

SCAN Policies Database State Profile 2023: Wisconsin

Overview of the SCAN Policies Database

The State Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) Policies Database compiles data on the definitions and policies that states use in their surveillance of child maltreatment, along with data on associated risk and protective factors. The SCAN Policies Database is funded by the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation in collaboration with the Children's Bureau in the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Mathematica leads this project in partnership with Child Trends.

The project's purpose is to review and compile information from states' definitions and policies to create a database of those definitions and policies that can be used for analysis. The SCAN Policies Database is a resource for researchers, analysts, child welfare agency staff, and others interested in examining differences between states in their definitions and policies on child maltreatment and how they change over time.

Content

The scope of the SCAN Policies Database includes information about state definitions and policies related to child abuse and neglect for all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The SCAN Policies Database team gathered this information through a document collection, review, and coding process. The team obtained input from states on data collection through a confirmation and verification process. More information about these data collection procedures can be found in the data user's guide and data collection protocol, accessible at <https://www.scanpoliciesdatabase.com/data-use-resources>.

The SCAN Policies Database 2023 represents data collected, reviewed, and verified between June 2023 and July 2024. The data reflect the state definitions and policies for the calendar year 2023. The scope of topics in the database includes states' definitions of child abuse and neglect, as well as information about policies related to reporting, screening, and investigating child maltreatment. Key aspects of the child welfare systems' response and context are also included.

The content in the SCAN Policies Database is organized into six domains. The state profiles, codebook, data collection protocol, and data file are also organized by these domains. In the protocol, each question begins with a letter prefix identifying the domain for each variable. The six domains with the identifying protocol number prefix are listed below.

Domain	Question prefix
Definitions	D
Reporting	R
Screening	S
Investigation	I
Child welfare response	W
Child welfare system context	C

State profile

This SCAN Policies Database state profile is a summary of the information collected about the definitions and policies for the identified state. Each of the six domains contain a set of tables that depict the state's information for all variables within that domain.

The state profile presents data for each variable with “yes,” “no,” “unknown,” or other response, as appropriate. The response of “unknown” appears for topics that could not be located from the state's available resources or verified with that state. In some cases, “logical skip” appears when a question was not applicable to a particular state, given a related response on a preceding question. Some information was not included in the state profile to ensure alignment with Executive Orders or other Presidential Actions.

Data use resources

Several data use resources are available to support users of the SCAN Policies Database:

- **Data user's guide:** The guide has detailed information about the data set, including the process used to collect and review the data, the scope of information included in the data set, guidance on using the data, such as how to link the data with other data sources, and notes about specific topics. The data user's guide includes appendices, including information about changes to the data between 2021 and 2023 that reflect changes to state laws and policies during that time period. There is one data user's guide that is updated and applicable for all rounds of data collection for the SCAN Policies Database.
- **Codebook:** The codebook provides information about each variable in the data set, including variable names, labels, definitions, protocol number, variable type, and frequencies. There are separate codebooks to summarize the data from each round of data collection.
- **Errata statement:** The errata statement presents corrections applied to previous rounds of data for the SCAN Policies Database. Starting in 2023, there is one errata statement that is updated and applicable for all rounds of data collection for the SCAN Policies Database.
- **Data collection protocol:** The protocol has the questions used to collect information about states' laws and policies as part of the data review and coding process for each round of data collection. There are separate data collection protocols for each round of data collection for the SCAN Policies Database.

These data use resources can be found on the SCAN Policies Database website (<https://www.scanpoliciesdatabase.com/data-use-resources>) or from the National Data Archive for Child Abuse and Neglect (NDACAN) (<https://www.ndacan.acf.hhs.gov/>).

More information

More information about the SCAN Policies Database can be found at <https://www.scanpoliciesdatabase.com>. General inquiries can be submitted to SCANPoliciesDatabase@mathematica-mpr.com.

State identifying information

Table I. State Identifying information

	Response
State abbreviation	WI
State Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS) code	55
Census region code	Midwest
State verified coding of information	Yes
State confirmed documents reviewed	Yes
State definitions and policies for calendar year	2023
Data version	2023v1

Domain D: Definitions of child maltreatment

Table D.I. State's definition of child maltreatment

	Response
1. Types of maltreatment included in state definition	
a. Physical abuse	Yes
b. Excessive corporal punishment	Yes
c. Sexual abuse	Yes
d. Emotional maltreatment	Yes
e. Neglect	Yes
f. Inadequate clothing	Yes
g. Inadequate shelter	Yes
h. Malnourishment, inadequate food	Yes
i. Medical neglect, inadequate medical care	Yes
j. Failure to thrive	No
k. Educational neglect	No
l. Abandonment	Yes
m. Injurious environment. Likelihood of harm to child's health, physical well-being	Yes
n. Drug lab. Child present within structure where methamphetamine is being created	Yes
o. Inadequate supervision. Failure to meet parent or caretaker responsibilities	Yes
p. Drug or alcohol misuse. Parental drug or alcohol misuse causing harm to child	Yes
q. Prenatal exposure to drugs or alcohol	Yes
r. Illicit substance. Illegally providing a controlled substance to a child	No
s. Human trafficking, involuntary servitude, sexual servitude	Yes
t. Female genital mutilation	No
u. Shaken baby syndrome, abusive head trauma	Yes
v. Failure to protect. Failure to protect from harm	Yes
w. Domestic violence. Exposure to domestic violence	Yes
x. Factitious disorder by proxy	No
y. Institutional abuse/neglect	No
z. Other definition (specify)	No
2. Subtypes of maltreatment included in state definition	
a. Subtypes of maltreatment considered abuse	Abuse includes physical abuse, emotional damage, sexual abuse, and methamphetamine manufacture; Physical abuse includes excessive corporal punishment
b. Subtypes of maltreatment considered neglect	Neglect includes inadequate clothing, inadequate shelter, malnourishment, and medical neglect
c. Subtypes of maltreatment considered other than abuse or neglect	Not applicable

Table D.1 (*continued*)

	Response
3. Level of harm included in state's definition of child maltreatment	
a. Inflicts harm	Yes
b. Imminent danger or substantial risk of harm	Yes
4. Differences in level of harm included in state's definition of child maltreatment by type of maltreatment	No
5. Type of harm or injury specified in state's definition of child maltreatment	
a. Death, bodily injury, impairment of physical condition	Yes
b. Impairment of mental or emotional condition	Yes
c. Harmful environment, conditions	Yes
d. Type of harm or injury not specified	No
e. Other (specify)	No
6. Variation in extent of injury or harm by maltreatment type in the state's definition of child maltreatment	No
7. Perpetrator identified as part of state's definition of child maltreatment	Yes
8. Types of perpetrators specified as part of state's definition of child maltreatment	
a. Any person	Yes
b. Parent	Yes
c. Guardian	Yes
d. Caregiver/caretaker	Yes
e. Family member or parent's paramour	Yes
f. Household member	Yes
g. Person responsible for child	Yes
h. Other (specify)	No
9. Types of perpetrators vary by type of maltreatment	Yes
10. Explanation of variation in types of perpetrator by maltreatment type	For neglect, the perpetrator is a caregiver; For emotional maltreatment, the perpetrator is a parent, guardian, or legal custodian; For physical abuse, sexual abuse, and manufacturing methamphetamine, the state considers any person to be a perpetrator
11. Child age included in definition of child maltreatment	Yes
12. Specific child age in definition of child maltreatment	Under age 18
13. Variability of child age by type of maltreatment	No

Table D.II. Child maltreatment definition exemptions

	Response
1. Exemption included in state's definition of child maltreatment	
a. Financial issues, financial inability to provide for a child	Yes
b. Discipline; physical discipline, if it is reasonable and causes no bodily injury to the child	No
c. Safe haven exemption; newborn relinquished or abandoned in accordance with infant safe haven and safe surrender laws	Yes
d. Infant testing positive for drugs – medical; newborn with positive test for controlled substance due to parent's medical treatment	No
e. Religious observance; parent relies on spiritual or religious forms of medical treatment	Yes
f. Other exemption (specify)	No
2. Safe haven exemption included in state's definition of child maltreatment	
a. Must leave a child at specific safe haven locations or designated providers	Yes
b. Child must be left by parent or parent's agent	Yes
c. Child must be left by a certain age (specify)	Yes - 72 hours old or younger
d. No intent to return	Yes
e. Child must be left unharmed	No
f. Other (specify)	No

Table D.III. Definitions and response for child fatalities and near-fatalities cases

	Response
1. State's definition of fatalities or deaths caused by child maltreatment	
a. Not specified or defined	No
b. Injury from abuse or neglect caused death	Yes
c. Abuse or neglect was contributing factor in death	Yes
d. Death of child who was in child welfare custody or foster care	No
e. Other (specify)	Yes - Incident in which a child who has been placed outside the home by a court is suspected to have committed suicide
2. State conducts case reviews with a child fatality review team or a similar review process for fatalities caused by child abuse or neglect	Yes, reviews are required for all or some cases
3. State's definition of near-fatalities or near-deaths caused by child maltreatment	
a. Not specified or defined	No
b. General reference to a serious or critical condition or injury that is life threatening with a substantial risk of death	Yes
c. Specific injury or specific medical treatment or intervention (specify)	No
d. Other (specify)	No
4. State conducts case reviews with a review team or similar review process for near-fatalities caused by child abuse or neglect	Yes, reviews are required for all or some cases

Domain R: Reporting child abuse and neglect

Table R.I. Reporting policies

	Response
1. Statewide centralized reporting	No
2. Decentralized reporting	Each county/region has own reporting hotline
3. Standard for reporting child maltreatment	
a. Known abuse and neglect	No
b. Reasonable cause to believe a child was abused or neglected	Yes
4. Universal mandated reporting	No
5. Required training for mandated reporters	Yes, some mandated reporters
6. Penalties for failure to report	Yes, all mandated reporters
7. Specific penalties for failure to report	
a. Criminal charges	Yes
b. Civil charges	No
c. Professional licensure suspended or revoked	Yes
d. Other (specify)	No
8. Penalties for false reporting	No
9. Specific penalties for false reporting	Logical Skip
10. Immunity for reporters of child abuse and neglect	Yes
11. Information requested at the time of report	
a. Identifying information of child	Yes
b. Location and contact information of child and family	Yes
c. Type and severity of suspected maltreatment	Yes
d. Date of suspected maltreatment	Yes
e. Identifying and other information of alleged perpetrator(s)	Yes
f. Identifying and other information of reporter	Yes
g. Identifying information of child's parents, guardian, or caregiver/caretaker	Yes
h. Identifying and other information of family or household members	Yes
i. Information on prior maltreatment	Yes
j. Other (specify)	Yes - Collateral contacts; Whether they are in the Safe at Home program; Whether services are already in place; Interventions or services needed for the child; How the family may respond to intervention by Child Protective Services

Table R.I (continued)

	Response
12. Anonymity of reporter	General public (not mandated reporters) can remain anonymous
13. Tribal involvement in state or local public child welfare agency's process to accept reports of Tribal cases	Yes, Tribes directly accept reports - Tribes are not specified
14. State requires all notifications of substance-exposed newborns (SENs) to be submitted as reports of child maltreatment	
a. State does not require all cases of SENs to be reported for child maltreatment, but they could be reported if they meet certain criteria	Yes
b. State requires all SENs to be reported as child maltreatment	No
c. Other (specify)	No
15. Accepts reports of risk without an allegation of child maltreatment (risk-only reports)	Yes

Table R.II. Types of mandated reporters

	Response	Response	Response
1. Types of mandated reporters	Included in state's definition of mandated reporters	Training required ¹	Subject to penalties for failure to report ²
a. Foster parents	No	Logical Skip	Logical Skip
b. School staff - teachers	Yes	Yes	Yes
c. School bus drivers or other transportation staff	Yes	Yes	Yes
d. Before- /after-school program staff	Yes	No	Yes
e. Child care staff	Yes	No	Yes
f. Camp counselors, directors, or administrators	No	Logical Skip	Logical Skip
g. Athletic coaches or staff	No	Logical Skip	Logical Skip
h. Medical or dental professionals	Yes	No	Yes
i. Substance abuse disorder treatment providers	Yes	No	Yes
j. Mental health, counselors, or other social service professionals	Yes	No	Yes
k. Police or other law enforcement	Yes	No	Yes
l. Emergency medical technicians, firefighters, or other emergency personnel	Yes	No	Yes
m. Judges	No	Logical Skip	Logical Skip
n. District attorneys or other attorneys	No	Logical Skip	Logical Skip
o. Guardians ad litem or court-appointed special advocates	Yes	No	Yes
p. Other court personnel	No	Logical Skip	Logical Skip
q. Shelter staff	No	Logical Skip	Logical Skip
r. Those who work in fields processing or monitoring print, film, or computer images	No	Logical Skip	Logical Skip
s. Religious clergy	Yes	No	Yes
t. Volunteers	No	Logical Skip	Logical Skip
u. Coroners or medical examiners	Yes	No	Yes
v. Staff or contractors of state and county agencies	Yes	No	Yes

Table R.II (*continued*)

	Response	Response	Response
w. Other type of mandated reporter (specify)	Yes - Mediator; Acupuncturist; Dietitian	No	Yes - Mediator; Acupuncturist; Dietitian

¹ Responses in this column can equal logical skip when the given type of mandated reporter is not included in the state's definition of mandated reporters or when no training is required for mandated reporters (Table R.II). Responses in this column can be yes when a state has universal mandated reporting (Table R.I) and all mandated reporters require training (Table R.II).

² Responses in this column can equal logical skip when the given type of mandated reporter is not included in the state's definition of mandated reporters or when no mandated reporters are subject to penalties (Table R.I). Responses in this column can be yes when a state has universal mandated reporting (Table R.I) and when all adults or all mandated reporters are subject to penalties (Table R.I).

Domain S: Screening reports of child abuse and neglect

Table S.I. Screening policies

	Response
1. Statewide centralized screening	No
2. How screening is decentralized	Each county/region has own screening unit
3. Information required to screen in report	
a. Identifying information of child	Yes
b. Location and contact information of child and family	Yes
c. Type and severity of suspected maltreatment	Yes
d. Date of suspected maltreatment	No
e. Identifying and other information of alleged perpetrator(s)	No
f. Other (specify)	No

Table S.II. Screening decision process and activities

	Response	Required cases	Conditions or types of cases
1. Decision processes used during screening			
a. Supervisory review	Yes	Required for all	—
b. Team-based decision	No	Logical Skip	—
c. Individual screener	Yes	Required for some	—
d. Other (specify)	No	Logical Skip	—
e. Unknown	No	—	—
2. Variability of decision process used for screening			
a. Consistent statewide	Yes	—	—
b. Varies locally	No	—	—
3. Certain activities or information are required as part of screening	Yes		
4. Activities or information required as part of screening			
a. Safety or risk assessment	Yes	Required for all	Not applicable
b. Review agency records for prior involvement with child protective services	Yes	Required for all	Not applicable
c. Other (specify)	Yes - Review criminal and sex offender history	Required for all	Not applicable
5. Types of safety or risk assessment used during screening			
a. Structured decision making	No	—	—
b. Other (specify)	Yes - No tools used; Screeners assess present and impending danger threats and other emergency conditions during initial assessment	—	—
6. Consistency of screening activities/information			
a. Consistent statewide	Yes	—	—
b. Varies locally (specify)	No	—	—

Table S.III. Screeners

	Response
1. Screener of abuse and neglect reports	
a. Caseworkers (frontline staff)	Yes
b. Case managers (supervisors)	Yes
c. Staff in specialized screening unit	Yes
d. Other (specify)	No
2. Qualifications of screener	
a. Associate's degree	No
b. Bachelor's degree	No
c. Master's degree	No
d. Training for screening (specify)	Yes - Child abuse and neglect protective services approved by the department for screeners; Pre-service training for caseworkers and supervisors
e. Years of experience (specify)	No
f. Other (specify)	No
3. Degree in social work or related field for screeners	Logical Skip
4. Tribal involvement in state or local public child welfare agency's process to screen Tribal cases	Yes, Tribes directly conduct screening - Tribes are not specified

Domain I: Investigations of child abuse and neglect

Table I.I. Investigations policies

	Response
1. Findings from child maltreatment investigations can lead to criminal penalties	Yes
2. Investigator for reports	
a. Caseworkers (frontline staff)	Yes
b. Case managers (supervisors)	Yes
c. Staff in specialized investigations unit	Yes
d. Law enforcement	Yes
e. Other (specify)	No
3. Qualifications of investigator	
a. Associate's degree	No
b. Bachelor's degree	No
c. Master's degree	No
d. Training for conducting investigations (specify)	Yes - Pre-service training for investigators and workers who remove children; Basic intake training for workers who are assigned to perform court intake worker duties
e. Years of experience (specify)	No
f. Other (specify)	No
4. Degree in social work or related field for investigators	Logical Skip
5. Level of evidence required for substantiation (founded/indicated/confirmed)	Preponderance of evidence
6. Investigation determination can result in an "inconclusive" finding	No

Table I.II. Required activities/information for investigation

	Response	Required cases	Conditions or types of cases
1. Certain activities or information required for the investigation process	Yes		
2. Specific activities or information required for investigation			
a. Review agency records for prior involvement with child protective services	Yes	Required for all	Not applicable
b. Visit to child's home	Yes	Required for some	Alleged perpetrator is the child's caregiver or legal guardian or is suspected to be in the child's home
c. Interview or observation of child victim	Yes	Required for all	Not applicable
d. Interview or observation of other children living in child's home	Yes	Required for all	Not applicable
e. Risk or safety assessment	Yes	Required for all	Not applicable
f. Evaluation of home environment or home study	No	Logical Skip	Not applicable
g. Interviews with child's parents, caregivers, or other adults residing in child's home	Yes	Required for all	Not applicable
h. Check of criminal records for adults in home	Yes	Required for all	Not applicable
i. Check of child welfare or central registry for prior child maltreatment allegations against adults in home	Yes	Required for all	Not applicable
j. Medical evaluation	No	Logical Skip	Not applicable
k. Mental health evaluation	No	Logical Skip	Not applicable
l. Interview alleged perpetrator	Yes	Required for all	Not applicable
m. Interview reporter or collateral source	Yes	Required for all	Not applicable
n. Other (specify)	Yes - Alleged maltreatment and any other type of maltreatment occurring within the family; Child, adult, and family functioning; Parenting and discipline techniques; Identify children who might be subject to Indian Child Welfare Act; Identify services and supports offered; Collaborate with law enforcement on some cases	Required for all	Not applicable

Domain W: Child welfare response

Table W.I. Differential or alternative response

	Response
1. Differential/alternative response	Yes--implemented in specific counties or regions - Barron, Brown, Chippewa, Dodge, Eau Claire, Fond du Lac, Jefferson, La Crosse, Langlade, Manitowoc, Marathon, Outagamie, Pierce, Sauk, and Winnebago counties
2. Types of maltreatment eligible for differential/alternative response	Only certain types of maltreatment are eligible
3. Types of maltreatment <u>not</u> eligible for differential/alternative response	
a. Cases involving child fatalities and near-fatalities	Yes
b. Substance-exposed infants	No
c. Physical abuse	Yes
d. Sexual abuse	Yes
e. Neglect	No
f. Abandoned infants	No
g. Other (specify)	Yes - Methamphetamine abuse by parent caregiver; Chronic neglect or hospitalization due to suspected maltreatment; Abuse or neglect in a licensed foster home or facility; Abandonment; Substantial abuse or neglect
4. Eligibility for differential/alternative response determined by a risk determination	No
5. Tools used to determine risk for differential/alternative response	Logical Skip
6. Risk level eligible for differential/alternative response	Logical Skip
7. Other types of cases or conditions eligible for differential/alternative response	
a. No other cases or conditions	No
b. No immediate safety concerns	Yes
c. No or few prior reports of child abuse or neglect	No
d. Other (specify)	Yes - Assignment to a traditional response or alternative response takes into consideration an array of factors (including presence of imminent danger, level of risk, the number of previous reports, the source of the report, and/or presenting case characteristics such as type of alleged maltreatment and age of the alleged victim); Assignment to the traditional or alternative approach can change based on new information that alters safety threats or levels of risk
8. When is determination made for differential/alternative response	
a. At the time of screening to assign to differential response	No
b. After a report is screened in	Yes
c. Other (specify)	No

Table W.I (continued)

	Response
9. Referrals to community services for cases engaged in differential response	
a. No	No
b. Yes - for all cases	No
c. Yes - when families express interest	No
d. Yes - when there is a determination of risk	Yes
e. Yes - other (specify)	No

Table W.II. In-home services, foster care, and permanency

	Response
1. In-home services provided for unsubstantiated cases to maintain intact families	Yes--implemented statewide
2. In-home services provided post reunification	Yes--implemented statewide
3. Permanency	
a. Kinship guardianship as a permanency option	Yes
b. Subsidized guardianship	Yes
c. Subsidized kinship guardianship	Yes
d. Subsidized adoption	Yes
4. Foster care case management staff	
a. State/county public agency staff	Yes
b. Contracted provider staff	Yes
c. Tribal agency staff	Yes
5. Qualifications of foster care case managers	
a. Associate degree	No
b. Bachelor's degree	No
c. Master's degree	No
d. Training for case management (specify)	No
e. Years of experience (specify)	No
f. Other (specify)	Yes - There are no statewide requirements for qualifications for foster care case managers, but counties may set their own qualification requirements
6. Degree in social work or related field for foster care case managers	Logical Skip

Table W.III. Tribal foster care and Tribes that directly operate Title IV-E programs through an agreement with HHS

	Response
1. Tribal involvement in foster care for Tribal cases	Yes, Tribes within state provide foster care - Tribes are not specified
2. Tribes directly operate a Title IV-E program through an agreement with US HHS	No
3. Number of Tribes that directly operate a Title IV-E program through an agreement with US HHS	Logical Skip
4. Specify Tribes that directly operate a Title IV-E program through an agreement with US HHS	Not applicable

Table W.IV. Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)

	Response
1. Federal ICWA requirements codified in state law	Yes
2. Federal ICWA requirements that are codified in state law	
a. Identifying a child's Tribal status	No
b. Use of active efforts to prevent removal/reunite families	Yes
c. Notification of child's parents and Tribe for child custody proceedings	Yes
d. Actively working to involve a child's parents and Tribe during the custody proceedings	Yes
e. Identifying a foster care or pre-adoptive placement using ICWA preferences provisions	Yes
f. Use of qualified expert witnesses	Yes
3. State law codifying ICWA includes state-recognized Tribes	No

Table W.V. Extended foster care

	Response
1. Foster care extension for youth older than age 18	Yes
2. Age youth are allowed to remain in extended foster care	Up to age 21 (until 21st birthday)
3. Youth must proactively request, provide consent, or opt-in to receive extended foster care	Yes
4. Criteria for youth to remain in extended foster care	
a. There are no criteria to remain in extended foster care	No
b. Enrolled in school	Yes
c. Employed	No
d. Participating in workforce development/training program	Yes
e. Comply with independent living/self-sufficiency plan	No
f. Receive independent living or other services	Yes
g. Medical condition exemption	No
h. Other (specify)	Yes - Have an individualized education program; Compliance with school attendance requirements, school district policies, and truancy laws and ordinances; Youth cannot be missing from out-of-home care placement for more than 2 weeks without contact with the agency
5. Reentry to extended foster care allowed for youth older than age 18 who aged out or left foster care	Yes
6. Conditions for youth to reenter extended foster care	
a. Youth consent or sign a voluntary placement agreement	Yes
b. Youth develop an independent living plan	No
c. It is in the best interest of the youth	No
d. Other (specify)	Yes - Has not yet graduated from high school; In a secondary school or its vocational or technical equivalent program full-time; Has an active individualized education program

Domain C: Child welfare system context

Table C.I. Child welfare system context

	Response
1. State- or county-administered child welfare system	Hybrid
2. State operates under legal consent decree or other court-ordered monitoring	No

Supplemental Notes on State

Definitions

Failure to thrive, illegally providing a controlled substance to a child, and female genital mutilation are not specifically defined as types of child maltreatment but may be considered maltreatment under other categories depending on the circumstances.

Prenatal exposure applies only to unborn children.

There is no specific exemption in state statute for physical discipline, but the statutory definition of 'physical abuse' is "physical injury inflicted on a child by other than accidental means." The statute defines what constitutes a 'physical injury.'

One of the following criteria needs to be met for a fatality or near-fatality practice review to take place:

1. Any case that was open, either to Initial Assessment (IA) or ongoing, at the time of the incident;
2. Any case that had 6 contacts with Access in the 12 months before the date of the incident;
3. Any case that has 2 or more contacts with Access in the 3 months before the date of the incident;
4. Any case that has 2 or more IA's in the 12 months before the date of the incident.

Reporting

Tribes are not involved in the county agency's decision on whether to accept a report, but some cases are reported to a Tribal social services agency. In those cases, the Tribal social services agency is involved in accepting the report. As sovereign nations, Tribes will accept reports, screen reports, and manage cases according to their Tribal codes and policies.

State statute lists categories of professionals who are mandated to report child maltreatment. Whether school bus drivers or other transportation staff are mandated reporters depends on whether they are considered school employees, which varies from district to district. Camp counselors, camp directors or administrators, and athletic coaches or staff at private sports organizations are not expressly included as categories in the Wisconsin mandated reporter statute, but an individual in one of these positions could be in one of the other categories in the mandated reporter law, such as child care provider.

University of Wisconsin coaches are the only athletic coaches and staff that are mandated reporters.

The Department of Children and Families provides a free online training for mandated reporters. However, state law only requires training for certain categories of mandated reporters, including school district employees. Although not included in state law or policy, licensing requirements for certain professions and certain employers may require their employees to have mandated reporter training.

Foster parents are not mandated reporters. However, foster parents are required to report serious incidents, including child abuse or neglect concerns. Foster parents receive training on serious incident reporting and what to do if a serious incident occurs. If a foster parent fails to report a serious incident, their foster care license may be revoked.

Professional licensure can be suspended or revoked for failure to report based on the licensing rules of the specific profession. Certain employers may also impose their own penalties for failure to report.

For notifications of a substance-exposed newborn, only reports by physicians are screened in. If anyone else reports a substance-exposed newborn, it could be screened out.

Screening

There are additional criteria to screen in reports of abuse of an unborn child and reports of possible medical neglect of a disabled infant.

Some counties have specialized screening staff, and other counties have workers with mixed caseloads (e.g. screening along with other functions).

There are no statewide education and experience requirements for qualifications for screeners, but counties may set their qualification requirements related to education and experience.

For county agency cases involving Tribal families, Tribes are not involved in the county agency's screening process. Some cases are also reported to a Tribal social services agency. In those cases, the Tribal social services agency conducts the screening process. As sovereign nations, Tribes will accept reports, screen reports, and manage cases according to their Tribal codes and policies.

Investigations

Some counties have specialized investigations staff, and other counties have workers with mixed caseloads (e.g. investigations along with other functions).

Court intake workers provide intake services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to screen children taken into custody and not released and the adult expectant mothers of unborn children taken into custody and not released.

There are no statewide education and experience requirements for qualifications for investigators, but counties may set their qualification requirements related to education and experience.

Child welfare response

When reports are screened out at Child Protective Services Access, agencies are encouraged to refer families to community resources when appropriate. When a report is screened out, but an agency decides to make an offer of services, the agency has initiated voluntary services (assessment and referral), which are optional for families.

Wisconsin will update its policies and no longer have alternative response in 2024.

Tribes may be involved in the foster care placement process. In some cases, a Tribal child may be placed in a home licensed by a Tribal social services agency. The involvement in foster care

varies from Tribe to Tribe. In addition, Tribal social services agencies conduct all tasks related to foster care for cases that are within their jurisdiction. As sovereign nations, Tribes will accept reports, screen reports, and manage cases according to their Tribal codes and policies.

Cases with substantial abuse or neglect cannot be assigned to the alternative response pathway, including the following:

1. Present danger threats;
2. Children placed in foster care or adoption in violation of the law;
3. Injury due to use of weapons; and
4. Children receiving inadequate care while a parent is missing, incarcerated, hospitalized, or institutionalized.

Characteristics or criteria eligible for the alternative response pathway include the following:

1. Threatened harm;
2. Lack of care due to poverty or religious reasons;
3. Medical neglect of a disabled infant;
4. Presence of domestic violence;
5. Lack of supervision;
6. Lack of necessary medical care;
7. Untreated injuries, impairments, or illnesses;
8. Emotional damage;
9. Unborn child abuse and substance exposed/affected infants; and
10. Situational/one-time non-accidental injuries.

There are no statewide requirements for qualifications for foster care case managers, but counties may set their qualification requirements related to education and experience.

State Statutes and Policy Documentation Sources

Children's Code, Wis. Stat. Charitable, Curative, Reformatory and Penal Institutions and Agencies § 48 (2022).

Crimes Against Children, Wis. Stat. Criminal Code § 948 (2017).

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Foster Home Care for Children, Wis. Admin. Code Ann. § 56 (2023).

Kinship Care and Long-term Kinship Care, Wis. Admin. Code Ann. § 58 (2022).

Re-entry into out-of-home care for youth 18 years of age or over, but under 21 years of age, Wis. Admin. Code Ann. § 21 (2021).

Social Services, Wis. Stat. Charitable, Curative, Reformatory and Penal Institutions and Agencies § 46 (2014).

Subsidized Guardianship, Wis. Admin. Code Ann. § 55 (2022).

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