



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

## MyWIChildCare and Wisconsin Shares Updates for Providers

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## Policy Changes Regarding Parent’s Work Schedules



As you may be aware, there are significant changes coming to the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy program with the implementation of the MyWIChildCare EBT cards. These changes affect both providers and parents.

YoungStar has encouraged child care programs to share a newsletter with parents on a number of different topics. DCF would like to offer content that could be included in your newsletters to help parents who are receiving Wisconsin Shares subsidy understand changes what will affect them during this transition period.

### Under MyWIChildCare, there are important policy changes that parents need to know.

One change is that parents need to provide their most accurate and current work (or other activity) schedule(s) when speaking with their child care authorization worker. The authorization worker will determine the correct number of subsidized child care hours the family is eligible to use for work or other activity schedule provided.



Parents must be prepared to provide up to four weeks of either their actual or their anticipated schedules. The work schedule provided by the parent is expected to correspond to the employment verification that has also been provided.

Parents with questions about what they need to provide during their child care authorization assessment should contact their local Wisconsin Shares agency. A list of Wisconsin Shares agency contacts is available on the DCF website at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wishares/where-to-apply>.

### 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/>

## Do you currently have subsidy funds being recouped for an overpayment?



**The overpayment collecting procedure is changing.** Please review these examples to understand the changes.

**Now:** Provider’s future subsidy payments are deducted when subsidy funds are owed to the state and the program still has authorizations. The provider’s funds are decreased until the debt is paid off.

**Example:** Susan operates a licensed family child

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### Overpayment collection procedures changing continued from page 1

care center and has two children with Wisconsin Shares authorizations. She has an overpayment of \$200, so \$50 a month is deducted from her Wisconsin Shares funds. This money is applied to her overpayment. This will continue until the overpayment is fully paid.

**Future:** After the release of the MyWIChildCare Initiative, all overpayments will be repaid out-of-pocket, directly to the state. Providers may work with the Public Assistance Collections Unit (PACU) to set a repayment amount that is manageable for them. The provider then will have to submit monthly payments to the PACU to repay this amount until the debt is paid off.

**Example:** Under the new system, Susan's overpayment of \$200 will be paid to the state directly through a Repayment Agreement and monthly payments until the \$200 is returned.

*\*If you currently have funds being recouped for an overpayment, you will receive a notice by approximately July of 2017, with the remaining amount of the overpayment and the Repayment Agreement instructions.*

## Reminder: Never keep a client's MyWIChildCare EBT card, account number, or PIN

If you or your staff is found in possession of another parent's EBT card, account number, PIN, or any representation of these items, you may be issued an overpayment and/or permanently suspended from the program.

**Do not risk it.  
Never ask for your client's EBT cards!**



### What is fraud?

Breaking the rules of the program or using the funds for anything other than the care of children is fraud.

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/progintegrity/fraud>

## Child Care Provider Portal Updates

The MyWIChildCare EBT Initiative has many new tools for providers, including the new Child Care Provider Portal. This is a new website, which allows providers to log in and see information pertaining to the provider.

Provider Portal information includes:

- YoungStar details and YoungStar Quality Adjustment payment information
- Information pertaining to Wisconsin Shares EBT authorizations at your center
- Regulation information
- Provider-reported pricing information
- Contact information
- Provider documents

Please take a moment to explore the new Child Care Provider Portal using your existing CCPI login information by visiting <https://mywchildcareproviders.wisconsin.gov>, or copy and paste the URL into your web browser. If you do not have access to CCPI and would like to request it, instructions are available on the DCF website. Add the

Child Care Provider Portal URL to your Internet favorites for future reference.

Be sure to visit the MyWIChildCare website at <https://mywchildcare.wisconsin.gov> for the latest information and to access online training tools and frequently asked questions for both parents and providers.





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## Rollout of Milwaukee County MyWIChildCare EBT Initiative Extended Until April 2017

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is extending the rollout of the MyWIChildCare EBT initiative in Milwaukee County until April 2, 2017, to ensure that all Milwaukee County parents and child care providers have the information and training they need to have a successful transition to the MyWIChildCare EBT Card.

### Milwaukee Early Care Administration (MECA)

Authorization staff has been working diligently since October 2016 to transition over 22,000 child care authorizations to the MyWIChildCare EBT system. MECA has also planned a number of activities to assist parents and child care providers in learning more about the new way to pay for child care. MECA is holding an Open House for providers and parents every Monday and Tuesday from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. until March 31, 2017. Our office is located at 1220 W Vliet Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor East, Milwaukee, WI 53205.

To receive more information about MyWIChildCare, please visit our website at <https://mywchildcare.wisconsin.gov> or contact MECA staff at 1-888-947-6583 Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Here are a few things Milwaukee County child care providers and parents can do to prepare to transition to MyWIChildCare.

- Wisconsin Shares parents who reside in Milwaukee County will receive their MyWIChildCare EBT cards in March 2017. The card must be activated as soon as it is received.
- All child care providers should continue to prepare and complete their FIS Provider Agreements.
- Parents and providers can also visit the Open House at MECA
- Parents and providers are encouraged to access the MyWIChildCare training videos through <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/mywchildcare> by clicking the blue parent or provider tab.
  - ◊ Using Your MyWIChildCare EBT Card (parents) – also available in Spanish
  - ◊ Child Care Parent Portal Video (parent)
  - ◊ Child Care Provider Portal Video (provider)
  - ◊ MyWIChildCare EBT Basics for Providers

Be on the lookout for Milwaukee County buses as they will be displaying information about MyWIChildCare EBT

cards.





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### YoungStar Update for Newly Accredited Programs



As of October 2016, the Department of Children and Families switched to running monthly YoungStar ratings as part of the MyWICildCare initiative. This means that for newly accredited programs, the effective date of any corresponding 4 or 5 Star rating is the first of the month following the accreditation award date. This policy change was initiated to align with the monthly rating cycle.

YoungStar accepts the following accreditations as equivalent to a 5 Star rating.

- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
- Association for Early Learning Leaders' National Accreditation Commission
- City of Madison Group and School-Age Accreditation

YoungStar accepts the following accreditations as equivalent to a 4 Star rating.

- Council on Accreditation (COA)
- National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)
- Satellite Family Child Care Accreditation (in the greater Madison area)
- American Camp Association (ACA)

YoungStar accepts the following accreditations as equivalent to a 4 Star or a 5 Star rating, as long as additional educational requirements are met.

- National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA)
- AdvancED
- American Montessori Society (AMS)

When a program becomes newly accredited by any of the accrediting organizations outlined above, it is the responsibility of the program to send their certificate of accreditation to the Department of Children and Families via fax: **608-224-6178** or via email to: [youngstar@wisconsin.gov](mailto:youngstar@wisconsin.gov).

For more information about accreditation policy, please review the YoungStar Accreditation Policy on the DCF website: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/policies/accreditation-policy.pdf>.

### Inclusion Resources Just a Click Away



Did you know that the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) has a webpage dedicated to early childhood inclusion? It is located within DCF's YoungStar website: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci>

We understand the important responsibility that child care providers have when it comes to including young children with special needs in all aspects of their program. In order to assist you with finding resources around the topic of inclusion, we have created a section within the YoungStar website that brings together research-based activities and supports that you can use to support the inclusion of all children.

We want to draw your attention to one of the resources located under the list of recommended activities (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci/activities-supports>). It comes from the University of North Carolina's Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute (FPG), and it centers on **"Incorporating Evidence-Based Practices"** into your child care program. The FPG site is broken up into a variety of "Landing Pads," each of which focuses on a different topic. For example, under the landing pad for Children with Exceptionalities, you will find a list of accessible resources for supporting the inclusion of children that are culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse. This list contains videos, text documents, and websites that offer research-based examples of best practices within each designated content area or landing pad. <http://scriptnc.fpg.unc.edu/resource-search>

Please take time to explore the many resources contained within the YoungStar Inclusion web pages. Check back frequently for updates and additional resources.





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### Introducing SFTA's ERS Observers and What to Expect from a Formal Rating



What does going through a formal rating mean for your child care program? If you are a provider seeking to earn a 4 or 5 Star rating in YoungStar, your program must either be [accredited](#) or undergo formal rating, where an Environment Rating Scale (ERS) observation is completed by an ERS Observer to assess the quality of your child care program's environment. ERS Observers complete an observation using the rating tool(s) appropriate to the type of program and age of the children in your care:

- [Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale, Revised Edition \(ITERS-R\)](#)
- [Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, Revised Edition \(ECERS-R\)](#)
- [Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale \(FCCERS-R\)](#)
- [School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale Updated \(SACERS-U\)](#)

You'll find the YoungStar accreditation policy on the Department of Children and Families (DCF) website: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/policies/accreditation-policy.pdf>. The complete ERS information is available here: <http://ersi.info/>.

Formal rating is an important step in quality for many providers. As such, SFTA's ERS Observers have been hard at work delivering formal ratings and becoming trained and reliable in the rating scales since they took on formal rating in July 2016. Meet the ERS Observer team:

- Sarah LaBine, ERS Observer (Trained & Reliable in ITERS & ECERS), [sarahl@supportingfamilies.together.org](mailto:sarahl@supportingfamilies.together.org)
- Jenny Martin, ERS Observer (Trained & Reliable in ITERS & ECERS), [jenny@supportingfamilies.together.org](mailto:jenny@supportingfamilies.together.org)
- Leah Purcell, ERS Observer (Trained & Reliable in ITERS, ECERS & FCCERS), [leah@supportingfamilies.together.org](mailto:leah@supportingfamilies.together.org)
- Amanda Schroeder, ERS Observer (Trained & Reliable in ITERS, ECERS & SACERS), [amandas@supportingfamilies.together.org](mailto:amandas@supportingfamilies.together.org)
- Scott Schweiger, YoungStar Rating Manager (Trained & Reliable in SACERS), [scott@supportingfamilies.together.org](mailto:scott@supportingfamilies.together.org)
- Sue VanderLoop, ERS Observer

(Trained & Reliable in ITERS & ECERS), [sue@supportingfamilies.together.org](mailto:sue@supportingfamilies.together.org)

In addition to the [formal rating resources on the YoungStar website](#), SFTA has created a [webpage dedicated to formal rating](#), containing an ERS observation walk-through, formal rating FAQs, high impact points in formal rating and more. It's a great place to get started if you are considering going through a formal rating, and you can always talk to your Technical Consultant (TC) if you have further questions as you move forward.

#### YoungStar Formal Rating Information:

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/ers>

**SFTA Formal Rating information:** <http://supportingfamilies.together.org/formal-rating-in-youngstar/>

Aside from the webpage, there have been some changes to the formal rating process since SFTA has been providing these services. You may notice as a provider:

- Your TC now scores the entire YoungStar Evaluation Criteria. Your ERS Observer, formerly called a Formal Rater, only completes ERS Observations.
- Your TC is your primary contact for all YoungStar Services. Prior to your formal rating request, your TC may help you prepare for your rating. Once you submit a formal rating request, you are assigned an ERS Observer who will complete your formal rating. When your formal rating window starts, your TC is no longer able to assist in preparation for the rating. When the observation is complete, your ERS Observer will contact you with the results and will meet with you and your TC for final consultation/feedback.
- Your ERS Observer strives to communicate with your TC throughout the formal rating process so that they are giving you consistent information and can partner to support you through your formal rating.

As of January 2017, ERS Observers have received 151 formal rating requests, with 24 providers requesting their first formal rating. Several SFTA ERS Observers are currently training to become reliable in additional ERS scales so that they can complete formal ratings for a wider expanse of programs.





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### New WECA Grants Raise Childhood Teacher Visibility and Value

Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA) is proud to announce two new national grants it has received.

#### Moving the Needle on Early Childhood Compensation

is a project sponsored by the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Center. Its goal is to raise the awareness of early childhood workforce compensation issues, and create new or significantly expand policy, advocacy, and funding strategies to improve compensation within the participating states. As one of five national grant recipients, WECA has convened a diverse Wisconsin team of individuals, including a representative of DCF, as well as representatives of our profession and of our broader community. Over the course of this year, they will be developing a state action plan. The findings from all five states will be widely disseminated, so look for more information to come.

**Power to the Profession** is a project of NAEYC, along

with 14 other national organizations. This project focuses on bringing diverse people together – with early childhood professionals at the center – to define our profession by establishing a unifying framework for career pathways, knowledge and competencies, qualifications, standards, and compensation. Over the next two years, WECA staff will be facilitating focus groups, workshop sessions, town-hall type meetings, one-on-one conversations, and more. This is a project about having the voices of Wisconsin early childhood professionals at the table as we take necessary steps towards our vision of a profession that exemplifies excellence, is widely recognized as performing a vital role in our society, and is supported by policy and financing strategies. As the project gets underway, WECA will use its website, social media, and a variety of communication tools to share opportunities for your involvement, so stay tuned!

### Child Care Collaborative Programs Update

Child care programs that participate with local school districts in offering a 4-year-old kindergarten option may want to review the latest update to the frequently asked questions (FAQ) on collaborative programs. The

Collaborative Child Care Programs FAQ is located on the DCF website: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cclicensing/collaborativecc-faq>. If you have questions, please contact your licensing specialist.

### Child Care Information Center

[ccic.wi.gov](http://ccic.wi.gov)

1.800.362.7353

[ccic@wisconsin.gov](mailto:ccic@wisconsin.gov)

#### Information to Answer Your Questions

- Free brochures, tip sheets, and articles
- Consultation to help you find trustworthy information
- Help using CCIC, Licensing, YoungStar, and Registry websites
- Referrals to other agencies, websites, and experts

#### CCIC Web Pages

- FREE materials to print or order online for licensing compliance and parent support
- New online catalog to easily search for books and DVDs to borrow from CCIC
- *Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards* purchasing information

#### Lending Library

- Specialized books and DVDs loaned through the mail for only the cost of return postage—or delivered to your local public library for you to pick up and return there
- Materials recommended by YoungStar and Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards
- For training, self-study, problem solving, and quality improvement
- DVDs loaned for one week, books for two weeks

*CCIC is funded by DCF and administered by the Department of Public Instruction. CCIC serves anyone in the field of early care and education and afterschool care in Wisconsin.*

