



**Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program**

**Policy Manual – Chapter 2  
Authorizations**

October 30, 2017

Division of Early Care and Education

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## **2.1 Wisconsin Shares Child Care Providers**

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

### **2.1.1 Child Care Provider Regulation**

The Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program only issues authorizations to eligible parents who choose regulated child care. Child care providers must be one of the following:

- Licensed;
- Certified; or
- Operated by a Wisconsin public school board.

#### **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 EBT CSAW.

#### **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.

Local administrative agencies are responsible for certifying child care providers. Once the provider's regulation has been approved, the information is entered into the Wisconsin Child Care Regulatory System (WISCCRS) and populates in EBT CSAW.

#### **2.1.1.2.1 In-Home Certified Child Care Providers**

An in-home child care provider may be either provisionally certified or regularly certified and travel to the child's home to provide care. Certification regulations allow in-home child care providers to care for more than three (3) children who live in the home under the age of 7. No license is required for caring for children in their own home. See Section 2.5.9.3 In-Home Care for 15 or More Hours Per Week for requirements for In-Home Certified Child Care Providers. Once the provider's regulation has been approved, the information is entered into WISCCRS, and populated in EBT CSAW.

#### **2.1.1.3 Public School Programs**

Child care programs that are operated by public school boards must be recorded in WISCCRS by DCF Regional Licensing staff. These programs must continue to submit prices to the local authorization agency to be entered into EBT CSAW. When the Provider Portal is available, the child care provider will be able to report their prices through the Provider Portal. The subsidy rate for public school programs is calculated by using the county maximum licensed group rate 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 non-profits or other organizations that are not the school boards. These programs must be regulated.

**Note:** Parochial or Tribal K-12 schools must be regulated in order to be eligible for authorizations under the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program.

#### **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. These programs must continue to submit prices to the local authorization agency to be entered into EBT CSAW. When the Provider Portal is available, the child care provider will be able to report their prices through the Provider Portal.

The **EBT CSAW subsidy** rate calculation is based on the parent's county of residence. The weekly subsidy ceiling is increased by 10% for accredited out-of-state providers if the accreditation is accepted by YoungStar.

#### **2.1.2 YoungStar Participation or Wisconsin Shares Participation Contract**

Providers must participate in YoungStar or have a current, signed Wisconsin Shares Participation Contract in place for an authorization to be written to their location.

#### **2.1.3 Fingerprint-Based Background Checks**

All child care providers are required to complete a one-time fingerprint-based background check in order for an authorization to be written to their location. The fingerprint requirement is monitored by licensing and certification staff during site visits. When non-compliance is discovered, the child care provider is given 30 days to comply with this requirement, and if not in compliance in 30 days, all authorizations to that location are ended. This requirement applies to all employees who care for children and adult household members who reside at the location where child care is provided and includes:

- Applicants for certification or licensure;
- Currently certified operators and licensees;
- Adult caregivers including employees, assistants and volunteers that are counted in the staff-to-child ratio;
- Adult non-client residents and household members;
- Students at least 18 years old and whose placement is more than 60 days;

- Extended stay visitors at least 18 years old who live on the premises more than 60 days; and
- Adults employed or contracted in a caregiver role in a certified program including any volunteers who provide care and supervision of children on behalf of the operator.

#### **2.1.4 Fidelity Information Services (FIS) Contract**

Regulated providers who are participating in YoungStar must have a signed contract with FIS in order to receive EBT payments from parents who are participating in the Wisconsin Shares program. EBT is the only means of disbursing Wisconsin Shares payments.

#### **2.1.5 Tax Reporting**

All child care providers that receive authorizations for child care under the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program 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. 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.

For tax year 2017, Phase 2 and Phase 3 child care providers will receive a 1099 tax form from FIS and another from DCF; WREA child care providers will receive just one from FIS for the 2017 tax year.

#### **2.1.6 Authorizations for Children Who Live with a Child Care Provider**

The Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program will not issue an authorization to a provider for child care services when the provider is the parent of the child or lives with the child. 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 DCF 201.04(2j). See Section 4.2.2 for additional information on this waiver.



## **2.2 Wisconsin Shares Authorizations**

Child care authorizations are written approval for child care subsidy for a specific child to a specific child care provider and location. 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.**

### **2.2.1 Parental Choice**

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

**However, parents that are** employed by a certified child care provider **are** not eligible for an authorization to the location where the parent is employed. **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 DCF 201.04(2j). See Section 4.2.2 for additional information on this waiver.**

### **2.2.2 Two-Day Time Frame to Issue Authorization**

After eligibility has been confirmed in CWW, the local agency must issue the child care authorization within two (2) business days of completing an authorization assessment, and after the parent has provided the agency with the child care provider information. Any delay in this time frame must be supported by a CWW case comment indicating the reason for the delay.

### **2.2.3 Authorizations at Initial Eligibility**

Once eligibility has been determined, an authorization may begin on the Child Care Request for Assistance (RFA) date, as long as the following requirements are met:

- The child care provider was regulated during that time.
- The child care provider had a YoungStar or Wisconsin Shares Participation Contract in place during **that** time.
- The child care provider was in compliance with fingerprint requirements during that time.

- The child care provider has a signed contract with FIS:
  - If the FIS contact has not been completed, the authorization can be backdated to the RFA date after the FIS contract is complete.
- The child was attending a child care program that met all above requirements.
- The parent provided the necessary authorization assessment information within 30 days of the RFA date.

The authorization may begin on the RFA date, provider regulation date, YoungStar or Wisconsin Shares Participation Contract date, fingerprint compliance date, or date that the child began attending the child care program, whichever of these dates is later.

**Example:** Phil applies for child care on May 15. He completes all of his eligibility requirements and his application is approved on June 8. On June 9, he provides all required approved activity schedules and information for the authorization assessment and he provides the name of the provider location that his children had started attending prior to May 15. The provider was in compliance with the requirements for Wisconsin Shares prior to the RFA date. Eligibility will begin May 1 in CWW, but the authorization in EBT CSAW will begin on May 15.

### **2.2.3.1 Authorizations at Initial Eligibility for Relatives with Court-Ordered Placement and Kinship Payment**

This section applies to relatives with court-ordered placement under Wisconsin Statutes Chapters 48 or 938, or a substantially similar Wisconsin tribal law who also receive the Kinship Care payment.

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

- The child care provider was regulated during that time.

- The child care provider had a YoungStar or Wisconsin Shares Participation Contract in place during that time.
- The child care provider was in compliance with fingerprint requirements during that time.
- The child care provider had a signed contract with FIS:
  - If the FIS contract has not been completed, the authorization can be backdated after the FIS contract is complete.
- The relative provided the necessary authorization assessment information within 30 days of the RFA date.

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

#### 2.2.4 Authorizations for Ongoing Eligibility

If the parent provides all required information to determine eligibility (i.e. verification, interview, and signature), but does not provide the information required to complete the authorization assessment, or does not request an authorization for more than 30 days, then the authorization will only be backdated to the first of the month of the authorization request and the authorization assessment information was received.

**Example 1:** If a parent completes the RFA on May 5 and completes the interactive interview on May 22, signs the application summary and provides the required verification, but does not request an authorization or provide the information needed to complete the authorization assessment until June 10, then the authorization would only be backdated to June 1.

An authorization for a case with ongoing eligibility may be backdated to the first of the month that the request was made and the authorization assessment information was provided, as long as the following requirements are met:

- The child care provider was licensed or certified during that time:
  - Certification may be backdated to the certification application date, but licensuring is never backdated.
- The child care provider had a YoungStar or Wisconsin Shares Participation Contract in place during the backdated period of time.
- The child care provider was in compliance with the fingerprint requirement for the backdated period of time, to be monitored by the regulatory agency.
- The child care provider (if a new provider is selected) has a signed contract with FIS.
- The child was actually attending a child care program that met all above parameters.

The authorization begin date is limited to the provider regulation date, YoungStar or Wisconsin Shares Participation Contract date, fingerprint compliance date, or the date that the child began attending the child care program, whichever is later, when any of these dates are later than the date that the authorization assessment information was received and the parent requested an authorization.

**Example 2:** Phil applied for child care on May 15. He is determined eligible on June 8. Eligibility will begin May 1 in CWW. He provided all of the information to complete the authorization assessment and requested an authorization on July 17. His child care provider met all Wisconsin Shares requirements prior to his request. The authorization in EBT CSAW can be backdated to July 1 or the start date of child care utilization, whichever is later.

**Example 3:** Phil's case was due for a child care renewal in the month of May. The renewal interview was completed on June 30, along with a signature and all required verification. Eligibility re-opened effective June 1 in CWW. Phil needs to request the authorization and provide the necessary authorization assessment information by June 30 in order to have an authorization begin date set for as far back as June 1.

If he does not request an authorization and provide the authorization assessment information by June 30, the authorization can be backdated no further than first of the month in which he requests an authorization and provides all necessary authorization assessment information, or the start date of child care utilization, whichever is later (as long as Phil chooses a provider that is already in compliance with all of the Wisconsin Shares requirements). This could be July, August, September, etc.

### **2.2.5 Security Privileges for Retro Authorizations**

Retro authorizations are those that are backdated further than allowed in Sections 2.2.3 and 2.2.4. Retro authorizations may be written by Child Care Coordinators with additional security privileges attached to their login ID.

Child Care Coordinators may write retro authorizations only in the following circumstances:

- Fair Hearing determinations;
- System issues that delay the request for an authorization; or
- Agency errors;

And within these parameters:

- The child care provider has a signed contract with FIS;
- The child care provider was regulated during that time;
- The child care provider has a YoungStar or Wisconsin Shares Participation Contract in place for the backdated period of time;
- The child care provider was in compliance with the fingerprint requirement for the backdated period of time;
- The parent provided the necessary authorization assessment information; and
- The child was attending a child care program that met all above parameters.

### **2.2.6 Maximum of 75 Authorized Hours Per Week**

A child's total authorized hours cannot exceed 75 hours per week. **This includes a child in two Child Care Assistance Groups and more than one provider.** EBT 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 EBT CSAW may write an authorization for more than 75 hours of child care per week (see Sections 2.2.12 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 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 EBT CSAW.

## 2.2.7 Authorization Assessment

Authorization workers are responsible for gathering enough information to create an authorization that meets the child care needs that will allow parents to engage in their approved activities based on the policy guidance contained in this manual. Parents are required to provide their work or other activity schedule, including specific days and times they are or will be participating in work or another activity. This information must be entered into EBT CSAW. Authorization 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;
- Scheduled school closed hours for school-age children (3 years or older);
- Inclement weather hours during the winter months; and
- Any other factor that affects the family's child care need.

W-2 FEPS do not determine the child care needs for W-2 families, however, a W-2 placement is an approved activity and the authorization worker must consider 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 must not factor into the number of child care hours to be authorized.

### **2.2.7.1 Authorization Comments**

EBT CSAW provides comments boxes on several of the authorization related pages and offers a case comments summary page where all EBT CSAW case comments are displayed. During the authorization assessment, workers are encouraged to use the EBT CSAW comments fields to describe relevant information regarding the authorization, such as:

- An explanation for the length of an authorization, if less than 12 months (why it is only 6 weeks long, is it because it is a school-age child, W-2 activity is ending, etc.).
- Information regarding the child's school schedule (short days on Mondays, or hours of a 3K, 4K or a Head Start program, etc.).
- Notes regarding gaps between activities or sleep time that are covered, (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 about the parent’s work or other activity schedule.
- Notes about the approved activity schedule, including any discrepancy between and the verification and the schedule.

### 2.2.8 Approved Activity Schedules

The 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. If the parent is not requesting authorization hours for a particular activity, the 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 (see Example).

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

- Job A: Gwen works Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. She asks for authorization hours for all three days.
- Job B: Gwen works on Sundays, but does not ask for authorization hours.
- Class A: Gwen attends on Thursday, and asks for authorization hours.
- Class B: Gwen attends on Thursday and Saturday. She asks for authorization hours for Thursday, but not Saturday.

The worker must collect and enter the entire schedules for Job A, Class A and Class B (both Thursday and Saturday). The worker does not need to collect the schedule for Job B.

EBT 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 EBT CSAW. The system analyzes the overlap between the parent’s schedule and the child care need to determine an average weekly amount. The average weekly amount is then multiplied by



4.348125 to get the final monthly authorization. In this way, most fluctuations over the authorization period are accounted for in the final subsidy amount.

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

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

EBT 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.
  - For a three-week rotating schedule, use the week with the most scheduled hours as the fourth week. For example, if week one of the schedule is 20 hours, week two is 45 hours, and week three is 25 hours, enter the week two schedule again as week four.

The parent may provide either their anticipated, 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 EBT 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.

#### **2.2.8.1 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. The authorization worker will determine whether the schedule that the parent provides and the verification correlate when completing the authorization assessment, as required in Section 2.2.7.

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

- Unpaid Lunch Breaks: one hour per eight-hour shift is acceptable

- Other Unpaid Breaks: 30 minutes total per eight-hour shift is acceptable
- 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 authorization worker shall accept the parent's stated schedule and enter it into the Parent Activity Schedule. The questions and answers used to resolve the discrepancy must be documented in EBT CSAW comments at the Parent Activity Schedule page. If after considering each of these items, the discrepancy cannot be resolved or reduced to 10 or fewer hours, the authorization worker shall request further guidance from the Child Care Subsidy and Technical Assistance Staff at [childcare@wisconsin.gov](mailto: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 paystubs indicate that the parent works 40 hours per week. The authorization 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 unpaid 15 minute breaks each day ( $.25 \times 10 = 2.5$  hours).  $40 + 5 + 2.5 = 47.5$  hours. The worker should accept the parent's schedule and proceed with the authorization process.

### **2.2.8.2 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 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 weeks must be provided per Section 2.2.8.

### **2.2.8.3 Authorizations for Self-Employment**

During the first six (6) months that a parent is engaged in a new business, the agency may authorize child care for the hours the parent is engaged in self-employment, up to one full time authorization (50 hours per week). Travel time cannot be added to the 50 hours, but travel time to transport their child to and from child care may be included as long as the authorization does not exceed 50 hours per week. The authorization end date should be set for the last day of the sixth month as a reminder to redetermine the child care need.

A parent may be eligible for a full time authorization for a new instance of self-employment only once every 24 months. Any part of the six-month period for a new self-employment business counts 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 1:** Jonathon is a mechanic and has been operating his business from his home for the past few years. Now, Jonathon wants to close the mechanic shop and start a new business as a handyman. Working as a mechanic and working as a handyman are two different skill sets, use different tools to perform the work, are performed in different work environments and the two businesses do not have the same clientele. This is a new self-employment.

**Example 2:** Rachel is self-employed as a real estate agent and has been offered a contract with Brian Warner Realty and accepts it. Rachel does not need new training or additional licensing, the nature of the work performed has not changed, and the clientele are the same. This is not new self-employment.

If a parent has a child care authorization during their first six (6) months of self-employment, the authorization end date must be the last day of the sixth month. At that time the parent must provide a Self-Employment Income Report Form (SEIRF) that covers the most recent 30 days. See Chapter 1 for Self-Employment Income and Financial Eligibility Verification around income verification for self-employment.

**Example 3:** Tamika begins a new business baking cakes. For the first six (6) months of her new business, she is not required to demonstrate a profit and the child care authorization may be for the number of hours she reports working, up to full time (50 hours per week). After the first six (6) months, Tamika's child care authorization will be based on her monthly adjusted self-employment earnings divided by Wisconsin's minimum wage (\$7.25 per hour).

**Note:** Self-employment as an unregulated child care provider is not allowed as an approved activity for Wisconsin Shares.

#### **2.2.8.4 Authorizations for Ongoing Self-Employment**

After the first six (6) months of a new business being in operation, child care authorizations for self-employment are limited to the number of hours that support employment that produces monthly adjusted self-employment income equivalent to at least Wisconsin's minimum wage.

The monthly adjusted self-employment income divided by the Wisconsin minimum wage equals the maximum number of child care hours that may be authorized for the month. All travel time is already included in the hours allowed under this formula. 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.

The average weekly calculated hours in EBT CSAW for self-employed participants whose businesses have existed for more than six (6) months must be overridden based on the minimum wage calculation. (See EBT CSAW Authorization User Manual for more information).

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 worker needs to use the lesser of the two (2) calculations for the maximum authorization amount.

**Example 1: (Single Parent)** After her first six (6) months in business, Tiffany's cake business has a monthly adjusted income of \$400. Divide 400 by \$7.25 to get 55.17, which is rounded up to 56 hours for the month. If Tiffany will utilize 56 hours for child care, do not add additional hours for travel.

**Example 2: (Single Parent Self-Employed and going to school)** Kenisha has been self-employed for eight (8) months selling cosmetics. Her monthly adjusted income is \$500. Divide \$500 by \$7.25 to get 68.97 hours for the month. Kenisha is also finishing college to get her business degree. She attends school part-time 13 hours per week, and needs 2 hours per week for travel time.  $68.97 + (15 \times 4.348125) = 134.17$  hours for the month. 134.17 is rounded to 135 hours for the month.

**Example 3: (Two-Parent Household-Separate Self-Employed Businesses)** Keisha and Rick are married and have 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 also 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. Since they indicated they do not have overlapping schedules, they do not qualify for an authorization.

**Example 4: (Two-Parent Household Shared Self-Employed Business)** Keisha and Rick share a business selling honey and work the exact same hours. Their monthly adjusted income of \$1,000 is split in half because they are equal partners. Keisha's adjusted income of \$500 makes her eligible for 68.96 (round to 69) hours and Rick's adjusted income of \$500 makes him eligible for 68.96 (round to 69) hours of child care. Their work hours overlap, therefore they are eligible for up to 69 hours of child care subsidy per month.

**Example 5: (Single Parent Self-Employed Business)** Bob is self-employed at Bob's Burgers and makes \$15,000 a year. He pays himself a draw/salary of \$10,000 per year. That draw/salary amount is entered in Employment Page in CWW. The remaining \$5,000 self-employment income is entered on the self-employment page in CWW. Use the total Self-Employment Income of \$15,000 to calculate the number of authorized hours. Divide  $\$15,000 \div 12$  to find a monthly income of \$1,250. Then  $\$1,250 \div 7.25 = 172.41$ . Bob is eligible for a maximum of 173 hours per month.

#### **2.2.8.5 Self-Employed Foster Parents**

Foster Care parents, Subsidized Guardians, Interim Caretakers, and relatives with court-ordered placement receiving Kinship Care are not subject to the authorization limits described in Section 2.2.8.4 for the children placed in these homes. Justification for authorized hours must be documented in EBT CSAW comments. The authorization limits for self-employment continue to apply to authorizations for the biological or adopted children in these families.

### 2.2.8.6 Authorizing for Gaps Between Approved Activities

If a parent is requesting child care authorization hours during a gap between approved activities (for example, a gap between two (2) jobs, work and school, or a gap between classes), the worker must assess the need.

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

If the total gap time is two (2) hours or less, the gap shall be included in the authorized hours.

If the total gap time is more than two (2) hours, **the worker should** use the following guidelines to help determine if the gap should be included. Travel time must also be considered. If the case does not meet any of the following situations, that does not mean that the worker should deny the request. Instead, the worker should consider the circumstances involved in each case, and proceed according to their discretion.

If the parent picking up the child would interrupt a meal and/or nap time, the parent should wait until the meal or nap is finished, then pick up the child. The time that the parent waits must be taken into account when considering the gap.

- **Gap Home Time:** If the parent were to pick the child up and take them home between the approved activities, would the parent and child be home for less than two hours? If yes, then the gap shall be covered without asking further follow-up questions.
- **Child Insufficient Sleep:** If the result of the parent picking up the child would be that the child would have fewer than eight hours of potential sleep time between the hours of 9 p.m. and 7 a.m., the gap shall be covered without further follow-up questions.
- **Travel Greater than Activities:** Add together the number of activity hours for the first and the second activities. If the activity hours are less than or equal to



the travel time (job to child care to home, then home to child care to work), the gap may be covered without follow-up questions. (See Example)

**Example:** Dana must travel to a different county in order to attend school. She has two one-hour classes, with a gap of five 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 hour and 15 minutes, so 1.5 hours each way. She and her child would be able to be home for two hours during the gap. However, the classes add up to two hours of activity time, and the travel adds up to three hours. The case meets the Travel is Greater than Activities situation, and the gap can be covered without further follow-up questions.

### **2.2.8.7 Two-Parent and Three-Generation Families with a Teen Parent**

A child care 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 parents' child, 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 parents' children, the dependent teen parents' schedule is not considered in the overlap. 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 1-year-old until he drops the child 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 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 authorization 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 mother, Choua, and her 3-year-old little sister Nancy. This is a three-generation family with a teen parent. The authorization 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 parent is unable to work and unable to care for the children as documented by a physician, psychiatrist, or psychologist, child care may be authorized for the time period when the other parent is participating in an approved activity.

#### **2.2.8.8 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 during daytime hours in order to remain employed. The local agency will determine a reasonable number of authorized hours based on the parent's request. 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.

#### **2.2.8.9 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.

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

The authorization worker must always document the rationale for the amount of or the lack of travel time need in EBT CSAW comments.

Any requests of more than one hour of travel time per day must be verified via an Internet map search or a public transportation schedule.

Travel time that is one 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 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 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 EBT CSAW.

**Example 1:** Marni requests a daily travel time need of a half hour each way per day. This is not considered questionable and the agency enters a one hour daily travel need. The agency 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 enters the highest of the travel time need, which is 45 minutes for the daily amount. The agency documents that this is not questionable and per policy the highest amount of travel time is entered into the system.

**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 enters the highest of the travel time need, which is 45 minutes for the daily amount. The agency 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 hour per day. She requested two hours. The agency 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 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 must ask a follow-up question 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. This is documented in EBT CSAW.

**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 and drops the children off at the child care 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 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 EBT CSAW Override Hours field.

### **2.2.9 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 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 EBT 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 EBT CSAW.
- Four-week schedule: If the child's need for child care varies every week, collect a four-week schedule and enter it into EBT CSAW.

EBT CSAW will compare the Child Care Need Schedule to the Approved Activity schedule and calculate the authorized hours based on the overlap of these schedules.

#### **2.2.9.1 Shared Placement Authorizations**

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

The authorization 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 worker of schedule changes. This should be reflected in the Child Care Need Schedule in EBT CSAW.

A shared placement schedule can be collected on a monthly calendar or by using EBT CSAW or Parent Portal, when it becomes available. 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 EBT CSAW.

### **2.2.9.2 Head Start, Early Head Start, 3K 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 3K or 4K program that is overseen by a public school board or a Head Start or Early Head Start program is located at a child care program, the education hours can be included in the authorized hours if each of the following are true:

- The parent is engaged in an approved activity during the school program hours and additional child care is needed for the parent to participate in his or her approved activity;
- The school program (3K, 4K, Early Head Start, or Head Start) 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 child care subsidy authorization must not include the school program hours.

If the school program is located at a different site than where child care is provided, 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.

**Example 1:** Charlie attends the Head Start program located at 1256 Water Street and the child care program that is located at 1536 Water Street. Charlie's authorization is limited to the hours he will spend at the 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 child care center where she is enrolled. Dara's Mom needs child care from 7:30 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. Monday – Friday. The 4K program is provided at Dara's 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 Mom needs child care which is 7:30 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. Monday through Friday.

**Example 3:** Cary attends an Early Head Start program that is located at the child care center where she is enrolled. Cary's Mom needs child care from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday – Thursday while she goes to work. The Early Head Start program goes from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday – Friday. Cary's authorization may be written for only the hours that Cary attends the child care program because the Early Head Start program hours are indicated to be 6 hours daily. Cary's authorization must begin at 2 p.m. when the Early Head Start program has ended until 4:30 p.m. when Mom picks Cary up, Monday – Thursday.

### **2.2.9.3 Authorizations for Children in Grades 1 through 12**

The Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program does not allow authorizations for time during the typical school day for children in grades 1 through 12 while the school year is in session. 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. This policy is necessitated by child care funding requirements established under 45 C.F.R. § 98.54(c).

Part-time or full time authorizations for children in grades 1 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 suspended from school are also not eligible for an authorization for inclement weather hours.

Expelled children who are considered dis-enrolled 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.

#### **2.2.9.4 Scheduled School Closures**

All parents with school-age children (all children who are three (3) years old or older on September 1) may request child care hours for days and hours that school is closed according to the school calendar and times that the parent will need child care in order to attend work or other approved activity (e.g. planned holiday breaks, or other planned school closed times).

If scheduled school closed hours were not included in the original authorization, parents must request these scheduled school closed days within 10 calendar days after the need for the additional hours.

School closed hours may also be added for unexpected school closures that are not weather-related. These child care hours are added to the scheduled school closure page of EBT CSAW. The authorization worker must use the note section of this page to identify the reason for the school closure. Parents must request these additional hours within 10 calendar days after the need for the additional hours.

Children who are authorized for a before and after school program or a co-located Head Start, 3K, or 4K program as described in Section 2.2.9.2 may need a secondary zero hour authorization if the school program is not available during school closures, including inclement weather. The authorization worker must assess the child care needs and the parent's approved activity to determine if a secondary authorization is needed.



Children who are homeschooled, truant, or expelled and disenrolled are not eligible for child care subsidy for days when school is closed.

#### **2.2.9.5 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 scheduled school closures or other days that school is closed for inclement weather. These authorizations won't have weekly/monthly hours calculated in EBT CSAW. Instead, the authorization worker will add school closed hours for each day that school is closed and the parent expects to be engaged in their approved activity.

#### **2.2.9.6 Authorizations For Inclement Weather Related School Closures**

Parents who request scheduled school closed hours for their children are also provided 10 **additional child care** hours per month in November, December, January, February, and March to be available when school **may** close due to inclement weather. The inclement weather hours assist with the cost of child care when school is not in session **due to** inclement weather, such as snowstorms, below-zero conditions, hail, or ice. Parents may utilize these extra hours and funds to help them maintain employment or another approved activity.

**After the 10 hours have been used in a month, the parent must assume the cost of any additional child care needed for inclement weather situations.** If there is a need outside the months of November through March, the agency may contact the Child Care Subsidy and Technical Assistance **Line** to add more subsidy hours to the authorization. If the school-age child has authorizations to two providers, EBT CSAW will apply the 10 hours to the first authorization that was created for the month, however, agency workers may **move** the inclement weather hours from one provider and add them to the secondary provider if the original entry was to the incorrect provider. **The 10 hours allotted per month for inclement weather situations should not be deleted by the agency for any reason.**

The inclement weather hours are subject to the same 90-day removal policy as all other funds. If there are no school closures due to weather for November, and the parent has not expended all of the funds by February 1, they will age-off and no longer be available. For the 90-day removal policy, please see Chapter 2 section 2.7 or Chapter 3 section 3.3.4.4.

Children who are homeschooled, truant, or expelled and disenrolled are not eligible for child care for inclement weather hours. Children who are homeschooled, truant, or suspended from school are also not eligible for an authorization during the typical school day.

#### **2.2.10 In-Home Child Care**

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

- Three or more children 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
- A child's special need could only be met in his or her home;

#### **2.2.11 Authorizations for Children with a Special Need**

Children with a diagnosed special need may be eligible for child care subsidy up to the age of nineteen (19). If a child age 13 or older is verified to have a special need, but the provider does not incur extra costs to provide care, the maximum county rate for 12-year-olds is used. See the EBT CSAW Authorizations User Guide for instructions for entering a special needs rate. See Section 2.5.9.1 for information on Inclusion Rates for Children with Special Needs.

## **2.2.12 Changing and Ending an Authorization Mid-Month**

When an authorization has been established for a full month, parents may not receive an authorization to a different provider mid-month, unless there is an agency or client error in which a subsidy amount was loaded to the card for the incorrect provider, or the situation meets the policy in Section 2.2.13 Authorizations in Situations of Hardship.

If the authorization was created to the incorrect provider and a payment was made to the incorrect provider by the parent, please see Chapter 4.

If the authorization was created to the incorrect provider and a payment was not yet made by the parent to the incorrect provider, then the agency must end the authorization to the incorrect provider at the end of the current month and write a new authorization to the correct provider to begin the next month.

If the situation meets the policy in Section 2.2.13 Authorizations in Situations of Hardship, the agency worker must end the current authorization to the first provider at the end of the current month. The agency's Child Care Coordinator must write the new authorization to the second provider if the total number of hours authorized to the first provider and second provider are greater than 75 hours per week.

## **2.2.13 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 days of the start of the unforeseen circumstance.

In order to be eligible for an authorization in this situation, the child care assistance group must meet one 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 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 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 parent passes away or unexpectedly leaves a two-parent or multi-generational child care 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 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. 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.

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 cases that are being reviewed for a possible hardship authorization must be documented in the new EBT CSAW Hardship page. Local agencies **must** utilize this page for each situation that is reviewed, even those which are denied for untimely reporting.

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

## **2.2.14 Change Reports and Ending an Authorization**

The timeliness of the parent's reported change, **the timeliness of verification**, and the eligibility outcome determines the action to take when changing or ending an authorization.

**Note:** There are some items that do not need to be pended in CWW and verified before taking action. These can include, but are not limited to, a change in child placement schedule, change in child care provider, activity schedule changes, etc.

The following subsections describe the actions that are required when processing reported changes. Also see Chapter 1, Sections 1.9.1 and 1.9.4, and Chapter 2, Sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.4, for additional policy guidance.

For technical guidance related to this policy please see:

1. The *EBT CSAW User Guide – Authorizations Processing Various Change Scenarios* when making changes to authorizations for scheduled school closed hours and/or inclement weather hours, making changes to a parent's approved activity schedule in EBT CSAW, and making changes to authorizations that will occur in future months.
2. The *Post Load Benefit Correction (PLBC) User Guide* when making a change that impacts the current month.

**Note:** When reviewing a PLBC adjustment for an overall increase or overall decrease in the subsidy amount for a particular time period, the agency must look at the total impact for the family rather than individual subsidy amounts for individual children. One child out of three may have a positive increase, but the total impact on the family might be negative when the amounts for all children are added together.

### 2.2.14.1 Timely Reported Change

A timely reported change is a change that a parent reports within 10 calendar days of the change occurring. If verification is needed, the agency must pend the case for verification in CWW.

**Note:** If the change was reported timely, positive PLBC adjustments should be confirmed, but negative PLBC adjustments should not be confirmed. PLBC adjustments must be completed without delay.

### Timely Verified and Continued Eligibility (Before and After Adverse Action)

- Upon timely receipt of the verification (if needed), and after making changes in CWW (if needed), if the change impacts the authorization in the current month, the agency must end the current authorization at the end of the current month (in which the verification was received).
- The agency must create a new authorization with the new information for the following month.
- The agency must use PLBC to assess the original authorization for an adjustment because it is difficult to predict whether the overall result will be positive or negative without using PLBC.
- If the PLBC correction results in an overall increase in the amount of subsidy from the date of the change forward, then the agency must confirm the adjustment in PLBC. If the result is an overall decrease in the amount of subsidy, then the agency would not confirm the PLBC adjustment, as only overall increases in subsidy are confirmed when a change is reported timely.

### **Timely Verified and Loss of Eligibility (Before and After Adverse Action)**

- Upon **timely** receipt of the verification **(if needed)**, the agency must update CWW with the change and confirm the **Child Care failure**. The agency **must** then allow the authorization to end systematically **at the end of the current month**.
- The agency must not take action in EBT CSAW to manually end the authorization.

### **Untimely Verified and Loss of Eligibility**

#### **Before Adverse Action**

- If the verification requested for the change was not received **timely**, then the agency must run eligibility and confirm the **Child Care failure**. **Eligibility will end the next consecutive month**.
- The authorization will follow the closure of Child Care eligibility and will end systematically at the end of the current month.
- **No PLBC adjustment is needed.**

#### **After Adverse Action**

- If the verification was due after adverse action and **verification** was not received timely, the agency must **follow the procedure in Section 1.9.4 and run eligibility** with dates (using a begin date of the first of the next consecutive month) to confirm **the** Child Care **failure** for the next consecutive month.
- The authorization will follow the closure of Child Care eligibility and will end systematically at the end of the current month.
- **No PLBC adjustment is needed.**

### **Untimely Verified and Loss of Eligibility**

**When verification is received after the due date, and the authorization has not yet ended:**



- If the verification requested for the change was not received **timely**, and the agency took the appropriate action to close Child Care at the end of the current month (as described immediately above in the “Untimely Verified and Loss of Eligibility” section), but the parent provided the verification before **a full calendar month had passed since the closure date**, then the agency must update CWW with the change (if needed) and reopen Child Care eligibility.
- **The agency must** end the current authorization at the end of the current month in which the verification was received **if the change impacts the authorization**.
- The agency **must** create a new authorization with the new information for the following month.
- The **agency must use PLBC to** assess **a change in the subsidy amount**. If there is an **overall** increase in the amount of **subsidy back to the date that verification was received**, then the agency must **confirm the adjustment in** PLBC.

**Note:** The agency **must** only create the **PLBC** adjustment back to the date that the verification was received **and forward**, because the parent failed to timely verify the change

**When the authorization has already ended:**

- If the verification was not received timely and the agency took the appropriate **action to close Child Care eligibility at the end of the current month (as described immediately above in in the “Untimely Verified and Loss of Eligibility” section)**, but the parent provided the verification before a full calendar month had passed, then the agency must update CWW with the change (if needed) and reopen Child Care eligibility.
- **The old authorization will have already ended systematically, so the agency must create a new authorization with the new information beginning on the first of the month that the verification was received, as long as the requirements in Section 2.2.4 have been met.**
- **No PLBC adjustment is needed in these situations.**

## 2.2.14.2 Untimely Reported Change

An untimely reported change is a change that a parent reports **more than** 10 calendar days **after** the change occurred. **If verification is needed**, the agency must pend the case for the needed verification in CWW.

**Note:** If the change was reported untimely, negative PLBC adjustments must be confirmed, but positive PLBC adjustments must not be confirmed. PLBC adjustments must be completed without delay.

**Note:** When reviewing a PLBC adjustment for an overall increase or overall decrease in the subsidy amount for a particular time period, the agency must look at the total impact for the family rather than individual subsidy amounts for individual children. If the change was reported untimely, a negative PLBC adjustment (or overpayment) should be confirmed. This is an overpayment and must be recovered per Chapter 4 policy.

### Timely Verified and Continued Eligibility (Before and After Adverse Action)

- Upon **timely** receipt of the verification (if needed), and **after making changes in CWW (if needed)**, if the change impacts the authorization, the agency must end the current authorization at the end of the current month (in which the verification was received).
- The agency must create a new authorization with the new information for the following month.
- If **the PLBC correction results in an overall increase in the subsidy amount** due to the change, then the agency **must not confirm the PLBC adjustment** because the change was reported untimely. If there is an **overall decrease in the subsidy amount**, then the agency must **confirm the PLBC adjustment**. **This is an overpayment and must be recovered per Chapter 4 policy.**

### Timely Verified and Loss of Eligibility Before Adverse Action

- Upon timely receipt of verification (if needed), the agency must update CWW with the change and confirm the Child Care failure.
- The authorization will end following the closure of Child Care eligibility at the end of the current month.
- The agency must use PLBC to assess the impact of the change. If the PLBC correction results in overall increase in the subsidy amount due to the change, then the agency must not confirm the PLBC adjustment because the change was reported untimely. If there is an overall decrease in the amount of subsidy, then the agency must confirm the PLBC adjustment. This is an overpayment and must be recovered per Chapter 4 policy.
- The agency may also need to assess whether a fraud referral is necessary.

#### **After Adverse Action:**

- Upon timely receipt of verification (if needed), the agency must update CWW with the change and confirm the Child Care failure.
- The agency must manually end the current authorization at the end of the current month in which the verification was received.
- The agency must use PLBC to assess the impact of the change. If there is an overall increase in the subsidy amount due to the change, do not confirm the PLBC adjustment as the change was reported untimely. If there is an overall decrease in the subsidy amount, confirm the PLBC adjustment. This is an overpayment and must be recovered per Chapter 4 policy.

#### **Untimely Verified and Loss of Eligibility**

##### **Before Adverse Action:**

- If the verification requested for the change was not received timely, then the agency must run eligibility and confirm the Child Care failure for the next consecutive month.

- The authorization will end following the closure of Child Care eligibility at the end of the current month.
- The agency must use PLBC to assess the impact of the change. If there is an overall increase in the subsidy amount as a result of the change, the agency must not confirm the PLBC adjustment because the change was reported untimely. If there is an overall decrease in the subsidy amount, the agency must confirm the PLBC adjustment. This is an overpayment and must be recovered per Chapter 4 policy.
- The agency may also need to assess whether a referral to their fraud unit or BPI is necessary.

#### **After Adverse Action:**

- If the verification was due after adverse action and the verification was not received timely, the agency must follow the instructions in Section 1.9.4 and run eligibility with dates (using a begin date of the first of the next consecutive month) to confirm Child Care closed for the next consecutive month.
- The authorization will end systematically at the end of the current month.
- The agency must use PLBC to assess the impact of the change. If there is an overall increase in the subsidy amount due to the change, the agency must not confirm the PLBC adjustment because the change was untimely reported. If there is an overall decrease in the subsidy amount, the agency must confirm the PLBC adjustment. This is an overpayment and must be recovered per Chapter 4 policy.
- The agency may also need to assess whether a referral to their fraud unit or BPI is necessary.

#### **Untimely Verified, Loss of Eligibility has been confirmed**

Verification is received late, but before the end of a full calendar month since the closure date

#### **If the authorization has not yet ended:**

- If the verification was received after the due date (but before the end of the calendar month) and after the agency took action to close Child Care at the end

of the current month (as described above in “Untimely Verified and Loss of Eligibility”), the agency must update CWW with the change and reactivate Child Care eligibility. It is also important that the agency determine if the change impacts the authorization.

- If the authorization needs to be changed, the agency must end the authorization with the end date of the last day of the current month and write a new authorization with the current information to begin the following month.
- The agency must use PLBC to assess the overpayment period from the date the change occurred forward to the end of that authorization. This is an overpayment and must be recovered per Chapter 4 policy.
- The agency may also need to assess whether a referral to their fraud unit or BPI is necessary.

**If the authorization has already ended:**

- If the verification was received after the due date (but before the end of the calendar month) and after the agency has closed Child Care at the end of the current month (as described above in “Untimely Verified and Loss of Eligibility”), the agency must update CWW with the change and reactivate Child Care eligibility.
- Since the old authorization has ended systematically, the agency must create a new authorization with the new information beginning on the first of the month that verification was received, as long as policy under Section 2.2.4 has been met.
- The agency must use PLBC to assess the overpayment period from the date the change occurred forward to the end of that authorization. This is an overpayment and must be recovered per Chapter 4 policy.
- The agency may also need to assess whether a referral to their fraud unit or BPI is necessary.

## **2.3 Authorization Correspondence**

### **2.3.1 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;
- Child care provider number and location;
- FIS provider ID;
- Monthly authorization effective periods;
- Monthly authorized hours;
- Monthly Wisconsin Shares amount;
- YoungStar rating; and
- Total monthly subsidy amount.

The Quarterly Parent Notice will be mailed approximately 10 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.

Parent Authorization Notices will also provide 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 days before the end of the month, but before the last 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 15th 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 worker takes action to change the end of the authorization on August 31. The second-quarter notice will include that change.

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 in PLBC.

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

### **2.3.2 Authorization Information for Child Care Providers**

The 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 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.

## **2.4 Parent Share**

The Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy does not cover the full cost of child care in most cases; the balance is the “parent share.” Parents are responsible for knowing and paying the amount that the child care provider will charge them that is above the Wisconsin Shares subsidy amount. Wisconsin Shares calculates a copayment amount that is based on the family’s income and family size, but this amount is used for subsidy amount calculation and does not reflect the actual out-of-pocket cost to the family.

### **2.4.1 Copayments**

The copayment is an amount that is deducted from the subsidy amount based on the family’s Federal Poverty Level (FPL), the number of children in subsidized child care, the sum of authorized hours for the family, and the number of hours for each authorization.

The base copayment amount is adjusted for the sum of child care hours for the family for the month. If a child has two or more authorizations in a month to different child care



providers, the base copayment amount will be distributed among both authorizations based on the number of authorized hours.

If all children in the group have authorizations for no more than 20 hours per week, the base copayment will not exceed 50%.

	Monthly Hours From	To Monthly Hours	% Copayment
<b>Base</b>	0	20	10
	21	40	25
	41	80	50
	81	999	100

The child level copayment amount is based on the authorized hours for the child for the month and further adjusted to each location the child is authorized to attend in the month.

	From Monthly Hours	To Monthly Hours	% Copayment
<b>Child</b>	0	15	10
	16	30	20
	31	45	30
	46	60	40
	61	75	50
	76	90	60
	91	105	70
	106	120	80
	121	135	90
	136	999	100

#### 2.4.2 Wisconsin Shares Copayment Types

The Wisconsin Shares copayment types and reductions 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 for W-2, FSET, and employed parents.

**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).

**Non-Court Ordered:** The non-court ordered kinship copayment code applies a copayment that is based on 70% of the federal poverty level instead of the 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 70% of the federal poverty level instead of the family's actual income level. This copayment code is used for teen parents under the age of 20 years and who are enrolled in high school or its equivalent.

**W-2 Employed:** This copayment code applies a copayment based on 70% of the federal poverty level instead of the family's actual income level. It is used for W-2 participants who move from a W-2 employment position (CSJ, W-2 T, or TEMP placement) to regular employment. This copayment type can be used the first two (2) months of regular employment.

**Learnfare:** The Learnfare copayment code applies \$0 copayment reduction to the subsidy amount. This copayment is used for participants of the Learnfare program.

## ***2.5 Subsidy Rates***

The maximum weekly and hourly rates are organized by licensed group, licensed family, certified providers, and by age of the child. 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 county maximum subsidy rates due to budget constraints.

Hourly rates are determined by dividing the weekly rate by 35 hours. Maximum hourly rates for regularly certified providers are set at 75% of the licensed family hourly rate; and hourly rates for provisionally certified providers are 50% of the licensed family hourly rate. Weekly ceilings are not set for certified providers, however, the weekly subsidy payments are capped at the licensed family weekly 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 EBT CSAW when the change is reported.

### **2.5.1 Components of Subsidy Calculation**

The following variables are the components of the subsidy calculation. When these factors change, it can also impact the subsidy amount.

- A change in the assistance group size.
- A change in the family's poverty level.
- A new child is added with an authorization.
- Monthly Authorized hours.
  - The average weekly hours up to 35 (full time care) are multiplied by 4.348125 and then the number of authorized days in the month and then divided by the number of days in the month. This is then rounded up to a whole number.
- Capped subsidy: three-way comparison.
  - Initial amount (the county maximum hourly rate multiplied by the number of authorized hours).
  - Provider price (The price the child care provider reported to the subsidy agency for the age group for Regular, Part-time or an entered override

provider price entered per authorization such as Override-Discount, Override-In-Home, Override-Special Needs.)

- Agency ceiling (The county maximum or weekly ceiling is based upon the age group, provider type (LGRP, LFAM, etc.), and provider location county (refer to the Maximum Rate Sheet).)
- Total Copay: Base Copay + Child Copay (Applies Copay Type).
- YoungStar adjustment (Only applicable for 2 Star Providers in which a 5% decrease is applied at the end of the subsidy amount).
- Scheduled School Closed and Inclement Weather Hours.

#### **2.5.1.1 Provider Prices above the County Maximum Rate**

Wisconsin Shares provides a subsidy amount at or below the provider's price, with the exception of qualified special needs situations and some in-home situations. A parent may choose a child care provider whose price is higher than the total Wisconsin Shares subsidy amount, however, the parent has the responsibility to pay the provider for the difference between the Wisconsin Shares subsidy amount and the provider price and any other fees charged by the provider.

#### **2.5.2 Child Care Provider's Prices**

Child care providers set their own prices. Only licensed providers must submit their full time and part-time weekly prices to the agency. 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 EBT 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.**

#### **2.5.3 Full and Part-Time Prices and Full and Part-Time Authorizations**

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 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 EBT CSAW.
- If the authorized hours do not vary from week to week and the average authorized hours are more than 20 per week, use the regular provider price.
- If authorized hours vary week to week and any of the weeks are more than 20 hours, use the regular provider price.
- When the authorization is only for scheduled school closures and for inclement weather days, use the regular provider price.

#### **2.5.4 Calculating a Full Time Provider Price**

If no full time price is entered into EBT 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 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 EBT 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.

#### **2.5.5 Calculating a Weekly Part-Time Provider Price**

If no weekly part-time price is entered into EBT 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 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 EBT CSAW.
- If the provider has an hourly price, multiply that price by 20 and enter that amount in EBT 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.

### **2.5.6 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 determining the subsidy amount. The maximum hourly rate for regularly certified providers is set at 75% of the licensed family hourly rate. Hourly rates for provisionally certified providers are 50% of the licensed family hourly rate. Weekly ceilings are not set for certified providers, however EBT CSAW will consider the licensed family weekly ceiling and compare this amount to the beginning reimbursement rate; the payment cannot exceed the licensed family weekly ceiling.

### **2.5.7 Dually Regulated Child Care Provider Prices**

Child care providers that are both licensed and certified (dually regulated) meet the health and safety standards of licensing therefore EBT CSAW calculations are made using the licensed family rate.

### **2.5.8 Changes in Subsidy Amounts**

Subsidy amounts may be recalculated the month after a change occurs. Recalculations can be triggered by:

- New authorizations and/or children added to the case.
- One or more children in the case have a change in authorized hours, which changes how the copayment is distributed among the children.
- The child care provider's price changed.
- The child care provider's YoungStar rating changed.
- An out-of-state child care provider's accreditation changed.
- There was a FPL mass change – this happens annually.
- There was a Maximum Rate mass change.
- There was a copayment mass change.
- There was a change in provider category (ex: provisional to regular certification or vice versa).

- A retro authorization was entered.
- A child's birthday putting them into a new age category.
- A change in household composition.
- There was an increase in household income that changes the FPL percentage and thus changes the copayment amount.

**Note:** When a certified provider becomes licensed, the child care provider location number does not change. The authorization worker must end the existing authorization to the certified provider and then create a new authorization to the now licensed provider, and EBT CSAW will derive hours for the new authorization using the Licensed Family rate.

Once these changes have been entered into the Child Care Systems, the information will interface with EBT CSAW and the subsidy amount will be recalculated. The new subsidy amount will be effective the first day of the month after the change was entered.

### **2.5.9 Override Provider Price**

Override prices are used for writing authorizations with a child with special needs higher price, discount, or for in-home authorizations when child care will be provided for 15 or more hours per week. Using the override price will allow the EBT CSAW system to disregard the lowest weekly rate amount to allow higher prices in cases of a child with a special need, to lower prices for discounts, and to adjust rates for in-home child care when in-home care is provided for 15 or more hours per week.

**Note:** Do not confuse override prices with overriding the system derived approved hours.

#### **2.5.9.1 Inclusion Rate for Children with Special Needs**

Parents of children with 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

special needs. The local agency workers may consider additional subsidy amounts for providers caring for children with 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).

The parent must provide documentation from a physician, special educator, or other licensed professional of the special need 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 EBT CSAW ~~EBT Authorization Module~~ comments and form DCF-F-2976 must be scanned into ECF, or uploaded by the parent via the Parent Portal.

**Agencies must** record the higher subsidy amount authorization in EBT CSAW as an Override rate; see the EBT CSAW Authorizations User Guide.

If a 13-year-old or older is verified to have a special need but the provider does not incur extra costs to provide care, EBT CSAW will use the provider's price or county maximum rate for 12-year-old children, whichever is less, and in this situation the authorization 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 special needs. If a higher subsidy amount is approved by the local agency, the increased amount is valid for one year. 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 agency with a statement by a physician or medical provider that the child has a 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 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 Wisconsin Shares child care authorization worker at the local agency, or via the Parent Portal.

**Note:** EBT CSAW will require an hourly price. Select the Override-Special Needs price in EBT CSAW.

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 agency rate rather than the higher rate.

### **2.5.9.2 Provider Discounts**

A discounted price may be applied in the following circumstances:

1. When a licensed child care provider offers a discounted price that is lower than the county maximum hourly rate or weekly ceiling
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 county maximum rate

Discounts are often given when more than one child from a family is enrolled in child care or when the parent is employed by a child care provider.

Providers must inform parents of discounts. It is the parent's responsibility to then inform the authorization worker that the child care provider is offering a discount when requesting an authorization. The parent must report it within 10 calendar days of the occurrence and it will become effective the following month unless it is untimely reported. If there is confusion on the exact amount, the authorization worker can 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 authorization worker must find out the amount the other program will pay in order to determine the rate that should be used for the Wisconsin Shares subsidy amount.

If, after applying the discount, the licensed child care provider's price is not lower than the county maximum rate, disregard the reported discount and do not use an override price.

Discounts can only be applied to subsidy payments for parents using licensed child care providers.

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 program.

**Example 1:** Randy's Licensed Group Care is giving the Jones' family a 50% discount. The child care provider's weekly price is \$300. The weekly amount after the discount is applied to the provider's original weekly price is \$150. The county maximum weekly rate is \$250. Since \$150 is less than the county maximum of \$250, the discounted amount

should be entered in the Provider Price Type-Override *Price* field for the new authorization.

**Example 2:** There may be instances where AmeriCorps or another organization provides financial assistance for a portion of a parent's child care costs. In these cases, subtract the amount that the other organization will pay from the provider's price – this is the discounted price. Compare the discounted price to the county maximum rate. If the discounted price is less than the county maximum rate, enter the discounted amount into EBT CSAW. If the county maximum rate is less than the discounted price, disregard the discount and allow EBT CSAW to calculate using the regular provider price.

County weekly max: \$300

Provider's weekly rate: \$325

Subtract AmeriCorps subsidy: \$200

$\$325 - \$200 = \$125$

The remaining \$125 is less than the county maximum weekly rate of \$300. Enter \$125 into the *Override Discount Rate* field in EBT CSAW.

### 2.5.9.3 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 parent must ensure that the child care provider is paid at the state minimum wage. The Wisconsin Shares subsidy amount can be adjusted to ensure that the provider's base rate is minimum wage in the rate calculation. If a child qualifies for a higher price due to a special need, that rate can exceed state minimum wage.

When authorizing for less than 15 hours per week, use the part-time provider price.

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 Department of Revenue's Customer Service Bureau, Department of Workforce Development's Bureau of Tax and Accounting, and/or

business professionals like accountants or attorneys for more information about their responsibilities as employers.

**Note:** When authorizing for 15 or more hours per week, agency workers must use the Override In-Home price in EBT CSAW.

## ***2.6 Participation in YoungStar***

All Certified Family providers, Licensed Family providers, Licensed Group Child Care centers, Licensed Day Camps, and public school programs must 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).

### **2.6.1 Wisconsin Shares Participation Contract**

Out-of-state and 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. Once the contract is entered into EBT CSAW, an authorization can be backdated to the received date (also known as the contract date). Wisconsin Shares contracts must be submitted to the Department of Children and Families (DCF), Division of Early Care and Education, YoungStar.

If a provider changes from Certified to Certified In-Home, they must submit a Wisconsin Shares Contract and return it to DCF.

### **2.6.2 Contracts for New Child Care Providers**

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.

In-home and out-of-state child care providers must return their Wisconsin Shares Contract to the local YoungStar office or DCF. In-home and out-of-state child care providers do not participate in YoungStar.

### **2.6.3 YoungStar or Wisconsin Shares Contract Renewal**

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 contract renewals. Parents will be notified when their child care provider is in the grace period and that 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 Contract prior to the end of the grace period, the provider's new participation period begins and the authorization 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.

If a YoungStar or Wisconsin Shares 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.

### **2.7 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 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 MyWICChildCare EBT Card. Any amount not expended by the nintieth day will be returned to the state.

## ***2.8 Authorizations During Temporary Absences from Employment***

Local child care agencies may authorize subsidy amounts to parents during temporary absences from employment in the following limited situations:

- The parent must report the break in employment and request continuing assistance within 10 calendar days of the onset of the break. If this report is made after the tenth day, there is no eligibility for continuing child care subsidy during the temporary absence from employment, see Section 2.2.13 for ending the authorization.
- If the child is absent from child care, the child must be returning to the same child care provider after the absence.
- The parent must be receiving Wisconsin Shares child care assistance prior to and after the leave.
- The parent must be **employed** prior to and after the leave.
- The parent must return to work for the same employer immediately after the leave. The local agency may ask for a statement from the employer verifying that the parent will return to employment after the leave.
- If the reported break is expected to be longer than the time frame allowed, the parent will not be denied the entire time, but can only get child care for the maximum time allowed in the table below.

Child care subsidy utilized while the parent is on paid time off from work, such as for vacation time, sick time, short-term disability, or personal time off, must meet the above requirements and is limited to the time frames listed in the table below.

When the parent reports the break in employment and it meets the above requirements, the agency must schedule the authorization to end on the last day of the break, not to exceed the time frames listed in the table below.

Situation	Maximum Number of Weeks of Leave
a. Parent is temporarily laid off, but will be return to work within 4 weeks to the same employer.	4 weeks
b. Parent has a temporary break in employment, but will return to his or her same employment within 4 weeks. (Note: this does not include situations when a parent loses employment and is seeking new employment.)	4 weeks
c. Parent must report for jury duty, but will return to work within 4 weeks to the same employer	4 weeks
d. Family vacation (allowed once per calendar year only)	2 weeks
e. Parent is on medical leave, as documented by a physician, but will be returning to work with the same employer.	6 weeks
f. Child is ill, as documented by a physician, but will be returning to the same child care provider.	6 weeks

### 2.8.1 Consecutive Episodes of Absence from Employment

No authorization shall be written for consecutive periods of absence from employment under the policy at Section 2.8 unless the parent has returned to work for at least one (1) full week between periods of absence from employment. The local agency may ask for a statement from the employer verifying that the parent will return to employment after the leave.

### 2.8.2 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.

If the child care provider will be closed for more than one week in a calendar year, all authorizations must be ended to ensure that subsidy amounts will not be issued for any time beyond the first week that the program is closed. New authorizations may be allowed when the child care program reopens.

If payment was made for more than one week in a calendar year to a program that was closed, that payment is considered a parent overpayment and must be recovered.

If the child care provider charges for the time period when their child care program was closed for longer than one week and the subsidy cannot be issued for any reason according to policy, the parent will be responsible for paying the child care provider.