
Wisconsin Legislative Council

STUDY COMMITTEE MEMO



Memo No. 02

TO: MEMBERS OF THE STUDY COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC DISCLOSURE AND OVERSIGHT OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT INCIDENTS

FROM: Melissa Schmidt, Senior Staff Attorney, and Amber Otis, Staff Attorney

RE: Background Information on the Systems Change Review Approach Adopted and Implemented by the Department of Children and Families for Conducting Practice Reviews

DATE: September 16, 2020

At the meeting of the Study Committee on Public Disclosure and Oversight of Child Abuse and Neglect Incidents on August 27, 2020, the committee received testimony from the Department of Children and Families (DCF) about its implementation of the “Systems Change Review” process. This memo provides additional background information on this process.

Very generally, the Systems Change Review is a data-driven and trauma-informed approach developed by Collaborative Safety, LLC. DCF implemented¹ this approach for conducting practice reviews of certain incidents of death, serious injury, or egregious child abuse or neglect (critical incidents) that are reported to DCF pursuant to 2009 Wisconsin Act 78.² According to DCF, the incidents reported under Act 78 that qualify for a Systems Change Review involve a recent incident of alleged child maltreatment resulting in a child’s death or near death where there is prior agency contact that is recent, or extensive, or both. [Division of Safety and Permanence, Bureau of Safety and Well-Being, DCF, [Systems Change Review: 2018-2019 Results](#), at 3 and 23.]

DCF has prepared, and made publicly available on its [website](#), additional summary information about the Systems Change Review:

- [Brief Webinars](#), a series of six webinars about the Systems Change Review found in the “Case Practice” section of the Child Welfare Policy & Program Information Webinars website.
- [Key Elements of the Systems Change Review Process Defined](#), a brief description of each step involved in the Systems Change Review process.
- [Systems Change Review Process Flow](#), a visual overview of the entire process.
- [Systems Change Review Frequently Asked Questions](#), answers to a number of questions related to the Systems Change Review process.

¹ DCF implemented the Systems Change Review in 2016 for all counties except Milwaukee County, and in 2018 for Milwaukee County. [DCF, [Systems Change Review: 2018-2019 Results](#), at 4.]

² Very briefly, DCF assigns one of two types of review to a critical incident that is reported to it pursuant to 2009 Wisconsin Act 78: (1) the summary review; or (2) practice review.

- [Secondary Traumatic Stress and the Systems Change Review: Review Tips, Process Recommendations, and Resources](#), a list of topics to consider when supporting child protective services professionals engaging in the Systems Change Review process.

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