



# Wisconsin Department of Children and Families

## 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 include: child welfare, child support, child care, 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 Management Services (DMS)

The DMS is responsible for providing the administrative support services including the following key functions: Budget, Finance, Information Technology, Performance Management and Regional Operations, Agency Operations, Continuity of Operations (COOP).

## **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

## **Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services (DMCPS)**

The DMCPS has responsibility for providing child protection functions in Milwaukee County. DMCPS' vision is safe children and healthy families in Milwaukee County. DMCPS 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. The Division also 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 the program responsibility to oversee the statewide child welfare system and the youth justice system. DSP efforts are guided by the following vision and priorities.

Putting Families First Vision: All children and youth are safe and loved members of thriving families and communities.

This effort has three key priorities

- To strengthen local communities + build services to support families in their homes.
- To keep children in family settings whenever possible.
- To support 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](#)

The child welfare system in Wisconsin is county-administered, with the exception of Milwaukee County where the state runs child welfare through the Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services (DMCPS). The youth justice system is county-administered throughout the state.