



# Provider News: A Resource for Wisconsin Shares & YoungStar Providers

## Winter 2017

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## Important Wisconsin Shares Updates

### Provider Portal Phase 2 Enhancements

Phase 2 of the Child Care Provider Portal was released on December 1, 2017. There are four enhancements in Phase 2. You can:

1. Update your prices.
2. Send a request to end a MyWIChildCare authorization for a child who is no longer attending or has never attended.
3. Report days (or weeks) that your child care program will be closed so a parent can request an authorization to an alternate provider during your closure.
4. View certain licensing/certification documents.

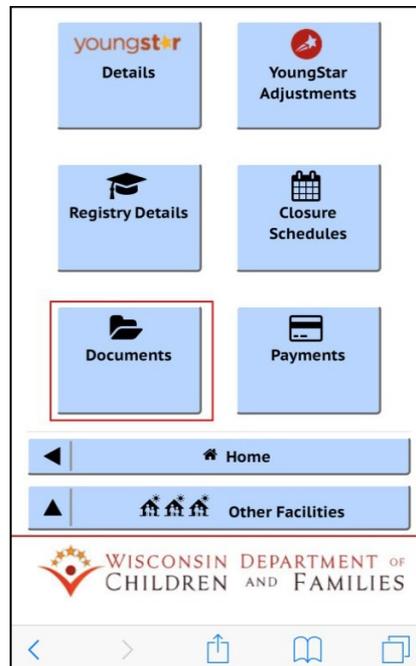
These enhancements promote communication between child care providers and the local authorization agency. To learn more about the MyWIChildCare Provider Portal, visit <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wishares/providers>, and select the Child Care Provider Portal accordion to access the training video link.

#### Mobile views of the MyWIChildCare Provider Portal



**Authorization icon:** You can view current authorizations and request an authorization to be ended.

**Prices icon:** You can view current prices, update future prices, and upload your price sheet.



**Document icon:** You can view system-generated letters and some licensing/certification documents that have been uploaded to the licensing/certification database.

### Training Corner

Sharpen your professional skills with new training opportunities!

#### SFTA Training Opportunities

<http://supportingfamilies.together.org/wp-content/uploads/Annual-Training-Calendar.pdf>

#### WECA Training Opportunities

<http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/training/>

#### The Registry Training Opportunities

<https://www.the-registry.org/myregistry/>





## Important Wisconsin Shares Updates

### Continuing Care for a 13-Year-Old Child Receiving Wisconsin Shares Subsidy



The Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Reauthorization asks states to promote the continuity of care for all children receiving child care subsidy funds. One change that Wisconsin has made to work toward this goal is to allow the child care subsidy to continue for a child who turns 13 years old until the annual eligibility review. This policy was effective November 1, 2017.

Child care licensing requirements have not changed concerning caring for a 13-year-old child. If the parent would like you to continue to provide care for a child who turns 13 years old, licensed providers must contact their licenser to either request an exception or amend their license, and certified providers must notify their certification worker prior to providing care for a 13-year-old child. The subsidy calculation will use the same price as reported for the age group of 12 years 11 months. If

you have any questions regarding your licensing/certification requirements, please contact your child care licenser or certifier.



### Collaborative Child Care Programs



Child care providers with collaborative 4K or Early Head Start/Head Start programs at their location have a responsibility to provide important information to their enrolled families who receive Wisconsin Shares subsidy.

**Families attending a program at a collaborative site need to know the structure of that program in order for the authorization worker to accurately authorize the family for Wisconsin Shares subsidy.**

It is important for the parent to communicate with their authorization worker which hours of the child's day are allocated to 4K or Early Head Start/Head Start, and which hours of the child's day are child care. This information will ensure that the families attending these programs are correctly authorized and avoid overpayments. If you have any questions about what information should be shared with your families, please email [YoungStar@wisconsin.gov](mailto:YoungStar@wisconsin.gov)

### Additional Child Care Hours for Inclement Weather



Parents of a school-age child who have requested additional child care hours for days when school is scheduled to be closed for holidays, spring/winter break, or teacher conferences, will also receive 10 additional hours of child care for the months of November–March. These hours may be used when school is unexpectedly closed and the children need to attend a child care program.

Parents may see a small increase in their child care subsidy amount during these months. Parents may utilize these extra hours and funds to help them cover the cost of child care when there are unexpected school closures due to inclement weather, such as snowstorms below-zero conditions, hail, or ice. These additional hours are subject to the same 90-day removal policy as all other funds.

For questions about the Inclement Weather Policy, parents should contact their local child care agency.



# Important YoungStar Updates

## Family Engagement Component



Over the past 10 years, more attention has been paid to how family engagement contributes to high-quality in early care and education and out-of-school-time settings, and improves child and family outcomes. Researchers agree that quality family engagement in programs has a positive impact on such things as school readiness, long-term academic success, and family and child well-being.

Wisconsin has focused attention on family engagement by including them as required components of YoungStar since 2016. The 2019/2020 Evaluation Criteria will be revised from five to four common family engagement features that include communication, utilizing family needs and feedback to inform the program, collaborative activities with families, and providing community resource referrals and family support.

Programs receiving 3 Stars will be required to demonstrate how they meet at least one item in each of the four key indicators. Programs receiving 4 or 5 Stars will be required to demonstrate how they meet at least two items in each of the four key indicators. Multiple

activities in each of the items are available to link with their program's identified outcomes for children.



### Family Engagement in YoungStar Key Indicators

#### 5.1 Communication

Items:

- ⇒ 5.1.1 Respectful two-way exchange of information
- ⇒ 5.1.2 Multiple ways to communicate are offered
- ⇒ 5.1.3 Time is made to engage families meaningfully in conversations

#### 5.2 Family Needs Feedback

Items:

- ⇒ 5.2.1 Family input guides program planning and policies
- ⇒ 5.2.2 Program is adapted to meet the needs of children and families
- ⇒ 5.2.3 Hiring practices of staff and volunteers reflect family's diverse backgrounds

#### 5.3 Collaborative Activities with Families

Items:

- ⇒ 5.3.1 Fathers are encouraged to participate in activities
- ⇒ 5.3.2 Opportunities exist for staff and families to learn from one another
- ⇒ 5.3.3 Volunteer opportunities match families' strengths, interests, and skills

#### 5.4 Community Resources and Family Support

Items:

- ⇒ 5.4.1 Families are connected to community resources
- ⇒ 5.4.2 Support and planning around transitions is provided
- ⇒ 5.4.3 Educational and developmental resources are offered for families to use at home

Halgunseth, L., Peterson, A., Start, D., Moodie, S. *Family Engagement: An Integrated Review of the Literature-EDF Literature Review.pdf*. 2009, Available from: [http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/ecprofessional/EDF\\_Literature%20Review.pdf](http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/ecprofessional/EDF_Literature%20Review.pdf).



# Preventing Child Care Subsidy Fraud

## A Quick Guide to Site Visits

One of the goals of the Division of Early Care and Education is to make sure all families have access to quality child care.

The Bureau of Program Integrity (BPI) and agency employees perform regular site visits to review attendance records and payments from Wisconsin Shares authorizations for your location and for children in your care.

- **You'll know when it's BPI or your local agency.** Employees will always announce themselves and provide identification when they visit your child care center.
- **Keep current, accurate, and detailed attendance records.** During visits we collect attendance records and compare them to payments made from the Wisconsin Shares Program.
- **Ask questions and give feedback.** A site visit is the perfect opportunity to clear up any confusion that you might have about MyWICChildCare or Wisconsin Shares policies and procedures.



## 10 Ways to Support Your Customers

- Establish a payment agreement with all families
- Inform families when they need to pay their bill
- Communicate how you will bill your families
- Inform families of their Parent Share (out-of-pocket) amount
- Provide receipts to families
- Discuss how families will pay you—over the telephone, online, or using a point of sale machine
- Communicate your policy for children who are sick
- Describe your policies about child behavior
- Explain attendance policies
- Inform families of your transportation policy (if applicable)



## Program Integrity Quick Tips



Providers are not allowed to be in possession of clients':

- MyWICChildCare EBT Cards
- MyWICChildCare card numbers
- Personal Identification Numbers (PINs)
- Account Number
- Photocopy, photo, or other image of these items

Providers may **not** require families to provide this confidential information or make payments for the parents.



DCF is now on Twitter! [@WisDCF](https://twitter.com/WisDCF) Watch for helpful child care subsidy information.



# Family Engagement and Developmental Concerns

Read the latest information about family engagement and boosting school readiness from the Administration for Children and Families (<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/>). What you do and say matters! Explore and practice everyday strategies to develop positive goal-oriented relationships with a family. These relationships are key to our work with children and families, including the journey toward school readiness. See a new simulation on Talking with Families about Developmental Concerns. (<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/family-engagement/article/parent-family-community-engagement-simulation-boosting-school-readiness>)

- **Simulation 1** allows you to practice building bonds with families, beginning with an intake visit.
- **Simulation 2** explores the process of developing and implementing goals with families.
- **Simulation 3** explores using strengths-based attitudes to partner with families during challenging times.
- **Simulation 4** helps you talk with

families about developmental concerns.

(**Source:** August 2017 *Early Childhood Development* (Volume 5, Number 5) newsletter.)



## MECA Corner

### MECA Inclusion Credential Classes

The Milwaukee Early Care Administration (MECA) in partnership with Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTTC) is offering accelerated Inclusion Credential Classes in Milwaukee on Saturdays. All are welcome to participate!

The next scheduled class is: ECE: Children With Differing Abilities, on January 13, 20, 27, February 3, 10, 17. Students must attend all class dates. For more information, contact Ann Farah at 414-289-6977.

If you have questions regarding *MyWIChildCare*, the Milwaukee Early Care Administration (MECA) is available to assist you. Please contact a MECA representative at 414-289-6842.



**Inclusion Credential Commission August 2017.** The child care providers in the picture all successfully completed 12 college credits and were approved by the Registry commissioner in August. Front row (left to right): Ebony J., Sallie T., Shevon W., Jennifer F., Joyce W., Kawanna B. Middle row (left to right): Sha Paris D., Deneta H., Shanetta P., Nyaira T., Angela W. Back row (left to right): Tamura C., Ivory S., Dante H., Rochell O-H., Donald H., Joseph C., Debra T., Tamekka B-G., Shari G., Tamkio L.



# New Minimum Point Required within Learning Environment Component



In 2019/2020, YoungStar Evaluation Criteria indicator **B.1.2 Developmentally Appropriate Practice** will change to **Developmentally Appropriate Environment, Incorporating Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards and/or School-Age Curricular Framework**. It will also become a **required point for 3 Star or higher ratings**. This will allow programs to demonstrate developmentally appropriate materials, interactions, and learning centers within classrooms/programs. Recent research completed on YoungStar indicates that increased emphasis on developmentally appropriate practices (while using a play-based curriculum) and intentional planning of activities meet children where they are at and are closely predictive of child outcomes.

In the first part of this two-part indicator, programs will need to demonstrate, through an observation, that staff members who work directly with children provide developmentally appropriate care that is engaging, comforting, culturally sensitive, and compassionate. This includes interactions that are positive or neutral, an appearance that staff and children appear to enjoy being together and demonstrate respect for each other, and staff communicate in developmentally appropriate ways with developmentally appropriate expectations for children's behavior.

Two additional practices of the following must be observed: communication from staff to children, peer interactions with children, turn-taking conversations with children are neutral or pleasant, and staff-initiated receptive language is offered each day.

For the second part of this indicator, raters will observe the environment to see if it includes at least five defined interest centers/areas that are developmentally appropriate and reflect either WMELS' five domains or SACF's nine content areas.

An additional practice must be observed that includes one of the following: information about WMELS and/or SACF is provided to families and staff, all interest center/areas are available for children to use for the majority of the day, and quiet activity areas are located away from noisy activity areas.

**In order to support programs**, the Department of Children and Families will be distributing 2,250 Environment Kits to actively participating 2 and 3 Star providers across the state. The kits are funded through the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant, and are currently being assembled by Kaplan Early Learning Company. They will include books, art and dramatic play materials, and materials to support math/number development and fine motor skills. There are three

versions of the kit: for children ages 0-12 months, 13-24 months, and 25-36 months.

These kits are meant to support DCF's increasing focus on learning environments, child-teacher/provider interactions, and developmentally appropriate practices. Technical consultants will be bringing the kits to providers during YoungStar site visits and will share tips about how to use the materials with children.

Developmentally appropriate practice trainings are available throughout the state. A list of scheduled trainings is available at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/training>.



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Kits will be given to programs by their technical consultants, during their consultation time.



## Provider Cohort Models



To offer child care providers additional options for professional development, Child Care Resource & Referral agencies (CCR&Rs) and SFTA recently implemented cohort models offering child care providers an innovative learning environment based on peer-learning. Cohorts were offered by seven CCR&R member agencies across Wisconsin and led by a trainer and/or Technical Consultant. These cohorts focused on providers offering infant/toddler care or family child care.

“The goal of the cohort sessions is increased knowledge and skills for participating providers,” said Abbe Braun, SFTA Professional Development Manager who helped to plan and implement the cohort model. “But it is also focused on providers building sustainable relationships with other providers in their area.”

A cohort session may include a mini-lecture from the cohort trainer on a topic of the providers’ choosing and related activities, or sharing and reflection—such as journaling. Sometimes providers are given homework to do between sessions, and all participants have access to onsite technical assistance from the cohort leader.

Cohorts started in February of 2017, meeting for 2-hour sessions once a month—with the same providers attending each month—to discuss topics that participating

providers chose to address, such as program environments, relationship-building and business practices. There were 100 participating providers across all agency cohorts. Initial cohort sessions wrapped up in September, with a total of 8 sessions for each cohort group. Providers had the chance to connect with an expert through their cohort leader, as well as with others in their field with ideas and strategies they can learn from. This is why—though an emphasis was placed on engaging automated 2 Star providers—participating providers ranged from auto 2 Star, to 4 and 5 Star providers (as rated by YoungStar, Wisconsin’s Child Care Quality Rating and Improvement System), offering providers a range of experience to pull from. In addition to the knowledge they gained, cohort participants received Registry credit and had the option to earn a credit from an institute of higher education.

SFTA is currently working to cultivate local supports in member agency service areas to implement a second, similar cohort model. Future cohorts may also be funded in part through SFTA’s T&TA and YoungStar contracts.

*Cohort models were made possible due to Race to the Top funding through the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families.*

## Five Reasons (Plus One) Why You Should Continue Your Education



Over 650 early childhood educators are currently on T.E.A.C.H. scholarships and engaged in advancing their education. Others are awaiting their opportunity for a scholarship, and planning ahead. And, still others are pursuing ECE degrees prior to working in the field or supporting their own education while working. As one semester comes to a close and plans are being made for the next, perhaps you’re wondering, “Can I really do this or continue to do this? Will I be able to balance family, work, and my professional studies? Is it all worth it? Should I wait?”

In a recent [blog post, Sarah Hasan](#), a student at National Louis University, outlined five reasons she decided to continue her education. Perhaps some of them resonate with you. Continuing your education:

1. Extends your qualifications; having a credential or degree provides you with a competitive edge,
2. Demonstrates success to current and future employers,
3. Builds your confidence; the more knowledge you have the more thoughtful decisions you will make,
4. Polishes your current skills and helps you discover or

rediscover other skills,

5. Helps you become a better team player because managing that balancing act helps you identify your leadership skills and makes collaboration with others essential.

If you’re looking for some supportive resources to help with [study skills](#), [time management and organization](#), or [developing support systems](#), check out the resources the WECA website. And when things get harried for you, don’t give up without a fight. Dropping or withdrawing from courses can have negative impacts, including financial ones. Talk with your instructors, your supporters, your center director, and your T.E.A.C.H. Counselor. We are all invested in your success!

Oh, and the “plus one” reason: Continuing your education is in your nature; teachers are learners, too!

<http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/>



# Three Years of Regulatory Information Now on Child Care Finder



Due to new Federal Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) requirements, states are now required to post three years of regulatory information about child care programs on the Department of Children and Families (DCF) website. The Regulated Child Care and YoungStar Public Search website, often referred to as the Child Care Finder, has been posting child care information since 2008, providing valuable information to parents, providers, and the public about regulated child care programs in Wisconsin.

As of September 29, 2017, the Department started adding a third year of regulatory history. The type of regulatory information shared on the website will not change. What will change is the **volume** of the information posted.



Visit the Child Care Finder to view your program's regulatory history.  
<https://childcarefinder.wisconsin.gov>

# Developmental Readiness and Solid Foods



Introducing solid foods too early may cause an infant to consume less breast milk or iron-fortified formula and not get enough essential nutrients for proper growth. There is also a higher risk of choking if solid foods are introduced too early because the infant has not developed the necessary skills to eat solid foods. Weight gain in early years and being overweight later in life are also risks associated with introducing solid foods too early. These reasons are very important to keep in mind when it comes to introducing solid foods to an infant's diet.

Infants are typically ready to accept solid foods around six months of age. However, age is not the best way to determine if an infant is ready for solid foods. An infant's readiness depends on his or her rate of development. The American Academy of Pediatrics (<https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/HALF-Implementation-Guide/Age-Specific-Content/pages/infant-food-and-feeding.aspx>) provides guidelines on determining when an infant is developmentally ready to accept solid foods. These guidelines are as follows:

- The infant is able to sit in a high chair, feeding seat, or infant seat with good head control;
- The infant opens his or her mouth when food comes his or her way. He or she may watch others eat, reach for food, and seem eager to be fed;
- The infant can move food from a spoon into his or her mouth; and
- The infant has doubled his or her birthweight.

For additional resources on developmental readiness,



refer to the following resources:

- Developmental Readiness handout from DPI ([https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/community-nutrition/pdf/infant\\_development\\_readiness\\_handout.pdf](https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/community-nutrition/pdf/infant_development_readiness_handout.pdf))
- WIC's informative handout on recognizing infant development skills and infant cues ([https://wicworks.fns.usda.gov/wicworks/WIC\\_Learning\\_Online/support/job\\_aids/cues.pdf](https://wicworks.fns.usda.gov/wicworks/WIC_Learning_Online/support/job_aids/cues.pdf))
- CACFP 06-2017 Feeding Infants and Meal Pattern Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; Questions and Answers (<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP06-2017os.pdf>)
- Feeding Infants: A Guide for Use in the Child Nutrition Programs (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/feeding-infants-guide-use-child-nutrition-programs>)