



**Wisconsin Shares Handbook – Chapter 2
Authorizations**

April 5, 2021

Division of Early Care and Education

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Note: CSAW User Guides are located in the CSAW Users SharePoint site (login required).

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2.1 Wisconsin Shares Child Care Providers

The authorization and subsidy policies for the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program are subject to Wisconsin's approved Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) plan, current state and federal law, administrative rules, and departmental policies.

This section last updated 01/31/2017

2.1.1 Child Care Provider Regulation

Wisconsin Shares only issues authorizations to eligible parents who choose regulated child care. Child care providers must be one (1) of the following:

- Licensed;
- Certified; or
- Operated by a Wisconsin public school board and monitored by DCF Bureau of Early Care Regulation.

This section last updated 08/01/2018

2.1.1.1 Licensed Child Care Providers

Licensing rules create separate requirements for three (3) categories of licensed child care:

- Group Child Care Centers;
- Family Child Care Centers; and
- Day Camps.

Child care licensing is done by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) through its regional licensing offices. When the provider's regulation has been approved, the information is entered into the Wisconsin Child Care Regulatory System (WISCCRS) and populates in CSAW.

This section last updated 01/31/2017

2.1.1.2 Certified Child Care Providers

There are two (2) levels of certification for family child care providers who meet the requirements:

- Regular Certified; and
- Provisionally Certified.

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) contracts with local administrative agencies and tribes for certifying child care providers. Local agencies may subcontract the activity with Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Agencies.

In Milwaukee County, certification is administered by DCF's Bureau of Early Care Regulation Southeastern Regional office. The below website provides information on who to contact by county for certification:

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/ccregulation/cccertification/certifiers.pdf>

Once the provider's regulation has been approved, the information is entered into the Wisconsin Child Care Regulatory System (WISCCRS) and populates in CSAW.

This section last updated 03/01/2019

2.1.1.2.1 In-Home Certified Child Care Providers

An in-home child care provider may be either provisionally certified (for up to six (6) months) or regularly certified and travel to the child's home to provide care. Certification group size rules do not apply to in-home care (care provided in the child's home); however, the provider may not bring additional, nonresidential children into the certified location (child's home). See Section 2.3.4 ~~2.4.7.3~~ for requirements ~~for~~ regarding when a child may receive an authorization to an in-home certified ~~Child-Care~~ providers and Section 2.4.7.3 for requirements regarding minimum wage when in-home care is provided for 15 hours or more per week. Once the provider's regulation has been approved, the information is entered into the Wisconsin Child Care Regulatory System (WISCCRS) and populates in CSAW.

This section last updated 04/05/2021 ~~08/01/2018~~

2.1.1.3 Public School Programs

Child care programs that are operated by public school boards must be recorded in the Wisconsin Child Care Regulatory System (WISCCRS) by Department of Children and Families (DCF) Bureau of Early Care Regulation (BECR) Regional Licensing staff. The subsidy rate for public school programs is calculated by using the monthly maximum rate for licensed group providers for the county/geographical area the child care provider is located within.

Child care programs that are operated by public school boards are monitored by DCF's Bureau of Early Care Regulation on an annual basis for a subset of licensing rules and are otherwise monitored under the authority of the local school board.

There are some child care programs that are located on public school grounds but are operated by nonprofits or other organizations that are not the school boards. These programs must be licensed or operated under contract with a public school and entered into WISCCRS by BECR staff in order to receive Wisconsin Shares authorizations.

<p>Note: Parochial or Tribal K-12 schools must be regulated in order to be eligible for Wisconsin Shares authorizations.</p>

This section last updated 08/01/2018

2.1.1.4 Child Care Provider Regulation Outside of the State

Parents may select a child care provider that is located outside of Wisconsin. Child care providers that are located outside Wisconsin must be regulated in their own state. Child care programs that are located out-of-state must be recorded in WISCCRS by DCF Central office staff.

The local agency must enter the out-of-state provider's prices into CSAW (see 2.2). The CSAW subsidy rate calculation is based on the parent's county of residence in Wisconsin. The weekly subsidy ceiling is increased by 10% for accredited out-of-state providers if the accreditation is accepted by YoungStar.

This section last updated 04/05/2021 01/31/2018

2.1.2 Mandatory Contracts for Wisconsin Shares

Child care providers are required to have the following current, signed contracts in place in order to receive Wisconsin Shares authorizations and subsidy funds:

1. YoungStar Contract or Wisconsin Shares Participation Contract; and
2. Fidelity National Information Services (FIS) Contract

This section last updated 10/01/2018

2.1.2.1 YoungStar Participation and Contract

All Certified Family providers, Licensed Family providers, Licensed Group Child Care centers, Licensed Day Camps, and public school programs must participate in YoungStar and have a signed YoungStar Contract entered into the YoungStar Case Management system before a Wisconsin Shares authorization can be written to their location. Once the contract is entered into the YoungStar Case Management system, an authorization can be backdated to the date the local YoungStar office received the contract (also known as the contract date).

New certified and licensed child care providers that submit a YoungStar Contract receive a pending rating until their first YoungStar rating is complete. The Wisconsin Shares subsidy calculation for a program with a pending rating uses the 2 Star YoungStar adjustment.

This section last updated 10/01/2018

2.1.2.2 Wisconsin Shares Participation Contract

Out-of-state and Certified In-Home child care providers are exempt from YoungStar participation but must sign a Wisconsin Shares Participation Contract in order to be eligible for Wisconsin Shares authorizations. Licensed providers who change to Certified In-Home providers must also submit a Wisconsin Shares Participation Contract.

Wisconsin Shares Participation Contracts must be submitted to the Department of Children and Families (DCF), Division of Early Care and Education (DECE), Bureau of

YoungStar ~~Early Learning and Policy (BELP)~~, Strategic Quality Initiatives Section.
Wisconsin Shares Participation Contracts can be submitted by mail, fax, or e-mail:

DCF
Attn: Bureau of YoungStar
~~201 E. Washington Avenue, E200~~
P.O. Box 8916
Madison, WI 53708-8916
Fax: 608-422-7156
E-mail: youngstar@wisconsin.gov

Staff in the Strategic Quality Initiatives Section enter this information into CSAW. Once the contract is entered into CSAW, an authorization can be backdated to the received date (also known as the contract date).

This section last updated 04/05/2021 ~~03/01/2019~~

2.1.2.3 YoungStar or Wisconsin Shares Contract Renewal and Grace Period

A one-month grace period following the child care program's anniversary date is allowed for child care providers to return their YoungStar or Wisconsin Shares Participation Contract renewals. Parents are notified when their child care provider is in the grace period and their authorization is at risk of ending if the provider does not complete the renewal.

During the grace period, no new authorizations can be written, but existing authorizations can continue up to the end of the grace period. If the provider returns the YoungStar or Wisconsin Shares Participation Contract prior to the end of the grace period, the provider's new participation period begins and the agency worker may authorize child care beginning that day. If the contract renewal is not returned by the end of the grace period, all Wisconsin Shares authorizations will end systematically on the last day of the grace period month.

If a YoungStar or Wisconsin Shares Participation Contract renewal is returned after the grace period, an authorization can be backdated to the date the contract was received and entered into the YoungStar system.

At the end of the grace period and continuing until the new YoungStar Contract is received by the local YoungStar office, authorizations cannot be written to the child care provider.

This section last updated 03/01/2019

2.1.2.4 Fidelity National Information Services (FIS) Contract

All child care providers who will accept Wisconsin Shares authorizations must complete a contract with FIS in order to receive Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) payments from

parents who are participating in Wisconsin Shares. EBT is the only means of disbursing Wisconsin Shares payments.

For detailed information on the FIS contracting process, visit <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wishares/providers/acceptingwishares>.

This section last updated 08/01/2018

2.1.2.5 Tax Reporting

All child care providers that receive Wisconsin Shares subsidies must provide a valid Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN), also known as a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) or Social Security Number (SSN) to the EBT vendor, Fidelity National Information Services (FIS). FIS will send an IRS Form 1099-MISC on or before January 31 of each year to all child care providers that receive more than \$600 in Wisconsin Shares subsidy in the previous tax year.

If any of the information on the W-9 tax form changes, the child care provider must submit the new information to FIS.

This section last updated 10/01/2018

2.2 Child Care Provider Prices

Child care providers set their own prices. Licensed providers, public school programs, and out-of-state providers must submit their full-time and part-time weekly prices to the local agency or through the Provider Portal. This is required before authorizations can be written and before the effective date of a price change. If prices already exist and there are current authorizations, the local agency must record the provider's price in CSAW with a begin date set for the first of the following month. If prices exist, the effective date of the new price cannot be a past date. If prices do not exist or there are no current authorizations in place, prices can be entered with a past effective date.

This section last updated 01/31/2018

2.2.1 Calculating a Full-Time Provider Price

If no full-time price is entered into CSAW, no full-time authorization can be written. If the child care provider does not submit a full-time price, the local agency must work with the provider to choose one (1) of the following options based on the provider's discretion:

- If the child care provider has an hourly price, multiply the hourly price by 35 and enter that amount into CSAW for a full-time price.
- When the child care provider reports a daily price, calculate a weekly price by multiplying the daily price by five (5) to arrive at a full-time price.

This section last updated 01/31/2017

2.2.2 Calculating a Weekly Part-Time Provider Price

If no weekly part-time price is entered into CSAW, no part-time authorization can be written. If the child care provider does not submit a part-time price, the local agency must work with the provider to choose one (1) of the following options based on the provider's discretion:

- Using the full-time weekly price, divide by 35; then use that amount and multiply by 20; the result is the part-time price that must be entered into CSAW.
- If the provider has an hourly price, multiply that price by 20 and enter that amount in CSAW for a weekly part-time price.
- If the child care provider has a daily price, calculate a weekly price by multiplying the daily price by three (3) to arrive at a part-time price.

This section last updated 01/31/2017

2.2.3 Certified Child Care Provider Prices

Regularly or provisionally certified providers may or may not submit their prices, but their prices are not a factor in calculating the subsidy amount. The maximum hourly rate for regularly and provisionally certified providers is set at 90% of the licensed family hourly rate. Monthly maximum rates are not set for certified providers; however, CSAW will consider the licensed family monthly maximum rate and compare this amount to the beginning reimbursement rate. The payment cannot exceed the licensed family monthly maximum rate.

This section last updated 11/01/2019

2.3 Wisconsin Shares Authorizations

Child care authorizations are written approval for child care subsidy for a specific child to a specific child care provider, location, and duration. Authorizations may begin and end on any day of the week. Once a child care authorization is in place, parents must request a change in child care providers before the next month's benefit load.

This section last updated 10/30/2017

2.3.1 Parental Choice

Parents have the right and responsibility to choose a regulated child care provider for their child within limits set by Wis. Stat. s. 49.155(4)(a).

However, parents may not receive an authorization for their child to attend a provider location where:

- ~~that are~~ The parent is employed by a certified child care provider at the same location ~~are not eligible for an authorization to the location where the parent is employed.~~
- The parent is self-employed as a certified or licensed child care provider and will be the provider for their own child(ren) (see 2.3.2).

- The child care provider lives in the same household as the child(ren) (see 2.3.3).

Parents who are child care providers may apply for a waiver to send their child(ren) to another child care provider in some situations per Wis. Admin. Code DCF s. 201.039(7).

This section last updated 04/05/2021 ~~11/01/2019~~

2.3.2 Authorizations for Children Whose Parent is a Child Care Provider

Wisconsin Shares does not allow an authorization to be written to a provider for child care services when the provider is the parent of the child. Parents who are certified or licensed child care providers may not receive a Wisconsin Shares authorization for their own children to attend their child care program. Parents who are child care providers may apply for a waiver to send their child(ren) to another child care provider in some situations per Wis. Admin. Code DCF s. 201.039(7).

The waiver request must be made in writing using the Request for Waiver of Eligibility Restrictions for Child Care Assistance form (DCF-F-432-E). If approved, the waiver will allow the local agency to write an authorization for the provider's child(ren) to receive care at another regulated provider. The waiver shall be approved or denied by the local agency within 10 business days of the receipt of the completed waiver application. Waivers must be granted for individual children if they meet the criteria outlined in Section 4.2.2.

Example 1: Mayumi is Amiko's foster parent. Mayumi is also a licensed family child care provider. Amiko may not have a child care authorization to attend Mayumi's child care program because Mayumi is Amiko's foster parent and they live in the same house. However, Mayumi may apply for a waiver so she can send Amiko to a different child care provider if she meets the criteria in Section 4.2.2.

This section last updated 11/01/2019

2.3.3 Authorizations for Children Who Live With a Child Care Provider

Wisconsin Shares does not allow an authorization to be written to a provider for child care services when the provider lives in the same house as the child. Any adult in the home who is also a child care provider may not receive a Wisconsin Shares authorization for a child who resides with them in the same household to attend their child care program, regardless of whether the adult is in the assistance group. A child who lives with a child care provider who is not their parent can attend a different child care provider without a waiver.

Example 1: Yuko lives with his parent and grandparent. Yuko's grandparent is a licensed family child care provider. Yuko cannot receive an authorization to attend his grandparent's child care program because they live in the same household, but he can receive an authorization to attend another child care program. Yuko's parent does not

need to apply for a waiver for Yuko to attend a different provider because the child care provider is not the parent.

This section last updated 11/01/2019

2.3.4 In-Home Child Care

Authorizations can be written for child care provided in the child's own home under any one (1) of the following circumstances as long as the in-home child care provider is certified:

- Three (3) or more children from the same family are receiving Wisconsin Shares subsidy and are being cared for;
- Other licensed or certified care is not available within a reasonable geographic area;
- Child care is needed during hours when no other care is available, such as second and third shift hours, and weekend care; or
- **The needs of a child's special need with a disability** could only be met in his or her home.

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2.3.5 Two-Day Time Frame to Issue Authorization

After Once eligibility has been confirmed in CARES Worker Web (CWW) **the parent can request an authorization. After the parent has provided the local agency with the child care provider and all necessary authorization assessment information,** the local agency **must** complete the authorization assessment and issue the child care authorization within two (2) business days ~~of completing an authorization assessment, and after the parent has provided the local agency with the child care provider information.~~ Any delay in this time frame must be ~~supported by a CWW~~ **documented in** case comments **indicating** **explaining** the reason for the delay (see 2.4.1).

This section last updated 04/05/2021 01/31/2017

2.3.6 Authorization Begin Dates at Application and Renewal

An authorization assessment is considered timely when it is completed within 30 calendar days of the Request for Assistance (RFA) date (see 1.2.2); or ~~One (1) calendar month of~~ the start date of the new eligibility period following a completed annual eligibility renewal (see 1.8.3).

A renewal is considered to be completed when all verification has been received and eligibility has been confirmed. When the parent completes the authorization assessment within 30 calendar days of the RFA date or ~~within one (1) calendar month of~~ the start date of the new eligibility period, an authorization ~~must~~ **may** begin on the most recent of the following dates:

- The RFA date;

- The start date of the new eligibility period following a completed annual eligibility renewal;
- The date the child began attending the child care provider; or
- The date **that** the child care provider the child is attending met both of the following requirements:
 - The child care provider was regulated.
 - The agency worker may backdate the authorization to the child care provider's certification application date as long as the certification is now completed.
 - The child care provider's ~~had a~~ completed YoungStar or Wisconsin Shares Participation Contract **was** entered **into** the YoungStar Case Management System (CMS).

If the parent does not provide all of the necessary information to complete an **timely** authorization assessment within 30 calendar days of the RFA date or ~~within one (1) calendar month of~~ the start date of the new eligibility period, ~~following a completed annual eligibility renewal it is considered late and the authorization must follow policy requirements for authorization begin dates during ongoing eligibility (see 2.3.7).~~ **the new authorization may only be backdated to the first of the month in which the authorization assessment was completed.**

Note: An authorization begin date at initial eligibility may not be backdated further than the RFA date unless policy requirements are met for relatives with court-ordered placement receiving the Kinship Care payment (see 2.3.6.1).

Process Note: ~~In order for the agency worker to write an authorization in CSAW, the provider must have a completed contract with Fidelity National Information Services (FIS). However, the FIS contract date is not a factor in determining the authorization begin date. If the FIS contract is not completed when all other requirements are met, if~~ the provider has met all of the requirements listed in Sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 except for the Fidelity National Information Systems (FIS) contract, the agency worker **may must** backdate the authorization to the most recent date in the list above once the contract is completed and entered into the FIS system. **The FIS contract date is not a factor in determining the authorization begin date. However, funds will not load to the EBT Card until the provider's FIS contract has been entered into the FIS system.**

Example 1 (At Application): Phil applies for Wisconsin Shares on May 15. He completes all of his eligibility requirements and is determined eligible on June 8. Also on June 8, he provides all ~~required approved activity schedules and~~ **necessary** information for the authorization assessment, ~~including and he provides~~ the name of the provider location that his children have been attending since April. The provider was **already** in compliance with the requirements for Wisconsin Shares prior to ~~the~~ **Phil's** RFA date.

Eligibility will begin May 1 in CWW, and the authorization in CSAW may begin on May 15 because the authorization assessment was completed within 30 calendar days of the RFA date.

Example 2 (At Application-Closed More than Reapplication After One (1) Calendar Month of Closure): Charlotte ~~is~~ ~~was~~ receiving Wisconsin Shares for her child, Olivia, when she ~~is~~ ~~was~~ determined to be in noncooperation with the Child Support Agency. She ~~does~~ ~~did~~ not claim good cause or cooperate with the Child Support Agency within seven (7) business days of receiving the Notice of Action Needed, so her Wisconsin Shares eligibility ~~ends~~ ~~ended~~ on March 30. On May 8, Charlotte ~~begins~~ ~~began~~ cooperating with the Child Support Agency. She reapplies for Wisconsin Shares on May 9 and is again determined eligible for Wisconsin Shares. Because the case was closed for more than one (1) calendar month, this is a new application. Olivia's authorization can begin on May 9, if Olivia was attending the child care program on this date, the provider met ~~all~~ ~~the~~ ~~policy~~ requirements ~~listed above~~, and Charlotte completes the authorization assessment by June 8.

Example 3 (Early Renewal): Priya's annual renewal is due May 31; however, she decides to complete an early renewal on April 8 along with her FoodShare renewal. Her eligibility is confirmed on April 11 and her new 12-month eligibility period for Wisconsin Shares starts May 1. Her agency worker ends the current authorization as of April 30 to align with the current eligibility period (see 1.8.3.1). Priya has ~~one (1) calendar month~~ ~~30~~ ~~calendar days~~ from the start of the new eligibility period to complete the authorization assessment ~~timely~~. She completes the authorization assessment on May 10 and her worker backdates the authorization begin date to May 1 because she completed the assessment within ~~one (1) calendar month~~ ~~30~~ ~~calendar days~~ of the start of her new 12-month eligibility period.

Example 4 (Annual Renewal): Amina's annual eligibility renewal is due April 30. She completes the interview and provides all verification on April 20. Amina's new eligibility period starts May 1. She completes the authorization assessment on May 25. The authorization may be backdated to begin May 1 because she completed the authorization assessment within ~~one (1) calendar month~~ ~~30~~ ~~calendar days~~ of the start of her new eligibility period.

Example 5 (Late Renewal): Anthony's case was due for a Wisconsin Shares renewal on May 31. Anthony did not complete his renewal timely, and his Wisconsin Shares eligibility ended on May 31. On June 28, Anthony completed the renewal interview, provided his written signature, and submitted all required verification. Eligibility reopened effective June 1 in CWW because he completed the late renewal within one (1) calendar month of Wisconsin Shares eligibility ending. Anthony completes his authorization assessment on June 30. Anthony's worker can backdate the authorization to June 1 because the authorization assessment was completed within ~~one (1) calendar~~

~~month~~ 30 calendar days of the start of his new eligibility period and his child had been attending the provider throughout the month of June. The authorization may begin on June 1 as long as the provider ~~is~~ was already in compliance with all of the Wisconsin Shares requirements.

This section last updated 04/05/2021 11/01/2019

2.3.6.1 Authorizations at Initial Eligibility for Relatives with Court-Ordered Placement and Kinship Payment

This section applies to relatives with court-ordered placement under Wis. Stat. Chapters 48 or 938, or a substantially similar Wisconsin tribal law, who also receive the Kinship Care payment (see Glossary for “Receiving a Kinship Care Payment”).

Once eligibility has been determined, if the relative provided the necessary authorization information within 30 calendar days of the Request for Assistance (RFA) date, the agency worker must create the authorization beginning on the most recent of the following dates:

- The first of the month of the Wisconsin Shares RFA date;
- The date of the child’s placement;
- The date the child began attending the provider;
- The date that the child care provider the child is attending met both of the following requirements:
 - The child care provider was regulated.
 - The agency worker may backdate the authorization to the child care provider’s certification application date as long as the certification is now completed.
 - The child care provider’s completed YoungStar or Wisconsin Shares Participation Contract was entered into the YoungStar Case Management System (CMS).

If the relative did not provide the necessary authorization information within 30 calendar days of the RFA date, see 2.3.7.

Example: Imani has a nephew, Tyler. Tyler was removed from his parents’ home through a Child in Need of Protection or Services (CHIPS) order, and placed with Imani on March 10. Imani applies for Wisconsin Shares on April 15. Wisconsin Shares eligibility is confirmed open for Tyler on April 17. Tyler has been attending the same child care provider since he was removed from his parents’ home on March 10. The agency worker creates an authorization for Tyler with a begin date of April 1.

Note: The Fidelity National Information Services (FIS) contract date is not a factor in determining the authorization begin date.

This section last updated 10/01/2018

2.3.7 Authorization Begin Dates During Ongoing Eligibility

Ongoing eligibility begins the calendar month following the completion of the Request for Assistance (RFA) in accordance with Section 1.2.2 and the calendar month following the completion of an annual eligibility renewal in accordance with Section 1.8.3.

~~An~~ During ongoing eligibility, a timely authorization assessment ~~according to Section 2.4.2.1 is required following eligibility confirmation for either a new application or a renewal and is considered late if it is completed more than 30 calendar days from the RFA date, more than one (1) calendar month from the start date of the new eligibility period following a completed annual eligibility renewal, or if one (1) calendar month or more has passed since the previous authorization ended~~ must be completed within 30 calendar days of an authorization end date in order for the new authorization to be backdated to the previous authorization.

~~If the authorization assessment is completed more than 30 calendar days from the RFA date, more than one (1) calendar month from the start date of the new eligibility period following a completed annual eligibility renewal, or if one (1) calendar month or more has passed since the previous authorization ended, the authorization may only be backdated to the first of the month that the authorization assessment was completed,~~
An authorization may be backdated to the previous authorization as long as:

- The child was attending the child care provider during the backdated period.
- The child care provider that the child is attending has met both of the following requirements.
 - The child care provider was regulated:
 - The agency worker may backdate the authorization to the child care provider's certification application date as long as the certification is now completed.
 - The child care provider's completed YoungStar or Wisconsin Shares Participation Contract was entered into the YoungStar Case Management System (CMS).

~~If these requirements are not met as of the first of the month,~~ The earliest the authorization ~~must~~ can begin is on the date that all the above requirements were met.

~~If an authorization has an end date during ongoing eligibility (not following an application or renewal), the authorization may be backdated to the day after the last day of the previous authorization if the request for a new authorization is made within one (1) calendar month of the previous authorization ending.~~

Process Note: In order for the agency worker to write an authorization in CSAW, the provider must have a completed contract with Fidelity National Information Services (FIS). However, the FIS contract date is not a factor in determining the authorization begin date. If the FIS contract is not completed when all other requirements are met, the If the provider has met all of the requirements listed in Sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 except for the Fidelity National Information Systems (FIS) contract, the agency worker may **must** backdate the authorization to the most recent date in the list above once the contract is completed and entered into the FIS system. The FIS contract date is not a factor in determining the authorization begin date. However, funds will not load to the EBT Card until the provider's FIS contract has been entered into the FIS system.

If the parent requested and provided all the necessary information for the authorization assessment within 30 calendar days of the authorization end date, but the agency worker was unable to complete the authorization timely, the authorization may be backdated to the previous authorization.

If the parent did not request or provide the necessary information for the authorization assessment within 30 calendar days, the new authorization may only be backdated to the first of the month in which the authorization assessment was completed. The new authorization must follow the requirements provided in Section 2.4.2.1.

Example 1 (Late Authorization Assessment at Application): Bao applied for Wisconsin Shares Child Care on May 3 and was determined eligible. She did not complete the authorization assessment until June 7. The authorization for her child can only be backdated to June 1 because the authorization assessment was completed more than 30 calendar days from the RFA date.

Example 2 (Late Renewal, Late Authorization Assessment): Bonnie's case was due for a Wisconsin Shares Child Care renewal on May 31. The annual eligibility renewal was completed late and eligibility was confirmed on June 30. Eligibility re-opened effective June 1 in CARES Worker Web (CWW). Bonnie completed the authorization assessment on August 30. Because the authorization assessment was completed more than one (1) calendar month from the start date of the new eligibility period following the completed renewal, the authorization may only go back to the first of the month in which the authorization assessment was completed (August 1).

Example 3 (Ongoing Eligibility): Gabriel was determined to be in noncooperation with the Child Support Agency on April 10. She did not claim good cause or cooperate with the Child Support Agency within seven (7) business days of receiving the Notice of Action Needed, so her Wisconsin Shares Child Care eligibility ended April 30. On May 10, Gabriel begins cooperating with the Child Support Agency and the noncooperation is ended. Because Gabriel is within one (1) calendar month of Wisconsin Shares Child Care eligibility ending, Gabriel's Wisconsin Shares Child Care eligibility will reopen as of

~~May 1 without the need to complete the application and interview process. Gabriel's case would be considered ongoing, and the authorization could be backdated to May 1 as long as Gabriel completes for an authorization assessment by May 31.~~

~~**Example 4 (Ongoing Eligibility):** Toby's son has an authorization through the end of the school semester. Toby forgot to request a summer authorization and the current authorization ended on June 12. On July 5, Toby contacted the local agency and completed an authorization assessment. The agency worker can backdate the summer authorization to June 13 because Toby completed the authorization assessment within one (1) calendar month of the previous authorization ending.~~

Example 1 (Timely Request, Timely Authorization Entry): Bao had an authorization that ended on March 31 for her child, Kou. On April 20, Bao requested a new authorization and provided all the necessary information for the authorization assessment. Because Bao requested the authorization and provided all the necessary information for the authorization assessment within 30 calendar days of the end of her previous authorization, the new authorization may be backdated to April 1 as long as Kou was attending the provider and the provider met all policy requirements.

Example 2 (Timely Request, Late Authorization Entry): Khan's authorization for his child, Anisa, ended on September 30. Anisa continued to attend the same provider. On Friday, October 29, Khan requested an authorization beginning October 1 and submitted all the necessary information to complete the authorization assessment from his MyWICChildCare Parent Portal account. However, the authorization was not completed until the following Monday, November 1. The agency worker sees that the request and necessary information was provided within 30 calendar days of the previous authorization ending and backdates the new authorization to October 1.

Example 3 (Untimely Request): Toby had an authorization for his school-age child, Abby, that ended on June 4. On July 7, he calls his worker to request a summer authorization for Abby and provides all the necessary information for the authorization assessment. Because he requested the new authorization more than 30 calendar days from the end of the previous authorization, the agency worker can only backdate the new authorization to July 1 even though Abby has continued attending the same provider since June 4.

This section last updated 04/05/2021 11/01/2019

2.3.8 Authorization End Dates

Authorizations should span to the next renewal date or to the next expected change, whichever comes first. Shorter authorizations are allowable if needed in order to collect sufficient schedule information from a parent with a new and varying schedule (see 2.4.3). ~~in situations outlined in Section 2.4.4, or as discussed in Section 2.3.10.~~ Shorter authorizations must be written in accordance with Sections 2.3.9 and 2.3.10.

Expected changes include, but are not limited to:

- A change in the school year that results in a higher or lower child care need for a school-aged child for summer or fall.
- **At** The end date of an approved activity, such as:
 - Wisconsin Works (W-2) employability plan or FoodShare Employment and Training (FSET) employment plan reviews; or
 - The end of a parent's school term.
- **At** The end of the 24-month education time limit for eligible parents who are **participating** in **Basic Education (see 1.3.8.6.2)**, Technical College or a Course of Study Leading to Employment (see ~~1.3.8.8~~ **1.3.8.6.3**), or **Online Education (see 1.3.8.6.4)**.
- A change in a child care provider.
- A parent's plan to move out of state.

If there are multiple expected changes, the authorization must end on the earliest date.

If the parent indicates that they do not need an authorization, there may be an allowable gap in authorizations of one (1) calendar month or more during the eligibility period, as illustrated in the example below. If the parent requests a new authorization during the eligibility period after there has been a gap of one (1) calendar month or more between authorizations, the agency worker must complete an authorization assessment and the authorized hours must be based on the assessment results (see 2.4.2.1).

Example: In September, Alanna completes her annual renewal. Alanna's worker writes an authorization for the school year, and asks Alanna about her child care needs for the following summer. Alanna indicates that her child, Josepha, does not need an authorization after June 15 because she will be visiting her grandparents in Florida for the summer. Alanna's worker does not write an authorization for the summer months.

This section last updated 04/05/2021 ~~11/01/2019~~

2.3.9 Consecutive Authorization Periods

Authorizations should be written consecutively without any gaps during the 12-month eligibility period. This includes time periods shorter than a calendar month **where when** a child may not be attending the child care provider, but is still enrolled, such as holidays and weekends.

Gaps between authorizations may occur when child care is not needed, the child is not enrolled, the parent does not request an authorization, or requests not to have an authorization for that time period.

Example 1 (Weekends): It is October 20 and Jeanette is requesting an authorization to a new provider for her child, Sonja. Sonja's last day at Busy Bees Child Care will be Friday, November 13, and she will be starting at Chicks and Chickadees Child Care on Monday, November 16. The agency worker could either:

- a) end the authorization to Busy Bees on Saturday, November 14, and start the new authorization to Chicks and Chickadees beginning Sunday, November 15; or
- b) end the authorization to Busy Bees on Sunday, November 15, and start the new authorization to Chicks and Chickadees beginning Monday, November 16.

Regardless of the method, authorization begin and end dates should always include weekends.

Example 2 (Holiday): Dee has an authorization for her child, Nina. In November, Nina will not be attending the child care provider on Thanksgiving Day and the day after Thanksgiving because Dee will not be working. However, the authorization should continue through November with no gaps because Nina is still enrolled and the time period is shorter than a calendar month. The agency worker should not end the authorization on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving and restart the authorization on the following Monday.

Example 1 3 (Spring Break): Allan has an authorization for his school age child, Jolene. Spring break is the week of March 15 – March 20. Jolene does not need child care the week of March 15 – 20 because Allan will be taking time off to spend with her. The authorization should continue through March with no gaps because Jolene is still enrolled, and the break is shorter than a calendar month. The agency worker should not end the authorization on the Friday of the last day of school and re-start the authorization on the Monday that school starts again.

~~Gaps between authorizations may occur when there are periods of time of a month or more during which child care is not needed and a parent requests not to have an authorization.~~

Example 4 (Vacation-No Request): Leo has a summer authorization for his child, Ken, through August 15. His family will be taking a two-week vacation before school starts. Leo does not request a new authorization when the previous authorization ends. On September 4, Leo requests a backdated school-year authorization to start on September 1. These authorizations do not need to have consecutive dates because Leo did not request an authorization for the time period in between authorizations.

Example 5 2 (Vacation-Parent Requests Gap): Caroline has an authorization for her school age child, Raphael, until the end of the school year on May June 18. Caroline ~~requests and needs more hours for the summer~~ calls to request an authorization for

Raphael starting July 15 after he returns from a summer stay with his grandparents in Florida. She states that she does not need an authorization from June 9 – July 14. These authorizations do not need to have consecutive dates because the parent requested the gap between authorizations.

Example 6 (Not Enrolled-Changing Providers): Alex's school-age child, Noah, has a summer authorization at Amazing Apes Day Camp through Friday, August 28. School will begin Tuesday, September 8, and Noah will be attending Space Center Child Care during the school year. The agency worker ends the authorization to Amazing Apes on Friday, August 28, and writes a new authorization to Space Center beginning Tuesday, September 8. These authorizations do not need to have consecutive dates because Noah's enrollment at Amazing Apes ends on August 28 (the last day of the day camp) and his new enrollment at Space Center does not start until September 8. The gap is allowed because the child is not enrolled at either provider locations during the gap period.

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2.3.10 Short-Term Authorizations

If a parent needs an authorization to cover a short period of time, the local agency should write the authorization for no less than seven (7) consecutive calendar days in the month. This will allow subsidy amounts to remain stabilized across all of the authorizations written for the month. Short-term authorizations do not need to be from Sunday to Saturday; however, they do need to end on or before the last day of the month. When a 7-day authorization is written at the end of the month, the last day must not cross over into the next month. A second short-term authorization will need to be written for the additional days that overlap into the next month. The second short-term authorization must still be at least seven (7) days long. However, the Child Care Need schedule for the short-term authorization must only reflect the actual days that care is needed.

Short-term authorizations are authorizations that are written in addition to the parent's regular or zero-hour authorizations, such as authorizations for when school is closed for holiday breaks and spring breaks. These authorizations are more than likely written to a second provider. Regular authorizations should continue to be written to the next expected change or the parent's renewal date.

Example 1: Sharee called to report that her provider will be closed for spring break, April 1 through April 12. Sharee needs child care on Monday April 2, Tuesday April 3, and Friday April 6 to a different provider. The authorization should be written for April 2 through April 8. The Child Care Need schedule in CSAW should reflect that care is only needed on Monday, Tuesday, and Friday.

Example 2: Mike called to report that his provider is going on vacation August 30 through September 8. Mike needs a new authorization for child care at a second child care provider for Thursday August 30, Friday August 31, Monday September 3, and Tuesday September 4. Two (2) authorizations would need to be written to the second provider to meet Mike’s needs. One (1) authorization would be written for August 25 through August 31. The second authorization would be written from September 1 through September 7. The Child Care Need schedule in CSAW should reflect that care is only needed for the days of August 30 and 31 on the first authorization. The Child Care Need schedule in CSAW should reflect that care is only needed for the days of September 3 and September 4 on the second authorization.

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2.3.11 Backdated and Retro Authorizations

Backdated authorizations are those that are backdated as allowed in Sections 2.3.6 and 2.3.7. Backdated authorizations have a begin date that is in the past and an end date that is either a current or future date. Agency workers may write authorizations that are backdated in accordance with Sections 2.3.6 and 2.3.7.

Example 1 (Backdated Authorization): Rena applied for Wisconsin Shares on June 4 and was determined eligible. She completed the authorization assessment on June 17. Because her children were already attending the child care program before she applied and the provider already met all of the Wisconsin Shares requirements, the authorization can be backdated to start on the Request for Assistance (RFA) date and end on the annual renewal date.

~~Retro authorizations are those that are backdated further than allowed in Sections 2.3.6 and 2.3.7. Retro authorizations are generally written with a begin date and end date that are both in the past. Retro authorizations may be written only by staff with the Child Care Coordinator profile in CSAW.~~

~~Retro authorizations may only be written in the following circumstances:~~

- ~~• Fair Hearing determinations;~~
- ~~• Automated system issues that delayed the request for an authorization; or~~
- ~~• Agency errors.~~

~~**Example 2 (Retro Authorization):** Mao’s children are currently attending a licensed child care provider who is participating in YoungStar and has a contract with FIS. Mao applied for Wisconsin Shares on May 10 and was determined eligible. She completed the authorization assessment on June 7, but the authorization was only backdated to June 1 due to agency error. On July 2, Mao calls the agency worker and says that she never received funds to pay her provider for the days her children attended in May. The agency~~

~~worker reviews Mao's case and realizes that the authorization should have been backdated to her RFA date of May 10 rather than June 1 because Mao completed the authorization assessment within 30 calendar days of the RFA date. To correct the agency error, staff with the Child Care Coordinator profile in CSAW must write a retro authorization for May 10 – May 31.~~

~~To determine the authorization begin date (if not specified by the Fair Hearing), see Sections 2.3.6 or 2.3.7 as applicable.~~ For retro authorizations that must start further than ~~12 months~~ 30 calendar days in the past, the Child Care Coordinator must contact the Child Care Subsidy and Technical Assistance Line.

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2.4 Authorization Assessment

Agency workers are responsible for gathering enough information to create an authorization that meets the child care needs to allow parents to engage in their approved activities based on the guidance contained in this handbook. Parents are required to provide their work or other activity schedule, including specific days and times they are or expect to be participating in work or another activity. This information must be entered into CSAW. Agency workers are responsible for reviewing the system-calculated authorization hours. Child care authorizations are based on an assessment of:

- The number of hours of care each child in the assistance group needs per week to enable the parent(s) to participate in their approved activities, including lunch and break times;
- Travel time between the approved activity and the child care location;
- Overlapping schedules of two-parent families;
- The length of time child care is needed (up to 12 months);
- The copayment type;
- The child's school schedule;
- Shared placement schedules;
- School closed hours for school-age children (3 years or older); and
- Other factors that affect the family's child care need.

Wisconsin Works (W-2) Financial and Employment Planners (FEPs) do not determine the child care needs for W-2 families; however, a W-2 placement is an approved activity and the agency worker must ~~consider~~ include the activities assigned in the W-2 Employability Plan (EP) in assessing child care needs. If the EP does not indicate the scheduled times for an activity, the parent may self-declare the time that child care is needed.

Past non-participation in W-2 activities, whether good cause was applied or not, must not factor into the number of child care hours to be authorized.

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2.4.1 Authorization Comments

CSAW provides comments boxes on several of the authorization-related pages and offers a Case Comments Summary page where all CSAW case comments are displayed. During Following the authorization assessment at initial eligibility determination, renewal, reported changes, and any contact with the parent, agency workers must document the authorization details relevant to their case. ~~authorization workers are encouraged to use the CSAW comments fields to describe relevant information regarding the authorization, such as:~~

The following information must be documented in a case comment in CARES Worker Web (CWW), CSAW, or both systems depending on local agency practices:

- Any delay in the authorization being completed within two (2) business days of completing the authorization assessment (see 2.3.5).
- An explanation for the length of an authorization, if less than 12 months (i.e. school year ending, ~~why it is only 6 weeks long, is it because it is a school-age child,~~ W-2 Employability Plan (EP) end dates ~~activity is ending,~~ etc.) (see 2.4.2).
- If the parent selects a reduced hour authorization or any number of hours other than the original authorized hours after completing an authorization assessment based on continuity of care (see 2.4.2.2 and 2.4.3.4.1).
- ~~Notes about~~ Start and end times of the parent's work or other approved activity schedule (see 2.4.3).
- ~~Notes about the approved activity schedule, including any~~ The questions and answers used to resolve any 10 hours or less per week discrepancy between the approved activity verification and the reported schedules (see 2.4.3.1).
- ~~Notes regarding~~ A summary of the justification for the inclusion of gaps between activities or sleep time in the authorized hours that are covered (see 2.4.3.2). ~~(a summary of the justification for the inclusion of these hours)~~
- ~~Notes about shared placement schedules (describe the schedule).~~
- ~~Notes about unexpected school closure hours that are added after the fact.~~
- ~~Notes regarding a parent's reported change in need of authorized hours during the 12-month eligibility period.~~
- Justification for authorized hours for self-employed Foster Parents, Subsidized Guardians, Interim Caretakers, and relatives with court-ordered placement receiving the Kinship Care payment (see 2.4.3.7).

- The rationale for the amount of travel time or the lack of travel time (see 2.4.3.10).
- The shared placement schedule used to create the authorization to cover the number of hours the parent needs for his or her approved activity plus travel time (see 2.4.4.1).
- When creating an authorization for co-located Head Start and 4K School Programs and the parent is only in their approved activity during part of the school program hours (see 2.4.4.2).
- ~~Information regarding~~ The child's school schedule (i.e. start and end times, short days on Mondays, ~~or~~ hours of a 4K or ~~a~~ Head Start school program, etc.) (see 2.4.4.2 and 2.4.4.3).
- The reason for school closed hours/days (see 2.4.4.4.1).
- The reason for the override rate when a Provider Price Type – Override (Disability) rate is used to create an authorization (see 2.4.7.1). Agencies must not include any health information or diagnosis in case comments (see 1.1.4).
- A description of any reported discounts the parent receives from the provider (see 2.4.7.2).
- A summary of documentation that shows a child care need which exceeds 12 hours per day (see 2.4.8).
- When a hardship authorization is written (see 2.4.9.1)
- Attempted contacts to the parent before ending an authorization after the agency receives notification from a provider that a child has not attended the child care provider within the previous 30 calendar days (see 2.4.11).

This section last updated 04/05/2021 ~~10/01/2018~~

2.4.2 Length of Authorization

Authorization assessments ensure that an authorization is written to meet the child care needs that allow a parent to engage in their approved activity. Agency workers must write authorizations for the longest duration possible: up to the next renewal or the next expected change (see 2.3.8). Longer authorizations reduce fluctuations in the monthly subsidy amount and copayment calculation. **If an authorization is less than 12 months, agency workers must document in case comments the reason that the authorization is less than 12 months (see 2.4.1).**

This section last updated 04/05/2021 ~~11/01/2019~~

2.4.2.1 Authorizations Based on Assessment Results

An agency worker must assess an Assistance Group's child care needs and the authorization must be based on the assessment at all the following times:

- Initial eligibility
- Annual Renewal
- When the parent selects a new provider;
- When school-age children transition from summer break to the fall school year;
- When an eligible adult or minor teen parent is added to the case;
- When one (1) calendar month or more has passed since the parent's previous authorization ended;
- At the end of the 24-month education time limit (see 1.3.8.6.5 ~~1.3.8.7~~ and ~~1.3.8.8~~);
- When the child care needs no longer align with the provider's hours of operation.

If a reported change is not one (1) of the above situations, the Authorizations Based on Continuity of Care policy (see 2.4.2.2) must be followed.

Example 1 (More than one (1) calendar month): Jessie has two (2) school-aged children. The first authorizations for both children begin on January 1 and end on May 31. Jessie does not need child care during the month of June because the children will visit their grandparents that month. However, Jessie needs child care authorizations beginning on July 15. Jessie's worker must complete an authorization assessment and the authorized hours and the length of the authorization must be based on this assessment because more than one (1) calendar month has passed since the previous authorizations ended.

Example 2 (Fall school year transition): From July 15 through August 31, Arturo's school-aged children need full-time child care. When school starts in September, the child care need will change based on the school day, so an authorization assessment is required. The authorized hours must be based on the assessment results because the children are transitioning from summer break to the fall school year.

When completing an authorization assessment while the parent is in an Approved Activity Search Period (ACTS) or Temporary Break Period (TBRK), the agency worker must use the same parent approved activity schedule and child care need (unless the parent requests fewer hours) as the previous authorization. However, the authorized hours could be reduced based on the assessment results during an ~~ACTS or TBRK~~ Activity Break Period (see the following examples). When a parent is in an Activity Break Period and a second parent enters the home, the second parent must be in an approved activity other than ACTS or TBRK.

Example 3 (ACTS-Second parent moves into the home): Roberta is in an ACTS period when Jackson, the biological parent of her child, moves into the home. Roberta and

Jackson's child, Craig, has an authorization for 35 hours per week. Jackson has an approved activity of working 20 hours per week. Because Jackson is an eligible adult in the Assistance Group, an authorization assessment is required. The new overlap between Roberta's previous schedule and Jackson's employment schedule is 20 hours. Craig's authorization must be reduced to 20 hours following the authorization assessment.

Example 4 (TBRK-Provider change): Lauren is working 40 hours per week and her child, Kalie, has an authorization to ABC Child Care Center for the times when Lauren is working.

Change 1 (Decrease in hours): In January, Lauren's work hours decrease to 20 hours per week. The agency worker enters the decreased schedule and asks if she would like to maintain the same number of hours for Kalie's authorization. Lauren chooses to maintain Kalie's authorization at 40 hours per week. The agency worker uses the "Copy from Prior Authorization" button and documents the conversation in case comments.

Change 2 (Temporary break): In March, Lauren goes on maternity leave. A TBRK period is entered for April 1 – June 30. Lauren chooses to maintain Kalie's authorization at 40 hours per week while she is on maternity leave. The agency worker leaves the current authorization in place and documents the conversation in case comments.

Change 3 (Change providers): In April, Lauren decides that she wants to change providers for May. The agency worker ends the current authorization for April 30 and creates a new authorization to Julie's Jumpin' Beans beginning May 1.

The new authorization uses Lauren's schedule from when she was last working (Change 1), which was 20 hours per week. Kalie's authorization would need to be decreased from 40 hours per week to 20 hours per week because the authorization must be based on the assessment results when the parent selects a new provider.

Example 5 (ACTS-Fall school year transition): Nora is in an ACTS period from July 1 – September 30. Her child, Phillip, had an authorization for 40 hours per week when she lost her job and she requested that the authorization continue during the ACTS period. Phillip is starting school in-person on September 9. Because child care cannot be authorized during the typical school day, Phillip's authorization must be reduced from full-time to part-time based on the child care need for any before and after school care that Nora would have had with her previous schedule. Nora must still plan to use child care for the authorized hours in order to continue to receive an authorization.

Example 6 (Provider hours of operation): Melissa works Monday – Friday at Hank's Automotive from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and her child, Sydney, attends Stargazers Childcare during the same hours. Stargazers Childcare is open Monday – Friday from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. Melissa's work hours at Hank's Automotive are changing and she will now be

working Monday – Friday from 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. Sydney’s child care need no longer aligns with the provider’s hours of operation and an authorization assessment is required.

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2.4.2.2 Authorizations Based on Continuity of Care

During the 12-month eligibility period, an authorization assessment must be completed when an authorization ~~was~~ **is** written to an expected change (see 2.3.8) or when certain changes are reported. ~~However, the authorized hours do not need to be based on the assessment results when a change not listed in Section 2.4.2.1 and not limited to the following scenarios occurs:~~

For all reported changes that are not listed in Section 2.4.2.1, the authorized hours must be based on continuity of care. Reported changes include but are not limited to:

- A change in the number of child care hours that are required to allow the parent(s) to participate in approved activities, including travel between the child care provider and the location of the activity and breaks;
- A change in the overlapping activity schedules of two-parent families;
- When school age children transition from the end of the school year to the summer break;
- A change in children’s shared placement schedules;
- Any change that results in a change in child care need, **except when the child care need no longer aligns with the provider’s hours of operation which will require an authorization based on assessment results (see 2.4.2.1).**

When the agency worker completes an assessment during the 12-month eligibility period and the assessment indicates a reduction in hours, the parent may:

- Choose an authorization for the reduced hours,
- Maintain the original number of authorized hours, or
- Request an authorization for any number of hours between the original authorized hours and the new assessment results.

If the parent chooses the reduced hour authorization or any number of hours between the original authorized hours and the new assessment results, the agency worker must record a **case** comment ~~in CSAW~~ documenting the conversation and the parent’s choice for a reduced authorization **(see 2.4.1).**

If at any time the parent informs the agency worker that the child will attend the child care provider for fewer hours than were previously authorized, the agency worker must reduce the authorization to align with the parent's request.

If the parent chooses to keep the original number of hours, the parent should plan to send their child to the provider for those authorized hours. If the parent consistently sends the child to their provider for fewer hours but makes a full subsidy payment to the provider for the full number of hours, then it could result in an overpayment (see 4.5.4.2.4.5). The parent does have the option to utilize authorization hours during whichever time they prefer as long as the provider is open and regulated during that time.

Parents are required to report when they have a change in child care need which includes when the number of days or hours that the Assistance Group needs child care has changed (see 1.8.1).

Process: If the authorization assessment indicates a reduced number of authorized hours and the parent chooses to keep the hours from the previous authorization, the agency worker must use the "Copy From Prior Authorization" button in CSAW or override the weekly hours to be the same as the previous authorization. For more information about the "Copy From Prior Authorization" button, see the CSAW Authorizations – Processing Various Change Scenarios User Guide.

If the assessment indicates an increase to the authorized hours, the agency worker must verify information related to the increase of approved activity hours before increasing the authorized hours.

Example 1: Annabelle works at Main Street Café from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. She has an authorization for 30 hours per week including travel time. In June, she reports that her work hours will change to 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Annabelle is not planning to change child care providers. The agency worker completes an authorization assessment and finds that the assessment results in 25 hours per week, including travel time. The agency worker asks Annabelle if she would like to keep her original authorized hours or if she would like to decrease to 25 hours per week. Annabelle chooses the reduction. The agency worker documents this conversation and the decision in **GSAW-authorization case** comments and completes the authorization.

Example 2: Cassie works at Plastics Manufacturing from 7 a.m. to noon. She has an authorization for her baby, Renee, for 27 hours per week, including breaks and travel time. In January, she reports that her work hours are changing to 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. The agency worker completes an authorization assessment and finds that the assessment results in 22 hours per week, including breaks and travel time. The agency worker asks Cassie if she would like to keep the 27-hour authorization or if she would like to decrease to the 22-hour authorization. Cassie indicates that she would like to keep the

27-hour authorization. The agency worker uses the “Copy From Prior Authorization” button and completes the authorization.

Example 3: Roxanne loses her job and is placed in an Approved Activity Search Period (ACTS). She tells her agency worker that she would like to continue sending her children to child care using the same schedule as when she was working (40 hours per week). The agency worker leaves her current authorization in place. However, Roxanne only takes her children to child care for 10 hours per week and continues paying the child care provider the same full-time amount. Roxanne is required to report a change in child care need and her case may be evaluated for an overpayment.

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2.4.3 Approved Activity Schedules

The agency worker must obtain the parent’s approved activity schedule, including the days and times of the schedule. The parent can self-declare the schedule; verification is not required for the purposes of authorization assessment unless questionable. Agency workers must document the start and end times of the parent’s work or other approved activity schedule in case comments (see 2.4.1).

For education, parents must provide the class schedule for all classes with set in-person or online log in times throughout the week. Parents may only self-declare online education that is self-paced and does not have set log in times. Self-paced online education is limited to one (1) hour per week per enrolled credit. The parent must provide a planned log in schedule for the agency worker’s use in writing an authorization. Additional hours can be authorized for summer school if the institution documents that the course is delivered over an accelerated period with more hours of instruction provided per week.

Study time must not be included in the approved activity schedule unless the parent has a verified learning disability that requires additional study time. If the parent has a learning disability verified by their current or previous educational institution or a medical professional, study time may be included. Study time is limited to one (1) hour per week per enrolled credit.

Study time must be included in the approved activity schedule for parents who are participating in Wisconsin Works (W-2) or Tribal TANF and have study hours included on their Employability Plan (EP) or Individual Self-Sufficiency Plan (ISP).

Note: Approved activity verification (i.e. class schedule, W-2 EP, etc.) is collected during the eligibility determination process (see 1.5.11). Agency workers may view the Electronic Case File (ECF) for scanned documents.

If the parent is not requesting authorization hours for a particular activity, the agency worker does not need to collect the schedule for that particular activity for the

authorization assessment; however, if the parent is requesting authorization hours for any part of a particular approved activity, the entire schedule for that approved activity must be collected.

Example: Gwen works two (2) jobs and goes to two (2) classes; these are all considered approved activities.

Job A: Gwen works Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. She asks for authorization hours for all three (3) days.

Job B: Gwen works on Sundays but does not ask for authorization hours.

Class A: Gwen attends school on Thursday and asks for authorization hours.

Class B: Gwen attends school on Thursday and Saturday. She asks for authorization hours for Thursday, but not Saturday.

The agency worker must collect and enter the entire schedules for Job A, Class A, and Class B (both Thursday and Saturday). The agency worker does not need to collect the schedule for Job B **because Gwen is not requesting authorized hours for that job.**

Note: CSAW will calculate the monthly authorized hours based on the parent's approved activity schedule and the child care need schedule that is entered into CSAW. The system analyzes the overlap between the parent's schedule and the child care need to determine an average **number of weekly hours amount**. The average weekly **amount hours are** ~~is~~ then multiplied by 4.348125 to get the final monthly authorization **hours**. ~~In~~ This way, most fluctuations over the authorization period are accounted for in the final subsidy amount.

The agency worker must determine which approved activity schedule type is most appropriate to be entered into CSAW. For purposes of calculating the authorized hours, approved activity schedules are categorized into five (5) basic types.

1. **Regular:** The schedule is known in advance and is the same every week. The agency worker must collect and enter one (1) week of schedule.
2. **Alternating:** The schedule is known in advance. It repeats in this pattern: week one (1), then week two (2), then week one (1), then week two (2), etc. The agency worker must collect and enter two (2) weeks of schedule.
3. **Rotating:** The schedule is known in advance, and is predictable, but may not fit into a four-week pattern. The agency worker must collect and enter four (4) weeks of schedule.
 - o Examples of Rotating schedules: The schedule repeats in three-week (or greater than four-week) blocks or the schedule creates an asymmetrical pattern (example: five (5) days on/two (2) days off, then five (5) days on/three (3) days off).

4. **Varying:** The schedule is known in advance, but is different every week and there is no repeating pattern OR the anticipated work hours may change unpredictably. For example, the parent is a food service worker and has a regular schedule, but may be sent home early or asked to work late unpredictably. The agency worker must collect and enter four (4) weeks of schedule.
5. **On-Call:** The schedule is not known in advance, and the parent may be asked to work with little advance notice. The agency worker must collect four (4) weeks of schedule. The schedule must not include times when the parent is waiting to be called, only times when the parent actually worked.

CSAW provides three (3) options for entering approved activity schedules:

- **One-week schedule:** Use this option to enter a regular schedule.
- **Two-week schedule:** Use this option to enter an alternating schedule.
- **Four-week schedule:** Use this option to enter a rotating schedule, a varying schedule, or an on-call schedule.

Process: If the parent has a three-week rotating schedule, the agency worker must use the week with the most scheduled hours as the fourth week. For example, if week one (1) of the schedule is 20 hours, week two (2) is 45 hours, and week three (3) is 25 hours, enter the week two (2) schedule again as week four (4).

The parent may provide either their anticipated schedule or the recent past schedule of hours and days worked and must provide the appropriate number of weeks for the schedule type. If the parent cannot provide the full number of weeks, the authorization can be written for a shorter period of time during which the parent will collect their actual schedule for the full number of weeks needed in order for CSAW to most accurately determine the monthly authorization.

Note: It is important that the child care authorization include enough hours to ensure that the parent is not at risk of job loss if subsidized child care is not available.

This section last updated 04/05/2021 ~~10/30/2017~~

2.4.3.1 Correlation Between Approved Activity Verification and Schedule

Verification is not required for the approved activity schedule, but the schedule must correlate to the hours on the approved activity verification, such as pay stubs or an Employability Plan (EP). The agency worker will determine whether the schedule that the parent provides and the verification correlate when completing the authorization assessment, as required in Section 2.4.2.1 and 2.4.2.2.

In considering the stated schedule and the approved activity verification, the agency worker must consider the following issues in the resolution process:

- Unpaid Lunch Breaks: One (1) hour per eight-hour shift
- Other Unpaid Breaks: 30 minutes total per eight-hour shift
- Unusual circumstances that may not be reflected in pay stubs:
 - Child was ill, and the parent missed work;
 - Parent was ill and had fewer work hours;
 - Parent or child had medical/dental appointment and missed work;
 - Vacation;
 - The employer closed the business due to a holiday, weather, or unsafe conditions within the employer's facility;
 - Parent was sent home early due to low workload; or
 - Parent was called into work due to increased workload.

After considering the items on the list ~~along with travel time~~, if the remaining discrepancy is 10 hours or less per week, the agency worker ~~shall~~ **must** accept the parent's stated schedule and enter it into the Parent Activity Schedule **in CSAW**. The questions and answers used to resolve the discrepancy must be documented in **CSAW case** comments (see 2.4.1) ~~on the Parent Activity Schedule page~~. **Agency workers may request additional verification if the answers provided are questionable.** If ~~after considering each of these items~~, the discrepancy cannot be resolved or reduced to 10 or fewer hours, the agency worker ~~shall~~ **must** request further guidance from the Child Care Subsidy and Technical Assistance Line at childcare@wisconsin.gov.

Example: The parent's work schedule is 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. (9.5 hours per day/47.5 hours per week) Monday through Friday; however, the ~~EVFE or~~ **parent's** paystubs indicate that the parent works 40 hours per week. The agency worker asks the parent about the discrepancy. The parent explains that they have a one-hour unpaid lunch every day ($40 + 5 = 45$ hours) and two (2) unpaid 15-minute breaks each day ($.25 \times 10 = 2.5$ hours). $40 + 5 + 2.5 = 47.5$ hours. The agency worker should accept the parent's schedule and proceed with the authorization process.

This section last updated **04/05/2021** ~~10/30/2017~~

2.4.3.2 Authorizing for Gaps Between Approved Activities

When a gap between approved activities occurs on the same day (for example, a gap between two (2) jobs, work and school, or a gap between classes), and the gap in activities is two (2) hours or less, the gap must be included in the authorized hours.

If the gap is two (2) hours or more, the authorization must be increased to cover the gap in the following scenarios:

- **Home Time:** Picking up the child and taking them home between the approved activities would cause the parent and child to be home for less than two (2) hours.
- **Child Insufficient Sleep:** The parent picking up the child would cause the child to have fewer than eight (8) hours of potential sleep time between the hours of 9 p.m. and 7 a.m.
- **Travel Greater than Activities:** The number of activity hours for the first and the second activities are less than or equal to the travel time needed (job to child care to home, then home to child care to work).
- **Disruption of Child Schedule:** Picking up the child would interrupt meal time or nap time.

If the gap is more than two (2) hours and does not meet one (1) of these situations, local agencies should consider the circumstances of the particular case and proceed according to their discretion.

In a two-parent household, gap time cannot be approved for times when the second parent is available to care for the child.

Agency workers must document in case comments (see 2.4.1) a summary of the justification for the inclusion of gaps between activities or sleep time (see 2.4.3.9) in the authorized hours.

Example: Dana must travel to a different county in order to attend school. She has two (2) one-hour classes, with a gap of five (5) hours between them. The time from her house to the provider is 15 minutes, and the time from the provider to her school is one (1) hour and 15 minutes, so 1.5 hours each way. She and her child would be able to be home for two (2) hours during the gap. However, the classes add up to two (2) hours of activity time, and the travel adds up to three (3) hours. The case meets the Travel Greater than Activities situation, and the gap must be included in the authorized hours.

This section last updated 04/05/2021 03/01/2019

2.4.3.3 New Employment with a Varying Schedule/On-Call Employment

When a parent has recently started new employment with a varying work schedule, or has just started on-call employment, the parent must provide the work schedule they have been given by the employer.

If the parent has no way to predict their future schedule, a four-week authorization should be written based on the parent's best estimate, and the parent shall be instructed to record their actual work schedule. After the four-week authorization has ended, it is the responsibility of the parent to contact the local agency for a new authorization. At that time, the employment is no longer new employment, but ongoing

employment, and a schedule for the past four (4) weeks must be provided in accordance with Section 2.4.3.

This section last updated 01/31/2017

2.4.3.4 Authorizations During an Activity Break Period

As stated in Section 1.3.9.2, federal regulations require states to provide up to three (3) months of continued assistance following a permanent loss or temporary break in approved activity. These policies are intended to support continuity of care for the child during a parent's permanent loss or temporary absence from an approved activity.

During an Approved Activity Search Period (ACTS) or Temporary Break Period (TBRK), agency workers must allow the parent to continue using the current authorization or request a reduced authorization. If an existing authorization ends during a break period, agency workers must offer the parent an authorization for up to the same number of hours as the child's previous authorization, unless the criteria in Section 2.4.2.1 for an authorization to be based on the assessment results are met.

Note: If eligibility is ending according to adverse action due to a parent's permanent loss of or temporary break in approved activity during the renewal month, agency workers must manually end or delete any authorizations created for the new eligibility period (see 1.3.9.2.1). This is to ensure that the same policy to not allow an Activity Break Period to begin the first month of the new eligibility period is applied to all parents regardless of when they complete the renewal.

~~Parents engaged in ongoing Self-Employment (see 1.3.8.3.2) who are operating at a loss (see 2.4.3.6) and choose to end their self-employment or take a temporary break from their self-employment, are eligible for an ACTS or TBRK period to maintain eligibility, but are not eligible for an authorization. Due to the self-employment operating at a loss, the authorization at the time of the loss would be zero hours and there would be no level of child care assistance to continue.~~

~~Parents who are engaged in new self-employment (see 2.4.3.5) who are not subject to the minimum wage calculation, parents engaged in ongoing self-employment who are not operating at a loss, and foster parents engaged in new or ongoing self-employment (see 2.4.3.7) are eligible to maintain their authorizations during an ACTS or TBRK period.~~

This section last updated 04/05/2021

2.4.3.4.1 Authorization Assessments During an Activity Break Period

Authorization assessments must still be completed during an ACTS or TBRK Activity Break Period (see 2.4.2) according to the criteria listed in Section 2.4.2.1. The agency worker must enter the authorization with the same parent schedule as the previous authorization. ~~and override the Approved Authorization Hours in CSAW if necessary to maintain authorization hours~~

If the new authorization meets the criteria in Section 2.4.2.1 for Authorizations Based on Assessment Results, the agency worker must **not** override Approved Authorization Hours to maintain authorized hours. When the authorization must be based on the assessment results, the authorization hours may need to be reduced. This is because the assessment must be based on the parent's approved activity schedule from the *last approved activity* rather than the total *authorization hours* in the previous authorization.

Example 1 (ACTS-Provider change): In January, Morgan was working 40 hours per week and her child, Aaron, had an authorization for the times when she was working.

Change 1 (Decrease in hours): In April, Morgan's work hours decreased to 20 hours per week. The agency worker completed an authorization assessment using Morgan's new 20-hour per week schedule and determined that Morgan was eligible to keep the higher hours per the policy in Section 2.4.2.2. Morgan chose to continue Aaron's authorization for 40 hours per week. The agency worker used the "Copy from Prior Authorization" button to maintain the authorization at 40 hours per week.

Change 2 (Job loss): In June, Morgan reported that she lost her job. An Approved Activity Search Period (ACTS) was created for July 1 – September 30 and the agency worker left the current authorization in place.

Change 3 (Change providers): In July, during Morgan's ACTS period, Morgan reports that she would like to send Aaron to a new provider starting August 1. The agency worker enters the same 20-hour per week schedule that Morgan was working prior to the job loss, which she reported in Change 1. However, a change in provider requires the authorization to be based on the assessment results. Aaron's new authorization must be based on Morgan's 20-hour per week schedule that she was working prior to starting the ACTS period.

If the new authorization results in fewer hours and the criteria in Section 2.4.2.2 for Authorizations Based on Continuity of Care are met, the agency worker should use the "Copy from Prior Authorization" button or override the Approved Authorization Hours in CSAW to maintain authorization hours (unless the parent requests fewer hours). If the parent requests fewer hours, the agency worker must document this decision in case comments (see 2.4.1 and 2.4.2.2). For more information on this process, see the CSAW Authorizations - Processing Various Change Scenarios User Guide.

The 24-month education time limit (see 1.3.8.6.5, 1.3.8.7 and 1.3.8.8) does not count for parents engaged in basic, ~~or~~ post-secondary, or online education as described in Section 1.3.9.2.1 during an ~~ACTS or TBRK~~ Activity Break Period. Parents can continue utilizing child care while they attend classes during the ~~ACTS or TBRK~~ Activity Break Period.

During an Activity Break Period, the parent has the option to utilize authorization hours during whichever hours they prefer as long as the provider is open and regulated during that time.

Example 2: Mariana is open and ongoing for Wisconsin Shares, and has an authorization for her child, Paulo. Mariana is working third shift when she loses her job, and Paulo's authorization is for overnight care. Mariana contacts the local agency, and the agency worker ~~places her in~~ updates the Approved Activity Status in CWW to ACTS. The agency worker does not need to update Paulo's authorization unless Mariana requests fewer hours or the criteria in Section 2.4.2.1 for an Authorization Based on Assessment Results are met ~~changes child care providers~~. Mariana can continue using the same number of authorized hours to send Paulo to child care during the day while she looks for a job. Mariana will need to work out the child care schedule with her child care provider.

This section last updated 04/05/2021

2.4.3.4.2 No Increased Hours During an Activity Break Period

Parents are not eligible for an increase in hours (including additional school closed days [see 2.4.4.4.1]) during an Approved Activity Search Period (ACTS) or Temporary Break Period (TBRK) ~~period~~. This also includes a parent's change in schedule in a two-parent or three-generation household.

In a two-parent or three-generation household in which more than one (1) adult is participating in an ~~ACTS or TBRK~~ Activity Break Period, the local agency must maintain authorizations at the same number of hours until all parents are again engaged and participating in approved activities (see 1.3.8 and 1.3.9), unless the criteria in Section 2.4.2.1 for an Authorization Based on the Assessment Results are met. Authorized hours may be reduced at the parent's request, but authorized hours cannot be increased if there is a change in one (1) parent's schedule or other change resulting in an authorization assessment (see 2.4.2.1 and 2.4.2.2) during the ~~ACTS or TBRK~~ Activity Break Period.

Example 1: Cora is in a TBRK period, and her spouse, Finn, is in an ACTS period. Their child, Leo, has an authorization for 20 hours per week. Finn obtains new employment and provides financial verification, while Cora remains in a TBRK period. The agency worker completes an authorization assessment using Cora's previous schedule and Finn's new schedule. The authorization assessment shows that Leo is now eligible for an authorization of 40 hours per week based on the new overlap. However, Leo's authorized hours can only be 20 hours per week (or less at the parent's request) during Cora's TBRK period because authorized hours cannot be increased during a TBRK period. The agency worker must either override the approved authorization hours or use the "Copy from Prior Authorization" button to maintain the authorization at 20 hours per week.

Example 2: Penelope is in an ACTS period. Her child, Hazel, has a school-year authorization of 10 hours per week for before and after school care. When school lets out for the summer, Penelope wants to send Hazel to the full-time summer camp program at her child care provider and is requesting 40 hours per week based on her previous work schedule. However, Hazel is not eligible for an increase in hours due to Penelope being in an ACTS period. Penelope can use the 10 hours per week based on Hazel's previous authorization for summer camp because it is at the same provider and location, but she will need to pay the rest of the child care cost out of pocket.

Example 3: Kristine has a school-year authorization for her child, Ingrid, when she loses her job. Kristine is placed in an ACTS period from November 1 – January 31. In December, Ingrid's school is closed for several days due to inclement weather. Kristine calls to request additional school closed hours. However, because Kristine is in an ACTS period, no additional hours can be added to Ingrid's authorization. Kristine's request for additional school closed hours is denied.

This section last updated 04/05/2021

2.4.3.4.3 No New Authorizations During an Activity Break Period for Children Not Previously Authorized

The intent of the Approved Activity Search Period (ACTS) and the Temporary Break Period (TBRK) is to continue benefits at the same level ~~during a time of change~~ following a permanent loss or temporary break in the parent's approved activity. If the child does not have an authorization ~~at the time of the change~~ that started prior to the day the parent lost their approved activity or began an absence from their approved activity, then there are no benefits to continue at the same level. Parents may maintain eligibility even if their child does not have an authorization (see 1.3.9.2.1).

Children who do not have authorizations that started prior to the day the parent lost their approved activity or began an absence from their approved activity are not eligible to receive new authorizations to continue during the Activity Break Period. If a child had an authorization that started prior to the day the parent lost their approved activity or began an absence from their approved activity, the authorization can be extended into the Activity Break Period if the parent makes a timely request (see 2.3.7). New authorizations cannot be created to extend into the Activity Break Period; only benefits that previously existed can be continued.

Authorizations during an Activity Break Period must be consecutive. The child's authorization that the parent was using prior to the Activity Break Period should continue through the Activity Break Period unless the parent requests fewer hours, decides that they no longer need an authorization, or the criteria in Section 2.4.2.1 for an authorization to be based on the assessment results are met. This is because there

cannot be a gap in authorizations during a time when benefits are being continued at the same level.

Example 1: Khloe has three (3) children: Sydney (age 2), Ja'mal (age 5), and Demarcus (age 8). Khloe has an authorization for Sydney but does not have authorizations for her school-age children. On May 9, she reports that she lost her job on May 7 and also requests authorizations for Ja'mal and Demarcus starting **on May 27**. ~~in June when school ends~~. Because Ja'mal and Demarcus did not have authorizations ~~at the start of Khloe's loss of employment~~ that started prior to the day that Khloe lost her job (May 7), they are not eligible for authorizations during Khloe's ACTS period. However, Khloe can choose to maintain Sydney's authorization at the same number of hours until the end of her 3-month ACTS period.

Example 2: Rhonda has two (2) children: Roberta (age 6) and Chad (age 8). She does not have authorizations for the children during the school year, but she ~~does have~~ **previously requested** authorizations for June 19 – August 31 for both children. On May 8, Rhonda reports that she lost her job **that day**, and is placed in an ACTS period for June 1 – August 31. Because ~~Rhonda had the summer authorizations in place prior to the permanent loss of approved activity~~ the summer authorizations did not start prior to the day that Rhonda lost her job (May 8), she is not able to keep the **summer** future authorizations ~~for her children~~. The agency worker must delete the future authorizations for both children. Rhonda may still maintain Wisconsin Shares eligibility without authorizations.

Example 3: Pam has a part-time authorization during the school year for her child, Tina, for February 1 – June 12 and then a full-time summer authorization for June 20 – August 31. She reports to the local agency on June 20 that she lost her job on June 15. Pam's ACTS period will be July 1 – September 30. Because the full-time authorization did not start prior to the day that Tina lost her job (June 15), Tina's full-time authorization may not be used for Pam's ACTS period. However, Pam may choose to maintain the hours from the part-time authorization during the ACTS period because that authorization started prior to the day that Tina lost her job.

~~**Example 4:** Samantha does not have an authorization in place for her school-age child during the school year. She is terminated from her job at the same time school lets out for the summer. Because Samantha did not have an authorization for her school-age child prior to losing her job, her child is not eligible for an authorization. However, Samantha can keep her Wisconsin Shares eligibility if she anticipates sending her child to child care after she finds a new approved activity. If Samantha chooses to maintain Wisconsin Shares eligibility, the agency worker would update Samantha's Approved Activity Status in CWW to ACTS but would not create any new authorizations.~~

Example 4: Catalina has one child, Javier (age 8). Javier has an authorization from January 1 – April 16 at Rosa's Playhouse. On April 20, Catalina reports that she started

maternity leave on April 18. A TBRK period is created from May 1 – July 31. The agency worker extends Javier’s authorization to July 31 because the authorization started prior to the first day of Catalina’s maternity leave (April 18).

~~The only exception to this policy is if eligibility was confirmed open for Wisconsin Shares within the past 30 calendar days and the parent was in the process of selecting a provider or providing authorization assessment information when the permanent loss or temporary break occurred.~~

~~In this situation, the child would be eligible for an authorization based on the parent’s previous work schedule and any other relevant authorization assessment information that was already provided.~~

~~**Example 6:** Josie has an approved activity of working full-time and is determined eligible for Wisconsin Shares. Josie begins the authorization assessment process, but still needs to choose a provider. Before Josie can choose a provider, she is laid off from her job. Josie’s child is still eligible for an authorization, and the authorization assessment of hours must be based on Josie’s work hours in addition to other relevant authorization assessment information that was in place prior to the end of employment.~~

This section last updated 04/05/2021 11/01/2019

2.4.3.4.41 Ending Authorizations During or Following an Activity Break Period

Wisconsin Shares eligibility will end systematically at the end of the third month in CARES Worker Web (CWW) if a parent has not started a new verified approved activity or returned to their approved activity by the end of an Activity Break Period (see 1.3.9.2.3). Authorizations will end systematically in CSAW on the last day of the last month in which the child was eligible if there is no eligibility for the following month. Agency workers do not need to take any action to end authorizations following an Approved Activity Search Period (ACTS) or Temporary Break Period (TBRK).

If Wisconsin Shares eligibility closes ~~or fails~~ in CWW for a different reason during an ~~ACTS or TBRK~~ Activity Break Period (see 1.3.9.2.3), the authorization will also end systematically in CSAW at the end of the last month of the child’s eligibility. If Wisconsin Shares eligibility is closing according to Adverse Action (see 1.8.4), agency workers do not need to take action to end an authorization earlier unless:

- The parent indicates that they do not plan to use child care; or
- The case is closing due to the parent not being eligible for an Activity Break Period the first month of the new eligibility period after the renewal has been completed (see 2.4.3.4).

If Wisconsin Shares eligibility closes and reopens in CWW within one (1) calendar month while the parent is in an Activity Break Period, the agency worker will need to

recreate or extend the end date on the previous authorization in CSAW as the authorization will have been systematically ended when eligibility ended.

If eligibility closes at the end of an Activity Break Period and reopens in CWW within one (1) calendar month because the parent gains a new approved activity or returns to their approved activity, the case is ongoing and the local agency must follow the policy in Section 2.3.7 for determining the authorization begin date.

Example 1 (Eligibility closes and reopens): Krystal is in an ACTS period from June 1 – August 31 and her child, Mallory, has an authorization at Kelly’s Kuddles. When Krystal’s ACTS period is ending in August, Krystal does not have a new approved activity for September. Wisconsin Shares eligibility systematically ends on August 31. On September 23, Krystal reports that she has started a new job and provides verification. Eligibility reopens effective September 1. Mallory has been attending Kelly’s Kuddles since her authorization ended. However, Mallory’s new authorization can only begin on September 23 because this was the date that both criteria of Krystal participating in an approved activity and Mallory attending the child care provider were met.

If a parent who is in a TBRK period intends to return to their approved activity prior to the end of the 3-month period, the authorization should remain in place until the parent reports that they have returned to their approved activity, unless there is an expected change within that period (see 2.3.8). An expected return to an approved activity prior to the end of the 3-month period should not be considered an expected change for the purposes of ending authorizations.

Example 2 (TBRK): Adeline reports on January 12 that she had a baby and is on maternity leave until February 28. The agency worker updates her Approved Activity Status in CWW to TBRK for February 1 – April 30. Adeline has an authorization for her older child, Phoebe. The agency worker leaves the original end date of June 7 in place for Phoebe’s authorization as the authorization will be ended systematically on April 30 when eligibility ends if Adeline does not report she has returned to work by April 30. Adeline will need to report if she returns to work before April 30 and if she has a change in child care need following her return to work.

Example 3 (ACTS): Mia loses her job on March 10 and the agency worker ~~places her in an~~ updates her Approved Activity Status in CWW to ACTS ~~period from for~~ April 1 – June 30. Mia’s child, Milo, has an authorization with an end date of Mia’s annual renewal date, August 31. The agency worker does not need to update Milo’s authorization (unless Mia requests changes to the authorization). If Mia does not have a verified approved activity by June 30, Mia’s eligibility in CWW and Milo’s authorization in CSAW will systematically end on June 30.

Agency workers must complete an authorization assessment at the end of an ~~ACTS or TBRK~~ Activity Break Period. If a TBRK period crosses a renewal, an authorization

assessment must be completed for the month following the end of the TBRK period and the authorized hours must be based on the assessment results. This would be considered their renewal authorization assessment (see 2.4.2.1) because the authorization assessment completed at renewal may not have been reflective of their child care needs after they return to their approved activity.

If the end of a parent's ~~ACTS or TBRK~~ Activity Break Period is within their 12-month eligibility period (not crossing renewal), an authorization assessment must be completed for the month following the end of the 3-month period based on the parent's actual schedule following the break, ~~but~~ Parents have the option to continue using the same number of authorized hours based on continuity of care (see 2.4.2.2) unless the criteria for an authorization to be based on the assessment results are met (see 2.4.2.1).

This section last updated 04/05/2021 ~~11/01/2019~~

2.4.3.5 Authorizations for New Self-Employment

During the first 12 months that a parent is engaged in a new self-employment business, the local agency may authorize child care for the hours the parent is engaged in self-employment and needs child care in order to engage in this activity. The authorization may be up to full-time (50 hours per week including any travel time that is needed) until the annual eligibility renewal due date. If the annual eligibility renewal occurs before the 12th month of the new self-employment, the authorization may continue with the same number of hours authorized until the next annual eligibility renewal.

If the parent's self-employment business began prior to the date he or she applies for Wisconsin Shares, the agency worker must use the actual start date of the self-employment to determine the 12-month new self-employment period.

Example 1 (Self-Employment Prior to Application): Mary Jo began self-employment on May 6, 2019 but did not apply for Wisconsin Shares until July. Mary Jo's worker enters May 2019 on the Self-Employment page in CWW, as this is the start of the self-employment. Mary Jo's 12th month of self-employment is April 2020, but her annual renewal is not until June 2020. Her authorization may remain in place until her renewal due date in June 2020. Beginning with the authorization assessment that is completed with the annual renewal, her authorization hours will be based on her adjusted self-employment earnings divided by the Wisconsin minimum wage.

A parent may be eligible for a full-time authorization for a new instance of self-employment only once every 24 months. All months for a new self-employment business count and child care may not be authorized under a new self-employment business for a full-time authorization, as described in this section, until 24 months have elapsed.

Example 2 (Initial Eligibility with New Self-Employment): Rosa starts her own business selling designer shirts in December. At the same time, she applies for Wisconsin Shares. Her child, Louisa, is eligible for an authorization based on Rosa's stated work schedule (up to 50 hours per week) until the annual eligibility renewal. Following the annual renewal, Louisa's authorized hours must be determined by Rosa's monthly adjusted self-employment earnings divided by Wisconsin's minimum wage.

Example 3 (Ongoing Eligibility with New Self-Employment): Richard is employed working as a delivery driver for ABC Trucking and is receiving Wisconsin Shares for his child, Aubrey. In September, he reports that he quit his job and will now be starting his own delivery business. Aubrey is eligible for an authorization based on Richard's stated work schedule (up to 50 hours per week) until the annual renewal that follows the 12th month of new self-employment.

Example 4 (Ongoing Eligibility with Changing Self-Employment): Jonathon is a mechanic and has been operating his business from his home for the past few years. He is receiving Wisconsin Shares for his child, Joseph. Now, Jonathon wants to close the mechanic shop because he is not making a profit and start a new business as a handyman. Working as a mechanic and working as a handyman are two (2) different skill sets, use different tools to perform the work, are performed in different work environments, and the two (2) businesses do not have the same clientele. This is new self-employment. Joseph is eligible for an authorization based on Jonathon's stated work schedule (up to 50 hours per week) until the annual renewal that follows the 12th month of new self-employment.

Note: Self-employment as an unregulated child care provider is not allowed as an approved activity for Wisconsin Shares. If the parent is self-employed as a regulated child care provider, see Sections 2.3.2 and 2.3.3.

This section last updated 11/01/2019

2.4.3.6 Authorizations for Ongoing Self-Employment

Self-employment is considered ongoing after the annual eligibility renewal that follows the 12th month of new self-employment. At each annual renewal, an authorization assessment is required, and the authorized hours must be based on monthly adjusted self-employment earnings divided by Wisconsin's minimum wage (\$7.25 per hour). This sum is then rounded up and divided by 4.3 to determine the maximum weekly hours for the authorization.

Note: The maximum weekly hours for self-employment authorizations displays in CSAW on the Case Activity Summary page based on the information entered on the Self-Employment page in CARES Worker Web (CWW). Agency workers do not need to manually calculate the number of hours that can be authorized for self-employment.

The total authorized hours cannot exceed the calculated number. If the number of hours requested for child care is less than the calculated amount, travel time can be added, up to the calculated hours.

Note: When business expenses exceed the business's income, the business is operating at a loss. If the business is operating at a loss, the parent is not eligible for an authorization with that self-employment business as the parent's Approved Activity.

Factors to consider for determining the authorized hours for self-employment include:

- Self-employed parents are eligible for school closed hours **and inclement weather hours** for school-age children, in addition to the maximum calculation.
- A child care need that is less than the self-employment minimum wage per hour calculation.
- Additional child care hours needed for another approved activity that may include travel time.
- Multiple parents in the household that do not have overlapping schedules.
- When there are two (2) self-employed parents that have different maximum calculated hours in CSAW, the agency worker must use the lesser of the two (2) calculations for the maximum authorization amount.

Example 1 (Single Parent Self-Employed Business): Tiffany's cake business has been in operation for two (2) years and has a monthly adjusted income of \$400. CSAW will calculate a maximum number of hours that can be authorized based on \$400/month divided by \$7.25 to get 55.17 monthly hours, which is rounded up to 56 hours for the month and then divided by 4.3 to determine the weekly amount (this weekly amount displays on the Case Activity Summary page in CSAW). Tiffany's child care authorization must not exceed 56 hours of child care each month (14 hours per week). Tiffany's worker must not add additional hours for travel. If Tiffany requests only 10 hours per week for work, up to four (4) hours of travel time per week could be added to the authorization.

Example 2 (Two-Parent Household-Separate Self-Employed Businesses): Keisha and Rick are married and have four (4) children. Rick has an auto repair business. Rick works at the auto repair from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and on Saturday mornings. The auto repair business produces a monthly adjusted income of \$1,000. Keisha has her own small business selling scented candles and home décor. The monthly adjusted income from Keisha's business is \$600. Keisha works about 15 hours per week, always in the evenings after Rick is home. Keisha and Rick do not have overlapping schedules; therefore, they are not eligible for an authorization.

Example 3 (Two-Parent Household Shared Ongoing Self-Employed Business): Mary and Tom share a business selling honey and work the exact same hours. Their monthly

adjusted income of \$1,000 is divided equally because they are equal partners. Mary's adjusted income of \$500 makes her eligible for 68.96 (round to 69) hours per month and Tom's adjusted income of \$500 makes him eligible for 68.96 (round to 69) hours of child care per month. Their work hours overlap; therefore, they are eligible for up to 69 hours of child care subsidy per month.

This section last updated 04/05/2021 ~~11/01/2019~~

2.4.3.7 Self-Employed Foster Parents

Foster Care parents, Subsidized Guardians, Interim Caretakers, and relatives with court-ordered placement receiving the Kinship Care payment (see Glossary for "Receiving a Kinship Care Payment") are not subject to the authorization limits described in Section 2.4.3.6 for the children placed in these homes. In these cases, authorizations must be based on the parent's stated need (up to 50 hours per week including travel time) regardless of the business being new or ongoing. Justification for authorized hours must be documented in CSAW case comments (see 2.4.1). The authorization limits for self-employment continue to apply to authorizations for the biological or adopted children in these families.

Example: Ava and Elijah just became foster parents for two (2) preschool-aged children. They do not have any children of their own. Ava works full time at the local elementary school and Elijah operates a business as a web designer. During the application process, Ava provided verification of her full-time employment and Elijah provided copies of last year's taxes. During the authorization assessment, the agency worker enters Ava's work schedule and Elijah's stated work schedule into CSAW. CSAW will determine a projected number of weekly authorized hours based on these two (2) work schedules, plus any travel time needed. The agency worker must accept this calculation without regard to the monthly adjusted self-employment income and the minimum wage.

This section last updated 04/05/2021 ~~11/01/2019~~

2.4.3.8 Two-Parent and Three-Generation Families with a Teen Parent

The local agency must only authorize child care in two-parent families for the period of overlap in the parents' approved activities.

When determining the authorization for a teen parent's child, the agency worker must authorize child care for the period of time during the overlap of approved activities of all parents in the assistance group, including the dependent teen parent.

When determining child care hours for other children in the assistance group of a three-generation family that are not the dependent teen parent's children, the dependent teen parent's schedule is not considered in the overlap. The agency worker must consider only the overlap in approved activity of the other adults in the assistance group for other children in the assistance group.

Example 1: Alberto and Alana both work full time. Alberto works from 3:30 p.m. to midnight and Alana works 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The child care authorization is limited to the overlap in work and travel time for both parents. Alberto is available to care for their child until he drops her off with the provider at 3:00 p.m. and leaves for work. It takes Alana 30 minutes to get to the child care center after work. The authorization may cover 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., or two (2) hours per day.

Example 2: Melissa is 17 years old. She and her baby live with her parents. This is a three-generation family. The agency worker must consider the approved activity schedule of the teen parent and both of the grandparents when determining the number of authorized hours for Melissa's baby.

Example 3: Mai is 17 years old. She and her baby live with her parent, Choua, and her 3-year-old sister Nancy. This is a three-generation family with a teen parent. The agency worker must consider only Choua's approved activity schedule when determining the number of authorized hours for Nancy. The authorization for Mai's baby is based on the overlap of both Choua's and Mai's approved activity schedules.

In two-parent and three-generation family situations where one (1) parent is unable to work and unable to care for the children as documented by a physician, physician assistant, nurse practitioner, psychiatrist, or psychologist, child care may be authorized for the time period when the other parent is participating in an approved activity.

This section last updated 11/01/2019

2.4.3.9 Sleep Hours for Third Shift Employment

Parents who work third shift may request an authorization for child care for sleep time based on the parent's need to sleep in order to remain employed. The local agency will determine a reasonable number of authorized hours on a case-by-case basis. The same family may also request child care for the hours of employment. ~~The total number of authorized hours cannot exceed 75 hours per week.~~ The Maximum Hours Per Day policy (see 2.4.8) must be followed when determining authorized hours. This maximum includes hours of employment, travel time, and any sleep hours requested by the parent.

Example 1: Theresa works from 12 a.m. to 8 a.m. and sleeps from 8:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. Theresa requests a child care authorization for her child, Milo, only for the hours that she sleeps. The local agency determines that seven (7) hours per day of sleep time is reasonable and authorizes seven (7) hours of child care per day.

Example 2: Julie sleeps from 6 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. and works her third shift job from 12 a.m. to 8 a.m. Julie's parent takes care of Julie's child, Lola, from 6 p.m. until 9 p.m. and then drops Lola off at her overnight child care provider. Julie requests a child care authorization for Lola for 9 p.m. to 8 a.m. the next day. The local agency determines that the 2.5 hours per day of sleep time requested (9 p.m. to 11:30 p.m.) is reasonable

and authorizes child care for eight (8) hours of approved activity time plus 2.5 hours of sleep time to equal 10.5 hours, rounded up to eleven (11) hours per day.

Example 3: Ximena works three (3) 12-hour overnight shifts (10 p.m. to 10 a.m.) per week. She requests a child care authorization for her child, George, to attend a licensed group provider for 12 hours of approved activity plus five (5) hours of sleep time, and 30 minutes of travel time each way. For documentation, Ximena provides her work schedule along with an internet search map of the route she takes for the travel time. George would need to be in care for 18 hours in a 24-hour period (12-hour shift + five (5) hours sleep time + one (1) hour travel time). Because the limit for a child to be in care at a licensed group provider is 14 hours in a 24-hour period, only 14 hours of care may be authorized. Travel time and sleep time cannot be included in the authorization because the total hours would be over the licensing limit for a 24-hour period. If Ximena decided to only request an authorization for the time she works (12 hours), travel time could be included because George would be in care less than 14 hours in a 24-hour period.

Example 4: Martina works from 5 p.m. to 3 a.m. Her spouse, Emilio, works from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Martina sleeps from 3:30 a.m. until 11 a.m. Martina requests an authorization for their child, Paula, from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. plus 30 minutes of travel time for Emilio to drop off Paula in the morning. The local agency determines that the requested three (3) hours per day of sleep time is reasonable and authorizes child care for three (3) hours plus 30 minutes of travel time for a total of 3.5 hours, rounded up to four (4) hours per day.

This section last updated 04/05/2021 11/01/2019

2.4.3.10 Travel Time

Travel time is the amount of time the parent needs to travel from the child care location to his or her approved activity and from the activity back to the child care provider location.

CSAW requires entry for daily travel time needs. The agency worker must ~~assess this to~~ ensure that adequate travel time is included in the number of authorized hours.

The agency worker must always document the rationale for the amount of or the lack of travel time need in **CSAW case** comments (see 2.4.1).

Any requests of more than one (1) hour of travel time per day must be verified via an Internet map search or a public transportation schedule. Travel time that is one (1) hour or less per day is not required to be verified; but if questionable may be verified via an Internet map search or a public transportation schedule.

Questionable situations include, but are not limited to the following:

- Parent requesting travel time from child care to work prior to the child care hours of operation.
- Parent requesting travel time from work to the child care after the child care hours of operation.
- Parent requesting daily travel time up to an hour when they work at the child care.
- Parent requesting daily travel time up to an hour when they work five (5) minutes away from the child care and the agency worker is aware of this information because they are familiar with the child care location and location of the parent's employment.

The agency worker is not expected to manually calculate a daily average of a varying travel need ~~as was previously instructed~~ and can take the maximum amount of daily travel need and enter it into CSAW.

For online education, if the computer used for logging into the course is located in a place other than the parent's home, the agency worker should consider the reasonableness of the location and must require verification if questionable.

Example 1: Marni requests a daily travel time need of 30 minutes each way per day. This is not considered questionable and the agency worker enters a one (1) hour daily travel need. The agency worker documents in the comment field that this is what Marni requested and that it is not considered questionable.

Example 2: Jose requests a daily travel time need that varies from day-to-day. He needs 30 minutes on Monday/Tuesday, and 45 minutes on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. This is not considered questionable and the agency worker enters the highest of the travel time need, which is 45 minutes for the daily amount. The agency worker documents that this is not questionable and per policy the highest amount of travel time is entered into the system.

Example 3: Amy requests a daily travel time need that exceeds one (1) hour per day. She requested two (2) hours per day. The agency worker asks why she needs this amount of time and she states that she rides public transportation to work and she works in a different city than where she resides. The agency worker verifies this information via an Internet map search and a bus schedule and documents that this information was verified.

Example 4: Katie requests a daily travel need of one (1) hour. She states she needs 30 minutes to travel from the child care center to work and 30 minutes to travel from work to the child care center. She works 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. and the child care provider's hours of operation are from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. This request is considered questionable. The

agency worker must ask a follow-up question as to why she has this need if she works earlier than when the child care provider opens. Katie clarifies that her mom drops the children off at the child care in the morning and therefore she changes her daily travel need request to 30 minutes. The agency worker documents this in **CSAW case** comments.

~~**Example 5:** James works third shift from 12 a.m. to 7 a.m. Monday through Friday; however, he requests a child care need only for sleep time because his mom watches the children overnight. He states that he arrives home after work at 7:30 a.m. and then drives to the child care center and drops the children off at the child care center at 8 a.m. and picks them up after sleeping at 5 p.m. The travel time is included within the request for sleep time from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Therefore, the agency worker does not need to add additional travel time but overrides the zero hour authorized hours to be an average of 45 weekly hours. This is documented in the **CSAW Override Hours** field.~~

This section last updated 04/05/2021 11/01/2019

2.4.4 Child Care Need Schedule

The Child Care Need Schedule is used to identify the days and times that child care is needed to allow the parent to participate in their approved activity. The Child Care Need Schedule has the same three (3) schedule options as the parent's approved activity schedule.

- **One-week schedule:** If the child's need for child care is the same each week, collect the schedule and enter it in the one-week schedule in CSAW.
- **Two-week schedule:** If the child's need for child care alternates every other week, collect the two-week schedule and enter it into CSAW.
- **Four-week schedule:** If the child's need for child care varies every week, collect a four-week schedule and enter it into CSAW.

CSAW will compare the Child Care Need Schedule to the Approved Activity schedule and will project an average number of weekly hours to be authorized based on the overlap of these schedules.

This section last updated 01/31/2017

2.4.4.1 Shared Placement Authorizations

Authorizations that involve the shared placement of children require extra attention to ensure accuracy and to prevent overpayments.

The agency worker is responsible for collecting a shared placement schedule that illustrates the days that the child is with each parent and collecting updates when the parent informs the agency worker of schedule changes. This **should must** be reflected

in the Child Care Need Schedule in CSAW and documented in case comments (see 2.4.1).

A shared placement schedule can be collected on a monthly calendar or by using CSAW or Parent Portal. The authorization must cover the number of hours the applicable parent will need for his or her approved activity plus travel time. ~~Case comments must be entered in CSAW.~~

This section last updated 04/05/2021 ~~10/30/2017~~

2.4.4.2 Co-located Head Start and 4K School Programs

Child care authorizations must always be based on the parent's need for child care while the parent is participating in an approved activity. However, when the 4K program that is overseen by a public school board or a Head Start program is located at the same location and address as a licensed child care program and not at a school (as listed in CSAW), the education hours could potentially may be included in the authorized hours based on the criteria listed below. The school program provider and the licensed child care provider must have the same provider number and location number in CSAW in order to meet the definition of co-located.

If the school program (Head Start or 4K) is located at a different site than where child care is provided the licensed child care provider (such as within a school facility), the authorization must cover only the hours the child attends the child care provider and must not include the hours the child attends the school program the before and/or after school care outside of the school program. ~~The school program provider and the child care provider must have the same provider number and location number in CSAW in order to meet the definition of co-located.~~

All of the school program hours can be included in the authorized hours if each of the following are true:

- The parent is engaged in his or her approved activity at least part of the school program hours;
- The school program and the child care program are co-located;
- The total number of hours of the child's school program(s) is not more than four (4) hours per day; and
- The total length of the child's authorized child care day is five (5) or more hours per day (the school program hours are included in this total).

If any of these requirements are not met, the authorization must not include the school program hours.

Agency workers must document the Head Start or 4K schedule in case comments (see 2.4.1).

Example 1: Charlie attends the Head Start program located at 1256 Water Street and the **licensed** child care program that is located at 1536 Water Street. Charlie's authorization is limited to the hours he will spend at the **licensed** child care program located at 1536 Water Street because the child care and the Head Start programs are in different locations.

Example 2: Dara attends a 4K program that is overseen by the local public school board, and is located at the **licensed** child care center where she is enrolled. Dara's parent needs child care from 7:30 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. Monday – Friday. The 4K program is provided at Dara's **licensed** child care center from 8 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Monday – Thursday. Dara's authorization may be written to include all of the hours that Dara's parent needs child care, which is 7:30 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Example 3: Cary attends a Head Start program that is overseen by the local public school board, and that is located at the **licensed** child care center where she is enrolled. Cary's parent needs child care from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday – Thursday while she goes to work. The Head Start program is from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday – Friday. Cary's authorization may be written for only the hours that Cary attends the **licensed** child care program because the Head Start program hours are indicated to be six (6) hours daily. Cary's authorization must begin at 2 p.m. when the Head Start program has ended until 4:30 p.m. when Cary's parent picks her up, Monday – Thursday.

Example 4: Melissa attends a Head Start program that is overseen by the local public school board, and is located at the **licensed** child care center where she is enrolled. The Head Start program hours are 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Melissa's parent works 2:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. She leaves Melissa at the center after the Head Start program ends. The authorization should be written from 2:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. plus travel time. Melissa's parent is not engaged in her approved activity during any part of the school program hours so those hours would not be included.

Example 5: Josh attends a 4K program that is overseen by the local public school board, and is located at the **licensed** child care center where he is enrolled. The **licensed** child care facility operates 24 hours a day. The 4K program hours are 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Josh's parent works 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. The authorization should be written for 11:00 p.m. - 7:00 a.m. plus travel time. Josh's parent is not in an approved activity during any part of the school program hours so those hours would not be included in the authorization.

Example 6: Melvin attends a Head Start program that is located at his **licensed** child care provider. The Head Start hours are from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. Melvin's parent, Raquel, needs child care from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. while she goes to work. Melvin's authorization can be written for 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. plus travel time from work to the **licensed** child care provider at the end of her shift. The travel time in the morning would not be counted

because Raquel is not going to her approved activity after dropping off Melvin at the licensed child care provider.

Process: When a parent is only in their approved activity during part of the school program hours, the agency worker must enter “Other” on the Parent Approved Activity Schedule in CSAW. This will allow CSAW to calculate the correct amount number of authorization hours without an override to the authorized hours. The agency worker must document in the CSAW authorization case comments the reason that “Other” is being used.

Note: For the purposes of Wisconsin Shares, 3K is considered to be regular child care and all hours are eligible for an authorization.

This section last updated 04/05/2021 11/01/2019

2.4.4.3 Authorizations for Children in Grades K through 12

Wisconsin Shares does not allow authorizations for time during the typical school day for children in grades K through 12 while the school year is in session, in accordance with 45 C.F.R. s. 98.56(c). The typical school day is determined by the local agency after a review of the school district hours of operation and school district calendar for schools within the particular county.

Agency workers must document the child’s school schedule (i.e. start and end times, short days on Fridays, etc.) in case comments (see 2.4.1).

Part-time or full-time authorizations for children in grades K through 12 can be made for times outside of the typical school hours during the school year and for times when school is not in session (e.g. summer break, planned holiday breaks, or other planned school-closed times).

Children who are homeschooled, truant, or suspended from school are not eligible for an authorization during the typical school day. Children who are homeschooled, truant, or in out-of-school suspension from school are also not eligible for an authorization for school closed hours.

Expelled children who are considered disenrolled may be eligible to receive an authorization during the typical school day. The parent will have been notified by the school if the child is expelled and dis-enrolled. If a child’s enrollment status is questionable, the parent must provide verification of the child’s school enrollment status.

This section last updated 04/05/2021 11/01/2019

2.4.4.4 Zero-Hour Authorizations

If a school-aged child only needs child care on days of school closure and does not need child care before and/or after school on a regular basis a zero-hour authorization can be written to a child care provider to care for the child during school closures. These authorizations won't have weekly/monthly hours calculated in CSAW. Instead, the agency worker will add school closed hours for each day that school is closed and the parent expects to be engaged in their approved activity.

This section last updated 11/01/2019

2.4.4.4.1 School Closed Hours

All parents with school-age children who are three (3) years old or older on September 1 may request Wisconsin Shares subsidy for days and hours that school is closed according to the school calendar (i.e. for teacher conferences or teacher in-service days) when the parent will need child care in order to attend work or other approved activity **or** due to inclement weather when the parent needed child care in order to attend work or other approved activity.

Children with an authorization only for scheduled school closed hours (zero-hour authorization) may also receive additional child care subsidy when school is unexpectedly closed; this includes closures due to inclement weather as well as closures that are not weather-related.

School closed hours assist with the cost of child care when school is not in session and when school is closed due to inclement weather, including but not limited to: snowstorms, below-zero conditions, hail, or ice.

School closed hours can be requested in advance by parents who know their work schedule ahead of time but can also be requested within 10 calendar days **after following** the school day closure whether the day was a planned school closed day or an unexpected closure. **The 10 calendar days should begin the day after the last day of the school closure or school closure period. A school closure period must have consecutive school closed days. Agency workers must use case comments to identify the reason for the school closure (see 2.4.1).**

For policy and process regarding short-term authorizations that may be needed to cover holiday and spring breaks, see Section 2.3.10. Agency workers have the option to enter the school closed hours/days using the process described below or may create separate, short-term authorizations as described in Section 2.3.10.

Example 1: Susie has a zero-hour authorization for her school-age child, Derek. She calls on January 15 to request school closed hours for Derek. His school was closed January 4 and 5 due to a snowstorm but the child care program was open and Susie needed to work. Because the request was made within 10 calendar days from the last

day the school was closed, the agency worker may add the additional hours for the days Derek attended child care while school was closed.

Example 2: Katie has a zero-hour authorization for her school-age child, Preston. She calls on May 4 to request school closed hours for Preston because his school was closed from April 20 – 24 due to flooding. Because the request was made within 10 calendar days from the last day the school was closed, the agency worker may add the additional hours for the days Preston attended child care while school was closed.

Example 3: Teri has a zero-hour authorization for her school-age child, Coby. She calls on February 14 to request school closed hours for Coby because school was closed on February 4 due to a snowstorm and February 5 due to cold temperatures. Because the request was made within 10 calendar days from the last day school was closed, the agency worker adds the additional hours for the days Coby attended child care while school was closed.

Example 4: Jessica has a zero-hour authorization for her school-age child, Laura. She calls on February 17 to request school closed hours for Laura because school was closed on February 5 and February 10. Because the request was made within 10 calendar days of February 10 but not February 5, the agency worker adds the additional hours only for February 10 for when Laura attended child care while school was closed.

~~**Process:** School closed hours are added using the Manage Scheduled School Closed Hours page in GSAW. The agency worker must use the Comments section on the Manage Scheduled School Closed Hours page to identify the reason for the school closure.~~

Children who are authorized for a before and after school program or a co-located Head Start or 4K program as described in Section 2.4.4.2 may need a secondary zero-hour authorization if care at the school program is not available during school closures, including inclement weather.

Children who are homeschooled, truant, in out-of-school suspension, or expelled and dis-enrolled are not eligible for school closed ~~or inclement weather~~ hours. Children who are homeschooled, truant, or in out-of-school suspension are also not eligible for an authorization during the typical school day. However, expelled children who are considered dis-enrolled may be eligible to receive an authorization during the typical school day (see 2.4.4.3.)

Parents in an Approved Activity Search Period (ACTS) or Temporary Break Period (TBRK) are not eligible for additional child care hours (see 2.4.3.4.2).

The school closed hours are subject to the same 90-day removal policy as all other funds. If the parent received additional subsidy hours for school closures and has not

expended all of the funds within 90 days, the funds will age off and no longer be available to the parent. For the 90-day removal policy, see Sections 2.5.6 and 3.3.1.3.

This section last updated 04/05/2021 11/01/2019

2.4.5 Subsidy Maximum Rates

The department publishes the Wisconsin Shares County and Tribal Subsidy Maximum Rates. Hourly and monthly maximum rates are established according to provider county or tribe, provider types (licensed group, licensed family, regularly certified or provisionally certified), and the age of the child in care. The maximum rates are based on an annual statewide survey of licensed child care providers regarding the child care prices they charge to the general community. The department has the authority to freeze the maximum rates due to budget constraints.

Hourly maximums for regularly and provisionally certified providers are set at 90% of the licensed family hourly maximum. Monthly maximums are not set for certified providers; however, the monthly subsidy payments are capped at the licensed family monthly maximum.

Maximum rates for child care providers located within tribes are grouped with the county in which the child care provider is geographically located.

The local agency is responsible for updating the provider's prices in CSAW when the change is reported.

This section last updated 11/01/2019

2.4.6 Full- and Part-Time Prices and Full- and Part-Time Authorizations Provider Price Type

Whether to use ~~regular~~ (full-time) or part-time provider prices is dependent on the average weekly authorized hours.

- If the authorized hours do not vary from week to week and ~~the authorized hours~~ are 20 **hours** per week or less (but not zero), use the part-time provider price.
- ~~When the part-time provider price is used, the provider's part-time weekly rates must be recorded in CSAW.~~
- If the authorized hours do not vary from week to week and ~~the average authorized hours~~ are more than 20 **hours** per week, use the ~~regular~~ **full-time** provider price.
- If authorized hours vary week to week and any of the weeks are more than 20 hours, use the ~~regular~~ **full-time** provider price.
- When the authorization is only for school closures, use the ~~regular~~ **full-time** provider price.

2.4.7 Override Provider Price

In certain situations, the subsidy amount can be overridden. The agency worker may override the calculated subsidy amount when:

1. A higher rate has been approved for a child with a disability special needs to allow for additional expenses related to the care of that child,
2. A provider has offered a discount that is lower than the initial hourly amount and the agency ceiling, or
3. An in-home authorization is written for child care that will be provided for 15 or more hours per week in order to ensure that the subsidy amount accounts for the state minimum wage minus the copayment amount.

When an override price is used for a child with a disability special needs or an in-home provider authorization, CSAW will disregard the lowest weekly rate amount to allow the higher prices.

When an override discount price is not lower than the initial hourly amount and the agency ceiling, CSAW will not accept the entered discount price.

Note: Agency workers should be careful not to confuse override prices with overriding the system derived approved hours.

2.4.7.1 Inclusion Rate for Children with Disabilities Special Needs

Parents of children with disabilities special needs may be eligible for a higher subsidy amount to reflect the increased costs the child care provider incurs in providing care to a child with a disability special needs. The local agency may consider additional subsidy amounts for providers caring for a children with a disability special needs on a case-by-case basis.

The subsidy adjustment should support the provider in caring for the child (e.g., specialized training, services, and/or environmental adaptations). It is the provider's responsibility to comply with all aspects of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). For more information on how the ADA applies to child care providers, please visit <https://www.ada.gov/childqanda.htm>.

The parent must provide documentation from a physician, special educator, or other licensed professional of the special need disability and identify the specific additional care that is needed for physical, behavioral, or educational needs.

The child care provider must provide a rationale and documentation of the extra costs associated with providing care for the child. The reason for the higher subsidy amount must be documented in CSAW case comments (see 2.4.1) and form DCF-F-2976 must

be scanned into ECF or uploaded by the parent via the Parent Portal. Agency workers must not include health information or diagnosis in case comments (see 1.1.4).

~~Local agencies must use the approved higher subsidy amount in CSAW as an Override Provider Price Type when writing the authorization; see the CSAW Authorizations User Guide.~~

If a child age 13 or older is has a verified disability to have a special need but the provider does not incur extra costs to provide care, CSAW will use the provider's price or county maximum rate for 12-year-old children, whichever is less, and in this situation the agency worker will not need to use an Override price.

Form DCF-F-2976 must be completed to request and document a higher subsidy amount for a child with a disability special needs. If a higher subsidy amount is approved by the local agency, the increased amount is valid for one (1) year. If the form expires or the override price ends during the 12-month eligibility period, the override price will remain in CSAW until the next renewal or there is a change in child care providers.

A new form must be completed every 12 months to evaluate the needs of the child and determine any adjustments to the cost incurred by the provider. A new form must also be completed if there is a change in child care providers to determine the cost incurred by the new child care program.

In addition to providing the local agency with a statement by a physician or medical provider that the child has a disability special need, the following supporting documentation helps to identify and clarify the specific accommodations that are needed.

- An Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) from Birth to 3.
- An Individualized Education Program (IEP) from a school district.
- A 504 plan (child has an alternative plan in place to provide some assistance to participate fully in school).

The child care provider must provide the rationale for additional costs incurred by the program and identify the specific additional care that is needed for physical, behavioral, or educational needs.

This form also includes an option for the child care provider to request training and technical assistance from the local Child Care Resource and Referral Agency or YoungStar Technical Consultant regarding child care for children with disabilities special needs.

After the child care provider has completed the “Provider Rationale” section, the parent is responsible for submitting the form to ~~the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Coordinator or authorization worker at~~ the local agency or uploading the document via the Parent Portal.

Note: ~~CSAW will require an hourly price. Select the Override-Special Needs price in CSAW.~~ Local agencies must use the approved higher subsidy amount in CSAW as an Override Provider Price Type when writing the authorization; see the CSAW Authorizations User Guide for more information. The hourly rate for ~~the~~ any authorized hours above 50 hours per week will be paid at the county’s hourly maximum rate for that provider rather than the higher ~~Special Needs~~ rate.

~~Authorizations for children with a special need may be authorized for more than 50 hours per week. The hourly rate for the hours above 50 will be paid at the county’s hourly maximum rate for that provider rather than the higher Special Needs rate.~~

This section last updated 04/05/2021 ~~10/01/2018~~

2.4.7.2 Provider Discounts

A discount is any price that a licensed provider charges the parent which is lower than their regular rate before any subsidy is applied. Any amount of the child care cost that another program (such as AmeriCorps) pays is also considered a discount. A discount that a child care provider applies to the parent’s share after the subsidy is paid is not considered a discount for the purposes of Wisconsin Shares.

Providers often have different rate structures based on the number of hours or days of care. However, CSAW can only accept one (1) weekly provider price. A difference between the weekly price in CSAW and the amount the provider charges the parent based on their standard rate structure is not a discount.

~~A discounted price must be applied in the following circumstances:~~

- ~~1. When a licensed child care provider offers a discounted price that is lower than the initial hourly amount or monthly maximum from the Wisconsin Shares Subsidy Maximum Rates (see 2.5.4)~~
- ~~2. When another program, such as AmeriCorps, is providing a child care stipend and the licensed child care provider’s price, after the stipend is applied, is lower than the initial hourly amount or agency ceiling.~~

Providers must inform parents of discounts. It is the parent’s responsibility to then inform the agency worker that the child care provider is offering a discount when requesting an authorization. Providers are required to have a written payment agreement with parents that includes any discounts or scholarships that are available to parents and any discounts or scholarships that the parent receives (see 4.8.2). ~~The Parents~~ must report to the agency worker that the child care provider has offered a

discount within 10 calendar days after receiving this information. The discounted price will become effective the month after the discount is reported and entered into CSAW.

Only discounts that are consistently applied to the provider's regular rate should be entered into CSAW. A discount that is applied intermittently, such as a discount for making a full payment at the beginning of the month, is not considered a discount for the purposes of Wisconsin Shares. This is because the parent may not be able to take advantage of the discount each month.

Example 1: Allison's child, Kate, attends Kiddie Korner for 35 hours per week. The provider offers a 5% discount on the monthly bill if the parent pays by the 4th of the month. In April, Allison received this discount because she was able to pay her Parent Share by April 4. The 5% discount should not be entered in CSAW because it is unknown whether Allison will be able to receive this discount each month.

The agency worker must enter the discounted price into CSAW. If ~~there is confusion on the parent is not sure of~~ the exact amount, the agency worker ~~can~~ **must** contact the child care provider for the discounted price. If another program (such as AmeriCorps) is paying part of the cost of child care, the agency worker must find out the amount the other program will pay in order to determine the rate that will be entered in the Override Price field in CSAW.

CSAW will generate an error message if the price entered in the Override (Discount) Price field is not lower than the initial hourly amount and agency ceiling. If agency workers see this error message, they ~~may~~ **should** disregard the provider discount and change the Provider Price Type back to part-time or full-time. **The discounted price must be documented in case comments (see 2.4.1) even if it is not used for the subsidy calculation in order to document that the parent reported the discount and that the agency worker attempted to enter it in CSAW.**

Example 2: Judy's two (2) children are attending Sammy's Day Care. The provider's regular rate for each child is \$350 per week. Because Judy has two (2) children in care, the provider offers a discounted price of \$300 per week for each child. When entering the discounted price in CSAW, the agency worker receives the following error message: "Override Price: Weekly Override price cannot be more than agency rate of \$225." Because the provider's discounted price is higher than the initial hourly amount and agency ceiling, CSAW will not accept the discounted price. The agency worker **changes** the Provider Price Type back to Full-Time and documents the discount in case comments.

Discounts can only be applied to subsidy payments for parents using licensed child care providers. **Discounts are disregarded for certified child care providers. This is because the maximum hourly rate for regularly and provisionally certified providers is set at 90%**

of the licensed family hourly rate and certified providers are not required to provide prices (see 2.2.3).

~~**Note:** Discounts are disregarded for certified child care providers. Authorization workers must also disregard a discount that a child care provider applies to the parent's share. This is not considered a discount for purposes of the Wisconsin Shares Child Care program.~~

Example 3 1: Randy's Licensed Group Child Care is giving ~~the Jones family~~ Audrey a 50% discount because she works for the provider. The child care provider's weekly price is \$300. The weekly amount after the discount is applied to the provider's original regular weekly price is \$150. The discounted amount should be entered on the Weekly Hours page in CSAW by selecting the Override (Discount) option in the Provider Price Type field and entering the discounted price in the Override Price field. CSAW uses the discounted price for the subsidy calculation because it is lower than the initial hourly rate and the agency ceiling.

Example 4 2: Bella's child, Luna, has an authorization for 28 hours per week. Bella is enrolled in AmeriCorps, which provides a weekly stipend of \$200 to help cover the cost of child care. When Bella informs her agency worker, the worker subtracts the amount that AmeriCorps will pay from the provider's weekly price that is entered in CSAW – this is the discounted price. The agency worker then enters the discounted amount into CSAW and CSAW accepts the discounted price because it is lower than the initial hourly amount and the agency ceiling.

Initial Hourly Amount: \$847.90 per month (\$6.95 per hour x 122 hours per month)
Agency Ceiling: \$1,057.69 per month
Provider's weekly price: \$325
Subtract AmeriCorps subsidy: \$200
Discounted Price: $\$325 - \$200 = \$125$ (Entered as Override (Discount) weekly amount)
Monthly discounted provider price: \$543.52

Capped Subsidy (before copay): \$543.52

Example 5 3: Because Pa has two (2) children enrolled in Alice's Wonderland Child Care, the child care provider gives Pa a 50% discount on her Parent Share for the second child. After the Wisconsin Shares subsidy has been applied paid for her second child, Pa's outstanding balance is \$150. The provider gives her a 50% discount on this Parent Share leaving \$75. Since the provider price discount is only applied to the Parent Share, it must not be entered for CSAW to use in the Wisconsin Shares subsidy calculation.

This section last updated 04/05/2021 11/01/2019

2.4.7.3 In-Home Care for 15 or More Hours Per Week

When child care is provided in the child's own home and the child care provider is working 15 or more hours per week, the subsidy amount must account for the state minimum wage minus the copayment amount, regardless of the number of children in care (Wis. Admin. Code DCF s. 201.06(4)(b)). When creating the authorization, the agency worker must enter an Override (In-Home) price to ensure that the sum of the subsidy amount for all children accounts for the state minimum wage minus the copayment amount.

~~For example, if~~ If there is one (1) child in care for 15 or more hours per week, the Override (In-Home) price must be ~~\$7.25 per hour~~ **the state minimum wage** in order for the subsidy amount to account for the minimum wage minus the copayment amount. However, if there are two (2) or more children receiving care, their authorizations overlap, and the provider is working in the child's home for 15 or more hours per week, the Override (In-Home) price must be adjusted so that the per hour rate of the combined sum of the subsidy amount before the copayment amount adjustment for all children equals the minimum wage.

~~In order to adjust the subsidy amount to account for the state minimum wage, when there is only one (1) child in care the agency worker must enter \$7.25 per hour for the Override (In-Home) price in CSAW.~~

When two (2) or more children are in care at the same time with overlapping authorizations, there must be a calculation that allocates an amount for each child so that the per hour rate of the combined sum of the subsidy amount before the copayment amount adjustment for all children equals the minimum wage. The agency worker must use the worksheet *Wisconsin Shares Child Care Hourly In-Home Price Calculator for Two or More Children* (DCF-F-5329) to perform these calculations.

Note: When authorizing for less than 15 hours per week, there is no requirement for the subsidy amount to account for the state minimum wage. The agency worker must not enter an Override (In-Home) provider price for that authorization, and CSAW will use the county's maximum regularly certified or provisionally certified rate for the benefit calculation.

Example 1 (One (1) Child): Shelly uses an in-home provider to care for her child, Betty. Betty needs child care 25 hours per week ($25 \times 4.348125 = 109$ authorized hours per month). Since there is only one (1) child in care, the Override (In-Home) price is ~~\$7.25 per hour~~ **the state minimum wage** for all 109 authorized hours.

Example 2 (Two (2) Children with Overlapping Schedules): Pete's two (2) children are cared for by a child care provider who comes to their home to care for them. The 2-year-old child, Annie, needs full-time care and is authorized for 45 hours per week (196 hours per month, the payment calculation is capped at 153 Regular Subsidy Hours). The 8-

year-old child, Danny, only needs after-school care and is authorized for 10 hours per week (44 hours per month). Although the total authorized hours for both children is 240 hours per month, the Override (In-Home) price will be calculated using Annie's number of Regular Subsidy Hours because both children's authorizations overlap and Annie has the most Regular Subsidy Hours.

When there are two (2) or more children authorized for in-home care and one (1) child's authorization changes, the Override (In-Home) price must be recalculated using the worksheet *Wisconsin Shares Child Care Hourly In-Home Price Calculator for Two or More Children* (DCF-F-5329). The authorizations for all children in care must be ended if the current authorization is in "Processed" status. Agency workers cannot update the Override (In-Home) price for authorizations that are in "Processed" status. In order to enter the new Override (In-Home) price, a new authorization must be written even if the schedule is the same.

Example 3 (Processing Changes): Patty has three (3) children, Ally, Bo, and Cici authorized for in-home care. Each of the three (3) children are authorized for 25 hours per week. The authorizations for all children are written from 4/1-8/31. In May, Cici's child care need changes and her authorization increases to 30 hours per week beginning 6/1. Because Cici's authorization changed and Ally's and Bo's current authorizations are in "Processed" status and the Override (In-Home) price cannot be edited, the agency worker must end all three (3) authorizations. A new authorization for each child must be written beginning 6/1 so that the new Override (In-Home) price can be entered to ensure that the combined sum of the subsidy amount before the copayment amount adjustment for all children equals the minimum wage.

Local administrative agencies should remind parents that choosing in-home child care creates an employee/employer relationship between the provider and the parent(s). Parents should be referred to the Department of Revenue's Customer Service Bureau, Department of Workforce Development's Bureau of Tax and Accounting, and/or business professionals such as accountants or attorneys for more information about their responsibilities as an employer. The parent's responsibilities include paying the provider at least state minimum wage for all hours worked. This may be more than the actual subsidy amount. Parents are responsible for paying the difference between the subsidy amount and the provider price (see 2.6).

This section last updated 04/05/2021 11/01/2019

2.4.8 Maximum Hours Per Day of 75 Authorized Hours Per Week

~~A child's total authorized hours cannot exceed 75 hours per week. This includes a child in two (2) Wisconsin Shares Child Care Assistance Groups and/or authorized to more than one (1) provider. CSAW will not allow authorizations for more than 75 hours of child care per week. It is only when the hardship policy requirements are met that staff with the Child Care Coordinator profile in CSAW may write an authorization for more than 75 hours of child care per week (see 2.4.9.1 and 1.1.3).~~

~~**Example:** Claudia has an authorization for 43 hours per week for her child, Jackson, at Lydia's Child Care program. Claudia asked for and was approved an exception to change child care providers mid-month due to Lydia's Child Care program's abrupt permanent closure. In this scenario, Jackson would have a 43-hour authorization at Lydia's Child Care program and another authorization for 45 hours at Jolly House Child Care program, for a sum of 88 hours. Since the original authorization to Lydia's Child Care program cannot be end-dated until the end of the month, the new authorization to Jolly House Child Care must be written by a worker with the Child Care Coordinator privileges in CSAW.~~

Children may not be authorized for Wisconsin Shares for more than 12 hours per day unless written documentation is provided describing a parent's work schedule, travel time, or a combination of work and travel time that exceeds 12 hours per day. Written documentation may include a parent's written statement or other verification already provided for approved activity (see 1.5.11) or financial eligibility (see 1.5.12). Documentation must be scanned into the Electronic Case File (ECF) and summarized in case comments (see 1.9).

If written documentation is provided describing a child care need of more than 12 hours per day, child care may be authorized up to the following limits:

- **Licensed Providers and Day Camps:** Per licensing rules, children cannot be in care more than 14 hours in a 24-hour period at a licensed provider (group or family) or a day camp. A child may not be authorized for more than 14 hours in a 24-hour period, which includes travel time, for a licensed provider or a day camp.
- **Certified Providers:** Per Wisconsin Shares rules, children may not be authorized for more than 16 hours per day, which includes travel time, for a certified provider.

Out-of-state providers will have a status of Licensed or Certified in CSAW and CSAW will use the associated daily limit as described above.

CSAW will enforce these limits by preventing the agency worker from entering more than 14 hours of child care need, including travel time, for licensed providers and 16 hours for certified providers during a 24-hour period.

Example 1 (Certified): Violet is receiving Wisconsin Shares for her child, Donna, to attend a certified child care provider. In May, Violet begins working 12-hour overnight shifts (7 p.m. to 7 a.m.) on a rotating schedule. She also needs six (6) hours of sleep time, as well as 30 minutes of travel time each way. Donna would need to be in care for 19 hours within a 24-hour period (12-hour shift + six (6) hours sleep time + one (1) hour travel time). Because a child cannot be authorized to a certified provider for more than

16 hours per day, only 16 hours of care may be authorized. Travel time could not be included in the authorization because Donna would still be in care during that time. CSAW will consider travel time and the parent schedule/child care need overlap and prevent the agency worker from entering a child care need that is greater than 16 hours per day.

Example 2 (Licensed): Carol is receiving Wisconsin Shares for her child, Johnny, to attend a licensed child care provider. Carol works a rotating 12-hour shift from 10 p.m. to 10 a.m. She also requests five (5) hours of sleep time and 30 minutes travel time for pick up only. Johnny would be in care 17.5 hours within a 24-hour period (12-hour shift + five (5) hours sleep time + 30 minutes travel time). Because a child cannot be authorized to a licensed provider for more than 14 hours per day, only 14 hours of care may be authorized. Travel time could not be included in the authorization because Johnny would still be in care during that time. CSAW will consider travel time and the parent schedule/child care need overlap and prevent the agency worker from entering a child care need that is greater than 14 hours per day.

Subsidized hours are capped at 75 hours per week. For more information about the subsidy calculation, see Section 2.5.4.

This section last updated 04/05/2021 ~~10/30/2017~~

2.4.9 Changing and Ending an Authorization During a Month

When an authorization has been established for a full month, parents may receive an authorization to a different provider only in the following situations:

- An agency or client error in which a subsidy amount was loaded to the EBT card for the incorrect provider;
- The parent chooses a different provider after the subsidy amount was loaded on the EBT card, but the child has not attended the provider and the parent has not spent any of the current month's subsidy funds; or
- The situation meets the Hardship Policy in Section 2.4.9.1.

In all the above situations, the agency worker must end the current authorization to the incorrect provider at the end of the current month and write a new authorization to the correct provider for the current month.

Example: Jennie requested an authorization for her child, Luke, at ABC123 Childcare beginning December 1. When Jennie arrived on the first day, the child care provider informed her that the \$100 registration fee was due that day. Jennie was not aware of the registration fee and was not prepared to pay the fee. She immediately contacted her agency worker requesting to change her child care provider. Jennie had not pre-paid the provider and Luke had not attended the provider at all. The agency worker can end the authorization and create a new authorization to a new provider beginning December 1.

The agency worker reminds Jennie of the importance of meeting with the child care provider ahead of time and being sure that she is aware of the full cost of child care.

If the authorization was created to the incorrect provider, regardless of whether a payment was made to the incorrect provider by the parent, see Section 4.5.1 regarding retraction of funds to the incorrect provider.

Process: An agency worker with the Child Care Coordinator profile in CSAW must write the new authorization to the second provider for the current month if the total number of hours authorized to the first provider and second provider are greater than 75 hours per week.

This section last updated 11/01/2019

2.4.9.1 Authorizations in Situations of Hardship

Families experiencing unforeseen circumstances that are no fault of their own and that inhibit them from utilizing the originally authorized child care provider during the current month may be eligible for a new authorization to a different child care provider location during the current month if continuing with the original child care provider would cause a hardship for the family.

Families may be eligible for a second authorization in situations of hardship when the subsidy amount has been loaded to the EBT card in the current month for a previously authorized child care provider if the family's situation meets the criteria of this policy. The request for this additional authorization must be made by the parent within 10 calendar days of the start of the unforeseen circumstance.

In order to be eligible for an authorization in this situation, the Wisconsin Shares Assistance Group must meet one (1) of the following situations and the situation must create a legitimate and unforeseen hardship for the child or children to continue to attend the current child care provider location for the remainder of the current month:

- The child is relocated from his or her current residence so the family can escape domestic abuse and it is not reasonable to travel to the current child care provider location.
- The child is ill and is not able to attend his or her current child care provider due to that illness, but another child care provider will allow the child to attend child care at his or her facility. This may be a chronic or temporary illness not otherwise qualified under a disability ~~special-needs~~.
- There is alleged abuse or neglect of the child by his or her current child care provider and a complaint has been made to the appropriate certification or licensing agency.
- The child is expelled from his or her current child care provider for behavior issues.

- The ~~child's special~~ needs of a child with a disability are no longer being met by the current child care provider (for example, a teacher who supported the child has suddenly left the child care facility).
- The safety of the parent or child is threatened by remaining at the current child care provider.
- The family is evicted from their current home and it is not reasonable to travel to the current child care provider location.
- A formerly homeless family finds stable housing and it is unreasonable to use the current child care provider.
- There are sudden changes in a parent's approved activity location which makes the use of the current child care provider **unreasonable**.
- There are sudden changes in a parent's approved activity schedule and the provider's hours of operation do not accommodate the family's need for child care.
- One (1) parent passes away or unexpectedly leaves a two-parent or multi-generational Wisconsin Shares Assistance Group and the current child care provider either does not have the facility capacity to handle the additional hours of the family's child care need, or the hours of operation of the child care facility no longer supports the family's need for child care.
- There is damage to the child care facility that creates an unsafe environment for children, such that it is impossible for them to continue to attend the same provider.
- The child care provider is temporarily closed and is located within an area affected by a state of emergency that has been declared by the Governor.
- The child care provider has a voluntary, unforeseen permanent closure and the family needs to attend an alternate provider.
- The provider does not allow the child(ren) to attend due to circumstances that are outside of the parent's control (for example, the center has reached their regulatory capacity or provider-to-child ratios).
- The child care provider's regulation is suspended or revoked by a regulatory authority.

Upon request, DCF Wisconsin Shares policy staff may approve limited situations of hardship at their discretion. Local agencies that receive a request which does not fall under the criteria above but is demonstrated to be a hardship on the family, should email the Wisconsin Shares Subsidy and Technical Assistance staff for review and approval or denial.

There may be extenuating circumstances that prevent a parent from making a timely hardship authorization request that results in the parent notifying the local agency and

requesting a hardship authorization beyond the 10-calendar day reporting timeframe. Such situations may include, but are not limited to, a domestic abuse situation, a child care provider losing their license/certification, or a family being evicted from their home. Agency workers must review each case individually to determine the circumstance for the late hardship authorization request and to determine whether it should be approved or denied. Agency workers may approve a hardship authorization that is requested beyond the 10-calendar day reporting requirement on a case-by-case basis.

In situations where a hardship authorization is granted due to circumstances regarding the child (for example, the child is expelled from his or her current child care provider for behavior issues), all other children on the case may also change providers as long as those children were attending the same child care center as the child receiving the hardship authorization.

The local agency will determine the duration of the subsequent authorization for the new child care provider location. Subsequent authorizations do not need to be for a full month depending on the circumstance and point in time in the current month that the hardship is requested.

Any case reviewed for a possible hardship authorization must be documented on the CSAW Hardship page. Local agencies **must** utilize this page for each situation that is reviewed. When the local agency denies a hardship request, a Hardship Denial Notice is system-generated and mailed to the parent. The Hardship Denial Notice includes the reason(s) for the denial as well as appeal rights to the decision. A hardship authorization must also be documented in case comments (see 2.4.1).

Note: Agencies must send cases involving foster or other placement children to the Child Care Subsidy and Technical Assistance Line for approval or denial. The Child Care Subsidy and Technical Assistance staff will make hardship decisions for these cases.

These processes must still be followed when the provider is located within an area affected by a state of emergency that has been declared by the Governor.

This section last updated 04/05/2021 ~~11/01/2019~~

2.4.10 Provider Closure Policy

Parents may utilize their subsidy to pay child care providers during a one-week shutdown once per calendar year. If the parent needs to attend a different provider during the one-week shutdown, the parent must request another authorization.

This section last updated 10/01/2018

2.4.11 Excessive Unexplained Absences

Wisconsin Shares subsidies assist eligible, low-income parents with the cost of child care while they participate in an approved activity. Excessive unexplained absence is an

indicator that the agency worker needs to review the authorization to determine if the level of child care need is accurate.

Child care providers are required to report to the local agency when a child in subsidized care has not attended within the previous 30 calendar days (see 4.8.4).

Upon receiving the notification from the child care provider, the local agency must make multiple attempts to contact the parent before ending the authorization. The local agency must document these attempts in **CSAW case** comments (see 2.4.1).

This section last updated 04/05/2021 ~~11/01/2019~~

2.4.12 Authorizations and Case Transfers

If a case is transferred to another Income Maintenance (IM) agency, any authorizations for that case will be systematically ended at the end of that month. There is an exception for cases transferred within Northern and WREA consortia: if a case is transferred between two (2) Northern agencies, or two (2) WREA agencies, the authorizations for that case will not systematically end.

This section last updated 01/31/2018

2.5 Subsidy Payments

Wisconsin Shares subsidies assist eligible, low-income parents with the cost of child care while they participate in approved activities (see 1.3.8 and 1.3.9). The CSAW system considers several factors in order to determine the amount of subsidy for which a parent may be eligible. **The subsections within this section describe the factors that are used to determine the copayment and subsidy amounts.**

Copayment

The copayment is the amount that is reduced from the subsidy amount based on household income and family size (see 2.5.1). CSAW subtracts the copayment from the parent's overall subsidy amount prior to loading funds to the MyWICChildCare card.

Note: The parent is responsible to pay the difference between their subsidy amount and the provider's price, which may be more than the copayment reduced from the subsidy amount (~~see 2.6~~). **This is usually referred to as the "Parent Share" (see 2.6).**

Subsidy Amount

The subsidy amount is the final amount of funds that are loaded to the parent's MyWICChildCare card. CSAW considers multiple factors in order to determine the subsidy amount, including the provider's location county, the number of subsidized hours of care, the provider's regulation category, and the provider's YoungStar rating (see 2.5.4).

This section last updated 04/05/2021 ~~10/01/2018~~

2.5.1 Copayments

CSAW determines the copayment that will be subtracted from the subsidy amount based on the:

- Assistance Group's Federal Poverty Level (FPL) (based on family size and income),
- Number of children in subsidized child care, and
- Sum of subsidized hours for all children in the Assistance Group (AG).

CSAW subtracts a portion of the AG's copayment from each child's subsidy based on the percentage of total subsidized hours that each child has at each location. The total copayment assessed for each child will not exceed 152 hours per month per child, even if the child attends multiple providers.

See the current Wisconsin Shares Copayment Schedule.

The department revises the Copayment Schedule annually based on changes made to the FPL (published annually in the Federal Register). The Copayment Schedule lists monthly FPL levels in 5% increments (e.g., 70%, 75%, 80%, etc.) and assigns an hourly copayment according to an AG's FPL. When the AG's FPL is between two (2) levels, CSAW will use the lower of the two (2) FPL percentages. If the family is in the Exit Copayment Period (see 2.5.1.1), CSAW will use the family's actual FPL and will not round to the lower FPL percentage.

Example 1: Sean's income places his family at 164% FPL. Sean's copayment per hour will use the copayment for the 160% FPL copayment level.

Process: CSAW determines the family's copayment per hour based on the family's FPL and the number of children in care with a Regular copayment type (see 2.5.2). CSAW then multiplies the copayment per hour by the sum of subsidized child care hours for the AG for the month. The maximum family copayment will not exceed 760 monthly subsidized hours.

CSAW subtracts a portion of the AG's copayment from each child with a Regular copayment type (see 2.5.2). The portion of the copayment applied to each child is capped at 152 hours per month per child. If a child has two (2) or more authorizations in a month to different child care providers, the child's portion of the AG's copayment is subtracted from each of the authorizations based on the number of subsidized hours at each location (see Example 3 below).

Children with a Reduced copayment type (see 2.5.2) are calculated separately from the family copayment. CSAW will not apply an hourly copayment to children with a \$0 copayment. For children with a Minimal copayment type (65% FPL), CSAW will use the

65% FPL copayment per hour for one (1) child multiplied by the individual child's subsidized hours (capped at 152 hours per month).

Example 2: Juniper's income places her family at 115% FPL. Juniper's two (2) children, Fantasia and Kyle, attend Sally's Day Care Center for 20 hours per week each. Juniper's total family copayment per month is \$113.10.

The calculation details are:

Copayment Per Hour for 115% FPL: \$0.65

Fantasia: 20 hours per week x 4.348125 weeks per month = 86.96 (87 monthly hours)

Kyle: 20 hours per week x 4.348125 weeks per month = 86.96 (87 monthly hours)

Total Monthly Family Hours: 87 + 87 = 174

Total Family Copayment: \$0.65 x 174 = \$113.10

In the summer, Juniper's two (2) children begin attending 40 hours per week each. Juniper's full-time total family copayment is \$197.60.

The calculation details are:

Copayment Per Hour for 115% FPL: \$0.65

Fantasia: 40 hours per week x 4.348125 weeks per month = 173.92 (174 monthly hours, capped at 152 monthly hours)

Kyle: 40 hours per week x 4.348125 weeks per month = 173.92 (174 monthly hours, capped at 152 monthly hours)

Capped Monthly Subsidized Hours: 152 + 152 = 304

Total Family Copayment: \$0.65 x 304 = \$197.60

Example 3: Monique works 30 hours per week on second shift. Monique's income places her family at 75% FPL. Monique has two (2) children, Genesis and Jasmine. Genesis attends Lil' Buddies for 28 hours per week. Jasmine attends Jumpin' Around in the afternoon for 8 hours per week, and Lil' Buddies in the evenings for 28 hours per week. Monique's total family copayment is \$63.02 per month.

The calculation details are:

Copayment Per Hour for 75% FPL: \$0.23

Genesis: 28 hours per week x 4.348125 weeks per month = 121.75 (122 monthly hours)

Jasmine: 8 hours per week x 4.348125 = 34.79 (35 monthly hours)

28 hours per week x 4.348125 = 121.75 (122 monthly hours)

35 + 122 = 157 monthly hours (capped at 152 monthly hours)

Total Monthly Family Hours: 122 + 152 = 274 monthly hours (279 uncapped monthly hours)

Family Copayment: \$0.23 x 274 = \$63.02

The copayment distribution is:

Genesis: 122 monthly hours ÷ 279 monthly uncapped hours = 43.73% of copayment
Copayment distribution: \$63.02 x .4373 = \$27.56

Jasmine Authorization for Jumpin' Around: 35 monthly hours ÷ 279 monthly uncapped hours = 12.54% of copayment

Copayment distribution: \$63.02 x .1254 = \$7.91

Jasmine Authorization for Lil' Buddies: 122 monthly hours ÷ 279 monthly uncapped hours = 43.73% of copayment

Copayment distribution: \$63.02 x .4373 = \$27.56

This section last updated 03/01/2019

2.5.1.1 Calculating the Copayment in the Exit Copayment Period

During the Exit period (see 2.5.3.3), the copayment is determined according to a different methodology. CSAW still uses the copayment per hour, but it is set at the 200% FPL copayment level. After the total hourly copayment amount has been determined, CSAW adds an additional family copayment to the total hourly copayment amount. The additional family copayment is determined by increasing the family's copayment \$1 for every \$3 by which the Assistance Group's (AG's) gross income exceeds 200% FPL.

Example: Renee's income places her family at 207% FPL at renewal in April. Based on that information, Renee's family is determined to be in the Exit period. Renee's two (2) children, Suki and Sahara, attend Joe's Quality Day Care for 15 hours per week each. Renee's total family copayment is \$233.72.

The calculation details are:

Copayment Per Hour for 200% FPL: \$1.46

Suki: 15 hours per week x 4.348125 weeks per month = 65.22 (66 monthly hours)

Sahara: 15 hours per week x 4.348125 weeks per month = 65.22 (66 monthly hours)

Total Monthly Family Hours: 66 + 66 = 132 monthly hours

Initial Copayment: \$1.46 x 132 = \$192.72

Additional Copayment (for Exit period): \$41 (207% FPL for an AG Size of 3)

Total Family Copayment: \$192.72 + \$41 = \$233.72

Renee receives a raise in December that places her family's income at 212% FPL. Renee's total family copayment increases to \$244.56.

The calculation details are:

Copayment Per Hour for 200% FPL: \$1.46

Total Monthly Family Hours: 132

Initial Copayment: \$1.46 x 132 = \$192.72

(This part stays the same, as Renee has not requested additional hours)

Additional Copayment (for Exit period): \$71 (212% FPL for an AG Size of 3)

Total Family Copayment: \$192.72 + \$71 = \$263.72

2.5.1.2 Assuming the Full Cost of Care

A parent assumes the full cost of care when the parent's copayment equals or exceeds the subsidy amount. A parent may assume the full cost of care during any Copayment Period; however, most parents will assume the full cost of care at some point during the Exit Copayment Period.

Agency workers must not end eligibility or end the authorization due to the parent(s) assuming the full cost of care. An Assistance Group (AG) can retain eligibility as long as they continue to meet financial and nonfinancial requirements. The authorization must remain in place because a family may need to request more hours or report a decrease in income at any time. However, a parent may request that the local agency end the authorization at any time, and the local agency must comply with this request.

Example 1 (No Subsidy Amount): At her annual renewal in August, Ebony's income places her family at 225% FPL. Ebony has one (1) child, Aiesha, who is 4 years old and attends Bundles of Fun in Brown County for 10 hours per week. Bundles of Fun is a Licensed Group provider.

The calculation details are:

Copayment Per Hour for 200% FPL: \$2.34

Aiesha: 10 hours per week x 4.348125 weeks per month = 43.48 (44 monthly hours)

Total Monthly Family Hours: 44

Initial Copayment: \$2.34 x 44 = \$102.96

Additional Copayment (for Exit period): \$117 (225% FPL for an AG Size of 2)

Total Family Copayment: \$102.96 + \$117 = \$219.96

Brown County Licensed Group Hourly Maximum for 4yo: \$4.48

Initial subsidy amount (prior to any reductions): \$4.48 x 44 hours per month = \$197.12

In this example, Ebony's total family copayment (\$219.96) exceeds her initial subsidy amount (\$197.12). As CSAW subtracts the total family copayment from the subsidy amount prior to loading the funds, no funds would be loaded to Ebony's EBT card.

Example 2 (Small Subsidy Amount): At her annual renewal in August, Sarafina's income places her family at 225% FPL. Sarafina has one (1) child, LaTanya. LaTanya is 4 years old and attends Reading Rainbow in Dane County for 10 hours per week. Reading Rainbow is a Licensed Group provider.

The calculation details are:

Copayment Per Hour for 200% FPL: \$2.34

LaTanya: 10 hours per week x 4.348125 weeks per month = 43.48 (44 monthly hours)

Total Monthly Family Hours: 44

Initial Copayment: $\$2.34 \times 44 = \102.96

Additional Copayment (for Exit period): \$117 (225% FPL for an AG Size of 2)

Total Family Copayment: \$219.96

Dane County Licensed Group Hourly Maximum for 4yo: \$5.79

Initial subsidy amount (prior to any reductions): $\$5.79 \times 44 = \254.76

In this example, the initial subsidy amount (\$254.76) is \$34.80 more than the total family copayment (\$219.96). The \$34.80 would be loaded to Sarafina's EBT card. Sarafina will remain eligible in CWW due to continuing to meet financial and nonfinancial requirements, and her authorization must remain in place (unless Sarafina requests that the agency worker end the authorization).

This section last updated 03/01/2019

2.5.2 Copayment Types

The Wisconsin Shares copayment types are as follows:

- **Regular:** The Regular copayment code will base the copayment on the actual income and family size, and the number of children in subsidized child care. This copayment code is used when a family does not qualify for a \$0 or Minimal Copayment Type.
- **Reduced Copayment Types:**
 - **\$0 Copayment Types:**
 - **Foster:** The Foster copayment code applies \$0 copayment reduction to the subsidy amount. This copayment code is used for foster care, subsidized guardianships, and interim caretakers.
 - **Kinship:** The Kinship copayment code applies \$0 copayment reduction to the subsidy amount. This copayment code is used for children who are residing with a relative under a court-ordered placement (with or without the Kinship Care payment).
 - **Learnfare:** The Learnfare copayment code applies \$0 copayment reduction to the subsidy amount. This copayment is used for teen parents participating in the Learnfare program due to their custodial parent participating in Wisconsin Works (W-2).
 - **Minimal Copayment Types (Based on 65% Federal Poverty Level [FPL]):**
 - **Non-Court Ordered Kinship:** The Non-Court Ordered Kinship copayment code applies a copayment that is based on 65% FPL instead of the placement family's actual income level. This copayment code is used when children are residing with a relative and there is no court order for the child's placement.

- **Teen Parent:** The Teen Parent copayment code applies a copayment that is based on 65% FPL instead of the family's actual income level. This copayment code is used for teen parents under the age of 20 years old who are enrolled in high school or its equivalent.
- **W-2 Employed:** The W-2 Employed copayment code applies a copayment based on 65% FPL instead of the family's actual income level. It is used for W-2 participants who move from a W-2 employment position (Community Service Job (CSJ), W-2 Transition (W-2 T), or Trial Employment Match Program (TEMP) placement) to regular employment.

If a family is within their eligibility period, the agency worker must not apply any copayment type change that would increase the family's copayment per hour until the next annual eligibility renewal. The agency worker must enter the new copayment type in CSAW with the day following the next renewal date entered as the Begin Date.

Example 1: Timothy's household consists of himself, his teenage child, Kurt, and Kurt's baby, Cameron. Timothy is a participant in W-2. The household is determined eligible for Wisconsin Shares in April and Cameron's authorization uses a Learnfare copayment type (\$0). Then in June, Timothy discontinues participation in W-2, meaning that Cameron is no longer eligible for the Learnfare copayment type; his new copayment type would be Teen Parent (65%). Since the change from the Learnfare copayment type to the Teen Parent copayment type causes an increase in the copayment amount, the new copayment type shall not take effect until Timothy completes his next annual renewal.

Example 2: Melody and Jennifer are married and have a foster child, Joshua, placed with them. They are determined eligible for Wisconsin Shares in April, and Joshua's authorization uses the Foster copayment type (\$0). In October, Melody and Jennifer adopt Joshua. Since the change from the Foster copayment type to the Regular copayment type causes an increase in the copayment amount, the new copayment type shall not take effect until Melody and Jennifer complete their next annual renewal.

This section last updated 10/01/2018

2.5.3 Copayment Periods

After CARES Worker Web (CWW) determines initial eligibility for the Assistance Group (AG), CSAW will assign the AG to one (1) of three (3) Copayment Periods based on their Federal Poverty Level (FPL). CSAW will reassign the AG's Copayment Period at each annual renewal, according to their FPL at that time.

CSAW will automatically determine which Copayment Period to assign the AG based on the AG's FPL and point in the eligibility period (application, ongoing, or renewal). Agency workers must continue to enter reported changes that may affect eligibility or the

authorization into CWW and CSAW; CSAW will automatically determine whether the changes entered should affect the copayment per hour. The three (3) Copayment Periods are:

Copayment Period	Assistance Group FPL	Copayment Per Hour Status During 12-month Eligibility Period
Copayment Stabilization	Below 190% FPL	Will not increase
Gradual Phase Out (GPO)	190% - 199% FPL	May increase up to 200% FPL copayment level
Exit	200%+ FPL	May increase

This section last updated 10/01/2018

2.5.3.1 Copayment Stabilization

If an Assistance Group’s income is below 190% FPL at any time, CSAW will assign the Assistance Group (AG) to the Copayment Stabilization period. During the Copayment Stabilization period, CSAW will not allow increases in income to increase the AG’s copayment per hour until the AG’s next eligibility renewal. Once CSAW has assigned the AG to the Copayment Stabilization period, CSAW will not assign the AG to a different Copayment Period until the AG’s next eligibility renewal.

Example: At application in June, Brad’s income places his AG at 75% FPL. In September, Brad receives a \$1.00/hour raise, which brings his AG’s income up to 90% FPL. CSAW will not increase Brad’s copayment per hour above the 75% FPL copayment level until his next renewal.

This section last updated 10/01/2018

2.5.3.2 Gradual Phase Out (GPO)

If the Assistance Group’s income is at or above 190% FPL but below 200% FPL at renewal, CSAW will assign the Assistance Group (AG) to the Gradual Phase Out Copayment Period. During the Gradual Phase Out period, CSAW will increase an AG’s copayment per hour starting the month after the agency worker enters the new income in CARES Worker Web (CWW), but the AG’s copayment will not exceed the 200% FPL copayment level at any time.

Example: Sari’s income places her AG at 193% FPL at renewal in July. CSAW assigns Sari’s AG to the Gradual Phase Out period. In October, Sari starts a new job. Her new income places her AG at 205% FPL. Sari’s copayment per hour will increase from the 190% FPL copayment level to the 200% FPL copayment level. CSAW will not increase her copayment beyond the 200% FPL copayment level and her AG will remain in the Gradual Phase Out period, regardless of subsequent increases in income, until the next annual renewal.

This section last updated 10/01/2018

2.5.3.3 Exit

If the Assistance Group's income is at or above 200% FPL at renewal, CSAW will assign the Assistance Group (AG) to the Exit Copayment Period. During the Exit period, CSAW will increase the AG's copayment starting the month after the agency worker enters the new income in CARES Worker Web (CWW). CSAW determines the copayment during the Exit period by adding an additional family copayment to the total hourly copayment for the 200% FPL copayment level (see 2.5.1.1). CSAW will continue to increase the AG's additional family copayment following subsequent income increases until the family assumes the full cost of care (see 2.5.1.2).

Example 1: Gloria's income places her AG at 212% FPL at renewal in July. CSAW assigns Gloria's AG to the Exit period and sets the AG's copayment ~~per hour at the~~ based on 212% FPL copayment level. In September, Gloria starts a new job, which places her AG at 218% FPL. The AG's copayment increases ~~to the~~ based on 218% FPL copayment level. In March, Gloria receives a raise for passing her 6-month probationary period, and her AG's income increases to 220% FPL. The AG's copayment increases ~~to the~~ based on 220% FPL copayment level.

Copayments may increase during the Exit period. When income remains above 200% FPL, the copayment adjusts accordingly whenever income increases or decreases. Copayments do not remain at a lower level when the AG is in the Exit period as long as income remains above 200%. If an income decrease moves the family to the Gradual Phase Out (GPO) or Copayment Stabilization period, the AG's copayment will decrease to the lower level and will remain capped at the lower level (as applicable for GPO) until the AG's next renewal (see 2.5.3.4).

Example 2: Paula's income places her AG at 216% FPL at renewal in August. CSAW assigns Paula's AG to the Exit period and sets the AG's copayment based on 216% FPL. In October, Paula's income decreases to 205% FPL. CSAW decreases the copayment based on 205% FPL. In December, Paula's income increases to 225% FPL. CSAW increases Paula's copayment based on 225% FPL. Paula's copayment does not remain at the 205% FPL copayment level because the copayment is reactionary in the Exit period.

This section last updated 04/05/2021 10/01/2018

2.5.3.4 Moving Between Copayment Periods

CSAW will only assign an Assistance Group (AG) to a higher Copayment Period at the AG's annual renewal. If an AG's FPL decreases, CSAW will reassign the AG to a lower Copayment Period at any time without regard to the renewal date but will not reassign the AG to a higher Copayment Period until their next renewal, regardless of subsequent increases in income.

Example 1 (GPO – Stabilization): At renewal in February, Jack’s income places his AG at 192% FPL. CSAW assigns Jack’s AG to the Gradual Phase Out period. In April, Jack’s employer cuts his work hours to part-time. The resulting income loss places his AG at 115% FPL. CSAW determines Jack’s copayment per hour at the 115% FPL copayment level and reassigns Jack’s AG to the Copayment Stabilization period. Even if Jack’s work hours increase back to full-time, Jack’s AG will remain in the Copayment Stabilization period at the 115% FPL copayment level until his next annual renewal.

Example 2 (Exit – GPO): LaQuisa’s income places her AG at 205% FPL at renewal in October. CSAW assigns LaQuisa’s AG to the Exit period. In November, LaQuisa starts a new job. Her new income places her AG at 192% FPL. CSAW decreases LaQuisa’s copayment per hour to the 190% FPL copayment level and reassigns LaQuisa’s AG to the Gradual Phase Out period. If LaQuisa’s income increases after this, CSAW will increase her copayment per hour. However, CSAW will not reassign her AG to the Exit period and will not increase her copayment per hour beyond the 200% FPL copayment level until her next renewal.

Example 3 (Exit – Stabilization): At renewal in July, Mai Thao’s income places her AG at 206% FPL. CSAW assigns Mai Thao’s AG to the Exit period. In September, Mai Thao loses her job, and her AG’s income decreases to \$0. Mai Thao’s worker offers her the Approved Activity Search period (ACTS), which she accepts. CSAW reduces Mai Thao’s copayment per hour to the 65% FPL copayment level and reassigns Mai Thao’s AG to the Stabilization period. In November, Mai Thao starts a new job, and her AG’s income increases to 210% FPL. Mai Thao remains in the Copayment Stabilization period, and her copayment remains at the 65% FPL copayment level until her next renewal.

This section last updated 10/01/2018

2.5.4 Subsidy Calculation

The variables as described below are components of the subsidy calculation. When these factors change, the subsidy amount can also change.

- The family’s Federal Poverty Level (FPL), which is based on the Assistance Group (AG) size and household income;
- The AG’s Copayment Period (see 2.5.3);
- Monthly Authorization hours: The average weekly authorized hours, capped at 35 hours (the full-time cap), converted to a monthly number, plus School Closed Hours;
- Copayment Type (see 2.5.2);
- Capped subsidy: The subsidy is capped at the lowest of the following three (3) amounts.
 - Initial Hourly Amount;

- Provider Price; and
- Monthly maximum from the Wisconsin Shares County and Tribal Subsidy Maximum Rates (see 2.4.5).
- Above Full-Time Hours: The number of average weekly hours above 50 and up to 75 per week, converted to a monthly number. This additional amount is added after the capped subsidy comparison.
- Adjustments: YoungStar Quality Adjustment (see 2.5.4.1 ~~3.4.2.5~~) or Out of State Accredited Adjustment (see 2.1.1.4)

For further details on the subsidy calculation, see the CSAW Benefit Calculations User Guide.

This section last updated 04/05/2021 ~~11/01/2019~~

2.5.4.1 YoungStar Quality Adjustments

YoungStar is Wisconsin's child care quality rating and improvement system. Child care facilities are rated on a 1-5 Star scale and only those with a 2 Star or higher rating are eligible for authorizations. The child care program's rating is then used to calculate the YoungStar adjustment amount in the subsidy calculation (see 2.5.4).

The YoungStar quality adjustment amounts are:

- **1 Star Providers:** Not eligible to receive Wisconsin Shares subsidies.
- **2 Star Providers:** Negative 1% of the subsidy amount is deducted from the subsidy amount before it is loaded to the parent's EBT card. This deduction is also used for providers who are not yet rated.
- **3 Star Providers:** No adjustment
- **4 Star Providers:** An additional 15% of the subsidy amount is paid directly to the provider as a quality adjustment.
- **5 Star Providers:** An additional 30% of the subsidy amount is paid directly to the provider as a quality adjustment.

A primary YoungStar adjustment for 4 Star and 5 Star programs is calculated the last business day of the month based on authorizations for the following month and deposited directly in the provider's bank account during the first week of the month. In addition to the primary adjustment for the following month, the end-of-month calculation includes adjustments for any retro authorizations spanning the current or past month(s).

Providers can view YoungStar adjustments that have been deposited using ebtEDGE.com. Providers can also view a list of YoungStar adjustments identified by month and individual child in the Child Care Provider Portal

2.5.5 Changes in Subsidy Amounts during the Eligibility Period

The subsidy amount will remain stable during the 12-month eligibility period with a few exceptions.

1. CWW Changes

The following are changes the agency worker makes in CWW that could impact the subsidy amount.

Changes Related to the Case

- **Change in Assistance Group (AG) or Income:** A change to the case's Assistance Group composition or income:
 - Can change the case's Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for the next month's calculations, which may or may not impact the copayment per hour based on Copayment Period (see 2.5.3).
 - Will not result in a higher Copayment Period.
- **Change in Child Placement Status:** A change in the child's relationship to the parent, such as the adoption of a foster child, will not result in a higher copayment (see 2.5.2) until the next eligibility renewal.

Process: When an agency worker enters changes into CWW, the information will interface with CSAW and the subsidy amount for future months will recalculate. The new subsidy amount will be effective the first day of the month after the change was entered and confirmed in CWW or the first of the recurring month if the change was entered after Adverse Action in CWW. If it is after Adverse Action and the change must take effect the immediately following month in order for CWW to correctly calculate income and AG size and CSAW to correctly calculate the copayment, agency workers must run with dates to ensure the change takes effect for the correct month (see 1.8.4.1).

2. CSAW Changes

The following are changes the agency worker makes in CSAW that could impact the subsidy amount. Before making a change to a child's authorization, see Section 2.4.2.

Changes to Authorizations

- **Change in Subsidized Hours:** A change in subsidized hours for any child, including adding a new authorization, deleting an existing authorization, or ending an authorization (either by allowing the authorization to end systematically or by the agency worker manually ending the authorization):

- Can impact the Initial Hourly Amount (see 2.5.4); the family copayment amount (see 2.5.1); the copayment distribution among children; and the Provider Price Type used in the subsidy calculation (i.e., full- or part-time).
- Will not impact the family’s copayment per hour.

Note: If the child’s copayment has already reached the 152 hour monthly cap (see 2.5.1), no additional copayment will be charged.

- **Change in Providers:** A change in providers will impact the provider price that is used in the subsidy calculation. If the new provider is in a different county/tribe than the previous provider, the subsidy calculation will use the Maximum Rates for the new county/tribe (see 2.4.5).

Changes Related to a Child

- **Change in Child Age:** A change in the child’s age will not change the age bracket used for Provider Price or Maximum Rates (see 2.4.5) until the next eligibility renewal.
- **Special Needs Disability Inclusion Rates:** The expiration of a child’s ~~Special Needs~~ Inclusion Rate form (see 2.4.7.1) will not result in the removal of an “Override (~~Special Need Disability~~)” Price. Unless the family indicates that they no longer need the override price, the override price for the child to attend that particular provider will continue until the next eligibility renewal.

Changes Related to the Provider

- **New Provider Prices:** When a child care provider submits new prices, the agency worker must enter the new prices into CSAW and the subsidy calculation will use the new provider’s price for the next month’s calculations. For information about entering new Provider Prices, see the CSAW Child Care Provider Screens User Guide.
- **Provider Discounts:** When a child care provider gives a family a discounted price for an ongoing authorization, the agency worker must apply the discounted price to authorizations as of the first of the next month, and the subsidy calculation will use the discounted price instead of the provider’s regular price. For information about entering a Provider Price discount, see the CSAW Authorizations User Guide.
- **Provider YoungStar Rating Changes:** If a provider’s YoungStar rating increases from a 2 star rating, the removal of the negative adjustment to the family’s subsidy will be applied at the beginning of the next month. If a provider’s YoungStar rating decreases to a 2 star rating, it will not result in a negative adjustment to the family’s subsidy until the next renewal. Changes in YoungStar ratings can result in a decrease or increase to the provider’s YoungStar incentive as of the effective date of the rating change.

- **Provider Regulation Changes:** A change in the provider’s regulation category, such as a change from certified to licensed or vice versa, can affect the provider’s category that is used in the subsidy calculation at the beginning of the next month.

Note: For information about how changes in Licensing/Certification can affect the authorization, please see Changes in Licensing/Certification – Impact on Other Child Care Programs (DCF-P-5271) located online on the Child Care User Guides page of the DCF Internet.

3. Departmental Mass Changes

The department makes the following changes that could impact the subsidy amount.

Federal Poverty Level and/or Copayment Schedule

The annual updates to the FPLs used in eligibility determination and copayment calculation:

- **Can** result in a change to the family's FPL level and resulting copayment per hour, and/or the family moving to a lower copayment period as of the effective date of the annual updates.
- **Cannot** result in the family moving to a higher copayment period.

Maximum Rates

An update to the Wisconsin Shares County and Tribal Subsidy Maximum Rates can impact the Maximum Rates (monthly maximum and hourly maximum) used for the subsidy calculation (see 2.4.5) as of the effective date of the new Maximum Rates.

Note: New FPL numbers and Maximum Rates are published with an effective date of the first of the following month.

This section last updated 04/05/2021 ~~03/01/2019~~

2.5.6 Subsidy Availability

The Wisconsin Shares subsidy is loaded the night before the first day of the following month. When an authorization is written during a current month, the subsidy is **usually** loaded to the EBT card the night the authorization was written.

The subsidy is available for use up to 90 calendar days from the date the funds were loaded to the parent’s EBT Card. Any amount not expended by the ninetieth day will be returned to the state.

This section last updated 04/05/2021 ~~01/31/2017~~

2.6 Parent Share

Wisconsin Shares **is intended** **exists** to help low-income parents with the cost of child care, and is not intended to cover the full cost of child care. A parent may choose a child care provider whose price is higher than the total Wisconsin Shares subsidy amount. The parent has the responsibility to know and pay the provider the difference between the Wisconsin Shares subsidy amount and the provider price. This balance is referred to as the “parent share.”

Providers are required to have a written payment agreement with the parent (see 3.4.3.3). Parents should compare this agreement that shows the provider's price to their subsidy notices that show their monthly subsidy amount to understand their out-of-pocket cost.

Example: At her annual renewal in September, Destiny's income places her family at 175% FPL. Destiny has two (2) children, Laylah and Malik, who attend Smiles R Us in Dunn County for 25 hours per week each. Laylah is 4 years old and Malik is 2 years old. Smiles R Us is a Licensed Group center.

Destiny is responsible for paying the provider the difference between the subsidy amount and the amount the provider actually charges. Destiny's monthly subsidy amount for both children is \$679.07 and the provider's actual price for both children as recorded in CSAW is \$1,478.38, so $\$1,478.38 - \$679.07 = \$799.31$. Destiny can expect to pay a total “parent share” of \$799.31 to the provider for the month. The provider may choose to charge Destiny less than their listed provider price, but this is between the provider and Destiny to work out.

The calculation details are:

Copayment Per Hour for 175% FPL: \$1.24

Laylah's Monthly Hours: 25 hours per week x 4.348125 weeks per month = 108.70 (109) hours per month

Malik's Monthly Hours: 25 hours per week x 4.348125 weeks per month = 108.70 (109) hours per month

Total Family Hours: 109 + 109 = 218

Total Family Copayment: \$1.24 x 218 = \$270.32

Amount distributed to each child: \$135.16 (50% of the sum is applied to each child because each are enrolled for the same number of hours)

Laylah's Authorization: 109 hours per month

Dunn County Licensed Group Hourly Maximum for 4yo: \$4.14

Initial subsidy amount: \$4.14 x 109 hours per month = \$451.26

Monthly Maximum for Licensed Group for 4yo in Dunn County: \$630.05

Monthly Provider Price for 4yo at Smiles R Us: \$165/week x 4.348125 = \$717.45

Laylah's Subsidy Amount after Copayment: \$451.26 - \$135.16 = \$316.10

Expected Parent Share for Laylah: \$717.45 - \$316.10 = \$401.35

Malik's Authorization: 109 hours per month
Dunn County Licensed Group Hourly Rate for 2yo: \$4.57
Initial subsidy amount: \$4.57 x 109 hours per month = \$498.13
Monthly Agency Ceiling for Licensed Group for 2yo in Dunn County: \$695.49
Monthly Provider Price for 2yo at Smiles R Us: \$175/week x 4.348125 = \$760.93
Malik's Subsidy Amount after Copayment: \$498.13 - \$135.16 = \$362.97
Expected Parent Share for Malik: \$760.93 – \$362.97 = \$397.96

This section last updated 04/05/2021 03/01/2019

2.7 Authorization Correspondence

2.7.1 Parent Authorization Notices

Eligible parents with completed authorizations will receive a Quarterly Subsidy Authorization Notice which contains three (3) months of detailed authorization information. The authorization notice contains the following detailed information:

- Child's name;
- Date of birth;
- FIS Child ID;
- Child care provider name, provider number and location number;
- FIS provider ID;
- Monthly authorization effective periods;
- Monthly authorized hours; and
- Monthly Wisconsin Shares subsidy amount.

The Quarterly Subsidy Authorization Notice will be mailed approximately 10 calendar days before the beginning of the next quarter, as follows:

- **First Quarter:** Mailed approximately December 20 for the months of January, February, March.
- **Second Quarter:** Mailed approximately March 20 for the months of April, May, June.
- **Third Quarter:** Mailed approximately June 20 for the months of July, August, September.
- **Fourth Quarter:** Mailed approximately September 20 for the months of October, November, December.

The Quarterly Subsidy Authorization Notice also provides a forecast of the next 12 months indicating the months for which an authorization is in place.

When authorizations are updated after the notice cutoff date, approximately 10 calendar days before the end of the month, but before the last business day of the month, an updated quarterly authorization notice will be sent.

Example 1: After the first quarter notice was mailed on December 20, on January 15 there is a change to the authorization for the month of February. An updated quarterly authorization notice will be mailed on January 20.

Example 2: The first quarter notice was mailed on December 20 and after January 20 (10 days before the end of the month), there is a change to the authorization for the month of February. An updated quarterly authorization notice will be generated the day of the authorization change.

Example 3: An authorization is in place from January through December, but in January, the agency worker takes action to change the end of the authorization to August 31. The second-quarter notice will include that change.

Authorization Ending Language

When an authorization ends and a new authorization has not been created in CSAW, an updated Quarterly Subsidy Authorization Notice may be mailed to the parent that includes authorization ending language to inform the parent that a future authorization for their child(ren) does not exist.

In scenario 1, the authorization is naturally ending after the February monthly notice cutoff date and no future authorization exists; therefore, an updated quarterly authorization notice with the new authorization ending language will be sent.

Scenario 1:

- On 10/24/17, an authorization is created for 11/1/17 – 3/15/18. The 2017 fourth quarter authorization notice is sent on this date for October, November, and December.
- On 12/20/17, the authorization is still in place for 11/1/17 – 3/15/18. The 2018 first quarter authorization notice is sent on this date for January, February, and March.
- On 2/19/18, the authorization is still in place for 11/1/17 - 3/15/18. No authorization exists after 3/15/18 so the same 2018 first quarter notice is re-sent and now includes the new authorization ending language.

In scenario 2, Wisconsin Shares eligibility is ended in CARES Worker Web (CWW) after the February monthly notice cutoff date; therefore, an updated quarterly notice will be sent with the new authorization ending language.

Scenario 2:

- On 10/27/17, an authorization is created for 11/1/17 – 7/15/18. The 2017 fourth quarter authorization notice is sent on this date for October, November, and December.
- On 12/20/17, the authorization is still in place for 11/1/17 – 7/15/18. The 2018 first quarter authorization notice is sent on this date for January, February, and March.
- On 2/19/18, the authorization is still in place for 11/1/17 - 7/15/18. Batch ACT closes Wisconsin Shares eligibility in CWW and ends the authorization as of 2/28/18. No authorization exists after 2/28/18, so the 2018 first quarter notice is re-sent and now includes the new authorization ending language.

In scenario 3, the authorization ends after the April monthly notice cutoff date and there is no future authorization; therefore, an updated 2018 second quarter notice will be sent and include the new authorization ending language.

Scenario 3:

- On 3/15/18, a backdated authorization is created for 3/1/18 – 7/31/18. The 2018 first quarter notice is sent on this date for January, February, and March.
- On 3/20/18 the authorization is still in place for 3/1/18 – 7/31/18. The quarterly authorization notice is run on this date; therefore, the 2018 second quarter notice is sent out for April, May, and June.
- On 4/20/18, the agency worker changes the authorization to 3/1/18 – 4/30/18. The 2018 first quarter notice and the 2018 second quarter notices were sent out on 3/15/18 and 3/20/18. The authorization ends after the monthly notice run date of 4/20/18 and there is no future authorization, so the same 2018 second quarter notice is re-sent and now includes the new authorization ending language.

In scenario 4, the authorization ends prior to the January monthly notice cutoff date; therefore, no updated quarterly authorization notice will be sent.

Scenario 4:

- On 11/1/17, an authorization is created for 11/15/17 – 1/20/18 and for 3/19/18 – 6/8/18. The 2017 fourth quarter notice is sent on this date for October, November, and December.
- On 12/20/17, the authorization is still in place for 11/15/17 – 1/20/18 and for 3/19/18 – 6/8/18. The quarterly authorization notice is run on this date; therefore, the 2018 first quarter notice for January, February, and March is mailed.
- On 1/22/18, at the parent’s request, the agency worker deletes the 3/19/18 – 6/8/18 authorization. This is the date of the monthly notice run. The authorization ended prior to the monthly notice run and no future authorization exists; therefore, no updated authorization notice will be sent.

Changes can be made to the completed authorizations before or after the scheduled quarterly notices are mailed, but they must be made before the last business day prior

to the authorization month. If they are not made by that day, then the changes must be made using Post-Load Benefit Correction (PLBC) in CSAW.

When a change is made to a current month's authorization or for a past month using PLBC, an updated quarterly authorization notice will be generated that day and will include an additional section listing the details of the change.

This section last updated 08/01/2018

2.7.2 Authorization Information for Child Care Providers

Wisconsin Shares authorization information will be mailed to providers on the last business day of each month. The authorization information letter will contain the following:

- All current and future authorizations;
- Any backdated authorizations added since the last notice was sent; and
- Any authorizations that were deleted or ended by the agency worker or the system, and that were previously listed in an earlier notice.

The letter will indicate when the dates of the authorization have been changed.

The child care Provider Authorization letter does not include payment or authorized hour information. The parent is responsible for discussing the cost of child care, agreed upon payment dates, and hours per week the child will be attending the child care program. The Parent Authorization Notice provides the parent with the subsidy amount for each month and the number of hours that were used in the subsidy calculation. The parent is responsible for initiating payment to the child care provider and knowing the amount of child care that their subsidy will purchase. The parent is responsible for all child care costs that are above the subsidy amount each month.

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