



## Agency Overview

### Agency Description

The Secretary administers the department with the assistance of an appointed Deputy Secretary, Assistant Deputy Secretary, and Administrators for the department's divisions. Key program areas for the department include: child welfare, child support, work programs, refugee resettlement, early childhood education/child care, home visiting, and domestic abuse services.

### Department of Children and Families Vision and Priorities

Our department's vision is that all Wisconsin children and youth are safe and loved members of thriving families and communities. To reach our goal, we are focused on reducing racial and ethnic disparities in our programs and services, focusing on five key priorities:

- Systematically increasing access to quality early care and education programs that support the needs of children and families statewide;
- Putting families in the center of successful child support and good-paying jobs programs;
- Safely transforming the child welfare and youth justice system to dramatically increase the proportion of children supported in their homes and communities;
- Dedicating additional resources to support vulnerable and historically underserved youth, specifically teenage girls, kids with complex care needs, and youth transitioning out of the foster care system;
- Fostering a workplace where agency staff feel engaged, valued, and connected to our vision

### Division of Early Care and Education (DECE)

The DECE has five bureaus whose purposes are to increase access to affordable, high-quality early care and education programs that meet the needs of all Wisconsin children and families.

Activities include:

- Licensing and Certification – regulation and monitoring of child care programs
- Wisconsin Shares – overseeing the child care subsidy program, program integrity, and administration in Milwaukee County
- Quality ECE Programming – managing YoungStar and child care quality rating and improvement system activities
- ECE Workforce – overseeing initiatives related to recruitment and retention for ECE programs
- Leading the Head Start State Collaboration Office

### Division of Family and Economic Security (DFES)

The DFES has four bureaus whose mission is to ensure families and individuals achieve financial and social stability.

The Division oversees the following programs:

- Wisconsin Works (W-2)
- Transform Milwaukee Jobs and Transitional Jobs
- Emergency Assistance
- Community Services Block Grant Funding

- Refugee Programs
- Child Support
- Skills Enhancement Grants
- Job Access Loans
- Jobs for America's Graduates Program

### **Division of Management Services (DMS)**

The DMS is responsible for providing the administrative support services including the following key functions:

- Finance
- Information Technology
- Strategic Agency Programs
- Area Administration
- Agency Operations
- Continuity of Operations (COOP).

### **Division of Milwaukee Child Welfare (DMCW) formerly DMCP**

The DMCW has responsibility for providing child protection functions in Milwaukee County. DMCW's vision is for safe children and healthy families in Milwaukee County. DMCW provides direct services to families and children in Milwaukee County by receiving and responding to calls of child abuse and neglect, evaluating the safety of children in their homes, and taking measures to control for safety as needed.

The division also contracts with external organizations and community care providers including Children's Wisconsin, WellPoint Care Network, and Milwaukee County to provide child welfare services to families in need of formal safety intervention and services. DMCW has funding for some family services outside of the formal child protective services system including voluntary kinship support and limited outside services for families who are struggling but do not require CPS interventions.

### **Division of Safety and Permanence (DSP)**

The DSP has oversight responsibility for Wisconsin's child welfare system, which includes child protective services (CPS), community-based youth justice, and out-of-home care. DSP efforts are guided by the division's strategic priority, Putting Families First, which is Wisconsin's shift to transform the child welfare system to be more family-focused and collaborative in supporting more children and families in-home.

This effort has three transformation strategies:

- Empowering local child welfare agencies to support families in their homes by reducing barriers and providing tools and resources.
- Keeping children and youth in family settings whenever possible.
- Supporting the child welfare workforce with solutions and improvements.

A brief video overview of this effort can be found here: [Putting Families First Wisconsin's Child Welfare System Transformation - YouTube](#)

Wisconsin's child welfare system is state-supervised and county-administered, except for Milwaukee County, where the state runs child welfare through the Division of Milwaukee Child Welfare. The youth justice system is county-administered throughout the state.