



Annual Report 2025



Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System

The Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System (WCWPDS) provides innovative, research-based, learner centered, and culturally responsible learning opportunities to child welfare professionals and caregivers. We strive to support professionals in being the best they can be through education, skill development, strategic partnerships, and effective advocacy.



Programmatic Areas

For each programmatic area we will highlight a few of the most significant accomplishment of the past year. If you are interested in further information or detail in any of the areas, we would truly welcome you to reach out to anyone within the WCWPDS for further information.



17
total
cohorts

13 Balance of the State
4 Milwaukee

274
total
participants

207 Balance of the State and
Public Adoption Staff
67 Milwaukee

238
participants
finished WiLearn

183 Balance of the State and
Public Adoption Staff
55 Milwaukee

..... Sample Range: 9/1/2024 - 10/31/2025

Key events

Orientation: Balance of the State (BOS) continues to provide orientation sessions for each new cohort. Cohort members and their supervisors and/or coaches attend prior to their first WiLearn Element and Community Huddle.

Facilitator Development: Several WiLearn facilitators helped launch the WiLearn Youth Justice program, and guided Youth Justice trainers to become facilitators.

Feedback Collection: We began using new, simpler survey evaluations to increase participant completion rate.

Auto-Enrollment: We continued auto-enrolling WiLearners into *Case Practice with American Indian Tribes: Understanding WICWA and Safety in Child Protective Services – Impending Danger* foundation courses. Foundation compliance rates have increased to **94%** since the auto enrollment of these courses.

Continued offerings

In addition to the WiLearn offerings in 2025, the WCWPDS continued to offer its cadre of the previous out of home care, foundation, fundamentals, ongoing and youth justice trainings.

932

face-to-face opportunities

409 designated for child welfare professionals

523 designated for out of home care workers

face-to-face delivery modality

14 hybrid

61 in-person

857 virtual instructor led training (VILT)

19,886

total attendees

13,684 child welfare professionals

6,022 out of home care workers

47

**standalone
web-based modules**

4,696

total attendees

Large increase attributed to
Nurturing Connections

20

**web-based
curriculum packages**

2,060

total attendees

* Out of Home Care

Enrollment: Served approximately **6100 enrollees** in foster/adoptive and youth care training sessions, including both foster and adoptive parent training offered in Spanish.

Training Revisions: Completed and launched significant revision to *Think Trauma*, a training for youth care professionals and supervisors.

Emotional Development Training: Offered *Leaning into Teens Emotional Development*, requested by Milwaukee and counties.

Continued Offerings: Continued to offer and monitor enrollment in online Youth Care Professional training suite.

New Training Development: Successfully Launched *Nurturing Connections*, the new foundation-level training for foster and adoptive families.

- Developed two additional modules: *Legal Issues* and *Supporting Indian Children*.
- Redesigned website to present materials and requirements while maximizing ease-of-use.
- Prepared contract trainers on new material.

* Ongoing Training

Training Collaboration: In collaboration with the Division of Safety and Permanence (DSP), via an Request for Proposal (RFP) with Sowers Education, we offered four sessions of *Ending the Game Supporter Training*, which provides best practices to support sex trafficking victims and strategies to foster coercion resiliency.

Ethics and Boundaries: Completed the RFP process for the next round of Ethics and Boundaries training. Aspire developed and trained 12 sessions of *Ethics and Boundaries 2025-2027* for Child Welfare Professionals and Leadership.

* Youth Services



WiLearn: Rolled out the very first cohort of *WiLearn Youth Justice*.

New Offerings: Began offering new training: *Youth Justice Philosophy and Case Process Training (YJPCP)*.

Design and Development: Designed a 3-year development plan for Advanced Youth Assessment And Screening Instrument (YASI) Training, with development to begin in 2026.

New Certifications: Finished formally certifying the 3rd cohort of YASI Coaches.

Toolkit Rollout and Recertifications: Rolled out Toolkit 1 to YASI coach cohorts 1 and 2 and conducted recertifications, which present opportunities for coaches to conduct YASI Booster annual training requirement credits.

Conferences: Assisted with *Conference on Child Welfare and the Courts*, and presented a break out session at the *Wisconsin Juvenile Court Intake Association (WJCIA)* conference.

Coach Event: Participated in the *Annual YASI Coach Event* with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and county partners.

Legal Trainings: Once again, we contracted with the Children's Court Improvement Program (CCIP) to develop and train legal topics. We offered two in-person and two face-to-face versions of the following trainings:

- *Court Procedures in CHIPS and Guardianship Cases*
- *Understanding Termination of Parental Rights in Child Welfare*

Continued Offerings: Continued recommended and required Child Protective Services, Foster Care Coordination, and Youth Justice Trainings, tailored to agency roles.

* Fundamentals Training

Training Updates: Provided the 26 Fundamental trainings in the subjects: *Access, Initial Assessment, Ongoing, Concurrent Case Planning, Placement, and Making the Most of Family Interaction*.

Participants: **351 total participants**

* eWiSACWIS Online

Updated the following modules:

- *eWiSACWIS Data Quality: Overview and Techniques*
- *eWiSACWIS Journeys: CPS Report to Reunification Part 1*
- *eWiSACWIS Tour: Basics and Desktop*
- *eWiSACWIS Youth Justice: Referral and Case Information*
- *eWiSACWIS Youth Justice: Restorative Justice*

Created Created one new module on the overall Kinship Care workflow:

- *eWiSACWIS Core: Kinship Care*

* Safety Training



Safety in CPS Present Danger: *Present Danger* training is a required component of WiLearn. The training is now being provided earlier in the sequence after feed back from county agencies regarding the needs of their staff and agency. Monthly sessions were provided to WiLearn cohorts in addition to **4 open sessions** available to all staff across the state.



Safety in CPS Impending Danger: *Impending Danger* is provided monthly and includes both WiLearn participants who are auto enrolled, as well as learners who self-register from across the state.

Supervising Safety: Provided both *Module 1: Present Danger and Protective Planning* and *Module 2: Assessing Impending Danger*, serving **16 participants** in each module. We also provided two sessions of *Assessing Impending Danger* post Module 2 for the staff of supervisors who participated in the 2025 learning.

* Tribal Training



Facilitation: Facilitated *Case Practice with American Indian Tribes* element in WiLearn, and facilitated *Case Practice with American Indian Tribes: Understanding WICWA* training.

New Trainer: Development of one new trainer for the *Case Practice with American Indian Tribes* in WiLearn element and *Case Practice with American Indian Tribes: Understanding WICWA* training.

Modifications: Began modifications of *Youth Justice WiLearn* for the *Case Practice with American Indian Tribes* element and *Case Practice with American Indian Tribes: Understanding WICWA*.

Development: Developed a plan for supporting supervisors in collaborating with tribes and supervising Wisconsin Indian Child Welfare act (WICWA).

* Professional Development Network

Previously known as “Home Visiting”

Enrollment: Served approximately **1500 enrollees** from areas including home visitors, family support, and early childhood professionals.

Online Training Modules: Completed four online training modules on Child Care Coordination, sponsored by the Department of Health Services (DHS).

Conference: Sponsored the *Fulfilling the Promise* conference to over 300 attendees (in person and virtual).

New Developments: Began assessment and development of foundation-level training requirements, based in part on the curriculum developed by the Institute for the Advancement of Family Support Professionals.

Continued Offerings: Continued providing training and technical assistance for national home visiting models, *Healthy Families America* and *Parent as Teachers*, and continued to offer training sponsored by the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board (CANPB).

* Evaluation

Built Capacity: The WCWPDS evaluation committee developed an evaluation logic model and created an evaluation design process. We held staff and committee presentations on measuring learning outcomes.



Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)

Process: Created 1st annual WiLearn report and used its findings to inform training enhancements.



2025 New Evaluation Priorities: Designed evaluations for *WiLearn Youth Justice* and *Nurturing Connections* Training for Foster and Adoptive Parents programs that assess knowledge acquisition, learner confidence, and learning application.

* Supervisor and Leadership Training

Supervisor Foundation: Completed one round of Supervisor Foundation – Educational, Administrative, Supportive, and Clinical.

Offerings: Offered one session of *Coaching: Bridging the Gap Between Training & Practice*, two sessions of *Developing Skills & Methods for Effective Group Facilitation*, and two sessions of *Reflective Supervision for Child and Family Services*.

Updates: Began comprehensive updates to all four Supervisor Foundation courses.

Supervisor Summits: New Supervisors were brought together to explore interest in continuing discussions about topics covered in Supervisor Foundation trainings. Based on interest, quarterly “Supervisor Summits” will launch in 2026.

* Additional Trainings and Projects

Module Updates: Conducted reviews and updates of the *Trauma and Permanency Pre-Service* training modules.

Accessibility: Began accessibility project, striving to bring our materials into Federal and University compliance. Initial focus is on forward facing materials, followed by internal materials.

Hybrid Trainings: Provided 7 Hybrid trainings to learners outside of WiLearn – *Culturally Responsible Practice* (2); *Trauma Informed Practice* (2); *Engaging Families* (2); and *Case Practice with American Indian Tribes* (1).

* Training Support and Administration (TSA)

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System

Integration: Overhauled purchasing and fiscal processes as part of the University of Wisconsin’s implementation of Workday ERP system; this probably took years off the life of the TSA manager.

Fiscal Stewardship: Successfully managed and allocated all costs of \$7.1 million contract with zero audit findings or areas of concern.



Supporting the New Professional Experience:

Expanded guidance and support for new child welfare professionals, including launching the first WiLearn Youth Justice cohorts.

Data and Reporting: Enhanced our data quality and output of standard and custom reports, including the Youth Justice Quality Assurance and County Ongoing Training Hours reports.

* Instructional Design

Instructional designers work with subject matter experts to create educational content that facilitates effective learning. The design process involves **analyzing** learners' needs, **designing** instructional materials, and **implementing** strategies to achieve specific learning outcomes. Their work is rooted in principles from educational psychology, adult learning theory, and instructional technology.

2025 Accomplishments: While there was much work that the ID Team accomplished in 2025, here are just a few of the highlights given the limited space available.

Development: Developed the first ever [WCWPDS Course Catalog](#)[1], available on the WCWPDS website. It includes a listing of all WCWPDS-sponsored courses and resources available for 2026. The catalog will be updated and published each January.

New Curriculum: Finalized and rolled out the new foster parent foundation curriculum, *Nurturing Connections: Training for Foster and Adoptive Parents*. Information is available on the WCWPDS website on the [Foster and Adoptive Parent Caregiver Training page](#)[2] and the [Relative Caregiver Training page](#)[3].

Training Update: Completed the annual update to the *Civil Rights for Child Professionals* web-based training and posted the 2026 version on the WCWPDS website's [Civil Rights for Child Welfare Professionals 2026 – Outside of PDSOnline page](#)[4]. It is also available in PDS Online.

New Resources: Designed two resources on Subsidized Guardianship to support child welfare professionals and caregivers. Information is available on the WCWPDS website at [Subsidized Guardianship Resources page](#)[5].

Leadership Resource: Created a leadership resource, *Strengths-Based Feedback: A Method for Delivering Effective Performance Evaluations*, that is available on the [Resources for Leadership page](#)[6] of the WCWPDS website.



Transfer of Learning: Finalized the creation of several Transfer of Learning (TOL) activities for WiLearn and posted a comprehensive list of child welfare professional, youth care professional, and caregiver training topics with TOL activities on the [Transfer of Learning WCWPDS website](#)[7].

Design and Development: Supported the design and development of 2025 training priorities, including ALCs, PDSAs, and Spaced Ed training, and maintained existing caregiver and child welfare professional web-based modules and curriculums to align with policy changes.

[1] <https://wcwpds.wisc.edu/2026-wcwpds-course-catalog/>

[2] <https://care.wcwpds.wisc.edu/>

[3] <https://care.wcwpds.wisc.edu/relative-caregiver/>

[4] <https://wcwpds.wisc.edu/web-based-courses/civilrights/civil-rights-for-child-welfare-professionals-2026-outside-of-pdsonline/>

[5] <https://wcwpds.wisc.edu/web-based-courses/subsidized-guardianship-resources/>

[6] <https://wcwpds.wisc.edu/resources-for-leadership/>

[7] <https://wcwpds.wisc.edu/transfer-of-learning-2/>

* Plan-Do-Study-Act Collaboratives (PDSA)

17 participating agencies 16 county agencies • 1 tribal agency

Participants: In 2025, the second cohort of PDSA Collaborative teams completed work. Overall **2 cohorts** participated in this topic with seventeen agencies (16 county and 1 tribal) sending improvement teams comprised of professionals and supervisors from varying units including:

- Child Protective Services
- Indian Child Welfare
- Youth Justice
- The Birth to 3 Program
- Children's Long-Term Support Services
- Comprehensive Community Services
- Behavioral Health / Mental Health / Substance Abuse Services.

Mission: The 2024-2025 PDSA Collaborative mission was to improve professional collaboration and communication between child welfare and human services/behavioral health partners when they are jointly supporting families.

View the [PDSA 2024-2025 Executive Report](#)[1] for more details.

Visit our [professional collaboration toolkit](#)[2] for successfully implemented examples and tools for your agency to use.

* Spaced Ed

956 child welfare professional participants

2025 Topic: *Domestic Violence in Child Welfare.*

90.85%

of participants
strongly agreed/agreed that:

“the question scenarios were realistic and relatable to my practice.”

96.52%

of participants
strongly agreed/agreed that:

“I was able to complete each Spaced Education question in 5 minutes or less.”

90.51%

of participants
strongly agreed/agreed that:

“the feedback provided after answering each question was relevant and helpful to my learning.”

[1] <https://media.wcwpds.wisc.edu/website-docs/wcwpds/org-development/pdsa/2024-25%20Professional%20Collaboration%20PDSA%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>

[2] <https://wcwpds.wisc.edu/organizational-development/organizational-process-improvement/plan-do-study-act-pdsa-collaborative/improving-professional-collaboration/>



Applied Learning Communities (ALCs)

2025 Topic: *Assessing and Planning for the Safety Ages Birth – 5 years.*

Standards Analysis: The 2025 ALC examined research, practice, and policy related to working with young children (ages 0-5), with a focus on developmentally informed assessment and planning.

Transfer of Learning: Developed materials with supervisors and lead workers to support local implementation and strengthen developmentally responsive practice.

Materials Offered: The learning materials addressed the social, emotional, and physical development of young children; caregiver mental health, substance use and interpersonal violence; and the identification and use of parent/caregiver protective capacities. These materials are available on the PDS website.

Conferences

WCWPDS supported one conference in 2025, co-sponsored by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Children's Court Improvement Program.

Conference on Child Welfare and the Courts

Preserving Connections to Family, Culture, and Community

529 attendees

The 2025 Conference brought together county, tribal, and state participants to advance solutions that improve outcomes for children and families by preserving their connections to family, culture, and community. The conference highlighted innovative child welfare practice from around the state and nation.





Providing innovative, research-based, learner centered,
and culturally responsible learning opportunities to child welfare
professionals and caregivers.

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