



# SHARING THE NEWS

Important Information for Child Care Providers  
caring for children in the Wisconsin Shares Child  
Care Subsidy Program

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The purpose of the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program is to assist low income working families in paying for the cost of quality child care for the time needed to participate in work and work activities.

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### About the Child Care Authorization

Every child care provider participating in the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program has seen the document called the authorization. That authorization is the result of a lot of work on the part of many people. Before you see the authorization:

- The W-2 agency has verified that the family is financially eligible, all parents in the household are engaged in an eligible activity (such as work), and there are children who need child care while the parents are working or doing other approved activities.
- The parent(s) and his or her employer, school official, or other activity manager have verified the hours that the parent is in the approved activity.
- The parent has selected you as his or her child care provider. You have agreed to be the provider, you have slots available for the times care is needed, and you and the parent have agreed on any service details or additional required payment. The Department recommends that you have signed agreements with all child care customers.

The authorization you get will show the child's name, parent's name, case number, and other identifying data. As a provider, you should pay special attention to the following items on the authorization:

- **Provider Identification.** This box includes your business name, your provider number, and the location at which care is authorized. The authorization is site specific. You may not report care that you provide at one site as if it occurred at another site. Wisconsin Shares will not pay

you for care you provided at a location other than the location named on the child's authorization.

- **Authorization Type.** This will either say "Attendance" or "Enrollment". "Attendance" means you will be paid for the hours of care actually provided. "Enrollment" means that, with certain exceptions, you will be paid for the same number of hours every week. The exceptions are related to the low attendance policy. In selecting the authorization type, the authorization worker has considered the variability of the parent's activities, the history of the family or child's use of care, and other issues.
- **Authorization Period.** The dates in the authorization period **are the only dates** of care for which the state is agreeing to pay you. You should be very careful about providing care for the child outside of the dates on the authorization. Any number of reasons can keep a family from getting the authorization they expect.
- **Weekly Hours.** For an attendance based authorization, this is the maximum number of hours that the subsidy will pay for. For an enrollment based authorization, this is the actual number of hours that the subsidy will pay for unless the child attends less than half of the authorized hours and the absence is unexcused. You should be aware that local agencies are instructed to write the authorizations **ONLY** for the hours needed to participate in the eligible activity. If there are two parents in the household, child care is authorized only for the hours that both parents are engaged in their eligible activities. If an authorization is regularly underused, local agencies are urged to reduce the authorized hours since they appear to be unneeded.

Sometimes providers are not paid what they are expecting. You can avoid these problems by making sure you have an authorization for all care you provide under the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program.

Example: A provider allows a parent to enroll a school-age child in care before an authorization is issued. The provider believes that the authorization will eventually arrive and be backdated to cover all care provided.

What Really Happens: The parent's authorization is delayed because of questions about the hours of employment. Once employment is verified, it turns out that care is not needed because all the parent's verifiable work hours are during school hours. Once work hours are verified and commissions counted, it also turns out that the family is not financially eligible for child care. Any payment for the care provided without the authorization is between the parent and provider.

Comment: The provider may have a good sense of eligibility and authorization requirements, but individual cases may turn out differently than presumed.

### Stay within Your Regulated Limits

With very few exceptions, the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program only pays for children to be cared for in regulated programs or child care programs operated by public school districts. We rely on licensors and certifiers to make sure the children whose families receive help with child care costs are in safe, healthful, appropriate and legal programs. The subsidy does not pay for care provided outside of regulation.

Example: A family child care provider, licensed to care for children from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., enrolls a family of 3 children into care. The parent works second shift—from 3:00 to 11:00 p.m. The authorization allows for 9 hours of care each day to cover work and transportation time.

What Really Happens: The children attend from 2:30 to 11:30 p.m. The provider's regulation only allows for her to care for the children until 9:00 p.m. When the local agency discovers the problem, they recover payment for the 2-1/2 hours per day that the care was unregulated.

Comment: The authorization says the Subsidy Program will pay for child care, but Wisconsin Shares only pays for regulated care. It does not pay for care outside of your regulated hours, when you have more children in care than your regulation permits, or at a location other than the authorized location. If we find that payments have been made for care outside of a provider's regulation, we will recover overpayments from the provider. The provider is responsible for complying with regulations.

State law requires the Department to survey child care rates every year. The Department contracts with counties to do this work. Each August or September, each county sends a survey to **all licensed family and group providers** to collect child care prices and related information about the private child care market in that county. The goal of the survey is to accurately identify market rates for use in setting maximum rates in the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program.

It is very important that you complete the survey form when you get it and send it back to the county so your prices can be included in subsidy rate calculations. You must also send your written price sheets listing the prices you charge for private-pay children in your care (children whose service is not subsidized).

### Sign up for the Child Care Email Subscription!

A couple years ago, the DWD Child Care Section created an email subscription list (or listserv) for child care providers. About 1,200 providers now subscribe to this service. The Department uses the listserv to send out notices about child care topics such as subsidy changes and updates and public hearing notices. Subscribers get more information and get it earlier than those who rely solely on mailed notices and items published in newspapers. To subscribe, go to <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/childcare/listserv/default.htm>. Make sure you enter your email address correctly. Invalid email addresses will be deleted. If your email address changes, you are responsible for updating your subscription.

### Web Address Change

The DWD Child Care Section's web pages have moved to <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/childcare/default.htm>

We hope this address will be easier to use than the previous one. Please update your bookmarks (favorites).