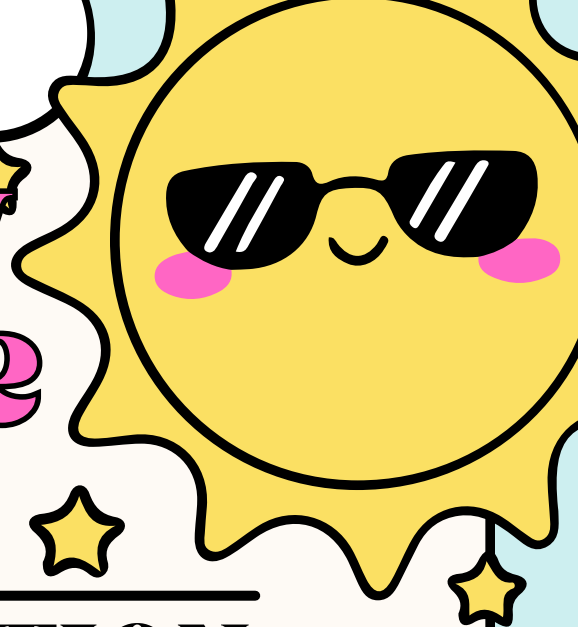


APRIL 2026

Dane County Kinship Care newsletter



INSIDE THIS EDITION

- Supervisor Scoop
- Independent Living (ILS) Updates
- Mental Health Moments
- Summer Camp Options
- Upcoming Training & Events
- Dane County Kinship Care Contacts

Have a great
spring!

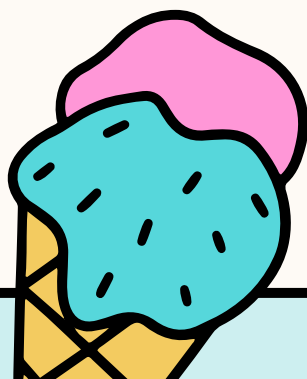
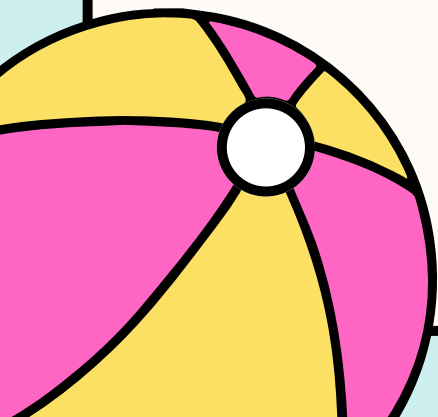
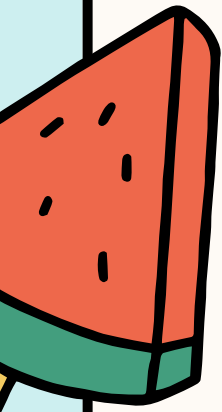
THANK YOU

A special Thank you to Kinship Parents for all you do. Your care, flexibility, and dedication make a meaningful difference in the lives of children and families every day.

TAX INFORMATION REMINDERS

As the tax filing deadline approaches, you may want to review information related to claiming children in your care or other potential tax considerations. Each family's situation is unique, and eligibility for credits or deductions can vary.

While we're happy to share general information, we are not tax professionals and cannot provide tax advice. We encourage you to consult with a qualified tax preparer or visit the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) website for the most accurate and up-to-date guidance.



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Dane County Kinship Care

SUPERVISOR SCOOP



As we welcome spring, I also want to take a moment to welcome you to this edition of our kinship newsletter. First and foremost, thank you. The care, stability, and love you provide to the children in your lives make a lasting difference every day. Stepping into the role of caregiver is a meaningful commitment, and we recognize the time, patience, and heart it takes. Your support helps children feel safe, connected, and encouraged as they grow.

This time of year often brings a season of change. As the school year begins to wind down, many families are looking ahead to important milestones like promotions to new grades, graduations, and the transition into summer routines. These changes can be exciting, busy, and sometimes a little overwhelming—for both children and caregivers.

Spring is a good time to pause, reflect on how far you have come, and prepare for what is ahead. Whether your family is celebrating a graduation, planning for summer activities, or simply adjusting to new schedules, we hope this season brings moments of joy, pride, and connection.

In this newsletter, we look forward to sharing information, encouragement, and resources to support you through the months ahead. Thank you again for all you do for the children and families in your care.

Wishing you a wonderful spring season.

SAVE THE DATE

Families Like Mine Event

June 6, 2026 @ Henry Vilas Zoo

The Families Like Mine event is a family-friendly gathering at the Henry Vilas Zoo where families can connect, enjoy activities, and a day at the Zoo.

Registration opens 30-days before event

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Dane County Kinship Care

ILS TEAM UPDATES



Independent Living Services are required for youth ages 14+ that are placed in a foster home or another out-of-home care setting. These services help teach youth the basic life skills they need in order to become successful adults.

Website: <https://www.dcdhs.com/Children-Youth-and-Family/Child-Protective-Services/Independent-Living>

JOB CORP WISCONSIN

Job Corps Wisconsin is a FREE education and vocational training program for low-income young adults (ages 16–24) aimed at providing career-ready skills in manufacturing, tech, and trades. The program offers in-depth career planning, on-campus housing, and academic opportunities like GED completion. While in the program, youth can live on campus for up to two years and can earn a stipend for participation and completion: <https://milwaukee.jobcorps.gov/>

If you have a youth in your life who might benefit from Job Corp please call/text one of our ILS Social Workers:

Beth Anderson (608) 422-2063
Charlie Larson (608) 695-3590
Nate Marzen (608) 512-9234

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH AS YOUNG AS 14 YEARS OLD

Summer Employment Opportunities

Student job opportunities: Please refer to this link for student job opportunities – these may fluctuate throughout the month.

- Frostwood Farms: Frostwood Farms is hosting interviews Wednesday May 6th and Thursday May 7th from 4:00–7:00pm at Briarpatch (2720 Rimrock Rd Fitchburg, WI 53713). Students must pre-register using this link:
- https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSef-3r5EqFYz4uE73Pk82xElFAFO2h4xuy-C_IsbdDO2kv9w/viewform?usp=header

BRIARPATCH YOUTH JOB CENTER SUPPORTS

For students needing extra support in finding/keeping a job, creating a résumé, practicing for their interview, or something else, please have them sign up via our referral link.

Please note that the wait time for students receiving support may range from a few days to a couple weeks. Please encourage your students to be patient through the process!

Link: <https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=qawwZZehgEKubNwYOVJtOqnYdfmLiZQsYDjTMg8LpUMIhUN0IHVlkyMiczR0IEME9TNIUyOFc5Mi4u>

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Dane County Kinship Care

MENTAL HEALTH MOMENTS



TRAUMA IS COMMON—AND IT SHAPES THE WHOLE CHILD

Trauma-Informed Parenting Today: What New Research Means for Foster Families
Foster parents have long understood something science continues to confirm: children's behaviors are often rooted in their experiences, not their intentions. New and emerging research in trauma-informed care is deepening that understanding; especially around brain development, physical health, and the powerful role caregivers play in healing.

Recent pediatric research shows that nearly half of children in the U.S. have experienced at least one traumatic event, with effects that reach far beyond behavior into physical health, brain development, and lifelong wellbeing. Trauma impacts how a child's brain develops, particularly in areas related to stress response, emotional regulation, and executive functioning. Even when children appear "fine" on the surface, subtle neurological differences may still be present, affecting attention, impulse control, and relationships. For children in foster care, who often have experienced multiple disruptions, these effects can be compounded by gaps in healthcare, education, and consistent relationships.

WHAT WORKS: EVIDENCE-BASED TRAUMA-INFORMED PARENTING

Emerging research is also helping clarify which parenting approaches are most effective. A 2024 meta-analysis found that trauma-informed parenting programs can improve both parenting practices and caregiver mental health. Across studies, several consistent strategies stand out:

- *Regulation before correction: Helping a child feel safe and calm is more effective than immediate discipline*
- *Connection over compliance: Building trust increases cooperation over time*
- *Predictability and routines: Structure supports a child's sense of safety*
- *Curiosity about behavior: Asking "What happened to you?" instead of "What's wrong with you?"*

These approaches align with what many foster parents already practice, but research now reinforces that these are not just compassionate choices, they are scientifically supported interventions.

TRAUMA AND PHYSICAL HEALTH: A GROWING AREA OF STUDY

One of the most important emerging insights is the connection between trauma and physical health. Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) have been linked to increased risk of chronic health conditions, including heart disease, immune dysfunction, and mental health disorders later in life. Encouragingly, newer research suggests that supportive caregiver-child relationships may actually buffer these biological effects potentially improving long-term health outcomes when healing happens early.

THE ROLE OF CAREGIVER WELLNESS

Another key takeaway from recent studies: caregiver wellbeing matters more than ever. Research shows that caregivers who have experienced their own trauma may face additional challenges in parenting, but also have tremendous potential to foster resilience when supported.

This underscores the importance of:

- *Ongoing training and support*
- *Access to mental health resources*
- *Peer connection with other foster parents*
- *Self-care as a necessity, not a luxury*

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR FOSTER PARENTS

The science is clear and encouraging. Healing from trauma does not require perfection. It requires presence, consistency, and relationship. As a foster parent, you are not just providing care you are actively shaping a child's brain development, health, and future. Every moment of connection, every calm response, and every effort to understand behavior through a trauma-informed lens contributes to something powerful: resilience.

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Dane County Kinship Care

SUMMER CAMP OPTIONS

When planning for summer camps, we encourage you to explore programs that are covered by Wisconsin Shares. If those options are not available or do not meet the needs of the children in your care, please check with the camp directly about any scholarship opportunities that may be available.

MSCR SUMMER 2026 CAMP PROGRAM GUIDE

The MSCR Summer 2026 Camp Program Guide provides a full listing of available summer camps, including program details, dates, and registration information.

The 76-page Program Guide is for preschool, youth, family, adult and multiage activities. Options – <https://www.mschr.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/MSCRSummer2026ProgramGuide.pdf>

BELONG WISCONSIN SIBLING CAMP

Belong Wisconsin's sibling camp is for children between the ages of 8 and 18 years of age who are separated from at least one sibling through foster care, kinship care, or adoption. Belong Wisconsin also provides family connection events, day-long events held throughout the state that help separated families and communities stay connected year-round. Email: contact@belongwisconsin.org <https://www.belongwisconsin.org/>

ROYAL FAMILY KIDS CAMP

Since 1985, Royal Family Kids (RFK) Camp has been offering week-long summer camps for children of abuse who have been placed in foster care. For many of these children, a week at summer camp is a first. It is a lifechanging experience for them!

In 2008, Royal Family KIDS Mentoring Clubs were started to provide an opportunity for the church to connect with their campers during the school year and continue the hope that was experienced at camp. Camps & mentoring clubs are sponsored by individual, well-established Christian churches of various denominations.

There are currently six camps and three mentoring clubs in Wisconsin serving these children, with wonderful volunteers who have dedicated thousands of hours to reach America's orphaned and abandoned children.

<https://rfk.org/locations/wisconsin/>

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SUMMER CAMP OPTIONS

UMOJA – A BLACK HERITAGE EXPERIENCE

UMOJA, INC will empower transracial families (primarily families with black children and parents of another culture) to raise children that will:

- *Have a positive black identity*
- *Be able to talk about race in an honest and open way*
- *Feel comfortable in all different cultures*
- *Handle basic skin and hair care*

They will do that by providing a powerful weekend experience for the entire family, which will include age-appropriate breakout sessions and large group cultural celebrations. <http://www.umojabhe.org/>

FORT LITTLEGREEN YOUTH CAMP AND NATURE CENTER

Kid-friendly farm! A nature-based day camp where children engage in outdoor activities, gardening, and hands-on animal care while building connections with the natural world. (Stoughton, WI)
<https://fortlittlegreen.com/>

REC WELL SUMMER CAMP

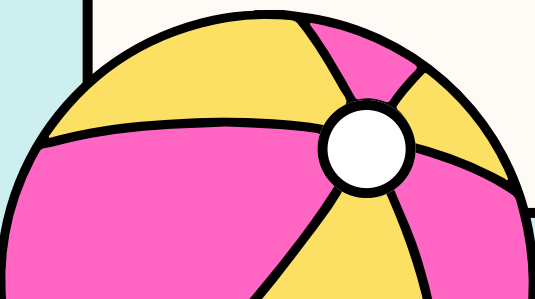
Day camp for children ages 5-14 to engage in recreational opportunities and field trips on the University of Wisconsin - Madison campus. Each week campers discover a new theme with specific field trips and activities. (Madison, WI) <https://summercamp.recwell.wisc.edu/>

WISCONSIN YOUTH COMPANY DAY CAMPS

Provides engaging summer experiences where children can build friendships, explore new interests, and enjoy a mix of activities, outdoor time, and weekly field trips. (Madison, WI)
<https://www.wisconsinyouthcompany.org/>

BETHEL HORIZONS CAMP

Provides up to 8 weeks of nature-based summer programs for youth (grades 2-9) focused on outdoor adventure, nature exploration, creative arts, and building connections with others in a supportive setting. Accepts WI Shares & CLTS funding. (Dodgeville, WI) For more information, visit <https://bethelhorizons.org>



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COLLEGE CAMP

FOSTERING SUCCESS DAY CAMP – JUNE 11, 2026

Specifically designed for high school students (entering grades 9-12) who have experienced foster care, legal guardianship, kinship care, group homes, or similar external care placements, our Summer Foster Youth Day Camp includes lunch and a variety of activities.

Topics explored during this experience include:

- Financing College
- Admission Processes
- Workforce Resources
- Major and Career Exploration

More Info Here: <https://www.uwstout.edu/life-stout/fostering-success>



COMMUNITY EVENTS PRIVATE KINSHIP FB GROUP

Shared County and Community resources for Kinship Providers

Request access here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2318412981742488>

YOU may also have some good information or community resources to share with others. If so, feel free to post in the group.

WEEKLY WELL-BEING ZOOM CHECK-INS

TUESDAYS – 11am-12pm

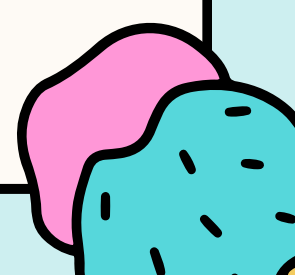
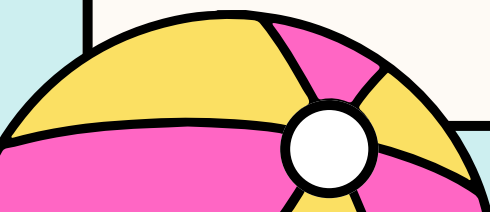
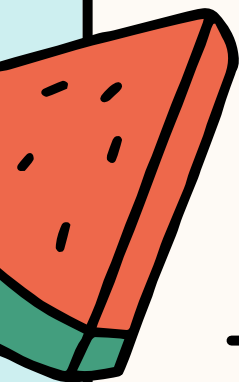
Weekly ZOOM meeting for Kinship Care Providers

Zoom Link:

<https://countyofdane.zoom.us/j/92370398126pwd=SFg2d0s4SzZ0TXd6YjBSumpFbjJEQT09>

Zoom Meeting ID: 923 7039 8126

Passcode: 234654



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TRAINING & EVENTS

Wisconsin Family Connections



Madison & Surrounding Area Events
Wisconsin Family Connections Center
<https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/madison-and-surrounding-area-events-28174>



ONGOING VIRTUAL SUPPORT GROUPS

Dates and times of groups are subject to change. Check the calendar of events on the Wisconsin Family Connections Center website for the most accurate schedule for each group.

ADULT ADOPTEES



This group is open to adult adoptees. Topics alternate between open discussion and structured facilitated discussion. This group meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 PM.

BIRTH PARENT SUPPORT



Open to any birth parents who have had a child placed for adoption, no matter what type of adoption or agency involved. This group meets on the second Tuesday of odd months at 6:30 PM.

ONLINE BOOK CLUB



Join us as we read through and discuss a book together (with relevance to out-of-home care or adoption). Check online for the current book selection. Days and times of group meetings will vary.

REUNIFIED PARENTS



Designed for parents who have recently reunified, or are in the process of reunifying (transitioning to reunification within the next month). This group meets monthly on a Wednesday at 7:00 PM.

OPEN MIC TEEN SUPPORT



Designed for teens in foster, adoptive, reunified, kinship, and/or guardianship families to socially connect and discuss topics related to family dynamics. This group typically meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 7:00 PM.

TRAUMA INFORMED PARENTING



Designed for Wisconsin foster, adoptive, reunified, kinship, and guardianship caregivers with a high level of need due to complex trauma histories. This group meets on the third Monday of each month at noon.

KINNECT RELATIVE CAREGIVERS OF CHILDREN



Designed for grandparents, uncles/aunts, siblings, or other relatives acting as the primary caregiver for children. This group meets on the last Thursday of every month at 11:00 AM.

REGISTER TODAY!



Registration is required to attend any group. Scan the QR code to visit our Eventbrite Collection of Virtual Support Groups and register today!

info@wifamilyconnectionscenter.org | 1-800-762-8063 | wifamilyconnectionscenter.org

Single-Family Housing Programs Webinar

Learn more about low-income loans for housing repairs or modernization, grants for low-income older Wisconsinites to remove health and safety hazards, and direct loans for first-time homebuyers.

Date: Tuesday May 5, 2026
@ 12pm

Contact Veronica Hinke:
Veronica.Hinke@usda.gov

Looking for additional training, support or education classes? Check the weekly Touchpoint Tuesday email for current options, or connect with your Kinship Care Consultant for additional support.

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MORE TRAINING & EVENTS

Love Through Hair Care: Textured Haircare Workshop

Devine Beauty Salon, Sun Prairie, WI
Sunday, May 31 from 10 am to 12 pm

Adoptive, foster, guardianship, relative caregiver, and reunified families – join for a special class focusing on learning more about your child's textured hair. This class is meant to show caregivers how to work with textured hair.

This in-person instruction at **Devine Beauty Salon in Sun Prairie** will be hosted by Olena, owner of Devine Beauty, who is passionate about blending artistry and education into creating beautiful, elevated looks while celebrating individuality, culture, and confidence.

This workshop will take place on **Sunday, May 31st from 10am-12pm**. It is a family hair affair (combo course) which will cover textured hair types, general textured hair care knowledge, use of products, as well as hands-on instruction for simple hairstyles. There will also be time for a Q&A!

A hair care grab bag will be included with your registration.

Each ticket is good for 1 adult and 1 child. This event is restricted to one child per family.

Your child must be able to sit for 2 hours consecutively. Feel free to bring snacks and entertainment for your child (ie: phone, tablet, snacks, etc.) We will also have snacks and fidgets available.

If you have any questions or accommodation needs, please contact Megan at mmiller@cclse.org.

Registration for this event is required on Eventbrite.
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/love-through-hair-care-textured-haircare-workshop-tickets-1984875483001>

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Dane County Kinship Care

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Dane County Kinship Care

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Madison, WI 53704

P: 608.381.5800

E: KinshipCare@danecounty.gov