



SHARING THE NEWS

Volume 4, Issue 1, March, 2010

This newsletter is for child care providers caring for children in the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program, a program which helps low-income families pay for regulated child care while participating in work activities.

- New Attendance Reporting Forms
- Part Time Rates
- Program Integrity Changes
- YoungStar: Quality Rating System

New Attendance Reporting Forms and Formats

To prepare for the Automated Attendance Recording System, the department is re-designing the current CCPI attendance screen. The implementation date is Monday, April 12th. The new screen will have the following three modes:

1. Weekly Mode: This is the current design. Workers and providers enter total number of hours the child attended during a week.
2. Daily Mode: This new screen mimics the current Attendance Report Form (ARF) and requires the user to enter daily hours similarly to the paper ARF.
3. In/Out Mode: This new screen requires the user to enter arrival and departure times for each subsidized child in care.

The State and County workers will be able to switch a provider between the modes. When the changes take place on 4/12/10, every provider will be in the weekly (current) mode, but the workers will be able to switch the provider to another mode effective 4/18/10 the earliest. The CCPI user guide will be modified to include detailed instructions on the new screens. Also, a payment insert will be sent to the providers prior to the implementation date.

Nothing changes the requirement that providers keep accurate daily sign in/sign out records, retain those records on site for 3 years, and accurately report actual attendance for Wisconsin Shares payments. This requirement applies equally to children with attendance and enrollment authorizations.

Part Time Rates Explained

In November, 2009, the Department began a new emphasis on establishing part time rates for all age groups, not just school agers. There are increasing

calls to the Department from licensed providers and local agencies saying that weekly payments calculated by the payment system are more than the provider is charging their private pay part time customers. To solve this problem, the Department requested part time rate information in the most recent rate survey. Many providers have given us those rates and many have not.

Licensed providers are encouraged to submit the part time rates they charge their private pay customers to their local agency child care provider or, in Milwaukee County, their provider liaison. If providers do not have a part time rate for an age group, or do not report it, the agency will create one by multiplying the hourly rate by 20 hours. Rates for certified providers are not affected by this change.

Children authorized to licensed providers for 24 or fewer hours per week will be authorized at the part time rate. Part time rates are used for both enrollment and attendance authorizations.

Program Integrity Efforts and Child Care Providers

You have likely heard a lot recently about child care fraud, investigations, monitoring visits, and payment suspensions. This article should clear up some of the confusion and offers tips on how to correctly work with the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program.

Even before recent actions, the Department and its local agencies (counties, tribes, and agencies under contract) have been able to request and review attendance records as part of their regular monitoring. If the records were found to be inaccurate, the agency had the authority to refuse payment or suspend authorizations for up to six months, or both.

Beginning last July, new laws went into effect that tightened reporting requirements for providers and gave the Department and local agencies more authority to enforce the rules. DCF sent out a letter to all providers as a payment insert last October that explained the new rules. A copy of that letter can be found at

http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/wishares/pdf/provider_letter1006.pdf

Here are the key changes:

Children of Employees -- DCF can no longer pay for children whose parents work for the provider if more than 40% of all children enrolled have parents who work for the provider. We will check every month for violations of this rule. If a provider violates this rule, they are given six weeks to come into compliance. If they continue to violate the rule after six weeks, DCF will end all authorizations for the children whose parents work for the provider. Additionally, local agencies have the authority to refuse new authorizations if they will put the provider in violation of this rule.

Written Attendance Records -- DCF has always required providers to maintain accurate attendance records so that the amount billed to the Wisconsin Shares program can be verified. The new law adds to this requirement by stating that:

- the attendance records must be on site and available to DCF, the county/tribe, or its agent.
- the attendance records must show the **actual** start and end times for each child (no rounding).
- the attendance records must be kept for at least three years after the child has stopped attending.

When state or local agency staff pick up attendance records, they should show you identification and leave a receipt stating the dates of the records that they picked up.

Suspension of Payments -- The new law gives DCF and local agencies the authority to withhold Wisconsin Shares payments to providers that they reasonably suspect have violated rules of the Wisconsin Shares program. While this law gives a lot of authority to DCF and its agencies, payments will only be suspended if, after an investigation has

started, there is strong evidence that a provider is intentionally violating the rules.

When payments are suspended, the provider has the right to appeal. The provider can also continue to care for children (unless their licensing or certification is revoked or suspended) and should continue to send in attendance report forms. All payments, including those for prior weeks that haven't been mailed yet, will be withheld by DCF until the investigation is complete.

DCF is committed to eliminating fraud and waste in Wisconsin Shares and knows that doing so will help all of the honest hardworking providers we partner with. If you have information about child care fraud, please call 1-877-302-FRAUD.



Start early. Start smart. Start here.

In June of 2009, the Wisconsin Legislature directed DCF to develop a Child Care Quality Rating System and present it to the Legislature for approval to implement. YoungStar is the DCF proposed five-star quality rating and improvement system for licensed and certified child care programming in Wisconsin.

YoungStar ratings have been developed in cooperation with child development and child care experts. Factors in the ratings are proven to have a positive impact on child development. They include: Provider educational qualifications, learning environment and curriculum, business and professional practices, and support for the physical, nutritional and health care needs for all young children. You can see the YoungStar proposal overview at on the Internet at:

<http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/default.htm>.

DCF believes YoungStar will help all parents to make informed decisions about child care, increase help for providers seeking improvement, and link provider quality to reimbursement in Wisconsin Shares.

If you need this information in an alternate format, need it translated to another language, or have questions/suggestions about the content of this newsletter, please e-mail ChildCare@Wisconsin.gov or contact your local child care coordinator or Milwaukee County vendor liaison. For civil rights questions, call (608) 266-5335 or (866) 864-4585 TTY (Toll Free). Previous issues of this newsletter are located at <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/wishares/newsletter.htm>.