

# MyWIChildCare Implementation Survey of Child Care Providers and Parents Participating in the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program

Wisconsin implemented MyWIChildCare, an electronic benefits transfer (EBT) card to empower Wisconsin parents who utilize the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program while selecting and paying for child care services. Changes include parents using the EBT card to pay their child care provider, payments being made prior to services being rendered, eliminating provider attendance reporting, encouraging parents to become more involved with their provider, and establishing a system that mirrors the private pay, free market child care system. MyWIChildCare was implemented throughout Wisconsin in three phases and fully implemented statewide in April 2017.

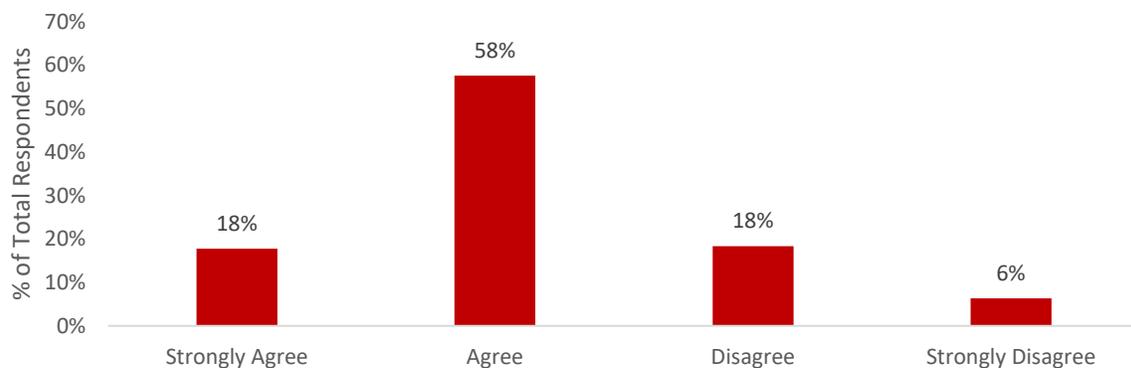
In an effort to understand how MyWIChildCare impacted child care providers and parents utilizing the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, Division of Early Care and Education (DECE) conducted a survey prior to and following statewide implementation. The pre- and post-implementation surveys were completed by 172 child care providers and 166 parents.

## Child Care Provider Results

**Our first research question related to providers was:** *Do child care providers perceive a reduction in the time they spend to meet the Department of Children and Families (DCF) billing and record keeping requirements?*

Seventy-six percent of child care providers indicated spending less time on billing and record keeping than before MyWIChildCare. Explanations from child care providers who indicated there was no decrease in time had a common theme in stating that time is now spent reminding parents to pay on time.

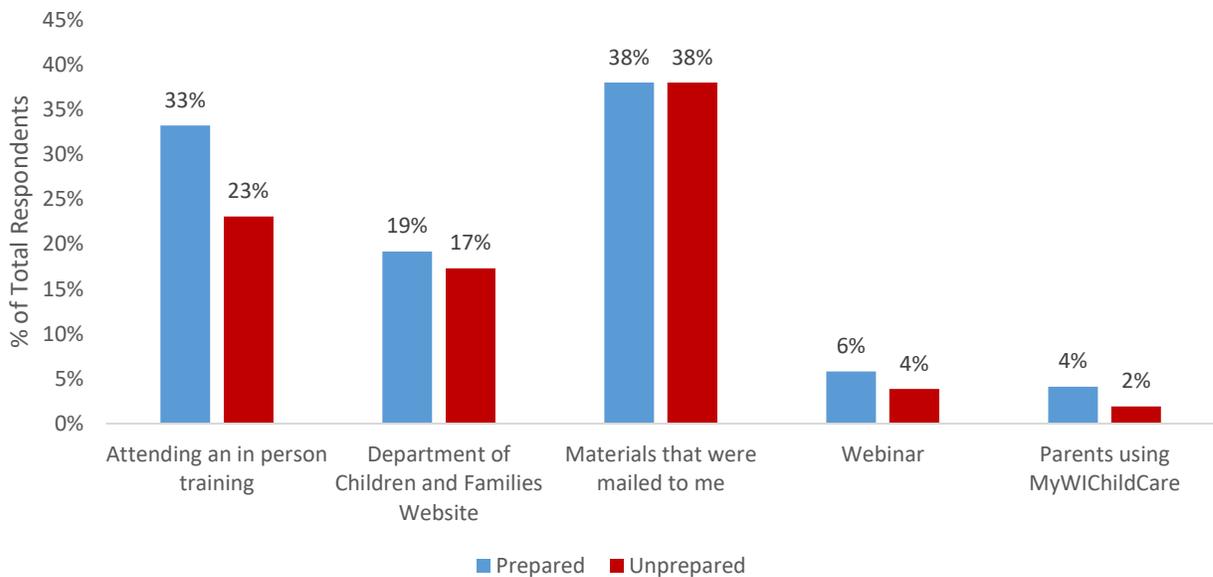
Child Care Provider Response to, "Overall, I feel I spend less time on billing and record keeping than I did before MyWIChildCare."



**Our second research question related to providers was: Do child care providers understand the changes associated with MyWICChildCare?**

Eighty-seven percent of child care providers stated they know what MyWICChildCare is and how it works on the post-implementation survey. Eighty-two percent of child care providers indicated they were prepared for the changes with MyWICChildCare. Child care providers who felt prepared for the MyWICChildCare changes attended 10% more in person training sessions than child care providers who were not prepared. Of the child care providers who received materials that were mailed to them, there was no difference in being prepared versus unprepared.

Child Care Providers who felt Prepared vs Unprepared for the Changes with MyWICChildCare by Type of Resource Used



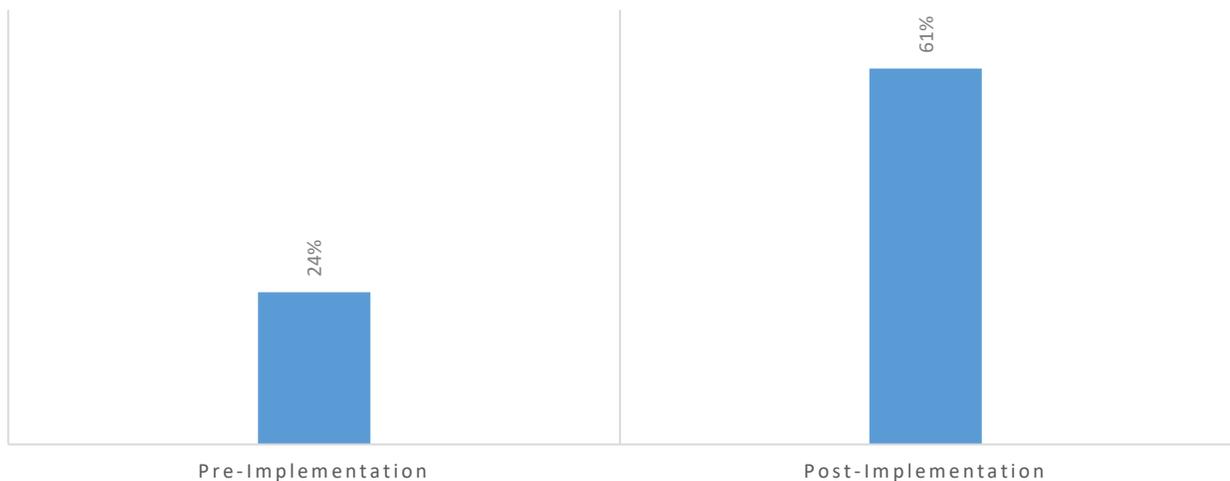
**Child Care Provider Summary:** Over 80% of child care providers surveyed understand what MyWICChildCare is and how it works. One consistent theme emerged across the child care provider survey as a whole. Child care providers are concerned about the parent’s ability to pay them in a timely matter whether it be for the subsidy amount, or parent share. There was a 19% increase in child care providers stating they disagree with the statement “I will no longer see a delay in receiving payments” from the pre- to post-implementation survey. Sixteen of the 25 comments provided for that survey item were in regards to parents causing payment delays. Due to these concerns, 23% of child care providers stated MyWICChildCare has affected how and when they enroll Wisconsin Shares recipients. Child care providers have chosen not to enroll children mid-month knowing they would not receive payment until the following month. They stated they would only enroll a child at the first of the month.

## Parent Results

**Our first research question related to parents was:** *Do parents have an increased understanding of their child care costs after implementation of MyWICChildCare as compared to their understanding of their child care costs under the previous system?*

Forty-one percent of parents who reported they did not know their child care costs during the pre-implementation survey reported a dollar amount during the post-implementation survey. The increase in parents reporting a dollar amount is consistent with parents' increased stated knowledge of the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program (see question below). The increased knowledge of the subsidy program appears to also indicate parents are more aware of their children's child care costs.

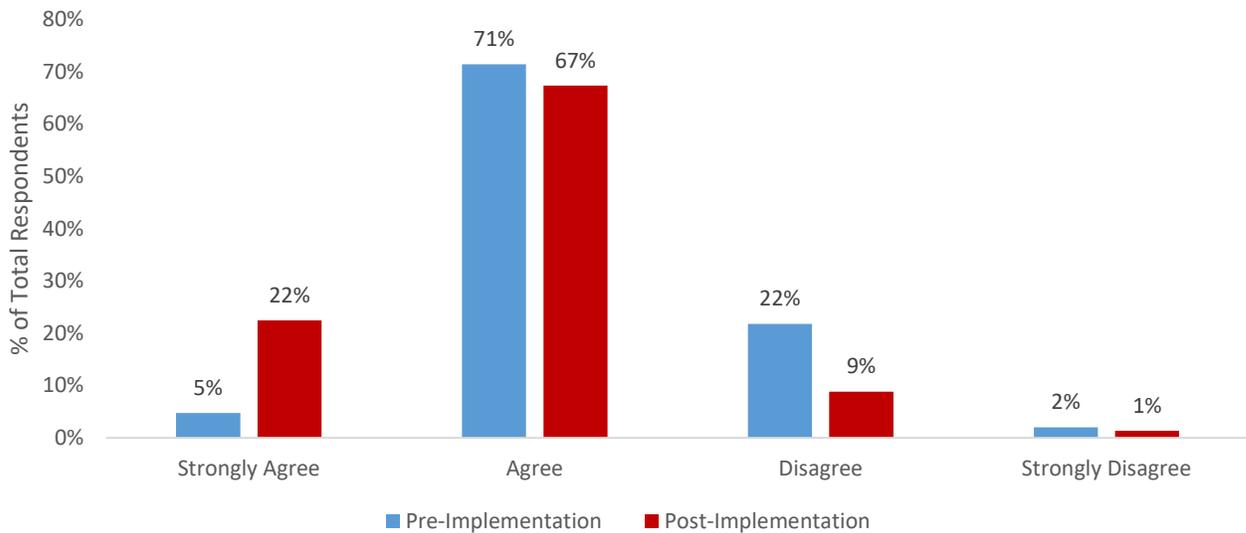
% Of Parents who Reported a Dollar Amount when Asked, "What Does WI Shares Child Care Subsidy Currently Pay For Your Children's Child Care?"



**Our second research question related to parents was:** *Has parents understanding of the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program improved?*

Eighty-nine percent of respondents stated they understood the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program during the post-implementation survey. Parents indicated an increase in understanding of the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program as well as an increase in knowledge of what MyWICChildCare is and how it works by the post-implementation survey.

## Parents' Response to, "I Understand the WI Shares Child Care Subsidy Program."



**Parent Summary:** Parents who stated they felt prepared for MyWICChildCare were twice as likely as parents who did not feel prepared (35% and 17% respectively) to report using multiple resources to learn about MyWICChildCare. No individual resource led to a parent's feeling of preparedness for MyWICChildCare. However, using multiple resources to learn about MyWICChildCare did correspond to an increase in their perceived preparedness.

Over 50% of parents surveyed gained an understanding of their children's child care costs after the implementation of MyWICChildCare. Along with gaining an understanding of their children's child care costs, nearly all parents who initially stated they did not understand the program felt they gained an understanding of the program by the post-implementation survey.

### Conclusion

Child care providers and parents participating in the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program overwhelmingly felt they understood the MyWICChildCare program at post-implementation. The materials that were mailed to child care providers and parents did not determine a participant's understanding. However, these materials in combination with other Department-provided and community resources did increase participants' knowledge. The results of the MyWICChildCare implementation surveys should be considered in light of the limitations of this study. Both child care providers and parents self-reported the data over a long period of time. Sample sizes were small and not representative of the state as a whole. Despite these limitations, using these resources to continue informing child care providers and parents about the EBT card and payment of child care will have a positive impact on the perception of the program and foster optimal use of MyWICChildCare.