



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

## Benefits of Family-Style Dining

Compiled by the Department of Public Instruction

Family-style dining has many benefits. It allows children to practice social skills like sharing, taking turns, and saying “please” and “thank you.” Family-style dining also allows children to develop gross and fine motor skills by performing tasks such as pouring their own milk and serving their own food. It allows children to feel in control of their eating; they are given the opportunity to decide what to eat and how much to serve themselves.

In family-style dining, the child care providers should sit at the table with the children and act as role models by

demonstrating healthy eating habits and appropriate table manners. Adults can encourage children to develop positive attitudes about foods and are able to minimize distractions and redirect inappropriate behavior.

To serve meals family-style, all food and milk are placed on the table at the beginning of the meal service. The food and milk available should allow for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) portion size required for each child to be served.

Encourage the children to try all foods and assist them with serving as needed. Do not force the children to eat any food or to eat more food than they want. Make mealtime enjoyable by making positive comments and smiling.

To make family-style dining easier for children, make sure to use child-



sized tables, chairs, serving bowls, pitchers, plates, cups, and serving utensils. Family-style dining takes time, but persistence will result in children who will develop lifetime skills at an early age.

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## Licensed Provider Surveys

In September, the Bureau of Early Care Regulation (BECR) launched a new statewide effort to solicit feedback from child care licensees and license applicants using Survey Monkey. Three customer satisfaction surveys have been created to gather comments on an ongoing basis from child care applicants, current licensees, and closed providers.

All responses provided to the surveys are anonymous. The answers are compiled and summarized by staff in the Bureau of Operations and Planning (BOP), who provide periodic summary reports for BECR staff. BECR will use the survey responses to improve services delivered to child care centers.

If you are a licensed provider interested in providing feedback to BECR, you will find the survey links here: <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/licensed/provider-survey.htm>. We welcome your comments!



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### Fingerprint-Based Background Checks—Reminder



In 2013, Wisconsin Act 20 was signed into law. This Act requires all regulated child care providers who accept Wisconsin Shares reimbursement to complete a one-time fingerprint-based criminal background check. This requirement applies to all licensees, certified providers, adults that reside at the child care address, and all employees who care for children.

**The Department requires full compliance no later than January 1, 2016.**

Failure to comply with the one-time background check may result in your Wisconsin Shares Child Care Authorizations ending 30 days after the date of this notice. If an individual had a fingerprint check conducted due to residing out of state, they will not be required to submit fingerprints again to meet this new requirement. If your child care program has already met this requirement, you may disregard this reminder. The fingerprint requirement may be completed through Fieldprint®. Individuals may schedule an appointment online using the Fieldprint® website. <http://fieldprintwisconsin.com/>

**Licensed Child Care Providers:** If you have questions regarding this requirement, contact the Background Unit at 608-266-8001.

**Certified Child Care Providers:** If you have questions regarding this requirement, contact your certifying agency.

### Updated Foster Parent Guide Published



An updated version of the *Wisconsin Shares Subsidized Child Care Resource Guide for Licensed Foster Parents* has been published to the DCF website at

[http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/publications/pdf/dcf\\_p\\_492.pdf](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/publications/pdf/dcf_p_492.pdf).

The guide is written to help all Wisconsin licensed foster parents, subsidized guardians, and families that receive a Kinship Care payment for a child for whom they also have guardianship or court-ordered placement. Eligibility and participation requirements for Wisconsin Shares are the same for all these types of situations; the guide uses the term “foster parent” to refer to all three. The guide contains important information for foster parents including the application process, financial and non-financial eligibility determination, authorization types, and foster parent child care costs.

### 2016 Evaluation Criteria Updates



All YoungStar participating programs with anniversary dates in 2016 will need to use the 2016 Evaluation Criteria. The documents are located on the YoungStar website at:

<http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/point-detail.htm>.

Two major changes to the criteria:

- The grace period for replacing staff when a staff departure causes a star level to change will increase from 60 calendar days to 90 calendar days beginning January 1, 2016.
- Beginning in 2017, programs will be required to be rated every other year with the option of an annual rating, if requested by the program. Additionally, the YoungStar Evaluation Criteria will be updated every other year as well. Planning for these changes will begin in 2016 with full rollout in 2017.





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### Wisconsin Shares Special Needs Higher Rate Request Form



Operations Memo 15-37 (<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/dhcaa/memos/15-37.pdf>) introduced the requirement for local county and tribal agencies to use form

DCF-F-2976, (<http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/forms/doc/2976.doc>) *Wisconsin Shares Special Needs Higher Rate Request*, to document requests for a higher reimbursement rate for a child with special needs. Parents are required to submit the *Wisconsin Shares Special Needs Higher Rate Request* form, DCF-F-2976, to request a higher reimbursement rate for a special needs child.

In addition to providing the agency with a statement that the child has a special need by a physician or medical provider, the parent may also submit supporting documentation of the need from a physician, special educator, or other licensed professional including: an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) from Birth to 3; an Individualized Education Program (IEP) from a school district; or a 504 plan (child has an alternative plan in place to provide some assistance to participate fully in school).

Child care providers must complete the section of the form titled "Provider Rationale". This rationale may include the child's additional needs for care that are not accounted for in the regular Wisconsin Shares reimbursement rate, and should identify the specific additional care that is needed for physical, behavioral, or educational needs. Providers may also use this form to request training and technical assistance from the local Child Care Resource and Referral Agency or YoungStar Technical Consultant regarding care for special needs children.

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

### New Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Policy Manual

A new Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Policy Manual has been published and is now available in an electronic and searchable format here <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/ccpolicymanual/>.

The new PDF version of the manual is located on the same web page as where it was located previously: <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/wishares/manual.htm>.



The new policy manual includes information that was previously published in Operations Memos, technical corrections, and wording changes to clarify policy intent. In addition, the overall organization of the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Policy Manual has been changed and is now organized as follows:

- Chapter 1: Eligibility
- Chapter 2: Authorizations
- Chapter 3: Program Integrity Client
- Chapter 4: Program Integrity Child Care Provider

All expired manuals are available at <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/wishares/expiredsharesdocs.htm>

### MECA Corner

(Milwaukee County Providers Only)

### School-Age Reporting Forms

**Reminder to Providers:** Turn in School-Age Reporting forms. Make sure all children are updated with the proper schools they attend. Providers will not be paid any school bank hours for any children missing on the sheets. If you need assistance on how to correctly bill for school closed hours or any other billing practices, contact our front desk for information on training opportunities (414-289-6842).



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### Physical Activity and Nutrition Evaluation Criteria Updates

For 2017, YoungStar indicator D.1.1, Program serves nutritious meal, snacks, and beverages and D.1.2, 60 minutes of physical activity per day, will be changing to 90 minutes of physical activity per day. By the end of 2015, the Wisconsin Early Childhood Obesity Prevention Initiative workgroup will have strategies to help programs meet both D.1.1 and D.1.2.

For **D.1.1 in YoungStar**, a program will look at a chosen focus area(s) (Healthy Bites, Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care or Gardening) and:

- Complete a self-assessment process
- Use a Quality Improvement Plan process to set one to three goals based on the self-assessment results
- Implement identified evidence-based strategies to achieve the identified goals
- Demonstrate one to two program policies that support the goals of the focus area(s).

Programs will continue to be required to serve nutritious meals, snacks, and beverages, and have policies and procedures on-site to address children's allergies and accommodate dietary restrictions.

For **D.1.2**, a program will need to demonstrate two items:

- Children are participating in physical activity for 90 minutes per day. This will be adjusted for younger age groups under three (3) and programs with part-time programming.
- A program will:
  - ◇ Complete a self-assessment process
  - ◇ Use a Quality Improvement Plan process to set one to three goals based on the self-assessment results
  - ◇ Implement identified evidence-based strategies to achieve the goals that were identified
  - ◇ Demonstrate one to two program policies that support the goals increasing physical activity and supporting children's physical/motor development



There will be opportunity for programs to utilize training, resource kits, and technical assistance support.

### Milk Requirements *compiled by the Department of Public Instruction*



Milk is an excellent source of protein, calcium, and vitamin D, and is the primary source of calcium in the American diet. The requirement on the type of milk served in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and is dependent upon the development stage. All milk served must be pasteurized and meet the Grade A milk standards set by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection. Fat-free (skim) and low fat (1%) milk is provided to children two years of age and older



since less fat is required for development at the age of two years.

As a reminder, the CACFP requirements for milk served are as follows:

- Children two years of age and older **must** be served fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk, fat-free or low-fat lactose reduced milk, fat-free or low fat lactose-free milk, or fat-free or low-fat buttermilk. Choosing fat-free or low-fat milk provides the same important nutrients as whole milk and reduced-fat milk, but with less fat and fewer calories. Whole milk and reduced-fat (2%) milk **may not** be served to participants over two years of age.
- Children 12 through 23 months of age are able to receive any fat content of milk (whole, reduced-fat, low fat or fat-free) and the milk can be flavored or unflavored. It is recommended that the child receives whole or reduced-fat (2%) milk.



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

### Earning and Understanding the Family Engagement Point(s)

*By Supporting Families Together Association*

#### The Requirements and Why

When a family is actively engaged in their child's early learning, in child care and at home, it not only positions them to better understand their child's growth and needs, it strengthens supports for that child's development and school readiness (NAEYC <https://www.naeyc.org/content/research-news-family-engagement>). The importance of this connection is why the 2016 YoungStar Draft Evaluation Criteria states that starting in 2017 child care programs participating in YoungStar will be required to earn points for family engagement practices; one point to earn a 3 Star, and two points to earn a 4 or 5 Star.

The family engagement criteria consist of five categories: (from Group and Family 2016 Draft Evaluation Criteria <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/point-detail.htm>)

**Transition:** An ongoing process to ensure children and families are informed and supported through changes in a child's placement within, or in relation to, their child care program.

#### Family Involvement

**(Engagement):** Family involvement is participation of families in events and activities the program plans *for* families. Family engagement is the ongoing, shared responsibility by programs and families to support children's learning and development, where families work *with* programs to plan events, activities, and program changes. Involvement = for families, engagement = with families.

**Family Communications Strategies:** If programs know how to most effectively communicate with the families in their care, they can build meaningful relationships.

**Family Support Strategies:** When programs have the tools and strategies in place to support families in areas of need, especially during stressful times, it enhances positive interactions between the program and the family, as well as the family and their child.

**Family/Community Connection Strategies:** By building and maintaining strong relationships throughout their community, with family support organizations, businesses, etc., early education programs can more readily connect families with extra supports when needed.



Beyond these categories, depending on the star level your program is striving to achieve or maintain, there are tiered requirements that demonstrate the depth of the activities you implement, a set amount of categories that have to be covered, and a certain number of family engagement activities that programs must achieve.

#### Additional Technical Consultation and Training Available

Some additional technical consultation may be handy in navigating this process if family engagement is newer to you. While not required to earn the family engagement point(s), there is the option for programs who would like extra support to apply for technical consultation specific to earning the family engagement point(s). This support would be in addition to any technical consultation programs are already receiving through YoungStar.

Technical Consultants can guide programs through family engagement by giving them feedback and ideas for meeting requirements and identifying what types of family engagement are already happening in the program.

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### Earning and Understanding the Family Engagement Point(s) *(continued from page 5)*

Aside from additional consultation, child care providers can also access a free or low-cost family engagement training that is currently available across the state: *Family Engagement: Partnering with Families for Children's Success*. This training, like the additional consultation, is not required, but is an optional support. To inquire about applying for additional consultation for family engagement or to find a family engagement training in your area, contact your local YoungStar Office (<http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/localoffice.htm>) or call 1-888-713-KIDS (5437).

*(Consultation and training is made possible by funding from the Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge Grant at the Department of Children and Families).*

### Further Resources and Examples

If you still feel like you could use some extra resources in preparing to earn the family engagement point(s) check out this What Works in Family Support blog post (<http://tinyurl.com/o9xw4hj>) for some sample activities from each category in the family engagement criteria, or visit the resources below!

- YoungStar: <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/parents.htm>
- Harvard Family Resource Project: Family Involvement: <http://www.hfrp.org/family-involvement>
- Bringing the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework to Your Program: Beginning a PFCE Assessment: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/fta-system/family/docs/ncpfce-assessment-101411.pdf>

**Sign Up for Your  
Training Today!**

## YoungStar Inclusion News and Updates



### Inclusion Tip Sheets

Inclusion Tip Sheets are now available on the YoungStar website at: <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci/tipsheets.htm>. You will find tip sheets on Child Development, Challenging Behaviors, Environment, and more. Feel free to read, download, and share with parents of children in your care, as well as with other staff.

### Federal Policy Statement on Inclusion

Finally, we are excited about the Joint Statement from the US Department of Education and Department of Health and Human Services on Inclusion that was released September 14, 2015. (See it here: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/earlylearning/joint-statement-full-text.pdf>.) It offers many ideas on how to build and strengthen the network of support of inclusion for child care providers and families who care for children with disabilities.

Stay tuned for more updates about how we are striving to support you to learn and understand how inclusion can be incorporated in your child care!

## Wisconsin's Child Care and Development Fund Plan

Wisconsin's Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plan will be published to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) public website and made available to the public for comment in early December 2015. The CCDF Plan provides detailed information on how Wisconsin will meet the requirements of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014.

The CCDBG is a grant given to the states and territories by the federal government. It is the primary source of federal funding for child care subsidies to assist low-income working families and to provide funds to improve child care quality.

In November 2014, the CCDBG Act of 2014 was signed into law and makes significant advancements in health and safety requirements, eligibility policies, quality improvement and transparency of information about child care services and choices.

Beginning in March of 2016; each state must submit its Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) Plan to federal Administration for Children and Families every 3 years. The CCDF Plan is a public document describing the administration and funding of Wisconsin's child care subsidy, regulation and quality programs.

A public hearing on the plan has been scheduled for January, 2016. Additional details regarding the public hearing will be posted on the DCF CCDBG Act of 2014 website: <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/ccdbg/default.htm>.





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### MyWIChildCare Updates (formerly EBT Parent Pay)

The EBT Parent Pay project has been re-named **MyWIChildCare**, and the initiative is on track for implementation of phase 1 in the La Crosse area WREA consortia for October 2016, and for phase 2 in Milwaukee County and the Balance of State outside of WREA for February 2017. The BITS team has begun the development phase of the project. Please visit our webpage for the latest information at <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/mywchildcare/default.htm>

#### POS Devices

The Division of Early Care and Education (DECE) has been conducting provider outreach events within the WREA Consortia to answer questions and to discuss the transition from current state to future state. Recent questions have centered on the Point of Sale device used to process MyWIChildCare payments. Our vendor, FIS, is under contract to provide this equipment to those providers who want one. This is completely optional to providers.

Parents may use the MyWIChildCare card to pay providers in three different ways.

- **Option 1 – Point of Sale Device (POS):** The Department of Children and Families has contracted with EBT card vendor, FIS, to provide optional Point of Sale Devices to Wisconsin child care providers. *The system for MyWIChildCare will only work with POS devices that have been provided by FIS.* FIS charges a fee of \$14.50 per month to those providers that want the convenience of a POS card swipe unit.
- **Option 2 – the FIS website [www.ebtEDGE.com](http://www.ebtEDGE.com).** Providers and parents can access the website via a desktop computer or mobile device to process or review payments. This option is provided at no cost and may be used 24 hours per day, seven days a week.
- **Option 3 – a telephone-based Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system.** Providers and parents can process or review payments by telephone. This is provided at no cost and may be used 24 hours per day, seven days a week.



We have been told there are some businesses out there attempting to market a Point of Sale Device to providers for this program. **Third party point of sale devices will not be able to process Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) transactions for MyWIChildCare.** The FIS machines will only process EBT transactions. Credit and debit cards will not work with FIS equipment.

If you have questions, please feel free to email us at [DCFMBDECEParentPay@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DCFMBDECEParentPay@wisconsin.gov). We welcome your questions and concerns and will try to provide timely responses to questions.

### Training Corner

#### WECA Training Opportunities

In addition to many in-person training opportunities, Wisconsin Early Childhood Association offers a free online training – *Cultivating Childhood Wellness Through Gardening*. See a full calendar of upcoming training opportunities here: <http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/training/>

#### SFTA Training Opportunities

Supporting Families Together Association offers a variety of trainings and consultations to help you sharpen your professional skills. See their training calendar here: <http://supportingfamilies.together.org/wp-content/uploads/Annual-Training-Calendar.pdf>

#### The Registry Training Opportunities

Visit The Registry training tab to find the current class listings in your region of the state. You'll find in-person and web-based learning opportunities here: <https://www.the-registry.org/myregistry/>





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

## Wisconsin Early Child Care Study (WECCS)



- The Wisconsin Early Child Care Study (WECCS), also known as the YoungStar Validation Study, was led by Dr. Katherine Magnuson of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, School of Social Work and the Institute for Research on Poverty.
- Study design:
  - ◊ 155 group and family child care programs in the Northeastern and Milwaukee YoungStar regions
  - ◊ Conducted in winter of 2013-14
  - ◊ Tools used:
    - Environment Rating Scale (ERS) tools to observe quality in programs serving three to five year olds
    - Parents, teachers, and administrators surveys
- The study, in part, was designed to determine two things:
  - ◊ Whether the YoungStar rating scale differentiates between programs according to their levels of independently observed quality
  - ◊ The extent to which the number of points within each rating domain predicts the observed quality
- Results from analyses of the data show:
  - ◊ YoungStar does differentiate among programs of varying observed quality. Specifically, programs rated at the 2 Star level had lower observed levels of quality than programs at the 3-5 Star levels.
  - ◊ The total number of points in all four rating domains predicted observed quality.
  - ◊ The differences were statistically significant and meaningful.
- The executive summary and full report are available on the YoungStar website: <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/media.htm>. (See the news headline *YoungStar Validation Study Shows Higher Rated Programs Demonstrate Higher Quality* for complete details.)

## Programs Should Add the Number of Hours Classrooms are Open Per Week to Registry Program Profiles

Beginning January 1, 2016, some indicators in YoungStar are affected by the number of hours a classroom is open per week in The Registry Program Profile. **Programs are advised to review their Program Profiles and update or add the number of hours per week each classroom is open.** Visit <https://www.the-registry.org/> to update your profile.

### Edit Classroom

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Classroom Name\*:  Delete Classroom

Start Date\*:

Hours Open Per Week\*: