

Wisconsin's Child Welfare Process Explained: Ongoing (In-Home)

Wisconsin's child welfare system is divided into three stages - access, initial assessment, and ongoing. Ongoing is the stage in the process where local and tribal child welfare agencies provide services for families based on needs identified in the initial assessment and conversations with the family. Many children whose families receive services following an initial assessment are able to remain in home. In these circumstances, supporting continued safety while achieving long-term stability is a priority. The below infographic showcases how a case with a child remaining in the home moves through this stage of the system.

The child welfare professional (CWP), the family and the Indian child's tribe (when applicable) work collaboratively throughout the case. Together, they build on parent/caregiver strengths and address safety related issues identified in the most recent safety assessment.

A CWP meets with the family to learn about safety concerns and needs.



The CWP partners with the family, their support network, and the Indian child's tribe to create a family case plan. The family case plan outlines what it takes to create safety and achieve a safe case closure. The plan must be completed within 60 days following the case transition to ongoing.



The CWP has face-to-face contact with the parents and child at least once per month. If there is an in-home safety plan or other needs, additional contact with the family, child, and family's support system who are part of the plan will occur.

Some in-home cases may be formalized through a Child in Need of Protection and/or Services petition. These may have more formal court conditions for the parents/caregivers which are supported through the family case plan.

The CWP engages with the family around building parental protective capacities, connecting to community/cultural resources, and enhancing informal/formal supports that can continue after child welfare involvement to achieve safety and desired changes. This information is documented in the family case plan.



Family case plans must be reviewed at least every 6 months. Family case plans are updated as needed. The purpose of the family case plan is to set up goals to help the family sustain safety on their own and for case closure to occur.



Evaluating and assessing child safety is continuous throughout the case. If safety cannot be managed in the home, placement into out-of-home care may be necessary.

See out-of-home ongoing case flow.

Case closure occurs when child welfare services are no longer needed. The CWP will partner with the family to identify and connect with community and cultural supports, formal supports, and natural supports that can remain involved with the family after child welfare services end.

For ICWA cases best practice includes that a letter must be sent to the tribe indicating the case has been closed.



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Tribal child welfare agencies may have a different process that is guided by tribal law or code. Additionally, county child welfare agencies must follow [policy and/or guidance](#) related to tribal families, which includes collaboration with the Indian child's tribe.