



NEWS RELEASE

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WAFCA Applauds Passage of Reform to Support New Caregiver Options

Upon passage of Senate Bill 520 in the Wisconsin State Legislature today, the Wisconsin Association of Family & Children's Agencies (WAFCA) shared the following:

"We are grateful to Senator Joan Ballweg and Representative Patrick Snyder for their leadership in bringing this bill forward, as it recognizes the importance of relationships and community in the healthy development of children. Creating a statutory definition of "Like-kin" to expand eligible placements to include adults with a strong relationship to the child will create new options for children – options that are likely to keep children closer to their family, school, and community. Wisconsin has been making progress with identifying and supporting children to live with relatives, and this legislation will take us one step closer to ensuring more children are placed with people who know and care about them, and their family."

WAFCA is a statewide association that represents nearly fifty child and family serving agencies and advocates for the more than 200,000 individuals, children, and families that they impact each year. Our members' services include foster care and adoption programs; family preservation services; community-based outpatient and day treatment therapies; and residential care for both children and adults. In addition, two of our member agencies are directly responsible for ongoing child welfare services in Milwaukee County.

"WAFCA member agencies stand ready to expand our services and programs to support these new like kin caregivers who will now be officially recognized and valued by our systems as they open their hearts and homes to children and youth. These "like kin" supports have long been key to our efforts to support children and families through an episode of out-of-home care. We are excited to see the new resources that emerge for our families as this legislative change unfolds."

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WAFCA is a statewide network of non-profit and for-profit providers of human services supporting member agencies in their missions to improve the lives of individuals, families and children in Wisconsin. Our member agencies provide a wide array of prevention and supportive services such as foster care, in-home support, counseling, and mental health treatment. We advocate for our members and the more 200,000 individuals and families that they impact each year.