

History of Programming Related to Intensive Foster Care (IFC)

In 2006, Wraparound Milwaukee established a Professional Foster Parent Program designed for teen girls, ages 13-17 years, who had serious emotional and mental health needs and who frequently ran away. The program began with four private Child Placing Agencies and exceptions were granted and by DCF to implement the program. The program served twenty-five teen girls (between 2006-April 2011) and demonstrated of the eighteen teens discharged 61% achieved permanency; 55% achieved good school attendance; 39% had good academic progress (2 made the honor roll); 25% had positive change on their clinical profiles; and runaway behaviors continued but chronicity and severity levels were contained. The Program costs less than group homes and residential treatment and continues to operate in Milwaukee.

From 2014-2020, RCC capacity in Wisconsin declined 32%. Placement data shows that the number of children placed out-of-state grew from 44 in 2016 to 119 in 2020. By the end of 2020, a total of 250 children from 46 different counties had experienced an out-of-state placement. The pandemic and workforce trends have contributed to the increasing numbers of children exiting the state.

Since 2016 the Wisconsin County Human Services Association (WCHSA), in collaboration with the Wisconsin Association of Family and Children Agencies (WAFCA), and support from Department of Human Services (DHS) and Department of Children and Families (DCF), has been assessing opportunities for expanding the continuum of placement options that keeps youth with complex needs in-state. In 2021, WCHSA provided leadership for an Organizational Effectiveness (OE) Team to pull together the various efforts occurring to address this concern and develop an OE Plan. The desired future state of the OE effort is as follows: "Wisconsin has a continuum of care, ranging from in-home services to residential treatment, that are skilled in meeting the individual needs of complex youth and their families and keeps them connected to their communities". One recommendation emerging from the OE Team in 2022 was to expand utilization of Professional Foster Parents (PFPs) in Wisconsin.