



PROMOTING OPPORTUNITIES TO CARE AND NURTURE

GONTACT AGENCIES:

Fond du Lac County Department of Social Services Access Unit: 929-3400

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Background:

P.O.C.A.N. is a State funded child abuse and neglect prevention initiative. Fond du Lac County was one of seven communities chosen to receive this grant award. This grant allows Fond du Lac County to provide a flexible integrated comprehensive system of child and family services that are individually tailored to meet the needs of many Fond du Lac County families. This is a primary prevention model designed to enhance family development and positive parenting practices. Each family will participate in the development of an individualized family service plan, an approach to bolster the family's ability to care for itself, produce strong family members, fully utilize existing skills, and acquire new ones. The plan allows families to recognize their accomplishments as they are empowered to take ownership of their participation and success.

The State has named this initiative P.O.C.A.N. (Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect). Fond du Lac County has redefined P.O.C.A.N. as Promoting Opportunities to Care and Nurture.

Target Group(s):

Two target groups have been identified for this initiative:

1. First time mothers whose child, age 0--3, is eligible for medical Assistance.
2. Families with children 0--18 who: (Preference given to 0--12)
 - Either requested assistance or have been the subject of child abuse or neglect referrals.
 - Are willing to cooperate with an informal plan of supportive services.
 - Are not involved with the Juvenile Court System relative to child abuse and neglect.
 - Substantial risk of maltreatment exists if assistance and/or services is not provided.

Program Goals/Objectives:

The program goals are to provide families with the resources necessary to confront stressful life conditions and avoid behaviors that could result in negative physical, psychological, or social outcomes. As the program focuses on primary prevention, the objective is to develop strategies designed to be implemented before the onset of significant problems and target larger community populations. The program goals/objectives are to promote awareness, knowledge, competency or skills, self-esteem and self-reliance, increased coping ability, support systems in families, schools, workplaces, and community environments, conditions for healthy lifestyles, and resistance to physical and psychological illness and disease.

The objective is to create environmental conditions for a healthy community and a healthy family.

- Program Services:** The project employs the utilization of both a home visitation component and the development of wraparound services. Wraparound means a process used to create individualized plans of care for children and families. The planning process includes the child, the parent(s), other informal supports, and professionals. This process is needs driven rather than services driven in order to meet the unique needs of each family. Services include both traditional and newly created services combined with informal supports. The wraparound services plans will address the following areas: economic support, respite for the family, community resources, parenting support, safety concerns, and other goals established with the family.
- Service Funding Sources:** Flexible funds may be available to individual families to assist them in accomplishing their plan. Flexible funds create optional money for families to enhance service delivery and eliminate barriers to the families achieving their goals. Other resources might include family Cost share or fee for service through local community agencies.
- Referral Procedure:** Referrals for the P.O.C.A.N. Program can be made through either Fond du Lac County Department of Social Services or Health Department. Please specify if this is a referral to the P.O.C.A.N. Program when making a referral to either agency. Written referrals can be sent to the Department of Social Services at P. O. Box 1196, 87 Vincent St., Fond du Lac, WI 54935 or telephone to the Access Unit at 929-3400, or faxed to the agency at 929-3447. Written referrals to the Health Department may be sent to 160 S. Macy St., telephone 929-3085, fax number 929-3102.
- Program Outcomes:** The program outcomes for the P.O.C.A.N. initiative are to strengthen family functioning, enhance family development' and inspire positive parenting practices. Generally, programs designed to prevent child abuse and neglect focus on one or more of the following:
- Increasing parental knowledge about general child development, child management techniques, and positive family functioning.
 - Improving overall child rearing skills.
 - Increasing empathy for and awareness of others' needs.
 - Improving the positive self-concept and self-esteem of all family members.
 - Improving family and parent-child communication.
 - Building family support and cohesion.
 - Increasing parental knowledge about the triggers of abuse.
 - Increasing parental use of nonviolent approaches to child discipline.