

W-2 Manual Chapter 16: Learnfare

16.1.1 Program Goal and Requirements

The goal of Learnfare is to help children fulfill their potential in life by providing programs and opportunities that will enable them to attend and complete school, obtain employment, and break the cycle of welfare dependency. The Learnfare requirement to be enrolled in and attend school is balanced by the provision of case management, especially for at-risk children, to address barriers, maintain school enrollment, and improve attendance and achievement.

Learnfare has ~~two~~ three program requirements:

1. **School Enrollment and Attendance.** Children in W-2 Groups are required to be enrolled in and attending school.
2. **Mandatory Case Management.** Members of certain target groups are required to participate in case management. (See [16.3.1](#))

“Attending” means that a child in the W-2 group has not been absent from school without an acceptable excuse for all or part of five or more days on which school is held during a school semester. A child that has been absent from school without an acceptable excuse for all or part of five or more days on which school is held during a school semester is considered a habitual truant. [Wis. Stat. s. [118.16\(1\)\(a\)](#)]

16.2.1 Children Subject to School Enrollment and Attendance

A child is required to be enrolled in and attend school if s/he:

1. Is in a W-2 Group whose parent is placed in a CSJ, TMP, or W-2 T;
2. Is age 6 through 17 (beginning on the first day of the fall school term), including a Minor Parent who is part of the W-2 Group;
3. Has not graduated from high school or obtained a HSED/GED; and
4. Resides with his or her natural or adoptive parent.

A child is exempt from school enrollment and attendance requirements if:

1. S/he is excused from attending school under s. 118.15 (3), Wis. Stats;
2. S/he is the caretaker of a child who is less than 45 days old and child care is not available at school and home instruction is not available;
3. Child care is needed for the minor parent to attend school but child care or transportation to and from child care is not available;
4. S/he is prohibited from attending school while an expulsion is pending;
5. S/he was expelled from school and there is no other school available because:
 - a. There is no public or private school within reasonable travel time or distance, which will accept the child.
 - b. There is no private or public transportation available to another school.
 - c. There is a public or private school, which will accept the child but the tuition charge is prohibitive and the child’s school district refuses to pay the tuition.
6. A physician has determined that she should delay her return to school after giving birth;

7. S/he is on the waiting list for a children-at-risk program and such a program is not available;
8. S/he or a family member is ill, injured, or incapacitated. ("Family member" means his/her spouse, dependent child, or parent who lives with him/her);
9. S/he is temporarily incarcerated; or
10. Circumstances beyond his/her control make him/her unable to be enrolled in and attend school.

Additional exemption reasons may be determined by the W-2 agency or justified through the Fact Finding Review.

Any child exempt from the school enrollment and attendance requirement is required to participate in case management if s/he is one of the target groups. (See [16.3.1](#))

No changes to 16.2.2 Learnfare School Definition

16.2.3 Enrollment and Attendance Verification

The FEP must verify enrollment and attendance for each child ages 6 – 17 subject to Learnfare and determine if the child is mandatory for Learnfare case management:

- At the initial W-2 eligibility determination;
- At each review; and
- When the FEP receives information or has reason to believe that a child in a W-2 Group whose parent is placed in a CSJ, TMP, or W-2 T has become a:
 - Dropout;
 - Habitual Truant;
 - Minor Parent; or
 - A child whose W-2 group includes a participant who has been unable to participate in required assigned activities due to the child's school-related problems.

~~Verification of school enrollment status may be in any form determined effective and efficient by the W-2 agency including documentation provided by or through the school. and attendance must be a school attendance record. If the record indicates that the child has been absent from school without an acceptable excuse for all or part of five or more days on which school is held during a school semester, the child is considered a habitual truant. If the FEP cannot determine the status of enrollment or whether the child is a habitual truant from the attendance record, the FEP must use the [School Enrollment and Attendance Information Release form \(DCF-F-DES11297\)](#) and allow the school to make the determination.~~

The format of a school attendance record may vary from school to school. The verification may be a document provided by or through the school that indicates the number of days a student is absent from school without an acceptable excuse.

The W-2 participant has seven working days from the date of the verification request to provide the verification. The verification due date may be extended up to 30 days from the initial request for W-2 services under extenuating circumstances. (See [4.1.3](#))

The W-2 participant has the primary responsibility for providing the verification. The FEP may assist in obtaining needed documents to expedite the verification process. If the family does not have the power to produce the verification, or requires assistance to do so, the FEP must proceed immediately to seek the verification. (See [4.1.3](#)) The [School Enrollment and Attendance Information Release form \(DCF-F-DES11297\)](#) is available for FEPs to use to obtain verification if participants are unable to provide verification. FEPs must scan completed forms into the W-2's Electronic Case Files (ECF) under code WLCM.

Any instance where a parent refuses to provide verification of a child's school enrollment or school attendance status will make the W-2 Group ineligible for a W-2 employment position.

While school is in session, the FEP must verify enrollment and attendance in the current semester only. When school is not in session, the FEP must verify enrollment and attendance for the immediately preceding semester. When making a determination as to whether a child is a returning dropout, the FEP must review information from both the current and immediately preceding semesters. To determine if a child is a habitual truant, the FEP must review school attendance in the current semester only, unless no more than four weeks have passed since the current semester starts.

Example: Lily's daughter, Selena is in 7th grade. She can monitor her daughter's progress through the school's parent portal page, which is updated daily with school attendance. At Lily's review, her FEP asks her to provide verification of Selena's school enrollment and attendance. Lily logs into the parent portal and clicks on the school attendance record. She prints out a copy for her FEP. Selena has missed nine days of school. Six days were unexcused absences, which meets the definition of a habitual truant. The FEP uses the document to verify Selena's school enrollment and attendance for Learnfare. Because Selena is a habitual truant, the FEP enrolls her in Learnfare case management and schedules the first appointment for next week. If Selena does not participate in case management, Lily's W-2 payments may be sanctioned.

Example: Joy's son, Leroy is in 4th grade. His school mails her progress reports. The progress reports also include a section on school attendance. Each report shows how many days Leroy was absent from school with an acceptable excuse, how many days he was absent without an acceptable excuse, and how many days he was tardy to school. Leroy has only missed one day of school. At review, Joy makes a copy of the report and brings it to her FEP. The report verifies Leroy's enrollment and attendance in school.

No changes to 16.3 Learnfare Case Management

16.4.1 Determining a Financial Penalty

~~W-2 Group A~~ W-2 participant in the CSJ, W-2 T, or TMP placement may have a financial penalty imposed if all of the following conditions are met:

1. The child continues to fail to meet the school attendance requirement if the student is either determined to be a habitual truant or is not enrolled in school;
2. Individuals assigned activities on the Learnfare Case Management Plan have failed to cooperate with case management;
3. Good cause for failing to cooperate with case management has not been presented; and
4. A Fact Finding Review was not requested within 10 days from the Learnfare Penalty Notification date.

The following ~~groups~~ children are required to participate in case management, but the W-2 participant in their group is not subject to a financial penalty for failure to cooperate:

- Minor Parents enrolled in school;
- ~~Habitual Truants~~;
- Returning Dropouts; and
- A child whose W-2 group includes a participant who has been unable to participate in required assigned activities due to the child's school-related problems.

Example: Mia is a minor parent. Mia continues to go to school and maintains regular school attendance. Mia was participating in the required Learnfare case management but missed her last scheduled case management appointment. She did not contact the FEP to reschedule the appointment. The FEP sends a notice that requires Mia to contact the FEP and schedule a new time to meet. Mia failed to contact the FEP by the due date on the notice. Although Mia is a minor parent and must participate in mandatory Learnfare case management, the FEP cannot impose a financial penalty because she is a minor parent enrolled in school and maintains regular school attendance.

If the following children fail to cooperate with case management, the W-2 participant in their group is subject to a financial penalty:

- Children between the ages of 6 and 17 not enrolled in school, including Minor Parents;
- Habitual Truants; and
- Dropouts.

Example: Last semester, Lucy missed eight (8) days of school without an acceptable excuse, which meets the definition of a habitual truant. She started participating in Learnfare case management and developed a plan to improve her attendance. This semester she continues to skip school. Lucy has missed five (5) days without an acceptable excuse. She also stopped coming to case management and did not contact the FEP to reschedule her appointment. The FEP sends a written notice for Lucy and her mom to contact the FEP within five (5) working days of the notice date. If they do not contact the FEP, a financial penalty may be imposed in the next possible payment month.

No changes to the remainder of 16.4.1