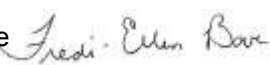


To: DCF/DMCPS Administrator
DCF Area Administrators
Child Placing Agency Directors
Child Welfare Agency Directors
County Departments of Community Programs Directors
County Departments of Human Services Directors
County Departments of Social Services Directors
Group Home Providers
Tribal Social Service/Indian Child Welfare Directors
Private Child Placing Agencies
Residential Care Center Providers
Shelter Care Providers
Tribal Chairpersons

From: Fredi-Ellen Bove 
Administrator

Re: WI Shares and Out-of-Home Care Providers

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memo is to inform counties and child placing agencies who license foster homes of an alternative method to initiate the application process for the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program for foster parents, interim caretakers, subsidized guardians, and relatives who have both a court order for placement of a child under Wisconsin Statutes Chapters 48 or 938, or equivalent Wisconsin tribal law, and who receive a Kinship Care payment.

In addition, this memo provides information about a policy change that allows the Child Care subsidy authorization begin date to start prior to the Request for Assistance (RFA) date in limited situations for relatives who have both a court order for placement of a child under Wisconsin Statutes Chapters 48 or 938, or equivalent Wisconsin tribal law, and who receive a Kinship Care payment.

BACKGROUND

Prior to February 2017, Wisconsin Shares authorizations had the capability to be backdated to the date a child was placed in a foster home or Kinship Care home or to the beginning of the month of the Request for Assistance (RFA), as long as the child was actually in child care during that time. However, effective February 2017, Wisconsin Shares no longer permits backdating to the date of placement and will only allow authorizations for subsidized child care to start on the date of the Request for Assistance, with the exception of relatives who have both a court order for placement of a child under Wisconsin Statutes Chapters 48 or 938, or equivalent Wisconsin tribal law, and who receive a Kinship Care payment.

INFORMATION SUMMARY

The Division of Early Care and Education has completed the implementation of MyWICChildCare across the state. This initiative enables Wisconsin Shares participants to pay their child care providers using an Electronic Benefits Transaction (EBT) card. As part of implementing MyWICChildCare, DCF Chapter 201 Admin. Code was amended to limit the authorization start date to begin no earlier than the RFA date, with limited exceptions.

In accordance with the changes to DCF Chapter 201, the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program Policy Manual was updated and Chapter 2 section 2.2.3 now limits the Child Care authorization begin date to start no earlier than the RFA date. As a result of this requirement, it is very important for parents to apply for Wisconsin Shares as soon as they know they will need child care.

For certain families, the ability to apply for Wisconsin Shares when the need for child care arises may be challenging, such as for foster parents, interim caretakers, subsidized guardians, and relatives who have both a court order under Wisconsin Statutes Chapters 48 or 938, or equivalent Wisconsin tribal law, and who receive the Kinship Care payment. These families may have a child placed in their home on short notice and may have obligations related to the child's placement that must be attended to immediately, which makes it more difficult to apply for Wisconsin Shares in a timely manner. To overcome this challenge, the Division of Safety and Permanence (DSP) and the Division of Early Care and Education (DECE) have agreed upon an alternative option for these families to submit a Wisconsin Shares Child Care Registration form ([DCF-F-2835](#)) so that the RFA date can be established without delay.

In addition, relatives who have both a court order for placement of a child under Wisconsin Statutes Chapters 48 or 938, or equivalent Wisconsin tribal law, and who receive a Kinship Care payment have additional delays in applying for Wisconsin Shares because, after obtaining the court order for the placement of the child in the relative's home, it can take up to 45 days to obtain approval of the Kinship Care payment once requested. Relatives often wait to apply for Wisconsin Shares until they have both a court order and are receiving the Kinship Care payment because then their eligibility is based on Wisconsin Statutes section 49.155(1m)(c)1h, which allows their financial eligibility to be tested based on the income and household size of the child's biological parent's at the time the child was removed from the home. Once the Kinship Care payment is approved, it may be backdated to the date the child was placed with the relative, if it is within 90 days of the Kinship Care request.

To alleviate some of the child care costs these relatives incur while waiting to be approved for the Kinship Care payment before applying for Wisconsin Shares, emergency rule DCF 201.039 Admin. Code was implemented and provides an exception to allow the authorization begin date to start before the RFA date in limited situations for these relatives. In accordance with this emergency rule change, the Wisconsin Shares policy has been amended to include this exception.

Under the new policy, once eligibility has been determined, an authorization for a relative who has both a court order for placement under Wisconsin Statutes Chapters 48 or 938, or equivalent Wisconsin tribal law, and who receives the Kinship Care payment may begin on the later date of either the first day of the month of the RFA or the date of the child's placement, so long as the child is receiving child care services from a child care provider and the following requirements are met:

- The child care provider was regulated during that time.
- The child care provider had a YoungStar or Wisconsin Shares Participation Contract in place during that time.
- The child care provider was in compliance with fingerprint requirements for the backdated period of time, to be monitored by the regulatory agency.
- The child care provider had a signed contract with Fidelity National Information Services Inc. (FIS).
- If the FIS contract has not been completed, the authorization can be backdated after the FIS contract is complete.
- The relative provided the necessary authorization assessment information within 30 days of the RFA date.

The authorization begin date is limited to the first day of the month of the RFA, the date of the child's placement, child care provider regulation date, YoungStar or Wisconsin Shares Participation Contract date, fingerprint compliance date, or the date that the child began attending the child care program, whichever is later.

To assist foster parents, interim caretakers, and subsidized guardians in getting an RFA date set as soon as a child is placed in their home, DECE and DSP have agreed that these individuals may sign the

Wisconsin Shares Child Care Registration form ([DCF-F-2835](#)) at the time the foster care license is issued by the licensing agency. The licensing agency may keep the signed form on file and when a child is placed in the home, the licensing agency may fax or deliver the signed form to the Child Care eligibility agency. The RFA date is the date the form is received by the Child Care eligibility agency.

In addition, relatives who have a court order for placement under Wisconsin Statutes Chapters 48 or 938, or equivalent Wisconsin tribal law, may also use this option for submitting a Wisconsin Shares Child Care Registration form ([DCF-F-2835](#)). Once the Kinship Care payment is received, the Child Welfare agency may fax or deliver the signed form to the Child Care eligibility agency. The RFA date is the date the form is received by the Child Care eligibility agency.

All families may apply for Wisconsin Shares by phone, in person, or through ACCESS. However, this alternative option for getting the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Registration form ([DCF-F-2835](#)) to the Child Care eligibility agency is a way of assisting these individuals with making sure that the RFA date is established as soon as possible.

Please note that the date the Child Care eligibility agency receives the form establishes the RFA date, not the date the form is signed.

CENTRAL OFFICE CONTACT: Out-of-Home Care Specialist
Bureau of Permanency and Out-of-Home Care
(608) 422-6937

Kinship Care Specialist
Bureau of Permanency and Out-of-Home care
(608) 422-6921
DCFkinshipcare@wisconsin.gov

MEMO WEB SITE: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/policy>

Attachments [Wisconsin Shares Child Care Registration form \(DCF-F-2835\)](#)