

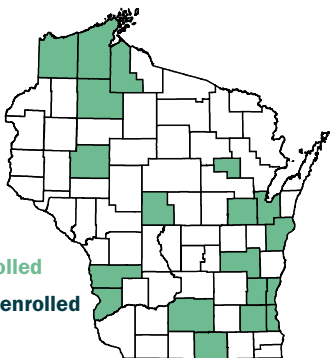
Agency Stakeholder's Annual Report 2022

Overview

The [Applied Learning Communities \(ALCs\)](#) were launched in 2019. Since then, [most local child welfare agencies](#) in Wisconsin have participated in the ALCs, including three of the 11 federally recognized Wisconsin tribes, over 85% of counties, and the Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services (DMCPS).

The ALCs provide space and structure to self-selected, learning cohorts who are eager to engage in a facilitated study of a child welfare policy or area of practice. Designed in partnership with the [Wisconsin Department of Children & Families \(DCF\)](#) and facilitated by the [Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System \(WCWPDS\)](#), the ALCs reflect the values of the [Wisconsin Child Welfare Model for Practice](#) by utilizing adult learning strategies to promote dialogue among Child Welfare Professionals.

In 2022, a total of 26 agencies applied, and 19 agencies enrolled, including 78 supervisors and lead workers. The ALC topic was *Danger Assessment & Decision-Making at Access* with a focus of study on *Child Protective Services Access & Initial Assessment Standards: VI. The Screening Decision and VII. The Timeframe for Response*.



19 local child welfare agencies represented at the ALCs

78

supervisors & lead workers



Learning Objectives

Module 1

- Describe personal biases according to Harvard's Implicit Bias Association Test.
- Analyze how personal biases may influence & impact danger assessment & decision-making at Access.

Module 2

- Describe how the assessment of danger informs subsequent decisions.
- Describe the 4-step framework for assessing danger at Access.

Module 3

- Train agency staff in the 4-step framework for assessing danger at Access.
- Answer staff's questions related to the assessment of danger at Access.

Module 4

- Analyze how personal biases may influence & impact danger assessment & decision-making at Access.
- Recommend improvements to local operations at the home agency and state-wide practice standards, eWiSACWIS, and WCWPDS training, to increase clarity and consistency in decision-making at Access.

Five Modules

Module 1: *Exploring hidden bias & its influence on decision-making*

Module 2: *Assessing danger at Access*

Module 3: *Transferring learning to home agency*

Module 4: *Practicing policy analysis as a tool to recommend change*

Module 5: *Wrap-up*

Danger & Decision Making at Access

4 Step Framework

Application of the 4-step framework supports the CPS professional's ability to articulate decision-making in precise and culturally responsible ways. When CPS professionals make it a practice to describe their rationale to other staff as well as families and community members, it illustrates the thought processes that lead to the decision-making. This is different than simply articulating the status of a CPS report (i.e., screened in or out). Clearly understood decisions promote accountability with agency staff, colleagues, and community partners, which strengthens credibility and promotes trust. Accountability at Access is critical because it is the first function of CPS, and it determines whether CPS has the authority to initiate further involvement.



Participants of the 2022 ALC were introduced to the four-step tool in Module 1 through the paper entitled, *“Danger Assessment & Decision-Making at Access.”* The four steps were reinforced in Modules 2 and 3. Specifically, in Module 2, participants viewed videos providing brief guidance on how to think about the step before applying the information to a CPS report. In Module 3, participants transferred the learning to staff at their agency using resources developed by WCWPDS to support the work.

During Module 2, supervisors reacted to the 4-step framework. Overall, supervisors found that it promoted careful decision-making because it slowed the decision-making process down, prompting the user to reflect on the facts of the report and consider how personal bias may impact interpretation.

A supervisor described it this way:

“We have done this recently and it keeps you focused on decision-making based on the facts of the Access report instead of getting caught up in the reporter’s emotions and opinions. It helps us focus on what information is related to a CPS concern, and the danger assessment.”

Top Local Recommendations

1. Facilitate self-awareness and identification of biases and their influence on decision-making.
2. Use a tool or framework to prompt CPS Access professionals and supervisors/designees to think through each component of the danger definitions at Access, including both Present and Likely Impending Danger.

Top State Recommendations

Policy Clarifications

1. Define the use of CPS history in decision-making and provide guidance on how to interpret it.
2. Provide additional guidance on screening.
3. Require justification for all screening decisions.

To access the annual handbook other report documents, visit the [ALC website](#).



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For rationale to support recommendations,
view the Annual Stakeholder’s Report.