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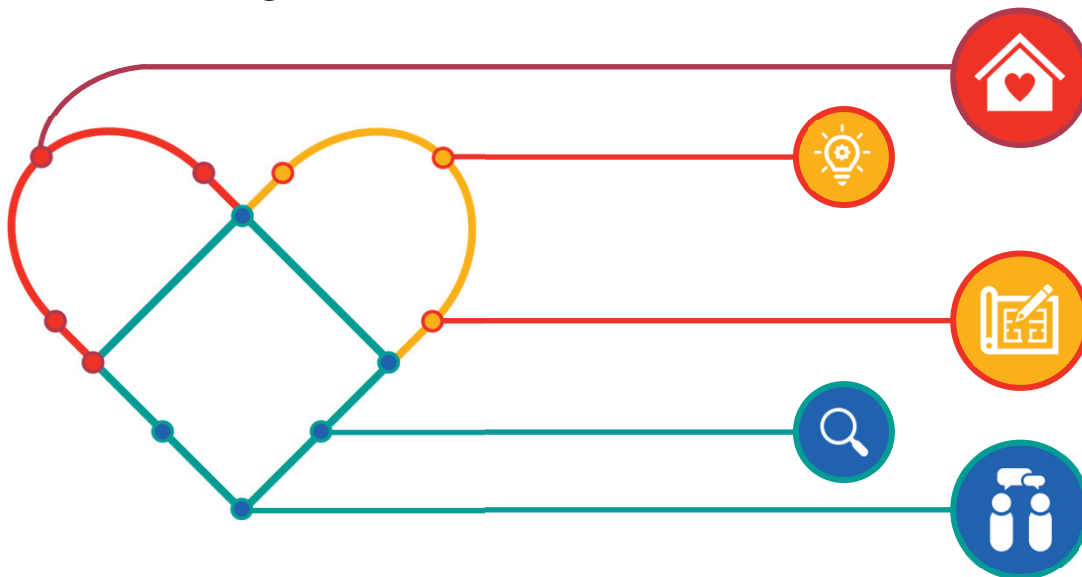


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**We strive for justice in the
child welfare system
through addressing
systemic oppression,
inequity and racism.**

3

Connecting the dots . . .



4

KADD0

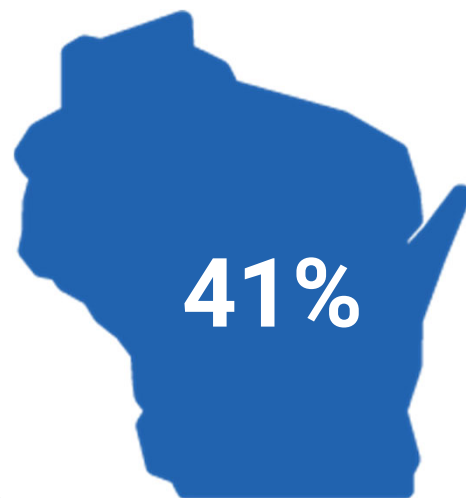
**Wisconsin is
transforming.**



5

In the first half of 2024 . . .

Of all the children who entered out-of-home care, **41% were initially placed with relatives.**



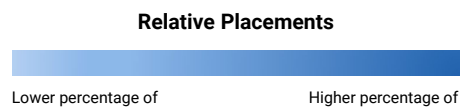
Source: Child Welfare Implementation Support Metrics Report (CM22X102)

6

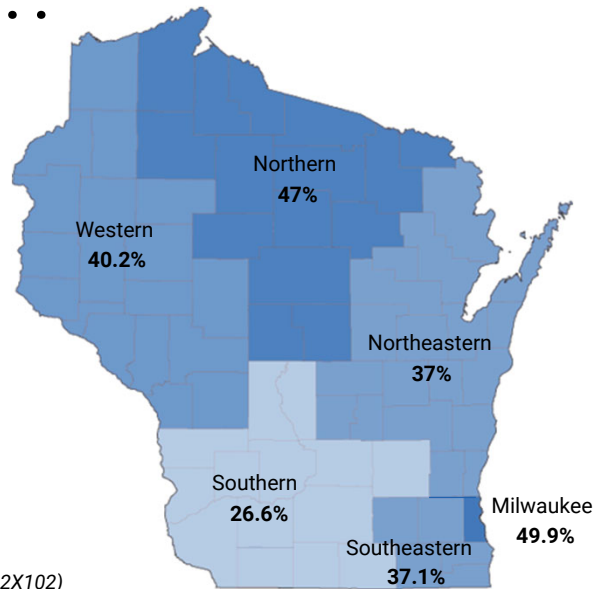
KADD0 What have we done, why is that important, where are we going,
Jeff on values, John is on substance
Krueger, Angela D - DCF, 2024-09-16T13:38:15.997

In the first half of 2024 . . .

Initial placement with relatives By region



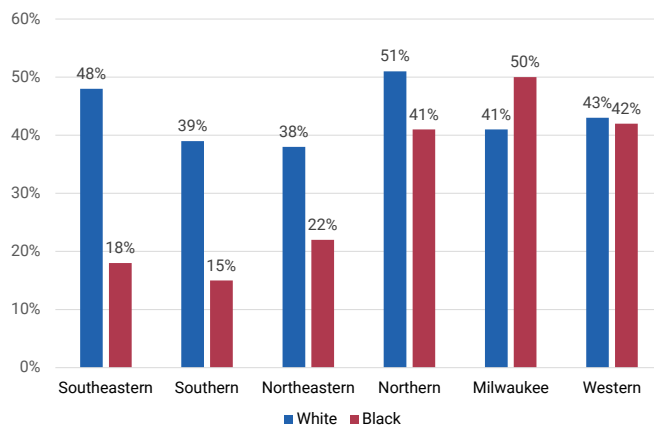
Source: Child Welfare Implementation Support Metrics Report (CM22X102)



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In the first half of 2024 . . .

Disparity in initial placement with relatives By region



Reading the chart:

In the Southeastern region, the percentage of white children initially placed with relatives was **48%**.

For Black children, this number was **18%**.

Source: Child Welfare Implementation Support Metrics Report (CM22X102)

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● **Keeping children in family settings whenever possible.**

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Like-kin legislation

Supporting families by supporting their people



2023 Wisconsin Act 119 has two impact areas in child welfare:

1. Placement with a like-kin caregiver.
2. Financial support through the Kinship Care benefit program (DCF 58).

Next step:

- Establishing a pathway for a January 1, 2025 implementation.



Photo courtesy of the office of Representative Dave Considine.

 Informational resource available here: dcf.wisconsin.gov/family-first/toolbox.

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Keeping the family together

Christopher – Connor's father – took placement of Connor's half-sibling.

Under previous law, Christopher was not eligible for kinship payments. This caused significant financial hardships for Christopher and the children, and while the child welfare agency assisted him when able, these periods of relief were brief and inconsistent.

Now, caregivers like Christopher will be eligible for kinship support.

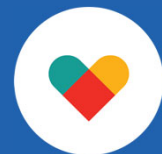
This means more families across Wisconsin will have an opportunity to stay together, to see siblings able to grow up alongside each other, and to experience stability.



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Chapter 56 Revisions

Foster Care Licensing Rule



Opportunity to **update and align** with federal model standards:

- Removing requirements that are no longer relevant.
- Clarifying the rules (reducing annotations).
- Making it possible for more families to be licensed appropriately to their needs.

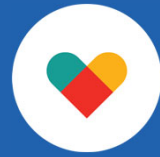


Agency authority over placement decisions and safety-related rule requirements will not be changing.

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Chapter 56 Revisions

Foster Care Licensing Rule



Relative and like-kin standard in DCF 56:



Promotes first choice decision to place a child with a relative or like-kin caregiver



Promotes quick licensure of a like-kin or relative foster home at Level 2



Supports diverse like-kin and relative populations

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Non-Relative Foster Homes

DRAFT

• Recommended revisions to rule/regulation:

- Create more clear respite care requirements for agencies and foster parents - - and allow substitute caregivers (like relatives) to assist in providing caregiving
- Remove blanket requirement for water testing and home inspections – agency discretion based on local environment
- Change to a biennial review of wood-burning and alternative heating source by a fire safety expert
- Clear up language on physician medical examinations



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DRAFT

Non-Relative Foster Homes

- **Recommended revisions to rule/regulation:**

- Update safe storage of firearm language to follow national subject matter experts recommendations, and include provision regarding concealed carry
- Remove square footage language, number of bathroom requirements, space for recreation, water/heat temperature, and ventilation requirements on the physical home environment
- Add communication device language to broaden 'telephone' requirements
- Remove list of unallowed pets and allow flexibility



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DRAFT

Non-Relative Foster Homes

- **Recommended revisions to rule/regulation:**

- Revise sleeping arrangements, bedroom requirements, and who can share bedroom spaces to allow for flexibility in foster homes and family makeup
- Eliminate requirements for out buildings to be in good repair (those not accessed by children)
- Allow foster parents to be aged 18+ and revise foster parent qualifications (including removing the exception process for two adults who have full-time employment)
- Revise language regarding foster parent responsibilities to be more concise and regulate only what is needed for the care of children



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DRAFT

Non-Relative Foster Homes

- Recommended revisions to rule/regulation:

- Eliminate some foster parent characteristics that were difficult to assess
- Revise emergency preparedness procedures to allow more flexibility
- Add ridesharing options to transportation of foster children
- Increase the number of children allowed to be cared for in the home
- Create a license revocation appeal process
- Change responsibilities of placing agencies/supervising agencies to allow flexibility in communities
- Include cultural considerations for children (ex. requesting permission to cut an Indian child's hair)



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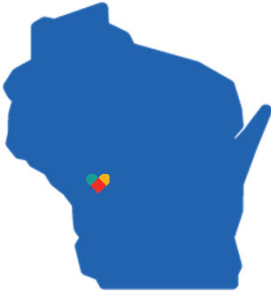


• **Strengthening local communities and building services that support families in their homes.**

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	Questions?
Thoughts? Opinions?	What licensing issues impact you? What areas would you like to change? What are things we should keep in mind?

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Youth Justice Innovation Grants: Jackson County

What are they doing?

- Enhancing and developing programming based on risks, needs, and responsivity factors, and
- Implementing services to help youth cultivate personal and community connections and build skills.

What are they seeing?

A slight decrease in referrals, better outcomes for youth engaged with programming, and cross-system collaboration.

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Putting Families First Grants



Earlier this year, DSP launched a non-competitive application process for a one-time, time-limited funds allocation.

- Can be used to cover costs of providing supports or services, addressing child, youth and family resource needs, and more.
- Contracts are for the July 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025 period.
- Award letters were sent in June.



All 71 eligible counties and 8 tribes applied for and received Family First Funds!

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How are agencies using these funds?

Housing, child care, and parenting supports!



Creating local youth justice groups!



Parents Supporting Parents staff support!



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Resources





A Guide for Youth in Out-of-Home Care Placements in Wisconsin

For youth ages 14 and older placed in court-ordered relative placements, foster homes, group homes, residential care centers, or Supervised Independent Living placements



Putting Families First Playbook for Educators

Overview

Educators and administrators are deeply invested in the well-being of children, and they often have more direct contact with a child or youth than any other adult in their life. Because of this, and because of their commitment to the children and youth in their schools, educators are critical partners in the Putting Families First child welfare transformation.

This transformation is focused on keeping children and families together by supporting them during their education and service, but more research makes clear that families do best when they are safely together.

By continuing to partner with families, educators are supporting safe and thriving families and communities.

Putting Families First in Schools

- Educators often see when children and families are struggling before they come to the attention of the child welfare system. Because of this unique position, educators and other school professionals play a critical role in supporting children, youth and their families.
- Engaging child welfare may often seem like the right answer, but child welfare is not always best positioned to respond.
 - A Child welfare system has strict statutory guidelines on when they can or cannot intervene in families' lives.
- Child welfare intervention is not always in the family's best interests, either.
 - In Wisconsin, the most common reason for Child Protective Services (CPS) involvement is neglect, which is often tied to economic distress.
 - Research shows that impoverished families are more likely to be referred to child welfare – and families of color are much more likely to experience poverty than white families. These and other systemic barriers for families of color can disproportionately increase the probability for involvement with the child welfare system.
 - In many cases, families need connection to services and resources – like housing, child care, counseling or other supports – to meet their needs.

The Department of Children and Families is an equal opportunity and nondiscrimination organization. If you have a disability and need to access materials, notify us at info@dcf.wisconsin.gov or call the Division of Safety and Permanency at 608-261-6371. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, and those who speak limited English can use the free Wisconsin Relay Service (800) - 735-7242 to contact the department.

Find these resources and more at: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/family-first/toolbox>.

And at our booth!

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Let's keep transforming **together!**



Happy Child Welfare Professionals Appreciation Week!



Check out DCF's communication and data resources.



September 30 is Orange Shirt Day.



Keep doing the **incredible work** you're doing!



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Thank you!

Have additional questions? Don't hesitate to reach out!

Putting Families First

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