



2026 Together for Children Conference

April 22-24, 2026

The Wilderness Resort | Wisconsin Dells, WI



The purpose of the 2026 Together for Children conference is to provide information and skills that support a multidisciplinary approach to improve prevention, treatment, investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect. Topics presented will address emerging issues, research questions and public policy changes in child welfare and child protection. As a reminder, the materials presented at the Together for Children Conference are for continuing education purposes only. The content and material shared during this event reflect an approach, view, experience, statement or opinion of the presenters or authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of Children’s Wisconsin or Prevent Child Abuse Wisconsin (PCAW). Moreover, the presence of any speaker, author, vendor or participant in the conference does not constitute an endorsement of their organization, views or services. Lastly, the information shared during the event does not create any patient-physician relationship and should not be used as a substitute for professional diagnosis.

2026 Together for Children

April 22 - 24, 2026 | The Wilderness Resort, Wisconsin Dells, WI

Wednesday, April 22: Seminar Day

9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Full day seminars focus on one main topic

Thursday, April 23: Conference Day 1

9 a.m. - 10:45 a.m. Welcome & Keynote

11 a.m. - 4:45 p.m. Breakout sessions

Friday, April 24: Conference Day 2

9 a.m. - 10 a.m. Keynote Presentation

10:15 a.m. - 4 p.m. Breakout Sessions

Conference Fees

Registration Deadline: April 3, 2026

Early Bird Registration:

Register by March 13, 2026

- 1 Day: \$150.00
- 2 Days: \$249.00
- 3 Days: \$320.00

General Registration:

Register after March 13, 2026

- 1 Day: \$175.00
- 2 Days: \$299.00
- 3 Days: \$370.00

The registration fee includes light continental breakfast and lunch for each day.

Conference Attendance

Conference attendees may attend up to:

- 1 full day seminar
- 2 keynote sessions
- 6 breakout sessions

Who should attend?

- Child advocacy center personnel
- Child protective services
- CASA staff and volunteers
- Sexual assault and domestic violence personnel
- Judicial officers, attorneys & guardians ad litem
- Law enforcement officials
- Medical and health professionals
- Multi-disciplinary teams
- School personnel
- Social workers, therapists, and psychologists
- Foster care workers and parents
- Anyone interested in child abuse & neglect issues and prevention

Continuing Education

Additional information regarding continuing education hours will be updated as the accreditation organizations approve the conference hours.

Discounts and Scholarships

Discounts

Group and Multidisciplinary Team (MDT)

10% Group and MDT registration discounts are available when **five or more** attendees are from the same organization OR multidisciplinary team. (MDT must include at least two different disciplines; i.e. social work, legal, law enforcement, medical, etc.).

Email [PCAW](#) to request a discount code for your group.

Student

Full-time students will receive a reduced fee when they register as a student. Students must email a copy of their current semester schedule to [PCAW](#).

Scholarships

General

Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors, there are a limited number of general scholarships available. Applications are available on the PCAW website. Application Deadline: Feb. 27, 2026

Email [PCAW](#) with questions.

Lodging

The Wilderness Resort, Glacier Canyon Lodge

45 Hillman Road | Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965

A block of rooms has been reserved with the following rates:

- **\$101** for a single (1 occupant)
- **\$129** for a double queen couch glacier canyon lodge room (2-4 occupants)
- **\$159** for a 2 bedroom deluxe glacier canyon lodge room (up to 4 occupants)

Contact the hotel directly to book a room before the block expires on *Sunday, March 22, 2026*. Call 1-800-867-9453 and indicate that you are with **Leader #B01359** to receive the group discount and to be placed in the group block.

If your group is tax exempt, please remember to bring your tax exemption certificate for check in.

Cancellation Policy & Refunds

In the event that a registration must be changed, substitutions from the same agency are permitted at no charge. Refund requests must be sent via email to [PCAW](#) by April 3, 2026.

The requests received by this date will be refunded the conference fees less a \$50 administrative fee. Refund requests received after April 3, 2026 will not be granted.

No refunds will be given in the event inclement weather forces cancellation of all or part of the conference. No-shows will be responsible for the full registration fee.

Special Accommodations

Children's Hospital and Health System fully intends to comply with the legal requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If any participant is in need of accommodation, please email [PCAW](#).

Conference Agenda

Wednesday, April 22 | Seminar Sessions

8 a.m. - 9 a.m. | Registration

Networking and light continental breakfast

9 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. | Seminar Sessions

Attend the same seminar for both the morning and afternoon sessions.

Understanding CPS and Juvenile Court

Lauren Krukowski, MSW; Michelle Swardenski, JD; Kristen Wetzel, JD

This full-day seminar will begin with an overview of the Child Protection System (CPS) from mandated reporting and receiving a CPS report, responding to CPS calls, and how safety is assessed by child welfare professionals. Presenters will go through all aspects of a Child in Need of Protection and Services (CHIPS) case when juvenile court jurisdiction is requested as well as the various permanency options for a child – reunification, guardianship, or termination of parental rights / adoption. Testifying tips will be provided to those who may receive a court subpoena. Finally, the differences between juvenile court CHIPS cases and criminal child abuse cases will be discussed. This seminar is focused on individuals who do not have experience working with CPS or the juvenile court system.

Objectives:

- Understand the role of the child protective system and how safety is assessed and responded to.
 - Recognize the legal requirements and procedures in a Child in Need of Protection and Services (CHIPS) case.
 - Learn how to convey information to a court and/or child welfare professional.
 - Identify the differences between child abuse or neglect in a CHIPS case and criminal child abuse.
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From Initial Disclosure to Trial - Protecting Child Victims Through Best Practices in Interviewing, Investigation, and Courtroom Practice

Lynn Cook, MSW, APSW; Miriam Falk, JD; Erin M. Karshen, JD; Matthew Torbenson, JD

This seminar will spend a day focusing on best practices in taking a victim's initial disclosure (including when it is not necessary to so), investigating and corroborating the disclosure to garner corroborating evidence, and protecting the victim through pretrial motion practice and at trial. Topics will include essential interviewing, trauma informed interviewing practices, following the disclosure trail, collecting micro-corroborating evidence to support the victim's disclosure and strengthen the case, advanced topics in forensic interviewing (such as when to delay the initial forensic interview and when is it appropriate to conduct a secondary forensic interview), and protecting your victim through pretrial motion practice, expert testimony, and at trial.

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Conference Agenda

Wednesday, April 22 | Seminar Sessions

9 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. | Seminar Sessions

Objectives:

- Attendees will identify best practices at each stage of the child maltreatment investigation.
 - Attendees will learn to apply best practices in child maltreatment investigations in order to minimize trauma to the victim and maximize the ability to gather evidence and hold offenders accountable.
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Enhancing Multidisciplinary Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Cases

Jacqueline Gremler, MS, CSW; Nina Maroszek Brennan, MSW, CAPSW; Payne Hughes

This seminar is intended to equip attendees with a comprehensive and child-centered framework for responding to complex child abuse and exploitation cases. Participants will strengthen their ability to identify and investigate problematic sexualized behaviors in youth, distinguish normative from concerning behaviors, and apply research-informed decision-making within multidisciplinary teams. This session will also examine the disclosure process in child sexual abuse cases, with particular focus on recantation, the systemic and emotional pressures influencing children, and the implications for child safety and case outcomes. Speakers will emphasize the improvement of coordinated system responses that support children and families throughout investigations. Participants will explore best practices for preparing children and caregivers for forensic interviews through developmentally appropriate, trauma-informed communication. Additionally, we will highlight effective collaboration between ICAC task forces and Child Advocacy Centers, from CyberTip intake through forensic interviewing. The overall goal of this multi-faceted seminar is to promote stronger interagency partnerships, improve investigative outcomes, and enhance support for children and families.

Objectives:

- Participants will differentiate normative, concerning and problematic sexualized behavior in youth utilizing evidence-based criteria
- Participants will evaluate the role of coordinated MDT's and inter-agency collaboration in improving the outcomes of investigations
- Participants will identify child-centered, research informed practices to multidisciplinary responses to these investigations
- Participants will learn to apply trauma-informed and developmentally appropriate strategies when preparing children and caregivers for forensic interviews

12:15 p.m. - 1:15 p.m. | Lunch

1:15 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. | Seminar Sessions

Attend the same seminar for both the morning and afternoon sessions.

Conference Agenda

Thursday, April 23 | Conference Day 1

8 a.m. - 9 a.m. | Registration

Networking and light continental breakfast

9 a.m. - 9:15 a.m. | Welcome

Opening comments

9:15 a.m. - 10:45 a.m. | Keynote

How Poverty Became Neglect in Federal and Wisconsin Law Policy: A 1961 Magic Trick

Prudence Beidler Carr, JD | American Bar Association

Do you know where the terms “best interests,” “fit parents,” or “contrary to the welfare of the child” come from? Have you ever wondered why federal foster care funding is linked with eligibility for Aid to Dependent Children? Do you know how school integration in the 1960s is connected to federal and Wisconsin foster care law? This presentation will deepen your understanding of the origins of federal and Wisconsin state child welfare law and policy by providing examples of how these origins connect with social, economic, and legal developments related to poverty that span American history and create a through-line to child welfare practice today.

Objectives:

- Deepen - Deepen understanding of origins of federal and Wisconsin child welfare law and policy.
- Connect - Provide examples of how these origins connect with historical social, economic, and legal developments related to race, parental fitness, and federal funding.
- Challenge - Challenge audience to think about how to untangle it all in Wisconsin and beyond.

10:45 a.m. - 11 a.m. | Break

11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. | Breakout Sessions

Trauma-Informed Investigations: Bridging Medicine, Law Enforcement, and Child Advocacy

Laura Clary, MSN, RN, FNE-A/P, SANE-A, SANE-P; Scott Kilpatrick

This workshop, presented by an experienced Forensic Nurse and Detective, provides attendees with critical insights into responding to child sexual abuse in a victim-centered, trauma-informed manner. Participants will explore the neurobiology of trauma and its impact on memory, behavior, and disclosure, equipping law enforcement officers to conduct more effective, compassionate interviews with child victims. The workshop highlights the essential role of a multidisciplinary approach, recognized as best practice in addressing child sexual abuse.

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Conference Agenda

Thursday, April 23 | Conference Day 1

11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. | Breakout Sessions

Through collaboration among law enforcement, forensic nurses, and allied professionals, attendees will learn how to reduce the risk of revictimization, ensure thorough and sensitive investigations, and support the child's physical and emotional healing. Using real-world case studies, the presenters provide a unique perspective on how these complex cases are managed across disciplines, emphasizing trauma-informed strategies that prioritize safety, trust, and dignity for the child. Attendees will leave with actionable tools to strengthen investigative practices, enhance interagency collaboration, and provide a truly survivor-centered response to child sexual abuse.

Objectives:

Participants will:

- Discuss how trauma impacts brain activity including memory, reactions, and behaviors.
- Utilizing case studies, presenters will illustrate how people react differently to trauma in order to understand that no one reaction is "normal."
- Develop trauma-informed techniques that put child abuse victims at ease during the investigative, medical-forensic, and multidisciplinary response.

Appropriate for all audiences

Positive Parenting Made Practical with Triple P Online

Natalie Popple

Triple P Online is an evidence-based parenting program that helps families build positive relationships and manage everyday challenges. This presentation will provide an overview of the program, summarize research demonstrating its' impact on parental confidence and child behavior, and describe how families in Wisconsin are supported from registration through participation to ensure continued success.

Objectives:

- Describe the core components and goals of the Triple P Online program and how it supports parents in promoting positive relationships and managing everyday parenting challenges.
- Summarize key research findings demonstrating the effectiveness of Triple P Online in strengthening family relationships and improving child behavior outcomes.
- Explain the process of family engagement and ongoing support provided to participants throughout their Triple P Online experience.

Beginner

Conference Agenda

Thursday, April 23 | Conference Day 1

11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. | Breakout Sessions

The Rock Families First Movement: A Systems Change Effort

Shelbey Puppe Shelton, MSW, APSW; Kami Williams, CSW

In this session, CPS Program Manager, Kami Williams, CPS Lead Supervisor, Shelbey Shelton, and community partners will share an overview of Rock County Human Services' intensive systems change efforts spanning from 2018 to present. Participants will hear an overview of what efforts have been made, challenges that have been encountered, and initial successes, including how Rock County has safely reduced the number of children in Out of Home Care by over 50%, drastically reduced staff turnover, and built key community partnerships all informed by a vision codesigned with parents with lived experience in the CPS system. At the end, attendees will be encouraged to consider ways that they can bring creative ideas back to their jurisdictions to continually improve service to families.

Objectives:

- Learn about Rock County's efforts, challenges, and successes in systems change efforts
- Understand how incorporating the voices of lived experts and community members can strengthen reform efforts and lead to more equitable and responsive child welfare systems
- Consider how data informed child welfare practices could be used in your jurisdiction
- Brainstorm ideas on ways to bring small incremental shifts back to your jurisdiction

Advanced

What Worked and Why: Evaluating Strategies that Reduced Turnover and Strengthened Retention in Child Welfare

Susan Leggio; Kate Angers; Megan Frederick-Usoh

At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Children's Wisconsin's Child Welfare program was in a state of crisis, facing one of the most complex workforce challenges in its history. High turnover, rising caseloads, and emotional fatigue were straining both staff, leadership and the families they served. In response, the leadership team launched a coordinated set of strategies focused on recruitment, retention and workload management. Data analysis combined with insights directly from employees helped shape a targeted response that was both data-informed and human-centered. As a direct result of their intervention and innovation, turnover dropped to its lowest point in five years, caseloads stabilized, and staff morale improved. In 2025, the Institute for Child and Family Well-Being conducted a retrospective evaluation to understand what worked and why. Through five focus groups, a 25-person staff survey, and analysis of turnover and engagement data, the evaluation identified key drivers of reduced turnover and improved retention.

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Conference Agenda

Thursday, April 23 | Conference Day 1

11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. | Breakout Sessions

Objectives:

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Identify the strategies used to successfully navigate out of a prolonged staffing crisis
- Understand data used to inform strategic planning and monitoring
- Identify those strategies identified as most impactful by staff and leaders

Beginner

12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. | Lunch

1:30 p.m. - 3 p.m. | Breakout Sessions

Diverse perspectives from Early Childhood and Family Mental Health Consultants: Embracing ambiguity while building collaborative relationships with Child Welfare

Brian Myers, MS, ATRL-BC, LPC, IMH-E®; Golshan Motamedi, MS, LMFT, IMH-E®; Nicole Robinson, MSW, LCSW, IECMH-E®; Ari Bar-Lev, JD, LMFT

As Wisconsin continues to break ground in integrating Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) into its Early Care and Education system, Children's WI has worked to develop an IECMHC framework embedding trained IECMH Consultants into different areas, including Child Welfare. Through SAMSHA funding, Children's WI has facilitated a pilot and successful integration of consultation within Child Welfare and other hospital departments and community agencies. This presentation will talk about experiences implementing IECMHC in a variety of Child Welfare settings. As we examine varying consultation experiences, including consultation in Healthy Infant Court, Case Management, Treatment Foster Care, and School-based Mental Health, attendees will have the opportunity to learn in a creative setting about Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health and the ways in which Mental Health Consultation, not only supports children in their early years of life and beyond, but also the adults and systems they interact with every day. Throughout the presentation we will relay anecdotes, share techniques we utilize with the Child Welfare staff we consult with, and provide information on what IECMHC looks like in Child Welfare sub-specialties.

Objectives:

- Identify how the mental health consultation model can be expanded from early childhood education centers to other environments and populations, including child welfare and schools.
- Understand how program partnership within and outside of the agency supports community wide mental health.
- Describe how partnering with existing services, and supporting established providers and caretakers, enhances outcomes for children.

Advanced

Conference Agenda

Thursday, April 23 | Conference Day 1

1:30 p.m. - 3 p.m. | Breakout Sessions

Engaging and Caring for LGBTQ+ Youth

Brad Schlaikowski; Jennifer Makrides, MD

Get ready for a session that is real, energizing, and built for every professional who shows up for young people. Wisconsin is home to LGBTQ+ youth who exhibit a variety of needs across several areas. These young people depend on medical providers, social service workers, and therapists to support them through what is often a challenging experience. Together, we will discuss sexuality and gender identity as well as their differences. We will also explore our society's biases in realms of schools, social supports including families and housing, as well in the healthcare field. Importantly, this session will address youth resilience and identify ways to provide support and resources to these young people. We will include real situations and a safe space to ask honest questions and engage in authentic conversations with professionals who work directly with this population. This breakout is meant for any professional who works with and cares for young people and their families.

Objectives:

Participants will:

- Gain resources and connections to LGBTQ+ organizations across the state for themselves and the youth they serve.
- Develop greater confidence in discussing LGBTQ+ related topics with youth.
- Gain practical, trauma-informed strategies for creating affirming, safe spaces where LGBTQ+ youth feel seen, respected, and supported.
- Better understand the unique risks, protective factors, and lived experiences of LGBTQ+ youth, and how those factors should inform care, engagement, and advocacy.

Appropriate for all audiences

Strengthening Families, Restoring Hope: Family Centered Treatment

Samantha Ryan, LCSW, LCAS, CCJP, CCS; Jennifer Deringer, MSSW, LCSW; Emily Klingenberg, MS, LPC

Families impacted by mental health, trauma, and/or substance use often face significant challenges, including strained relationships, disrupted stability, and the risk of children entering out-of-home care. Family Centered Treatment (FCT) and Family Centered Treatment-Recovery (FCT-R) offer evidence-based, intensive home-based approaches that place families at the heart of healing. These models emphasize strengthening relationships, supporting recovery, and preventing placement through whole-family engagement and trauma-responsive practices. This session will combine lecture, Wisconsin-based case studies, video demonstrations, and facilitated discussions to highlight both the evidence and the lived impact of FCT and FCT-R. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of how these approaches address complex family needs, advance recovery, and improve outcomes for children and caregivers across Wisconsin.

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Conference Agenda

Thursday, April 23 | Conference Day 1

1:30 p.m. - 3 p.m. | Breakout Sessions

Objectives:

- Identify the gaps in traditional mental health and substance use treatments
- Learn the guiding values and clinical components that are used as mechanisms for long-lasting change by FCT and FCT-R
- Discuss program outcomes, successes, and challenges
- Experience an FCT/R session enactment

Appropriate for all audiences

What is the Why: The Reasons Behind What We Do and Don't Do in Forensic Interviews

Liz Ghilardi, MSW, LCSW

This session will guide participants through the phases of a forensic interview and explain the reasons for and research behind each phase. It will incorporate development concepts, question types and other issues important to the forensic interview.

Objectives:

- Participants will be able to identify each phase of the forensic interview and describe the goal of that phase and what steps are being taken in the interview to achieve the goal(s).
- Participants will be provided with research so that they can not only understand the research behind the phases and techniques but also be able explain it to other members of the MDT and how it can be incorporated into interviews, investigations and prosecutions.
- Participants will be able to apply the knowledge received to be able to be able to conduct more defensible and productive interviews of children. Observers will be able to use this knowledge to support the interviewer.

Intermediate

3 p.m. - 3:15 p.m. | Break

3:15 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. | Breakout Sessions

iGuardian Training for Trusted Adults

Steve Moran

Project iGuardian is a training designed to inform trusted adults about the risks that children and teens face in the online environment. Explore ways to educate and empower children and teens on being safe online.

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Conference Agenda

Thursday, April 23 | Conference Day 1

3:15 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. | Breakout Sessions

Objectives:

- Identify risks faced by children and teens online.
- Implement proactive and preventative strategies regarding the safe guarding and support of children online.
- Explore the different types of crimes committed by online predators and how to help the children we seek to protect.

Beginner

Rethinking Neglect: Changing the Story to Change the System

Gabriel McGaughey, MSW; Luke Waldo, MEd

Neglect doesn't happen overnight. It builds as families face mounting stress, limited resources, and social isolation. Yet our systems often treat neglect as a sudden crisis or a matter of individual failure. This session invites participants to explore how reframing the story of neglect can shift practice, policy, and community response toward prevention. Through short presentations, group discussions, and hands-on activities, participants will learn to recognize common mental models, understand the basics of framing, and practice practical ways to respond when deficit-based narratives surface in daily work.

Objectives:

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Identify common mental models that influence how neglect is understood and addressed in child and family-serving systems.
- Explain how framing concepts can be used to shift narratives from blame and surveillance toward prevention and support.
- Apply evidence-informed reframing techniques to real-world examples in order to strengthen prevention-focused communication and practice.

Advanced

The Stories We Don't Know We're Telling: Implicit Bias and Us

Taryn Arndt, MSW, CAPSW

We all carry biases, no matter how committed we are to treating children and families with equity. In this breakout session, we are going to take a real and honest look at how these biases can unknowingly shape our work as child welfare workers. Through small group discussion and a real-life case review, we will explore where and how biases show up in our decision-making. Additionally, we will see how it can affect the families we serve and what we can do to interrupt it. This will be a safe space for reflection, connection, and professional next steps. There is no place for blame.

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Conference Agenda

Thursday, April 23 | Conference Day 1

3:15 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. | Breakout Sessions

This breakout session is intended to leave you with a better self-awareness and action steps that we all can take to reduce bias in our daily practices.

Objectives:

Participants will:

- Understand the importance of recognizing bias
- Practice reflection over blame
- Apply reflective thinking tools

Beginner

What We See, What They Feel: Bridging Science and Trauma Informed Care in Pediatric Sexual Abuse Exams

Amanda Palm, PA-C, LCSW; Mary Mansker, MSW, APSW; Jessica Wipperfurth, MSW, APSW

Worried that a medical examination for sexual abuse might further traumatize a child? You're not alone. Join us for an informative and compassionate presentation on how child sexual abuse medical exams can be conducted in a trauma-informed, age-appropriate, and sensitive manner. We will explore the vital role these exams play in both acute and historical cases of abuse and provide an overview of what actually happens during the process.

Objectives:

- Learn the components that are covered in a standard psychosocial assessment completed by a hospital-based child protection team during consults. Understand why acquiring a comprehensive psychosocial assessment during pediatric sexual abuse exams is evidence-based.
- Explore the logistics of a pediatric sexual abuse exam, including, exam room set up, emotional support for the patient during the exam, cultural considerations and responsiveness, and parent engagement.
- Learn about the medical goals of an examination in both acute and historical sexual abuse cases including recommended medical testing and examination technique.

Appropriate for all audiences

Conference Agenda

Friday, April 24 | Conference Day 2

8 a.m. - 8:50 a.m. | Registration

Networking and light continental breakfast

8:50 a.m. - 9 a.m. | Welcome

Keynote introduction

9 a.m. - 10 a.m. | Keynote

The Swiss Cheese Model of Preventing Child Sexual Abuse

Elizabeth L. Jeglic, Ph.D. | John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is entirely preventable, yet no single intervention can eliminate all risk. In this keynote presentation, Dr. Elizabeth Jeglic will synthesize the latest research on evidence-based CSA prevention initiatives and introduce the “Swiss Cheese Model” of prevention, a layered, systemic framework designed to identify and close gaps in protection across individual, organizational, and societal levels. The session will conclude with a call to action for professionals in child protection to integrate this multi-tiered approach into their prevention policies and practices.

Objectives:

After viewing this keynote, attendees will be able to:

- Describe current evidence-based approaches to preventing child sexual abuse and identify their respective strengths and limitations.
- Explain the principles of the Swiss Cheese Model and how overlapping layers of protection can reduce the risk of CSA.
- Apply the Swiss Cheese framework to their own organizational or community context to enhance prevention strategies and address existing gaps in safeguarding systems.

10 a.m. - 10:15 a.m. | Break

10:15 a.m. - 11:45 a.m. | Breakout Sessions

Offering Hope for Children with Incarcerated Parents

Rachel Fryda-Gehde, MSW, CAPSW; Tommy Losch, BRM; Kenzie Gonzalez

Studies have shown parental incarceration to be a significant Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) that increases a child’s risk for experiencing other adverse childhood experiences as well as negative mental and physical health problems into adulthood. During a parent’s incarceration, the most important factors for a child’s well-being are the nature and quality of their living arrangement and the opportunity to maintain contact with the absent parent.

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Conference Agenda

Friday, April 24 | Conference Day 2

10:15 a.m. - 11:45 a.m. | Breakout Sessions

This session will focus on some of the programming the Wisconsin Department of Corrections has implemented to promote strengthening the bond between children and their incarcerated parent, including Camp Reunite, the Parenting Inside Out Program, and other special visiting opportunities. As we witness increasing calls for family reunification as a practice and policy priority during this era of growing de-incarceration efforts, helping to sustain and strengthen relationships through visiting could be a way to mitigate the negative impacts of incarceration on the current generations and potentially prevent future criminal legal system involvement for future generations to come.

Objectives:

- Participants will learn about the effects of parental incarceration on parents, children, and their families.
- Participants will be educated about programming being offered in the Wisconsin Department of Corrections to promote increased contact between parent/child.
- Participants will learn about the positive outcomes associated with increased parent/child contact.

Appropriate for all audiences

Roots and Belonging: Choosing Connection over Convenience

Alisha Brown, MSW; Jessica Nehmer, CSW

This session focuses on the importance of maintaining family connections and the impact of family separation on children. Participants will be given tools to mitigate the barriers to relative placement, strengthen relative engagement, and explore ways to utilize relatives as both placement providers and supports; and understand how a shared approach across systems will promote belonging and stability for children.

Objectives:

Participants will:

- Increase knowledge related to the impact of separation on development and long-term outcomes.
- Identify approaches to reduce barriers and strengthen relative and like-kin engagement.
- Clarify roles of child welfare professionals and non-child welfare professionals in relative and like-kin identification, engagement, and support to promote belonging.

Appropriate for all audiences

Conference Agenda

Friday, April 24 | Conference Day 2

10:15 a.m. - 11:45 a.m. | Breakout Sessions

The Red Flags of Sexual Grooming

Elizabeth L. Jeglic, Ph.D.

Sexual Grooming is the deceptive process wherein a would-be perpetrator prepares a child for sexual abuse (CSA) and prevents disclosure and detection. Recent research has found that sexual grooming is present in 99% of all cases of CSA (average 14.25 behaviors). It is often difficult to detect sexual grooming because some grooming behaviors resemble normal adult-child interactions. To prevent CSA, it is vital to identify sexual grooming behaviors that can be considered “red flag” behaviors. In this breakout session, Dr. Elizabeth Jeglic will discuss her team’s new research which has identified specific pre-offense behaviors which can be proactively identified and linked to sexual grooming. The implications of this research for education, prevention, investigation and prosecution of CSA will be discussed.

Objectives:

After viewing this session, attendees will be able to:

- Define sexual grooming and the five stages of the Sexual Grooming Model
- Identify which sexual grooming behaviors are red flag behaviors for child sexual abuse
- Understanding how sexual grooming research can be used in education, prevention, investigation, prosecution and treatment of child sexual abuse

Appropriate for all audiences

Understanding FGM: Prevention, Protection, and Partnership in Practice

Zainab Koroma, BA, MS; Rachel Cortez, RN CEN, SANE-A, SANE P

This session provides a comprehensive look at Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) through the lenses of prevention, protection, and partnership. Presenters will explore cultural context, forensic response, and survivor support. Participants will learn practical ways to identify risk, respond appropriately, and work collaboratively across disciplines to safeguard children and empower survivors.

Objectives:

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Identify key cultural, social, and safeguarding factors associated with FGM risk and disclosure.
- Describe best practices for prevention, multidisciplinary response, and survivor support.
- Apply culturally informed and trauma-sensitive approaches in cases involving FGM.

Appropriate for all audiences

11:45 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. | Lunch

Conference Agenda

Friday, April 24 | Conference Day 2

12:45 p.m. - 2:15 p.m. | Breakout Sessions

From Anxious Generation to Thriving Youth: Mental Wellbeing in the Digital World

Tina Crave, MAPP, MBA, PT; Susan Olson

Today's youth face unprecedented rates of anxiety and disconnection in a world where technology shapes nearly every aspect of life. This engaging session explores what young people need to thrive in the digital age. Through brief teaching, reflection, and facilitated discussion, participants will discover the latest research on youth wellbeing and practical ways to promote balance and connection. You'll leave equipped with fresh insights and tangible actions to support your own wellbeing and that of the children and families you serve.

Objectives:

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Explain how societal shifts in technology use are affecting child and adolescent development.
- Identify evidence-based precursors to wellbeing and protective factors for youth mental health.
- Apply concrete strategies to support digital balance and strengthen wellbeing in their own lives, families, and professional practice.

Appropriate for all audiences

Health Outcomes from Positive Experiences (HOPE)

Ashley Barlow, BA, MSW

This training covers the HOPE (Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences) framework, which uses four key positive childhood experiences to help children build resilience and thrive into healthy adulthood.

Objectives:

Participants will:

- Learn about Positive Childhood Experiences PCE's and the science behind it.
- Compare Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs) to ACEs or Adverse Childhood Experiences and how they affect child development.
- Discover the Four Building Blocks of HOPE. What they are and how you can use them to support children and families.

Appropriate for all audiences

Conference Agenda

Friday, April 24 | Conference Day 2

12:45 p.m. - 2:15 p.m. | Breakout Sessions

Hidden in Plain Sight: Lessons Learned from Wisconsin's Research on Pediatric Strangulation at Child Advocacy Centers

Lynn Cook, MSW, APSW; Susie Kanack, BSN, RN, SANE-P; Sophia Hannauer

This workshop will discuss the prevalence and severity of strangulation in children as indicated by a recent study conducted among Wisconsin's 16 Child Advocacy Centers.

Objectives:

- Participants will be able to describe the prevalence and severity of pediatric strangulation and its overlap with domestic violence using recent data from Wisconsin CACS.
- Participants will understand the short and long term medical impacts of strangulation in children and adults and the clinical relationship between these presentations.
- Learners will be able to apply best practices for identifying and responding to suspected strangulation within a multidisciplinary team framework.

Intermediate

Supervision That Sustains: What We Learned From Reflective Supervision Implementation

Amanda Jaeger, MSW, APSW, IECMH-E, PMH-C; Beth Wanke, LCSW, CSAC; Amy Knutson, MS; Schayna Wilson, MSW

This interactive session explores how implementing structured reflective supervision can strengthen team stability and improve family engagement. Participants will learn to distinguish reflective supervision from traditional case consultation, apply practical tools such as agendas and fidelity checklists, and identify measurable deliverables that make reflection visible in daily leadership. Attendees will leave with customizable templates and clear strategies for embedding reflective supervision practices that sustain staff and enhance outcomes for children and families.

Objectives:

- Differentiate between reflective supervision and traditional case or performance supervision by identifying key elements such as collaboration, regularity, and structured reflection.
- Analyze: participants break down supervision approaches to distinguish essential reflective components. Apply practical implementation tools such as reflective supervision agendas, self-assessments, and reflection prompts to strengthen supervision structures within their own units.
- Apply: participants use concrete strategies and tools in realistic supervision scenarios. Explain how consistent, structured reflective supervision contributes to workforce stability and continuity of relationships with children and families, drawing on lessons learned from agency implementation efforts.
- Understand / Evaluate: participants articulate the rationale and assess the impact of reflective supervision on staff and family outcomes.

Appropriate for all audiences

Conference Agenda

Friday, April 24 | Conference Day 2

2:15 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. | Break

2:30 p.m. - 4 p.m. | Breakout Sessions

Care4Kids Foster Care Medical Home: Exciting Strategies and Innovations to Improve Health Care and Well-being

Lisa Zetley, MD; Heather Swider, MS, CCC-SLP; Jessica Cabrera, MSW, APSW; Kellie Lynch, MSW, APSW

The Care4Kids Foster Care Medical Home program, launched in 2014, has served over 10,000 children and adolescents in southeastern Wisconsin through an enhanced Medicaid benefit and robust care coordination. A partnership between Children's Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, and the Department of Children and Families, the program improves access to well-child, dental, and mental health care for children in out-of-home care. In 2026, Care4Kids will expand eligibility to children placed outside its six-county region, ensuring continuity of care and coordination benefits. This session will use case studies and a panel discussion to highlight program outcomes, the vital role of the health care coordinator, and effective collaboration with child welfare and community partners. Attendees will gain insight into Care4Kids' impact, innovative supports, and its ongoing role in improving health and stability for Wisconsin's foster youth.

Objectives:

- Participants will explore the unique services and supports provided by the Care4Kids Foster Care Medical Home which support children, caregivers and their families
- Participants will learn about the 2026 innovations and enhancements which will improve access and support to children and families in Wisconsin

Appropriate for all audiences

Empowering Voices: Implementing a Collaborative Prevention Education Program

Chelsey Steffens, BS; Shelby Mitchell; Kristie Sickel, MSW, CSW

Educating children with body safety knowledge and skills to involve safe adults, empowers them to start the disclosure process potentially sooner. This coupled with strong preventative and response initiatives for adults, sets a solid proactive framework within the community. This presentation will focus on the power of a comprehensive and collaborative prevention education program. Presenters will pull back the curtain of a program in Brown County, that reaches thousands of individuals each year. The presentation will highlight the proactive approaches being taken to mitigate core reasons why children may delay or never disclose abuse.

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Conference Agenda

Friday, April 24 | Conference Day 2

2:30 - 4 p.m. | Breakout Sessions

Objectives:

- Understanding the benefits of implementing child abuse prevention education program within your community.
- Understanding and recognizing ways to prevent abuse, by providing children and adults with ongoing education on how to respond, recognize, and report abuse.
- Identifying ways that an MDT can embrace a preventative lens when responding to child abuse, to empower families with further resources.

Appropriate for all audiences

From Diagnosis to Courtroom: Understanding Medical Child Abuse

Rachel Segal, MD, MPH; Mallory McPhee, MD; Stefanie Wagner, JD

This session will educate professionals on the medical diagnosis of medical child abuse (formerly known as Munchausen by proxy). It will review the diagnostic process, and aspects such as epidemiology and risk factors of these cases. It will also highlight features of medical child abuse compared to medical neglect cases from both the medical and legal perspective. The presentation will also provide an overview of the legal standards and court process specific to Wisconsin by helping attendees gain a clearer understanding of how these complex cases are identified, investigated, and tried in court.

Objectives:

- Define medical child abuse and understand how this diagnosis is made
- Improve understanding of the court process for MCA cases

Appropriate for all audiences

You've Got This: Addressing Problematic Sexual Behavior in Youth

Valerie Gonsalves, PhD, MLS, DBT-Linehan Board of Certification, Certified Clinician™;
Lisa Dunham, MSW, LCSW, DBT-Linehan Board of Certification, Certified Clinician™

It is estimated that around 30% of all childhood sexual abuse involves youth as the perpetrator. This statistic helps demonstrate why it is critical that all individuals who work with youth know how to appropriately respond to and address harmful sexual behavior (HSB) when it occurs. Too often, providers want to refer out for treatment of HSB, which can result in a rupture to the therapeutic alliance, a delay in receiving services due to a lack of providers, and ultimately a delay in other activities (such as returning to the home). Finally, referring out may negatively impact the youth who could internalize that their actions were shameful and/or “too much” for their current provider to handle.

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Conference Agenda

Friday, April 24 | Conference Day 2

2:30 - 4 p.m. | Breakout Sessions

In this presentation, we want to empower professionals and parents to feel competent in addressing HSB's with child and adolescent-aged clients. We will discuss statistics related to frequency and future harmful behaviors. We will ensure that all attendees know how to develop a comprehensive safety plan (including use of the internet). We will make sure that the essential components of sexual education are described so that individuals know what to discuss with youth. We will discuss how to address cultural considerations. Finally, we will make sure participants know when it is essential to refer to a higher level of care. Our goal is that when these behaviors show up as either a concern from a parent or when law enforcement is involved, providers can offer immediate intervention to mitigate any future harm.

Objectives:

- Attendees will be able to identify typical and atypical sexual behaviors.
- Attendees will be able to outline how to safety plan with a family.
- Attendees will learn about resources to assist families in monitoring technology.

Beginner