

1       **AN ACT** *to amend* 48.981 (8) (a) and 49.143 (2) (c); and *to create* 48.981 (8) (e) of  
2           the statutes; **relating to:** requiring child welfare staff and Wisconsin works staff to  
3           meet requirements for training in family systems theory.

*The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:*

**JOINT LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PREFATORY NOTE:** Under current law, the department of health and family services (DHFS), the county departments of human services, and a licensed child welfare agency in Milwaukee county, are required to conduct continuing education and training programs for staff of those departments, as well as for law enforcement agencies and tribal social services departments, persons and officials required to report child abuse and neglect, the general public, and others as appropriate. The programs must be designed to encourage reporting of child abuse and neglect and of unborn child abuse, to encourage self-reporting and voluntary acceptance of services, and to improve communication, cooperation, and coordination in the identification, prevention, and treatment of child abuse and neglect and of unborn child abuse.

To satisfy this requirement, DHFS has proposed to promulgate ch. HFS 43, relating to the standards for training required for staff and supervisors involved in the access, initial assessment, and ongoing services delivered to children and families in child abuse and neglect cases. The DHFS has not yet submitted the proposed rule to the legislature for review.

Also under current law, the department of workforce development (DWD) is required to ensure that a financial and employment planner employed by a Wisconsin works (W-2) agency meets certification and training requirements established by the department by rule and that appropriate training is provided by a W-2 agency.

The DWD satisfied this requirement by promulgating ch. DWD 17, relating to W-2 worker training. The administrative rule requires the department to make training available to new financial and employment planners and resources specialists, as well as their supervisors. The rule also requires the department to develop an ongoing course or courses for supervisors, experienced resources specialists, and experienced financial

and employment planners, and to make the course or courses available each year directly or through contractors.

This draft requires DHFS to promulgate additional rules relating to training for employees of the department, county departments, and licensed child welfare agencies who work with families that have children involved with the child welfare system. The additional training must be training in family systems theory. Family systems theory is defined as a method of working with families that acknowledges that each family is a system and not just a group of individual members; that families behave and interact in predictable patterns; that families have established boundaries; that families have unwritten rules of interaction; that systems are resistant to change; and that every family has skills and resources to contribute to solutions to the family's problems.

This draft also requires DWD to promulgate additional rules relating to training for W-2 workers. The additional training must be training in family systems theory.

1           **SECTION 1.** 48.981 (8) (a) of the statutes is amended to read:  
2           48.981 **(8)** (a) The department, the county departments, and a licensed child welfare  
3 agency under contract with the department in a county having a population of 500,000 or more  
4 to the extent feasible shall conduct continuing education and training programs for staff of the  
5 department, the county departments, licensed child welfare agencies under contract with the  
6 department or a county department, law enforcement agencies, and the tribal social services  
7 departments, persons and officials required to report, the general public, and others as  
8 appropriate. The programs shall be designed to encourage reporting of child abuse and neglect  
9 and of unborn child abuse, to encourage self-reporting and voluntary acceptance of services  
10 and to improve communication, cooperation, and coordination in the identification,  
11 prevention, and treatment of child abuse and neglect and of unborn child abuse. Programs  
12 provided for staff of the department, county departments, and licensed child welfare agencies  
13 under contract with county departments or the department whose responsibilities include the  
14 investigation or treatment of child abuse or neglect shall also be designed to provide

1 information on means of recognizing and appropriately responding to domestic abuse, as  
2 defined in s. 46.95 (1) (a). Programs provided to staff members of the department, county  
3 departments, and licensed child welfare agencies under contract with the department or county  
4 department, who work directly with families who have a child involved in the child welfare  
5 system, shall include training in family systems theory. The department, the county  
6 departments, and a licensed child welfare agency under contract with the department in a  
7 county having a population of 500,000 or more shall develop public information programs  
8 about child abuse and neglect and about unborn child abuse.

9 **SECTION 2.** 48.981 (8) (e) of the statutes is created to read:

10 48.981 (8) (e) In this subsection, “family systems theory” means a method of working  
11 with families that acknowledges that each family is a system and not just a group of individual  
12 members; that families behave and interact in predictable patterns; that families have  
13 established boundaries; that families have unwritten rules of interaction; that systems,  
14 including family systems, are resistant to change; and that every family has skills and  
15 resources to contribute to solutions to the family’s problems.

16 **SECTION 3.** 49.143 (2) (c) of the statutes is amended to read:

17 49.143 (2) (c) Employ at least one financial and employment planner. The financial and  
18 employment planner shall work with a participant to facilitate the participant’s achievement  
19 of the maximum degree of self-sufficiency. The department shall ensure that a financial and  
20 employment planner employed by a Wisconsin works agency meets certification and training  
21 requirements established by the department by rule and that appropriate training is provided  
22 by a Wisconsin works agency. The training program provided to financial and employment

1 planners shall include training in family systems theory. In this paragraph, “family systems  
2 theory” has the meaning given in s. 48.981 (8) (e).

3 (END)