requirements.

Also, it is important to know that each licensing agency has the authority to create policies that outline additional requirements beyond the State’s minimum standards. In addition, tribes have the authority to establish tribe-specific standards for licensing foster homes. Because licensing agencies have this flexibility, foster care services might look a little different from agency to agency, tribe to tribe, or county to county. It is always a good idea for foster parents to first check with their licensing agency if they have a question about something.

We have an immense appreciation for all that foster families do. The hard work and commitment they provide do not go unnoticed. In fact, we all know that without dedicated and caring foster parents, the foster care program in Wisconsin could not provide the safety and stability that the children who come into care need so much.

Thank you for providing hope, guidance, and assistance to Wisconsin’s children and families!
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