**Newsletter/Blog**

**Option 1: Awareness**

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Money for child care is available to those who need it most.

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Paying for child care is a struggle many Wisconsin parents and caregivers face. It’s easy to understand why. Wisconsin's average monthly cost of child care for an infant is a whopping $1,047. The monthly cost of child care is often more than the cost of food, housing, and utilities. For many families in our state, that's a financial hurdle too big to overcome. Thankfully, there is help available.

The Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program is designed to help working families across the state afford quality child care. How? By giving them money each month to cover a portion of the costs. That's right! Wisconsin Shares invests in eligible families to help create strength and opportunities for growth and success by making quality child care more accessible and affordable.

**Who qualifies? Eligible families all:**

* Have children under the age of 13.
* If a child has a special need, the family may remain eligible until the child's 19th birthday.
* Live in Wisconsin, and their children must be United States citizens or qualifying immigrants.
* Earn no more than 185% of the [Federal Poverty Level](https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wishares/apply?accactive=1).
* Guardians who are not biological parents, like foster parents, may have different income eligibility requirements.

Every month, around 30,000 children statewide are served through the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program. Still, there are more children and families that are not receiving support than there are in the program. With money available through federal funding and investments — many more families across Wisconsin can get help!

Wisconsin Shares provides important financial support to families. Why? Because child care is an essential part of helping working families thrive. Parents and caregivers rely on safe, affordable child care so they can work, take classes, or take advantage of other opportunities to strengthen their families. Most importantly, children get a better start when they're in quality care. Young children depend on child care to help them develop the social-emotional skills needed to prepare them for the future.

To learn more or to apply for child care financial assistance, visit WIShares.WI.gov.

**Option 2: Eligibility/Apply**

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Make ***more*** possible — apply for the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program.

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Do you want more for your family? The opportunity to give your child a great start with quality care? The chance to strengthen your family's future by investing in your career and education? If so, the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program may be your answer.

The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families is accepting applications for the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program. This unique program helps eligible families for child care so that caregivers can do more — and give their children a great start!

Here's how to get started.

**Step 1. Find out if you qualify:**

**Eligible families all:**

* Have children under the age of 13.
* If a child has a special need, the family may remain eligible until the child's 19th birthday.
* Live in Wisconsin, and their children must be United States citizens or qualifying immigrants.
* Earn no more than 185% of the [Federal Poverty Level](https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wishares/apply?accactive=1).
* Guardians who are not biological parents, like foster parents, may have different income eligibility requirements.
* Participate in approved activities.

**Approved activities include:**

* Employment
* A combination of employment and school or training
* Participation in the Wisconsin Works or [Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families](https://www.benefits.gov/benefit/627) programs
* Attending high school if you are under 20 years old
* Participation in certain components of the FoodShare Employment and Training Program

**Step 2. Choose how to apply:**

Once you know you're eligible, apply online using [ACCESS](https://access.wisconsin.gov/access), Wisconsin's online application tool, or by visiting [dcf.wisconsin.gov/wishares/apply](https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wishares/apply). You can also apply in person or by telephone with your local [Income Maintenance Agency.](https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wishares/where-to-apply)

After you're approved, it's time to choose the right child care provider for your family and create a schedule for care based on your activities and your child's needs.

Wisconsin Shares will be there to assist you through every step, including making payments using a MyWIChildCare EBT card. So why wait? Take a big step toward giving your family more. Find out if you qualify for financial assistance at WIShares.WI.gov and apply today!