**Pre-Service Module: Introduction to Child Protective Services**

**Section 1: Child Protective Services in Wisconsin**

**Section Learning Objectives**

By the end of Section 1: Child Protective Services in Wisconsin, child welfare professionals will be able to:

* Understand the mission of the Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System and the role it plays in helping Child Protective Services professionals meet Pre-Service training requirements.
* Learn about the values and principles that comprise the Wisconsin Child Welfare Model for Practice and guide our work.
* Explore the big picture of how child protective services are affected by four levels of government: Federal, State, Native American Tribes, and County.
* Understand the primary areas of concern related to ethical practice in child welfare and the challenges that arise when a child welfare professional strays outside of ethical boundaries.

**Section Themes and Key Points**

Below is a summary of the themes and key points covered in this section. This summary is intended to remind learners of the key learning points addressed and assist supervisors/ coaches in understanding what was covered in order for them to guide and support the application of learning for new child welfare professionals related to this section.

1. This section introduces the child welfare training system, known as the Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System (WCWPDS). The mission of WCWPDS is to promote the best child welfare practice through education, skill development, strategic partnerships, and effective advocacy.

WCWPDS is jointly funded by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF), county child welfare agencies, and tribal child welfare agencies. The University of Wisconsin-Madison partners with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee to develop and deliver all required and special topic trainings for child welfare direct practice staff, supervisors, and foster parents, as well as provide technical assistance to county and tribal child welfare agencies.

The role of WCWPDS is to serve child welfare professionals, and therefore the families assisted, through exceptional professional development opportunities.

1. This section addresses the role of Pre-Service Training under DCF 43, the administrative training rule. Pre-Service training is one component of the WiLearn program that all new child protective services (CPS) professionals, whose primary job functions include CPS access, initial assessment, ongoing, or a mixture of these practice areas, are required to complete in the first six months after hire.

DCF 43 directs new CPS professionals to complete Pre-Service training prior to having primary casework assignment or responsibility. During the Pre-Service training period, new CPS professionals can assist with casework under the direction of a CPS supervisor or an experienced CPS professional who has completed Pre-Service training. Once Pre-Service training is complete, a CPS professional can be entered as a primary caseworker in the statewide automated child welfare information system, known as eWiSACWIS and will then complete the Foundational Elements and other WiLearn program requirements.

During the Pre-Service phase, each child welfare agency will also provide additional training such as agency orientation, job shadowing and other related activities related to understanding specific agency requirements.

Pre-Service training is a resource that can be re-visited anytime by logging into PDS Online and launching from the “completed” transcript.

1. This section reviews the Wisconsin Child Welfare Model for Practice, the compass which informs the development of the standards, codes, and regulations that direct our work and guide decision-making in Wisconsin. Our purpose is Putting Families First through child welfare services that help children thrive in safe environments and empower families to provide safe, permanent, and nurturing homes for their children.

The Wisconsin Child Welfare Model for Practice provides a vision for quality services. The values and principles of the Wisconsin Child Model for Practice include:

* Family-Centered: We engage with families using a strengths-based perspective, support a team approach, and advocate for appropriate services and supports to meet the needs of families, youth, and caregivers. Families and youth are the drivers of change and are empowered to make decisions with the recognition that they are experts on their needs.
* Trust: We approach complex family situations with honesty and integrity to effectively support positive change. Those who experience our state’s child welfare system will have transparent, trusting relationships with competent and compassionate child welfare professionals.
* Respect: As an ongoing commitment to integrity, we strive to lift the tenets of inclusion. We acknowledge and champion the worth, ideas, and experience of every person and family system, treating each with dignity, positive regard, and consideration.
* Engagement: Through collaboration, active listening, empathy, and partnership, we effectively establish relationships with children, youth, birth families, foster families, service providers, courts, and others, to nurture and support meaningful connections and achieve positive outcomes. The voices of families, including children and youth, are included and welcomed in policy and program development for the system.
* Accountability: We are accountable to children, youth, families, and the community, to provide effective and accessible services that are strengths-based, trauma-informed, culturally responsive, evidence-informed, and focused on family preservation. We model our values and principles, measure performance, learn, self-correct, innovate, and enhance our ability to achieve positive outcomes through data-driven continuous quality improvement efforts: this includes actively reducing the disproportional negative impact child welfare system involvement has for children, youth, and families who identify as sexual and gender minorities and/or as Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC).
* Trauma-Informed: We understand the impact of child and family trauma and recognize that our practice is most effective when trauma is understood and addressed. Families, especially their children and youth, child welfare professionals, and service providers are supported socially, emotionally, and physically to encourage healing, build resilience, and prevent re-traumatization.
* Culturally Responsible: Through a deep commitment to personal responsibility, a genuine respect of oneself and others and our similarities and differences, and other forms of cultural humility, we seek to reduce all biases and disparities at the individual, agency, and system level. We treat children, youth, and their families with fairness and equity and provide service to them within the context of their identities, communities, tribes, histories, cultures, and traditions.
* Workforce Support: We invest in child welfare professionals through training, technology, practices, and processes to gain the competencies needed, while maximizing time with families. Additionally, we promote teamwork, support professional development, seek to ensure the physical and emotional safety of all staff, and provide support to address secondary trauma.

1. This section outlines the levels of government impacting child protective services in Wisconsin:

* Federal: Legislation, federal court decisions, and policies. The Children and Family Services Review (CFSR) monitors and evaluates state child welfare systems.
* State: The mission of the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) is to improve the economic and social well-being of Wisconsin’s children, youth, and families.

DCF’s focus and commitment is to protect children and youth, strengthen families, and support communities.

* Native American Tribes: Native American Tribes have sovereign rights and may use their separate tribal court systems.

County and tribal professionals may work together with families.

* County: Wisconsin is a county administered, state supervised system.

State and Federal standards require consistency, and some counties may have more requirements.

1. This section reviews Wisconsin Statute, Chapter 48: The Children’s Code. Chapter 48 directly defines the responsibilities of the Department of Children and Families, the courts, county human or social service departments, and specific responsibilities of child protective service professionals.

The goal of the Children’s Code is to protect children and unborn children, with recognition that children have certain basic needs along with the need to be free from physical, sexual, or emotional injury or exploitation in a safe and permanent family.

We strive to preserve and strengthen the unity of the family. We recognize that, under certain circumstances, in order to ensure that the needs of a child are met, the court may determine that it’s in the best interest of the child for the child to be removed from their parents temporarily or permanently.

1. This section explores ethical practice and cultural humility in child welfare practice.

Ethical practice includes:

* Dual relationships and boundaries
* Confidentiality – balancing the following factors in public agencies:
  + The rights of individuals to have their privacy protected, and
  + Sharing private information in order to provide services and/or protect vulnerable people

Cultural humility includes being curious and having a desire to understand cultural experiences of others by:

* Suspending judgment
* Recognizing that they are the experts on their own lives
* Demonstrating an openness and interest in understanding
* Understanding that others define themselves; you do not define them

**On-the-Job Application Activities**

Listed in this section are optional transfer of training activities to support the learner in applying the knowledge acquired during the Introduction to CPS: CPS in Wisconsin Pre-Service Module to their CPS roles and responsibilities.

These four activities are optional and are provided only to aid the child welfare professional and supervisor/coach in supporting transfer of learning from pre-service to the agency. The child welfare professional, with input from their supervisor/coach, may choose to complete all, some, or none of these activities or substitute in other activities.

Each of the four activities are described below, and a resource section to aid the post-activity supervisor/coach discussion with the child welfare professional follows the description of each activity.

**Option 1: The Wisconsin Child Welfare Model for Practice Activity**

* Download the most recent Wisconsin Child Welfare Model for Practice document under “Practice Model” on the following link: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/model>.
* Review the Wisconsin Child Welfare Model for Practice.
* Discuss how the Wisconsin Child Welfare Model for Practice has implications in your agency and child welfare work with your supervisor or coach

**Option 2: NASW Code of Ethics Activity**

* The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics is a set of standards that guide the professional conduct of social workers. All child welfare professionals, whether or not a social worker, should review the Code and affirm their commitment to abide by the Code of Ethics.
* Follow this link to the NASW Code of Ethics and review the document: https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English
* Discuss any highlights, questions, or concerns regarding potential ethical dilemmas in your work with your supervisor or coach.

**Option 3: Confidentiality Questions Activity**

* Schedule time to meet with your supervisor or coach to discuss several or all of the “Confidentiality Questions for your Supervisor” referenced in the pre-service module and listed below.
* How are you protected legally as an employee of your agency?
* What is the agency’s policy about how to ensure confidentiality of files?
* Who can share information about a family?
* Who do you go to with a question about whether or not to talk about a family?
* Who has the right to access information face-to-face, in writing, and over the phone?
* What are the limits to what information they can have?
* What is the agency policy about how people request information?
* Can they request information over the phone?
* Do you always get a release of information before sending information?
* Do you ask for a written request?
* What if the person calling says it’s an emergency?

**Resource for Option 3: Confidentiality Questions Activity**

This resource section is provided to aid the post-activity supervisor/coach discussion with their child welfare professional after completion of Option 3 related to the Confidentiality Questions Activity.

The questions listed in the Confidentiality Questions Activity are meant to further conversation around ethical practice in child welfare between you and your new child welfare professional. To support your conversation, you may want to review the NASW Code of Ethics, Section 1.07 Privacy and Confidentiality provides guidance on the Confidentiality Questions: <https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English/Social-Workers-Ethical-Responsibilities-to-Clients>.

**Option 4: Wisconsin Statute, Chapter 48 Activity**

* Review Chapter 48 on the following link: <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/48>
* Discuss how Chapter 48 will guide your practice with your supervisor or coach

**Resource for Option 4: Wisconsin Statute, Chapter 48 Activity**

This resource section is provided to aid the post-activity supervisor/coach discussion with their child welfare professional after completion of Option 4 related to the Wisconsin Statute, Chapter 48 Activity.

Reference Chapter 48 Children’s Code and identify specific subsections related to the new child welfare professional’s area(s) of practice. Chapter 48 is available at:

<https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/48>.