







West Michigan Partnership for Children (WMPC) strives to ensure that children removed from their homes due to abuse, neglect, or abandonment are placed in safe, family-like settings with culturally responsive and trauma-informed care delivered through services including Care Coordination and Enhanced Foster Care.

**Our mission** is to empower communities to create better futures for children and families through innovation and collaboration.

**We value:**

-  Demonstrating accountability in our work
-  Using data to initiate change
-  Fostering innovation to advance child welfare initiatives
-  Looking through the same lens as the people we serve
-  Collaborating with our partners and community
-  Promoting equity through social and racial justice

## The WMPC Model

### A Performance-based Approach

WMPC’s approach to child welfare services focuses on empowering families and addressing barriers to reunification. We use a performance-based funding model for our agency partners, departing from the traditional model that lacks incentives for timely permanency. Agency partners are paid based on achieving specific outcomes, ensuring that families receive the best services possible.

*Evaluation of Michigan’s Performance-Based Funding Model*, a five-year evaluation of our model, was completed in 2023—we share some of the highlights below. All tables and figures shown are from that evaluation. Figures with an asterisk (\*) are statistically significant findings, which means there is a 95 percent probability the findings are a result of our program and not due to chance.



*“We have been licensed [as a foster family] for 12 years. Our last foster care case start to finish was just under 14 months, which is huge. We had kids over two years in the past with cases lingering and not permanency-focused. WMPC reduced the amount of time he stayed in foster care.”*

FOSTER CARE PARENT

## Reuniting Families with Care and Speed

In contrast to two similar Michigan counties (Ingham and Oakland), youth served under the WMPC Model (formerly known as the Kent Model), on average, had:

**79 fewer days**  
in care (almost three months)\*

**4.2% faster exit rate**  
from foster care to permanency\*

Table 3-11. Exited or Still in Care; pg. 38

*Permanency is defined as reunification with parents/primary caregivers, adoption, or living with relatives or guardian*

Table 3-11. Exited or Still in Care; pg. 38

Children in Kent County were reunified with their parents or primary caregivers, on average, at significantly higher rates and more quickly than children in comparison groups.

**50 days faster**

for reunification with parents or primary caretakers\*

Table 3-15. Time to Exit by Permanency Type; pg. 41

**6.6% more**

children achieved permanency within **six months\***

Table 3-12. Cumulative Exits to Permanency; pg. 38

**5.2% more**

children achieved permanency within **12 months\***

Table 3-12. Cumulative Exits to Permanency; pg. 38

On average, the cost of WMPC services were:

**\$1,497 less**

for each family reunification in Kent County

**\$8,751 more**

for each adoption in Kent County\*

*We're working to understand why adoption costs in the county are disproportionately higher and identify the factors contributing to the difference.*

Average Cost per Placement

Reunification	Adoption*
<b>\$37,023</b> Comparison	<b>\$57,680</b> Comparison
<b>\$35,526</b> Kent	<b>\$66,431</b> Kent

Figure 3-16. Average Cost per Out-of-home Placement Spell; pg. 33

Youth between 16 and 18 years old face different challenges than younger children in foster care, making it harder for them to find permanent homes. The WMPC Model is making a positive impact and more older youth are finding permanent homes in Kent County under the WMPC model than those in comparison groups

**17.7% more**

older youth achieved permanency within 12 months\*

Table 3-16. Cumulative Exits to Permanency for Older Youth; pg. 42

**9% more**

older youth ever achieved permanency

Table 3-16. Cumulative Exits to Permanency for Older Youth; pg. 42

When looking at outcomes among youth in Kent County before and after the WMPC Model was implemented, on average, under the WMPC Model:

**240 days faster**

for reunification with parents or primary caretakers

Table 3-15. Time to Exit by Permanency Type; pg. 41

**14% more**

youth achieved permanency within **six months**

Table 3-16. Cumulative Exits to Permanency; pg. 38

**23.5% more**

youth achieved permanency within **12 months**

Table 3-12. Cumulative Exits to Permanency; pg. 38

**18.3% more**

older youth achieved permanency within **six months**

Table 3-16. Cumulative Exits to Permanency for Older Youth; pg. 42

**26.8% more**

older youth achieved permanency within **12 months**

Table 3-16. Cumulative Exits to Permanency for Older Youth; pg. 42

# We Keep Youth Safely in Their Homes and Communities

## Care Coordinators

WMPC's care coordination structure assigns one dedicated Care Coordinator to each partner agency, from which the youth and families receive services. Care Coordinators provide a crucial link between the child welfare system and partner agencies. They facilitate efficient service approvals, ensure consistent communication, and assist partner agencies to meaningfully support each child. Partner agency staff found Care Coordinators to be a personalized approach that led to more consistent application of policies and procedures.

**One Child, One Worker, One Agency**

## Enhanced Foster Care

Enhanced Foster Care (EFC) is a community-based service designed to ensure the permanency and stability of youth with significant behavioral and emotional concerns. EFC includes a range of services aimed at cost-effectively caring for children in family settings rather than 24-hour supervised group care, such as Child Caring Institutions (CCI).

## Providing Youth Permanency and Stability in a Family-like Setting

Through EFC, specialized care is offered based on three distinct levels of need. EFC's primary objective is to keep children safely within their homes and community while providing individualized support for both youth and caregivers. This approach aims to improve outcomes for youth while also expediting placement in permanent homes.

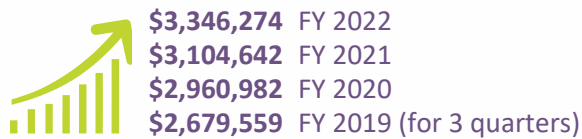
The shift from CCI to EFC created notable cost savings and is a far more cost-effective approach.



Level 3 care includes the highest treatment needs and most intensive services

## WMPC Investment in EFC through the Years

**\$3,618,092** FY 2023



**EFC can be in place for reunification, for guardianship, for adoption, for all of our goals ... EFC has played a huge part in permanency."**

CHILD WELFARE AGENCY LEADER

## Equipping Families with Enhanced Capacity to Meet the Needs of Their Youth

As part of WMPC's EFC program, each partner agency implements Together Facing the Challenge, an evidence-based training for foster care families, that:



Develops skills in effective behavior management and communication strategies



Emphasizes building and maintaining supportive and involved relationships



Employs an individualized approach to address specific child and family needs



Supports caregivers in meeting the unique needs of each youth



**We had a foster child pre-WMPC who had severe behaviors, and it took months to get them the support they needed. After WMPC, we had a foster child with severe behaviors, and we received as much support as possible to provide stability to this child, within days of them entering care. I'm so grateful for the impact of WMPC in this community."**





FOSTER CARE PARENT

## Dedicated to Future Progress

We are committed to continuous improvement and recognize that even a successful model can be strengthened. The recent WMPC Model evaluation has shed light on areas where enhancements are needed. Here are some ways we aim to increase our impact and effectiveness as we work to create a better future for youth and families.

### Strengthening Collaboration and Communication

WMPC collaborates with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, child placing agencies, courts, the county's community mental health organization, and other child welfare system partners. We are working to improve collaboration by:

-  Fostering effective communication through consistent check-ins and weekly site visits with partner organizations
-  Deploying more efficient reimbursement approval processes
-  Helping partners obtain accurate and up-to-date data
-  Hiring a diversity, equity, and inclusion consultant




**WMPC's Workforce Stabilization Grant funds initiatives to decrease partner agency staff turnover and maintain staffing consistency for better outcomes for children.**


### Optimizing Data Analysis

Effective data analysis helps us promote equity, foster a thriving workforce, and improve community engagement. We ensure that data guides every decision and drives us toward achieving collective impact.

Some ways we're working toward this include:

 Analyzing EFC separately from other programs

 Utilizing data to better understand staff satisfaction to improve retention

 Implementing a predictive model to anticipate future needs and understand what factors impact length of stay

 Automating reports to allow consistent analysis and communication with partners

 Hiring a lead data scientist

***“The flexibility and the humanity that WMPC brings to us ... it's made our lives so much nicer. We can actually get the things that we need for our clients. They actually see our clients as people rather than just a case or a number on a paper.”***

AGENCY SUPERVISOR

## Learn More

We look forward to sharing our performance-based model with agencies and policymakers interested in this approach. To learn more about our initiatives and future plans, please visit [wmpc.care](https://www.wmpc.care) or email us at [info@wmpc.care](mailto:info@wmpc.care). For the full evaluation report, please visit [wmpc.care/what-you-should-know/policies-procedures-and-reports](https://www.wmpc.care/what-you-should-know/policies-procedures-and-reports)