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Division of Early Care and Education

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Wisconsin Department of Children and Families

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Note: CSAW User Guides are located in the CSAW Users SharePoint site (login required).

Chapter 1 Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program

Section 1.1 Program Purpose

Wisconsin Shares assists low-income families with a portion of the cost of quality child care while they are working or participating in activities that will lead to work. Activities that will lead to work include participation in:

- Wisconsin Works (W-2)
- FoodShare Employment and Training (FSET)
- Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (Tribal TANF)
- Eligible educational activities

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 1.2 Statutory Authority

Wisconsin Shares was created under Wisconsin Statutes ss. 49.141 through 49.161 and specifically s. 49.155, and Wisconsin Administrative Code DCF Chs. 101, 102, and 201. The program is delivered locally through contracts between the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and tribes, county agencies, and Income Maintenance (IM) consortia with approval to include Child Care in their IM service delivery model. In Milwaukee County, eligibility is determined by the Department of Health Services, Milwaukee Enrollment Services (MilES). Authorizations are managed by DCF, Milwaukee Early Care Administration (MECA). Additionally, a contracted nonprofit agency manages child care subsidy for children of migrant farmworkers. For specific statutory and administrative code references, see Appendix I – Statutes and Administrative Rules.

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 1.3 Parent's Rights

Individuals served in the Wisconsin Shares program have the right to:

- Be treated with respect by state and local program staff
- Confidentiality of local agency records
- Access records and files relating to their case
    - The local agency may withhold information obtained under a promise of confidentiality to the provider of the information
- Speedy determination of eligibility and notice of any proposed change in such eligibility
- Speedy appeals of department decisions related to their case

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Chapter 2 Local Agency Requirements

Section 2.1 Local Agency Requirements

Local agencies are responsible for administering the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program under the direction of the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Local agencies are prohibited from establishing procedures that are more restrictive than the policies and guidance described in the Wisconsin Shares Handbook. The department provides local agency direction through various methods, including but not limited to:

- Wisconsin Shares Handbook
- Operations Memos
- Administrator's Memos
- Desk aids
- User Guides
- CARES Worker Web (CWW) Process Help
- Resource documents
- Templates
- Child Care Help Desk responses for case-specific guidance
- Child Care Program Committee (CCPC) meetings
- Technical Assistance
- Training resources

Specific local agency requirements are defined in the local agency's State/County and State/Tribal Child Care Contracts.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 2.2 Quality Assurance Reviews

Local agencies are required to investigate, address, and/or correct any discovered errors for:

- Federal Improper Payments (FIP)
- Fraud and Claim Referrals
- Subsidy Monitoring Reviews
- Targeted Case Reviews (TCR)

Local agencies may be required to complete a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) to prevent future errors of the same type (see Appendix III – Local Agency Program Integrity Management).

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 2.3 Confidentiality

All Wisconsin Shares case information is confidential. No person may use or disclose information regarding individuals applying for or receiving Wisconsin Shares for any purpose that is not related to the administration of Wisconsin Shares. Local agency records and data are confidential and should be open to public inspection or disclosure only when required by state or federal law. If local agencies have questions or concerns about disclosure, they should contact their local Corporation Counsel. If Corporation Counsel needs assistance, they may contact the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Office of Legal Counsel for assistance.

Safe at Home

Safe at Home is a statewide address confidentiality program administered by the Department of Justice (DOJ) that provides those who fear for their physical safety with a legal substitute address to be used for both public and private purposes. Safe at Home allows participants to use and receive mail at an assigned address in lieu of their actual address and then forwards the mail to the participants' actual address free of charge. Verification of enrollment in the Safe at Home program is self-declared; a copy of the Participant Authorization card is not required. For more information about the program, see the Safe at Home page on Wisconsin Department of Justice website and Process Help Section 10.1.

No information regarding a Safe at Home participant's actual address, including home, work, or school, may be shared under any circumstances, absent a court order. Any questions regarding this prohibition should be directed to DCF BEFORE releasing any information to anyone. This rule is absolute and includes sharing with other government programs and agencies. The parents' Safe at Home mailing address can be shared with other programs as necessary.

There is **no** reason that local agencies need the actual home, work, or school address of a Safe at Home participant to determine eligibility or establish an authorization. Any verification received that includes the parent's actual address must be censored or obscured prior to scanning the verification into the Electronic Case File (ECF). Anything regarding the parent's actual address, including home, work, or school, must not be entered in CWW.

Government Agencies and Third Parties

Information that is needed to administer Wisconsin Shares may be exchanged with other government agencies or third parties. This includes:

- Communication with Wisconsin Works (W-2) Financial and Employment Planners (FEPs) and FoodShare Employment and Training (FSET) workers regarding program activities
- Communication with the Child Support Agency (CSA) regarding good cause claims, information needed to establish a child support case, or household composition
- Communication with employers or other third parties when assisting the parent with obtaining verification
- Communication with child care providers regarding discounts, inclusion rates, or authorizations

Health Information
Certain case information is highly confidential and subject to additional safeguarding. See the ECF Handbook for additional information on Restricted Documents.

When assisting the parent with obtaining documentation needed to verify that the parent meets the policy in Section 5.2, the agency worker must obtain a signed Confidential Information Release Authorization form (DCF-F-369-E). The form is not required when the parent provides verification without requiring assistance from the local agency.

Investigations
Local agencies must not disclose the reason for or details about an investigation to any person not within the assistance group without permission from the local agency's Corporation Counsel. Local agencies can disclose any applicable information to governmental officials conducting an investigation, prosecution, or civil proceeding for Wisconsin Shares. The official must submit a written request to the local agency to obtain the information.

The request must include:

- The identity of the person requesting the information
- Their authority to request the information
- The violation under investigation
- The individual being investigated

However, the local agency must disclose information to the District Attorney (DA) and fraud investigators without a written request.

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Chapter 3 Applications and Renewals

Section 3.1 Application Process

The Wisconsin Shares eligibility determination and authorization process is a two-step process.

1. **Eligibility:** Parents must complete the application process, meet all financial and nonfinancial eligibility criteria and be determined eligible.
2. **Authorization:** Parents must select a child care provider and specific location, and request an authorization.

Wisconsin Shares cases must be managed within the applicant's county of residence or within an Income Maintenance (IM) Consortium that has been approved by the department to pool its Child Care caseload.

ACCESS applications for Wisconsin Shares are routed to the county of residence and must be processed in the county of residence, unless the local agency has an approved waiver from the department or for tribal members who have requested their application be processed by the tribal agency. IM Consortia with approved waivers determine routing rules for their own counties.

Applications for Wisconsin Shares submitted through ACCESS Add a Program (AAP) are assigned to the local agency that currently administers the case and must be processed by the assigned local agency. The ACCESS application cannot be transferred to another local agency even if the parent has moved.

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Section 3.2 Request for Assistance (RFA)

There are four (4) ways a parent may apply for Wisconsin Shares:

- By phone
- In person at the local agency
- Filling out and submitting the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Registration form (DCF-F-2835) to the local agency
- Online through ACCESS Apply for Benefits (AFB) or Add a Program (AAP)

Families may receive assistance with initiating the application process if they are working with the child welfare agency to care for a child who is not their biological or adopted child. The parent may sign the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Registration form (DCF-F-2835) and allow the child welfare agency to send it to the Income Maintenance (IM) agency on their behalf. The filing date (see 3.2.1) is the date the IM agency receives the signed registration form, not the date the form is signed. Parents may also apply on

their own using any of the four (4) ways to apply and are not required to follow this process when working with the child welfare agency.

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Section 3.2.1 Setting the Filing Date

The filing date, also known as the Request for Assistance (RFA) date, is the date the local agency receives a signed application or program request. Only one (1) signature is needed, which may be received on an application or collected during the interview. The filing date is the first date that the parent could potentially receive benefits if eligible.

If the parent is applying by phone or in person and does not complete a signature prior to the interview, the agency worker must advise the applicant that the filing date will be the date the signature is received (see 3.4).

The filing date for ACCESS applications is the date the local agency receives the application unless it is submitted after 4:30 p.m. If the ACCESS request is submitted after 4:30 p.m., the filing date is the next business day, according to the CARES calendar.

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Section 3.3 Interview

When a parent applies for Wisconsin Shares, the agency worker must schedule the interview to occur no later than five (5) business days after the receipt of the application. Parents must complete an interview during the application and renewal process. In a two-parent household, either parent can complete the interview.

Interviews may be held either face-to-face or by telephone. The agency worker must hold a face-to-face interview if requested by the parent.

For telephone interviews, the agency worker must contact the applicant at the scheduled interview time using the telephone number that was confirmed in the interview appointment notice.

If the first attempt to contact the applicant is unsuccessful, the agency worker must attempt to contact the applicant again within 30 minutes of the first call. If the second attempt is unsuccessful, the agency worker must document in case comments (see 12.1) that the applicant was unavailable at the appointment time and indicate when the follow up call was made. A notice must be sent to the parent indicating that the agency worker attempted the interview and the parent was not available. This can be done through the Notice of Child Care Missed Interview (NCMI) when Integrated Client Scheduler (ICS) is used in CWW or through a manual notice.

During the interview, the agency worker must advise the parent of the items that need to be verified and the program reporting requirements. Agency workers must document a summary of the interview and describe any outstanding verification that is needed in case comments (see 12.1).

The interview must be documented in CWW on the Interview Details page and a Case Summary must be generated after the interview is completed (see 12.1). Agency workers can wait until outstanding verification, such as income verification, has been received by the local agency before providing the parent with the Case Summary. This ensures that the information on the Case Summary that the parent receives is accurate. The Case Summary is essential for meeting the legal requirement that the parent has an opportunity to review and confirm that the information is accurate.

The agency worker must also provide the parent (if not automatically generated from CWW) with a copy of the Child Support & Good Cause Publication (DCF-P-5600), regardless of whether the family is intact or if there is an absent parent. If the parent only has out-of-home placement children and there are no biological or adopted children in the household, the agency worker does not need to provide a copy of the Child Support & Good Cause Publication to the parent.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 3.4 Signature Requirements

A signature is required from the applicant, spouse, or non-marital co-parent for every application and renewal. A parent may provide an electronic, written, or telephonic signature (if the local agency has the software necessary to complete telephonic signatures). If a signature is collected when the parent applies for Wisconsin Shares or completes an ACCESS renewal, then a second signature is not required at the conclusion of the interview.

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Section 3.5 Initial Eligibility Determination

Once the individual's verification requirements are completed, the local agency must determine eligibility without delay. When eligibility is confirmed, CWW sets the initial eligibility period to be 13 months (the child care request month plus 12 additional months).

The eligibility period begins on the first day of the month that the parent met all eligibility criteria. Occasionally a parent will not be eligible for the month in which they apply but meets the eligibility criteria for the following month. When that happens, the parent's eligibility period begins the first of the month following the RFA date.

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Section 3.5.1 Eligibility Determination When a Child is Added

When a newly eligible child (see 4.3) is timely added to an ongoing case, verification requirements are completed and eligibility is confirmed, CWW will establish a new eligibility period and a new renewal date to be the first month following the eligibility determination month plus 12 additional months. Existing eligible children on the case can have their renewal date extended to align with the newly added child's eligibility period. The agency worker must document in case comments, the eligibility determination details of when an eligible child is added and the renewal date is extended (see 12.1).

An eligible child who turned 13 or 19 (with a verified disability and not physically or mentally capable of caring for themselves) during the eligibility period (see 4.3), will not have their renewal date extended when an eligible child is added to the case and will become either an Included Child (IC) or an Excluded Child (XC) after the original renewal date.

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Section 3.6 Front-End Verification

Front-End Verification (FEV) is a method of fraud prevention. FEV provides additional scrutiny of cases that display characteristics of potential program violations or errors. FEV focuses on elements or circumstances of a specific case, as defined by a local agency's Error Prone Profile (EPP).

FEV can occur during any application, renewal, or change if three (3) or more EPP characteristics are present.

An EPP is a list of characteristics that result in common case errors. Local agencies must use an EPP to determine which criteria meet the requirements for an FEV investigation. Local agencies must measure all cases against the EPP in a consistent manner to avoid biased selection for FEV. Cases demonstrating three (3) or more of these characteristics should be referred for FEV.

See Appendix IV – Error Prone Profiles and Front-End Verification for FEV processes and EPP resources.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 3.7 Reapplying

Parents must reapply for Wisconsin Shares if:

- Wisconsin Shares eligibility is closed for one (1) calendar month or longer
- The parent does not provide all required verification by the 30th calendar day from the filing date or renewal date

- The renewal is not completed (including interview, signature, verification, and eligibility confirmed) by the end of the month following the renewal date month

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Section 3.8 Renewals

A renewal is considered timely when it is completed (including the interview, signature, verification, and confirmation) between Adverse Action in the month prior to the renewal date and the renewal date that is located on the Override AG Renewal/Review Dates page in CWW. Only after Adverse Action in the month prior to the renewal date can a parent submit and workers process child care renewals (see Process Help Section 7.1.11)

Renewals must be completed by the end of the eligibility period (timely renewal), or by the end of the month following the renewal date month (late renewal). Parents receiving Wisconsin Shares may initiate their renewal by contacting their local agency or through ACCESS. An interview must be completed in person or by telephone and a Case Summary must be generated and provided to the parent (see 3.3). The Child Support & Good Cause Publication (DCF-P-5600) is automatically sent from CWW during the renewal process or agency workers can provide a copy (see 4.7.3 or Process Help Section 10.2.3).

The agency worker must document a summary of the renewal interview and any outstanding verification requirements in case comments (see 12.1). At the time of the renewal, the household income must not exceed 85% State Median Income (SMI) (see 6.1.2).

A renewal is considered complete when the parent has completed the interview, provided a signature (see 3.4) and all necessary verification, and eligibility is confirmed. If the renewal is not fully completed, including the signature, all verification items requested and eligibility confirmed, by the last day of the month following the renewal date month, the parent must reapply.

Example: Bianca's eligibility renewal is due on March 31. She received a 45-day notice in mid-February that her renewal is due by March 31. She did not complete her renewal by March 31 and eligibility systematically ended in CWW on March 31. She received a Notice of Decision informing her that her Wisconsin Shares eligibility ended and did not receive any subsidy funds for April. On April 25, Bianca calls the local agency to complete her renewal. She does not have verification of income, so the agency worker pends for this information. The agency worker explains to Bianca that she must submit the verification to the agency with enough time for the worker to receive the verification and confirm eligibility before April 30 or Bianca will need to reapply.

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Section 3.8.1 Early Renewals

Child care does not allow early renewals. The Case Summary page in CWW will restrict child care renewals from being processed before Adverse Action in the month prior to the child care renewal date.

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Chapter 4 Nonfinancial Eligibility Requirements

Section 4.1 Assistance Groups

The local agency must determine the individuals that are to be included in the Assistance Group (AG). The AG includes any of the following individuals who reside in the same household:

- An individual who is a parent, according to the Wisconsin Shares definition
- The individual's dependent children
    - Includes 18-year-olds who are enrolled in high school and are expected to graduate by their 19th birthday and are residing with a parent
    - Includes minor teen parents and their dependent children also residing with the teen's parent
- The individual's spouse or any non-marital co-parent
    - The spouse's dependent children
    - The non-marital co-parent's dependent children

Domestic partners who do not have a child in common are not included in the AG.

If an adult has guardianship of both another adult in the household and that adult's child, the adult with guardianship of both must be the applicant.

Example 1: A grandparent, an adult parent, and the adult parent's baby live in the same house. The AG consists of the adult parent and her baby. The applicant is not the grandparent. The grandparent is not in the AG unless the grandparent has guardianship of both the adult parent and her dependent child.

Example 2: A grandparent has guardianship of her 2-year-old grandchild. The child is reunited with her parent and the parent now also resides in the grandparent's home. Once the adult parent moves into the house, the AG must change. The parent and grandparent cannot be in the same AG, even though the grandparent has court-ordered guardianship of her grandchild. Eligibility for the child on the grandparent's case must end and the parent must apply for Wisconsin Shares.

Example 3: A grandparent has legal guardianship of the adult parent and the adult parent's dependent child. The AG consists of the grandparent/guardian, the adult parent, and the child. The applicant is the grandparent.

Example 4: Gloria is applying for Wisconsin Shares. Her household consists of herself, her children, and her grandchild: 18-year-old Maria, 6-year-old Jesus, 4-year-old Cheri, and Maria's infant Faith. Maria is still enrolled in high school and is expected to graduate before her 19th birthday. This means Maria is a dependent 18-year-old in Gloria's AG. Because Maria is a dependent 18-year-old, Faith is also included in Gloria's AG. Gloria is the applicant, and the AG includes Gloria, Maria, Jesus, Cheri, and Faith.

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Section 4.1.1 Incarceration

An individual who is in a Wisconsin Shares Assistance Group (AG) and who is incarcerated for 30 calendar days or less will remain in the Wisconsin Shares AG, unless a child support referral has been made.

An individual who is in a Wisconsin Shares AG and who is incarcerated for more than 30 calendar days must be excluded from the AG. The parent remaining in the AG must cooperate with child support requirements, as necessary. CWW generates Prisoner discrepancies that identify incarcerated individuals who are listed as a member of a Wisconsin Shares AG (see Process Help Section 19.4.2.3 and Appendix III – Local Agency Program Integrity Management).

An individual is not incarcerated for Wisconsin Shares purposes if living in the home under a restricted release, such as:

- Work release
- Home monitoring
- Other alternatives to incarceration

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Section 4.1.2 Shared Placement

Each eligible parent with shared placement can receive Wisconsin Shares subsidy to assist with the cost of child care for the time that the child in common is residing within his or her household.

Example 1: Melissa has a child who is in her home on a shared placement basis. The child spends part of the week with her other parent and part of the week with Melissa. The AG consists of Melissa and her child.

Example 2: Jessica and Mathew have shared placement of Megan, age 11. Mathew lives with Betty, and they have a child together. Jessica's AG consists of herself and Megan. Mathew's AG consists of himself, Megan, Betty, and any children in common.

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Section 4.2 Applicant Age

The applicant for Wisconsin Shares must be at least 18 years of age unless the minor applicant:

- Is living in a group home licensed by the State of Wisconsin or a supervised independent living situation, **and** is a high school student or is enrolled in an equivalent program approved by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction; **or**
- Is married.

Note: A supervised independent living arrangement is an arrangement that allows individuals between the ages of 17 to 21, who are in a court-ordered out-of-home care (OHC) placement, the ability to live in their own (or shared) apartment, flat, or room. They are under the supervision and support from a child welfare caseworker and/or provider from a contracted agency in their county. If the parent knows who their Ongoing Child Welfare Case Manager is, the parent should provide this information to the agency worker for the agency worker to verify the arrangement. If the parent does not know who their Ongoing Child Welfare Case Manager is, agency workers can visit the Child Welfare Independent Living Coordinators page on the Department of Children and Families website to find the correct contact for their area.

If the teen parent does not meet the criteria above, an adult parent (according to the Wisconsin Shares definition) needs to apply on behalf of the teen parent.

Example 1: Kylie, age 17, and her child, Jordan, are living in their own apartment. Their living arrangement is through a court ordered placement with ongoing supervision from a child welfare caseworker. Kylie is attending high school and needs child care for Jordan while she is in school. Because she is in an approved and supervised independent living arrangement and attending high school, she can be the applicant for Wisconsin Shares.

Example 2: Mike, age 16, and his child, Jean, are living with Mike's grandparents. There is no court order for the placement. Mike is attending high school and needs child care for Jean while in school. Because Mike is a minor living with his grandparents, a grandparent must apply for Wisconsin Shares on behalf of Mike.

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Section 4.3 Ages of Eligible Children

To be eligible for Wisconsin Shares the child must meet the age requirements for child care:

At **application**, eligibility determination is based on the age of the child *on the day of the child care request*. To be eligible, the child must be:

- Under age 13, which includes 12 years, 11 months or
- Under age 19 with a verified disability and is not physically or mentally capable of caring for themself.

At **renewal**, eligibility for child care is based on the child's exact age on the date of the child care interactive interview and *the date populated in the Request/Renewal/Review Date field on the Interview Details page* in CWW. To be eligible, the child must be:

- Under age 13 (which includes 12 years, 11 months) or under age 19 with a verified disability on the date of the child care interactive interview which meets the age requirement for the program. The child will remain an Eligible Child (EC) for child care after completion of the renewal.
- If the child is age 13 or older, or younger than 19 without a verified disability on the day of the child care interactive interview, they become an Included Child (IC) for child care after the renewal is completed.
- If the child is age 19 and older on the day of the child care interactive interview, they become an Excluded Child (XC) for child care after the renewal is completed.

During **ongoing** eligibility:

- An eligible child who turns 13 years old or 19 (with a verified disability) during the eligibility period may continue to be eligible until the next renewal date.

Note: When a newly eligible child is added to the case during ongoing eligibility, existing children who turn 13 or under 19 (with a verified disability) will remain eligible only until their original renewal date. An Action Item will be created following the Adverse Action date in the month prior to the child care review date month. The Action Item alerts the worker to run eligibility and confirm child care so following the original renewal date, the 13 year old will be considered an Included Child (IC) (see 3.5.1 and Process Help Chapter 18). No Action Item will be generated for a child who has turned 19 years old.

Example 1 (child turns 13 after renewal interview): Ella has a child care renewal due on April 30. The assistance group (AG) consists of Ella, her 12-year-old son TJ who turns 13 on April 12 and her 8-year-old son Alex. Ella initiates her renewal and child care

interview on April 2. April 2 is populated in the Request/Renewal/Review Date field on the Interview Details page, but verification is not received until April 13 (after TJ turns 13). TJ is 12 years old on April 2 and is found to be an Eligible Child (EC) for the new eligibility period which begins May 1. After completion of the renewal, CWW determines both TJ and Alex meet the age requirements to be an EC for child care.

Example 2 (child turns 13 before renewal interview): Charlie has a child care renewal due June 30. His AG consists of himself, his 12-year-old daughter Stella and 5-year-old daughter Frankie. Stella turns 13 on June 4. Charlie contacts the local agency to initiate his renewal and his child care interview on June 15, which is the date populated in the Request/Renewal/Review Date field on the Interview Details page. Because this date is after Stella turned 13, she will be an Included Child (IC) for the new eligibility period beginning July 1 as she does not meet the age requirement to be an EC for child care.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 4.4 Wisconsin Residency

Applicants must be residents of Wisconsin and intend to remain in Wisconsin unless the applicant is a migrant farmworker (see 8.1).

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 4.5 U.S. Citizen or Qualified Immigrant

The beneficiary of the Wisconsin Shares subsidy must be a child who is either a United States citizen or a qualified immigrant. The child's immigration status or citizenship must be verified.

Example: Juanita and Carlos work full time and are neither U.S. citizens nor qualified immigrants. Juanita has applied for Wisconsin Shares for their two (2) school-aged children, who are U.S. citizens. The AG consists of Juanita, Carlos, and the two (2) children.

A qualified immigrant is a person who is not a United States citizen, but who meets one (1) of the following criteria:

1. An immigrant lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence under the Immigration and Nationality Act
2. An immigrant who is granted asylum under section 208 of such Act
3. A refugee who is admitted to the United States under section 207 of such Act, including Special Visa Immigrants from Iraq and Afghanistan under section 1059 of H.R. 1815
4. An immigrant who has been certified as a victim of trafficking

5. An immigrant who is paroled into the United States under section 212(d)(5) of such Act for a period of at least one (1) year
6. An immigrant whose deportation is being withheld under section 243(h) or 241(b)(3) of such Act
7. Cuban and Haitian immigrants, as defined in section 501(e) of the Refugee Education Assistance Act of 1980
8. A Native American Indian born in Canada who is at least 50% American Indian by blood, or a Native American Indian born outside of the United States who is a member of a federally recognized Indian tribe
9. An immigrant who has been battered or whose child has been battered, who is no longer residing in the same household with the batterer, and who meets the requirements of 8 USC 1641(c)
10. An immigrant who is granted conditional entry pursuant to section 203(a)(7) of such Act as in effect prior to April 1, 1980
11. Amerasian immigrants, as defined in section 584 of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act of 1988
12. An Immigrant who is lawfully residing and is one (1) of the following:
    a. An armed forces veteran who received an honorable discharge that was not on account of alienage and who completed either 24 months of continuous active duty or the full period for which the individual was called, unless the individual received a hardship discharge under 10 USC 1173, early discharge under 10 USC 1171, or a discharge due to a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty.
    b. On active duty in the armed forces of the United States, other than active duty for training.
    c. The spouse of an individual described in subdivision a. or b., or the un-remarried surviving spouse of an individual described in subdivision a. or b. if the marriage was for one (1) year or more or the individual had a child in common.
13. An immigrant who is lawfully residing in the United States and authorized to work by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)
14. A dependent child of an individual who meets one (1) of the above criteria

The chart below provides the Registration Status Code shown in CWW associated with each qualified immigrant status listed above. Process Help Section 24.24 provides more information regarding Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) Program responses and mapping to CWW.

Qualifying Immigrant Reference # from Above	CARES Registration Status Code	Eligibility Results
1	01 - Lawfully admitted for permanent residence	Eligible
2	05 - Lawfully present under Section 208	Eligible
3	04 - Lawfully present under Section 207(c)	Eligible
4	19 - Victims of Trafficking	Eligible
5	05 - Lawfully present under Section 208 OR 06 – Lawfully present under Section 212 (d)(5)	Eligible
6	15 - Withheld deportation - Section 243(h)	Eligible
7	11 - Cuban/Haitian Entrant	Eligible
8	18 - Foreign Born Native American	Eligible
9	16 - Battered Immigrant	Eligible
10	3 - Lawfully present under Section 203(a)(7)	Eligible
11	17 - Amerasian	Eligible
12	Varies	Eligible
13	20 - Lawfully Residing	Eligible with an Employment Authorization Card

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 4.6 Social Security Numbers (SSNs)

Parents must provide or apply for a Social Security Number (SSN) for any child for whom they are requesting Wisconsin Shares authorizations and subsidy payments.

Any child who does not have an SSN or an SSN application filed with the Social Security Administration (SSA) will not be eligible for Wisconsin Shares authorizations but will be an “Included Child” in the Assistance Group (AG).

Parents are not required to provide an SSN for themselves. If the parent does provide their SSN, the agency worker must enter it in CWW so that existing data exchanges can be completed to reduce the amount of verification the parent is required to submit.

If the applicant has provided verification of an SSN application that was filed with the SSA to initially qualify for Wisconsin Shares, the SSN must be provided to the local agency when the SSN is received or when the SSN verification is requested. An action item is generated in CWW six (6) full months after the SSN application date. The agency worker must request verification when the action item is generated in CWW.

If an SSN is not provided by the verification due date (see 7.4), the child without an SSN is no longer eligible for authorizations. Eligibility may continue for other children in the Wisconsin Shares AG for whom a valid SSN has been provided.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 4.7 Child Support Cooperation

Each parent in the Wisconsin Shares Assistance Group (AG) must cooperate with the Child Support Agency (CSA) only when there is a new child care program request (application or program add) and at renewal for all their minor biological or adopted children over the age of 60 days, unless a good cause exception has been granted for a particular child (see 4.7.4).

Cooperation means that the custodial parent must assist with:

- Identifying and locating an absent parent
- Establishing the legal parentage of any child of the custodial parent
- Obtaining any support payments or any other payments or property to which that parent and any minor child of that parent may have rights

Relatives or non-relative adults caring for a child that is not their biological or adopted child are not required to cooperate with the CSA for that child.

The Income Maintenance (IM) Agency must refer the following individuals through CWW to the local CSA:

- Unmarried pregnant women, including minors
- Families where the biological or adoptive parent is absent from the home (but not cases where the absence is due to military service)
- Non-marital co-parent cases (families where the parents either are not married to each other or were not married to each other when the child was conceived or born), when paternity has not been established

For more information about the automated Client Assistance for Re-employment and Economic Support (CARES) referral process, see Process Help Sections 11.3.3 and 10.2.

Establishing Legal Parentage

For non-marital children, parentage is legally established by a court order, a Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment (VPA) form (F-05024) filed with the Wisconsin Vital Records office, or through the administrative paternity process, in which genetic testing establishes the man as the father and paternity is entered in the Kids Information Data System (KIDS) system by the CSA. When paternity is established using any of these

methods, the father's name is added to the birth certificate. A father's name on a birth certificate is evidence that paternity has been established. A same-sex spouse added to the child's birth certificate through a court process is a legal parent of the child.

The following designations for a father are used in CWW:

Claimed father: A claimed father is an individual who claims to be the father of a child but has not had his paternity established or had a paternity action initiated. A claimed father is not included in the Wisconsin Shares AG. The case must be referred to the CSA so that steps to establish paternity can be taken.

Acknowledged father: An acknowledged father is an individual who claims to be the father of a child who has started a process to establish paternity but has not yet been added to the child's birth certificate. An acknowledged father meets one (1) of the following criteria:

- The father has filed a Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgement, but the Wisconsin Vital Records office has not yet finished processing it
- A paternity action (adjudication) has been initiated, but the courts have not yet finalized it

This information can be self-declared unless questionable (see 7.6). An acknowledged father is included in the Wisconsin Shares AG. However, because there is still no evidence of a formal adjudication, the case must be referred to the CSA so that steps to establish paternity may be taken. Once paternity is established, the father's name is added to the child's birth certificate.

Legal/adjudicated father: A father who has had his paternity legally established is the legal/adjudicated father. A legal/adjudicated father meets one (1) of the following criteria:

- The father's name appears on the birth certificate for a child.
- The parent provides a copy of the court adjudication or similar proof of a Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgement being filed with another state.

A legal/adjudicated father is included in the Wisconsin Shares AG. A referral to the CSA is only needed if the father moves out of the home.

Marriage of one (1) biological or adoptive parent to another person does not relieve the other biological or adoptive parent of their child support obligations. Both biological and adoptive parents are responsible for supporting their children, regardless of subsequent relationships. A stepparent can only adopt a child if the child's second biological or adoptive parent has agreed to relinquish their parental rights.

Example: Angelique is applying for Wisconsin Shares. Her household consists of herself, her child Alonzo, and her spouse Albert. Albert is not Alonzo's biological parent; his relationship with Alonzo is stepparent/stepchild. Alonzo's biological parent is Finn. The AG consists of Angelique, Albert, and Alonzo, and the Absent Parent page indicates that Finn is Alonzo's legal father.

Marital Presumption

If the parents are married and living together, but the mother claims that the husband is not the father of the child(ren) born during that marriage, the IM agency must **not** refer the case to the CSA. Under Wisconsin law there is a presumption of paternity based on the marriage of the parties. The paternity presumption may be overturned by a court with genetic evidence that shows the man is not the biological father. If the court rules that the man is not the father, the court ruling may be used to remove the man's name from the birth record. The man's name can only be removed through a court process. Therefore, since the parties are living together and the husband's name is on the birth certificate, the husband is included in the AG because he is the legal/adjudicated father until the paternity presumption is overturned.

If the husband moves out of the home, then the case must be referred to the CSA with the husband named as the absent parent, even if the wife names a different person as the father. The CSA will initiate an action naming the husband as the absent parent, at which time he can refute paternity and request genetic testing. If the parties are married and living together, but the husband's name is not listed on the birth certificate (due to prior genetic testing), then the case must be referred to the CSA as paternity has not been established.

The presumption of paternity does not currently apply to same-sex spouses who are married at the time of a child's birth. Same-sex spouses must follow a different legal process to have their name added to the birth certificate. If both parents are listed on the birth certificate, then legal parentage has been established. If one (1) parent moves out, the case must be referred to the CSA using the other parent's name as the absent parent. If the other parent's name is not listed on the birth certificate, then legal parentage has not been established. In these scenarios, the agency worker must refer the case to the CSA using either the named father or the unknown father as the absent parent.

Note: Local agencies should establish a working relationship with CSAs. Agency workers should contact their local CSA for any child support issues affecting the parent's Wisconsin Shares eligibility.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 4.7.1 Exemptions to Child Support Cooperation

Parents with a child that is younger than 60 days and parents with unborn children are exempt from cooperating with the Child Support Agency (CSA) for that child.

Relatives or non-relative adults caring for a child are not required to cooperate with child support for a child that is not their biological or adopted child.

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 4.7.2 Child Support Noncooperation

The Child Support Agency (CSA) determines child support cooperation for all individuals. If the CSA determines that a parent is not cooperating, they will notify the parent of the noncooperation decision and provide their justification for the decision. In CWW, the agency worker will receive an action item that child support cooperation has been updated after the CSA has entered the noncooperation in KIDS.

Income Maintenance (IM) workers determine if good cause for not cooperating with the CSA exists. If the parent is also applying for or participating in the Wisconsin Works (W-2) program, the W-2 Financial and Employment Planner (FEP) determines good cause for both W-2 and Wisconsin Shares if both programs are open.

The agency worker must send a Notice of Action Needed (also known as the Verification Checklist) to the parent within seven (7) calendar days from the date the agency worker receives the notice of noncooperation from the CSA. The agency worker must send the Notice of Action Needed even if eligibility for the parent is closing at the end of the month for a different reason (unless the parent is moving out of state).

The Notice of Action Needed informs the parent that they are not cooperating with child support and that they have seven (7) business days from the issuance date on the Notice of Action Needed to cooperate with the CSA or file a good cause claim. The Notice of Action Needed includes a copy of the Good Cause Claim form, as well as a link to the electronic format of the Good Cause Claim form (DCF-F-DWSP2019-E).

On the eighth (8th) business day, if the individual has not cooperated with the CSA or submitted a good cause claim to the IM agency, the agency worker must run eligibility. Wisconsin Shares eligibility will close only when there is a new child care program request (application or program add) or renewal. When the agency worker runs eligibility during ongoing eligibility, noncooperation will not impact eligibility until the beginning of a new eligibility period.

Noncooperation Instances

An instance of noncooperation will be automatically recorded in CWW when eligibility is run. When there is a new child care program request (application or program add) or renewal, and a first or second instance of noncooperation, the entire Wisconsin Shares Assistance Group (AG) will not be eligible for Wisconsin Shares until the individual

cooperates with the CSA or files a good cause claim. However, eligibility can be obtained for children on the case who are in foster care, subsidized guardianship placements, interim caretaker placements, and children in a court-ordered placement with a relative who receives the Kinship Care payment (see 4.7.1).

Example 1: Clark has two (2) biological children, Nancy and Dale, and one (1) foster child, Ryan. On April 7, the agency worker receives an action item that Clark is not cooperating with the CSA for Nancy and Dale and pends eligibility to send the Notice of Action Needed. Clark does not cooperate or claim good cause by the verification due date. On April 18, the agency worker runs eligibility to confirm Wisconsin Shares eligibility. Child Care remains open until the end of the eligibility period since it is not a program request (application or program add), or renewal, if all other criteria are met.

If an individual fails three (3) or more times to meet the child support cooperation requirements without good cause, the AG is not eligible for Wisconsin Shares for a period of at least six (6) months. This is referred to as a sanction period. Eligibility cannot be regained until all members of the AG cooperate with the CSA. If there is an existing sanction period during a new child program request (application or program add) or renewal, child care eligibility will fail. The parent can reapply for child care after the sanction period ends.

After the third instance, there will be a subsequent 6-month sanction period for each new instance of noncooperation because the parent has already failed to cooperate three (3) times.

Example 2: Terry has three (3) instances of noncooperation with child support. On December 20 Terry initiates her renewal due on December 31 and the agency worker receives an action item that she is not cooperating with child support. The agency worker pends for good cause and generates the Notice of Action Needed. On December 28, the agency worker runs eligibility to close Wisconsin Shares effective December 31 because Terry has not cooperated or claimed good cause. A fourth instance of noncooperation is created. Terry is not eligible until July 1, even if she decides to cooperate with the CSA before July.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 4.7.3 Good Cause Publication

A Child Support Cooperation & Good Cause publication (DCF-P-5600) must be provided to all Wisconsin Shares applicants and participants at the following times:

- At application or program add for Wisconsin Shares
- When a child is added to the Assistance Group
- When a parent leaves the Assistance Group

- At the eligibility renewal for Wisconsin Shares
- When a parent discloses to his or her agency worker circumstances that may meet the good cause criteria

The Child Support Cooperation & Good Cause publication describes the requirement to cooperate with child support, the right to claim good cause as an exception to the cooperation requirement, and the criteria for good cause. The document must be provided even if both biological/adoptive parents of all children are living together.

A Child Support Cooperation & Good Cause publication (DCF-P-5600) is automatically sent from CWW:

- When a parent applies by phone, mail or in-person and an agency worker completes the application or program add driver;
- When a parent renews through ACCESS, phone, mail or in-person and the worker completes the renewal driver in CWW;
- When a child with an absent parent is added to the case, or
- When a parent leaves the case, which results in a child on the case having an absent parent.

If the notice is not automatically generated from CWW, local agencies can also provide the Child Support Cooperation & Good Cause publication to parents by either:

- Printing the Child Support Cooperation & Good Cause publication from the online DCF Publications Repository and manually providing it to the parent; or
- Using the Manual Letter Selection functionality in CWW to mail the Child Support Cooperation & Good Cause publication

If the parent applies for Wisconsin Shares through ACCESS – Apply for Benefits (AFB) or Add a Program (AAP), the language from the Child Support Cooperation & Good Cause publication displays on the page where the parent signs the application. The parent must check a box indicating that they have read this information and understand that they have the right to claim good cause for not cooperating with the Child Support Agency (CSA). If the parent has chosen to view ACCESS in Spanish, the textbox and acknowledgement also display in Spanish. This notice and acknowledgement are included on the Application Summary which is viewable to the parent in ACCESS and to the agency worker in CWW and the Electronic Case File (ECF).

Because this information is the same as the information contained in the Child Support Cooperation & Good Cause publication and captures the parent's acknowledgement, this is sufficient for providing the Child Support & Good Cause publication at application for Wisconsin Shares.

If the parent is exempt from cooperating with child support per Section 4.7.1 and the parent has no other biological or adopted children for whom cooperation with child support is required, the local agency does not need to provide the parent with the Child Support Cooperation & Good Cause publication (see Process Help Section 10.2.3).

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 4.7.4 Good Cause Claim

The Good Cause Claim form (DCF-F-DWSP2019-E) describes the good cause criteria and the documentation that will be needed to support a good cause claim. A good cause claim can be filed at any time, even if the parent is currently cooperating with the Child Support Agency (CSA). Agency workers must provide parents with the Good Cause Claim form whenever the form is requested.

If a parent is not cooperating with the CSA and needs to claim good cause, the Good Cause Claim form must be returned to the local agency within seven (7) business days from the issuance date of the Notice of Action Needed. The parent must specify the circumstances that meet the good cause criteria for not cooperating (see 4.7.4.1). If the parent is applying for or participating in Wisconsin Works (W-2), the Good Cause Claim form must be returned to the Financial and Employment Planner (FEP) to determine good cause.

Upon receipt of the Good Cause Claim form, the local agency must notify the CSA within two (2) business days (through an automated process) that no further child support action may be taken until the local agency determines whether good cause exists.

If an individual is cooperating with the local agency in providing evidence and information for the local agency to determine good cause and other eligibility criteria are met, Wisconsin Shares subsidy must not be denied, delayed, reduced, or discontinued pending the determination of the good cause claim.

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 4.7.4.1 Good Cause Criteria

A parent may claim good cause for not cooperating with the Child Support Agency (CSA) for the following reasons:

- Cooperation is reasonably anticipated to result in either physical or emotional harm to the child, including threats of domestic abuse or child kidnapping
- Cooperation is reasonably anticipated to result in either physical or emotional harm to the parent, including domestic abuse
- Cooperating with the CSA would make it more difficult for the individual to escape domestic abuse or unfairly penalize the individual who is or has been victimized by such abuse, or the individual is at risk of further domestic abuse

- The child was conceived as a result of incest or sexual assault
- The parent is considering whether to terminate parental rights and has sought the assistance of a public or licensed private social services agency not more than three (3) months ago
- A petition for the adoption of the child has been filed with a court, except this does not apply as a good cause exemption from the responsibility to make payments under an existing court order

Local agencies do not have discretion to grant good cause for any reasons not listed in this section.

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 4.7.4.2 Good Cause Claim Documentation

Parents must submit at least one (1) document of supporting evidence and a statement specifying the circumstances that the parent believes provide sufficient good cause for not cooperating. The parent must submit supporting evidence to the local agency within 20 calendar days from the date the Good Cause Claim form (DCF-F-DWSP2019-E) was signed. The agency worker may, with supervisory approval, determine that more time is needed due to difficulty in obtaining supporting evidence.

If the good cause claim is based on domestic abuse, and no supporting evidence is currently available, the local agency may permit the parent to submit evidence to the local agency within 60 calendar days from the date the Good Cause Claim form was signed.

The local agency must encourage the parent to submit as many types of supporting evidence as possible and must inform the parent that if assistance is needed in obtaining evidence, the agency worker will assist him or her. The agency worker must make every reasonable effort to obtain specific documents or information that the individual is having difficulty obtaining.

If the documentation that the parent provides does not prove that they have good cause for not cooperating with the Child Support Agency, the local agency must notify the individual that additional evidence is required and must explain the types of evidence that may be used.

A parent may provide any of the following types of documents to prove that they have good cause for not cooperating:

- Court, medical, criminal, child protective services, social services, psychological, school, or law enforcement records regarding domestic abuse or physical or emotional harm to the parent or child

- Medical records or written statements from a mental health professional that pertain to the emotional health history, present emotional health status, or prognosis of the parent or child
- Birth certificates, medical records, or law enforcement records that indicate that the child may have been conceived as a result of incest or sexual assault
- Court documents or other records that indicate that a petition for the adoption of the child has been filed with a court
- A written statement from a public or private social services agency that the parent is being assisted by the agency in deciding whether to terminate parental rights
- Written and signed statements from others with knowledge of the circumstances on which the good cause claim is based, including, but not limited to, statements from neighbors, friends, family, or clergy
- Any other supporting evidence

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 4.7.4.3 Good Cause Claim Investigation

The local agency **must** investigate any good cause claim based on anticipated harm, even when the claim is credible without supporting evidence and when the local agency knows supporting evidence is not available. Good cause must be found when the parent's statement and the local agency's investigation satisfy the local agency that good cause exists.

The local agency **may** investigate good cause claims based on any other criteria when the individual's statement and the supporting evidence do not provide enough information to make a determination.

Parents must cooperate with the local agency's investigation. The local agency may contact the Child Support Agency during any good cause claim investigation. The local agency is not allowed to contact the individual alleged to have committed acts that are the basis of a good cause claim.

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 4.7.4.4 Good Cause Determination

The local agency must determine if good cause exists within 45 calendar days from the date the Good Cause Claim form (DCF-F-DWSP2019-E) was signed unless an extension to submit evidence was granted to the parent who is claiming good cause or more time is necessary for the local agency to obtain evidence.

If the local agency granted up to 60 calendar days to submit evidence for a claim of domestic abuse, the local agency must determine if good cause exists within 85 calendar days from the date the Good Cause Claim form was signed.

The Child Support Agency (CSA) must be given the opportunity to review and comment on the findings of the local agency prior to the final determination on good cause by the local agency. The local agency must consider any recommendations from the CSA.

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 4.7.4.4.1 Good Cause Denial

If the local agency determines that the individual does not have good cause for failing to cooperate with child support, the local agency must promptly notify the parent of the determination and the right to a Fair Hearing based on the local agency's decision (see 4.7.4.5). If the parent is participating in both Wisconsin Shares and Wisconsin Works (W-2), the parent can request a W-2 Fact Finding of the W-2 agency's decision (not a Fair Hearing because W-2 made the determination).

The local agency must notify the Child Support Agency (CSA) that it may proceed with child support services and require the cooperation of the parent. The CSA may not proceed with child support services for 10 calendar days from the date of the notice to the parent. This is to allow the parent time to withdraw the Wisconsin Shares application, request the Wisconsin Shares case be closed, or request a Fair Hearing or W-2 Fact Finding of the agency decision before the CSA proceeds with child support services.

After the local agency enters the determination that good cause does not exist in CWW and confirms eligibility, Wisconsin Shares eligibility will fail only if during a new child care program request (application or program add) or will end at renewal if ongoing eligibility exists.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 4.7.4.4.2 Good Cause Approval

If the local agency determines that the individual has good cause for failing to cooperate with the Child Support Agency (CSA), the local agency must promptly notify the individual of the determination and the basis for the determination in writing.

The local agency must also either:

- Direct the CSA to suspend all further child support case activities if the individual did not request that the CSA proceed without their cooperation; or
- Notify the CSA that it may proceed with child support services if the individual requested that the CSA proceed without their cooperation.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 4.7.4.5 Good Cause Disputes

A parent whose good cause claim was denied or who disputes a decision by the local agency may petition the local agency for a Fair Hearing. If the good cause determination was made by the W-2 agency, the parent may request a W-2 Fact Finding.

The Child Support Agency (CSA) must be given reasonable notice and may participate in any Fair Hearing or W-2 Fact Finding resulting from a good cause dispute.

If the parent requests a Fair Hearing:

- Wisconsin Shares eligibility must remain open during the Fair Hearing process; and
- The local agency must instruct the CSA to suspend child support services during the Fair Hearing process.

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 4.7.4.6 Reviewing Good Cause

The local agency must review good cause determinations that are based on circumstances subject to change at each review of eligibility during a new child care request (application or program add) or upon new evidence. Good cause determinations based on permanent circumstances do not need to be reviewed again. If the local agency determines that good cause for failing to cooperate with the Child Support Agency no longer exists, the local agency must follow the policy in Section 4.7.4.4.1.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 4.8 Participation in Approved Activities

Participation in an approved activity is a nonfinancial eligibility requirement for Wisconsin Shares (see Chapter 5). Parents with a verified approved activity may choose to keep their child care eligibility open without an authorization.

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Chapter 5 Approved Activities

Section 5.1 Approved Activities

Approved activities in Wisconsin Shares are limited to:

- Employment, including self-employment
- Education

- Participation in Wisconsin Works (W-2)
- Participation in Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Participation in FoodShare Employment and Training (FSET) job search or work experience
- Learnfare

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 5.1.1 Employment

Employment is an approved activity for Wisconsin Shares. Employment is an activity which produces income, such as:

- Employment for which the employer controls or has the ability to control the work, how the work is done, and provides tools and equipment to the individual to do the work
- Employer-sponsored training
- Apprenticeship
- Sheltered employment/workshop (see Glossary for definition)
- Supported employment (see Glossary for definition)
- Participation in the Transform Milwaukee Jobs Program (TMJ) or the Transitional Jobs (TJ) Program
- Participation in the Trial Employment Match Program (TEMP) (TEMP is a W-2 Employment Position but is included in the employment category for Wisconsin Shares)
- Participation in a Case Management Follow-Up (CMF) or CMF+ Placement (CMF and CMF+ are W-2 Placements but are included in the employment category for Wisconsin Shares)
- Participation in an AmeriCorps employment program if the stipend equals Wisconsin minimum wage
- Self-employment, including independent contractors who determine when (days or times) and where work is performed, provide their own tools and equipment, and are subject to the self-employment tax

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Section 5.1.1.1 Self-Employment

Self-employment is an approved activity for Wisconsin Shares. However, self-employment as an unregulated child care provider is not allowable as an approved activity.

Parents who are self-employed must file taxes with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for the self-employment to be an approved activity.

After the renewal that follows the 24th month of new self-employment, the self-employment only qualifies as an approved activity if annual net business income equals $400 or more. An ongoing business that generates less than $400 annual net income is considered a hobby for Wisconsin Shares purposes and not an approved activity.

Identifying Self-Employment
Agency workers should review the questions/statements below to determine if a parent is self-employed or employed when it is unclear whether the activity is employment or self-employment. Not all questions are applicable to all self-employed parents, and the answers to some of these may resolve the question of self-employment or employment without needing to answer further questions. For example, receipt of an IRS Form 1099 is enough to show that it is not an employee-employer relationship.

1. Does the parent have or have they applied for a tax ID number? If the business has employees, an Employer Identification Number (EIN) is required by the IRS. Some businesses use the individual's SSN to report their earnings.
2. Does the parent receive an IRS Form 1099 at year end? If so, they are self-employed. If they receive a W-2 Wage and Tax Statement, they are employed.
3. What is the nature of the business? If the parent states they are a farmer, do they have their own farm or work on someone else's farm?
4. Who are their customers? The parent should be able to explain to whom they provide their product or service.
5. Do they have an online presence? Most businesses have a website, advertise online, and/or have a social media account.
6. Does the parent maintain a separate location to deliver their product or service? A self-employed hair stylist can rent a work space in a salon where they use their own equipment.
7. Does the parent set their own hours, provide materials, and use their own tools and equipment?
8. Does the parent incur the main expenses related to the services that they perform under contract? A self-employed truck driver owns their truck and pays for insurance, repairs, and maintenance.
9. Does the parent have a contract to provide goods or services? A construction business has a contract with the customer for building a new home.
10. Does the parent receive compensation for services performed under a contract on a commission or per-job basis and not on any other basis? If the parent is paid a salary, they typically are not self-employed but employed.

11. Does the parent use a business bank account related to the services they provide?
12. Does the parent use their privately owned vehicle to provide a service? An Uber driver uses their own vehicle for providing transportation to customers.
13. Does the parent have recurring expenses, such as liability insurance?
14. Does the parent have a license if a license is required for their business? If the parent reports they are a real estate agent, hair stylist, or plumber they must obtain a license to do business in Wisconsin.
15. Does the success or failure of the parent's business depend on the relationship of business income to expenditures?
16. Does the parent work in and around the house under the direction of the person who owns the home? If so, they are a household employee, not self-employed.

After reviewing these statements, if it is still unclear if the parent has valid self-employment, the agency worker should contact the Child Care Help Desk at childcare@wisconsin.gov for assistance.

Example 1 (Employment): Sarah works for her neighbor, Betty. Betty pays Sarah in cash, with no taxes withheld. Sarah cleans Betty's home, mows her lawn, does her laundry, and anything else that Betty asks of her. Because Sarah is working under the direction of Betty, this is employment, not self-employment.

Example 2 (Self-employment): Rochelle decides that she is going to open her own cleaning business. She will drive to different homes, use her own cleaning supplies, and control her own work schedule. Rochelle is self-employed.

Example 3 (Employment and self-employment): Steve works for Smith Farms during the week taking care of the animals on the farm, under the direction of Mr. Smith. Mr. Smith instructs Steve as to what jobs need to be done during the workday on the farm and pays him cash. Steve also has his own landscaping business. Mr. Smith is one (1) of Steve's customers for whom he mows the lawn. Steve indicates to Mr. Smith what days and times he will be there to mow the lawn and provides his own lawn equipment. Steve is an employee of Smith Farms, but his landscaping business is self-employment.

Example 4 (Employment): Chelsea goes to Sabrina's home to care for her children for 40 hours every week. Sabrina controls Chelsea's work, her work schedule, and how the work is done. Chelsea is Sabrina's household employee.

Example 5 (Self-employment, unregulated child care provider): Judy runs a baby-sitting service in her own home. She only cares for one (1) child at a time. She is not certified or licensed according to Wisconsin child care provider regulations. Judy is self-

employed. However, her self-employment is not an approved activity for Wisconsin Shares because she is an unregulated child care provider.

Example 6 (Self-employment, regulated child care provider): Kelly is a licensed family child care provider. She has two (2) employees. If Kelly needs Wisconsin Shares for her children while she works, she will need to apply for a waiver for her children to attend a different provider (see 13.2). Kelly's approved activity is self-employment. If her two (2) employees apply for Wisconsin Shares, their approved activity is employment.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 5.1.2 Education

Participation in the following types of education is an approved activity for Wisconsin Shares:

- High School (see 5.1.2.1)
- Basic Education (see 5.1.2.2)
- Postsecondary Education (see 5.1.2.3)
- Online education (see 5.1.2.4)

Once child care is authorized for a semester, parents must report if a course is cancelled, or they withdraw from a course so that a new authorization assessment can be completed (see 17.1).

Education is a stand-alone approved activity. There is no work requirement for a parent to have education as their approved activity.

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Section 5.1.2.1 High School

High school or a course of study meeting the standards established by the state superintendent of public instruction for a high school equivalency, such as a High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED) or General Education Development (GED), is an approved activity for teen parents younger than 20 years old. These parents are not subject to the 24-month education limit.

Note: If the parent is age 20 or older and is pursuing a GED or HSED, see Section 5.1.2.2.

To determine if the parent who is under the age of 18 is participating in an approved activity, they must reside in one (1) of the following living arrangements:

- With their custodial parent

- With a kinship relative who may or may not be receiving the Kinship Care benefit
- In a foster home
- In the home of a subsidized guardian or interim caretaker
- In an independent living arrangement that is approved by a licensed or public child welfare agency and is supervised by an adult; the supervised living arrangement must be documented in case comments (see 12.1)

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Section 5.1.2.2 Basic Education

Participation in basic education is an approved activity for Wisconsin Shares. Basic education includes English as a second language courses; literacy tutoring; General Education Development (GED); or High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED).

Note: If the parent is younger than age 20 and is enrolled in high school or is pursuing a General Education Development (GED) or High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED), see Section 5.1.2.1.

The local agency must determine that participation in basic education will facilitate the individual's efforts to maintain employment and document this decision in case comments (see 12.1).

Receipt of child care subsidy for basic education is limited to 24 months during the lifetime of the parent. Only the months that the parent is using child care subsidy for education count towards the 24-month time limit. Exact dates of participation must be recorded on the CSAW Parent Education Tracking page under the Basic Education Tracker (see 5.1.2.5).

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Section 5.1.2.3 Postsecondary Education

Participation in postsecondary education, including a course of study at a technical college or educational courses that provide an employment skill, is an approved activity for Wisconsin Shares.

The local agency must determine that participation in this activity will facilitate the individual's efforts to maintain employment and document this decision in case comments (see 12.1).

Receipt of child care subsidy for postsecondary education is limited to 24 months during the lifetime of the parent. Only the months that the parent is using child care subsidy for education count towards the 24-month time limit. Exact dates of

participation must be recorded on the CSAW Parent Education Tracking page under the Postsecondary Education Tracker (see 5.1.2.5).

Field placement, such as unpaid student teaching and unpaid internships, may be included as part of the educational activity if school credits are awarded for completion.

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Section 5.1.2.4 Online Education

Participation in courses delivered online qualify as a parent's basic or postsecondary education activity regardless of whether the course requires specific log-in times or is entirely self-paced.

In addition to the eligibility requirements for basic education (see 5.1.2.2) or postsecondary education (see 5.1.2.3), online education must be provided by an accredited educational institution and provide credit hours for the completed course(s).

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 5.1.2.5 Education Tracking

When a parent has education as one of their approved activities, the CSAW Parent Education Tracking page must be used to track the parent's 24-month education limit as applicable for basic education or postsecondary education.

Months do not count towards a parent's basic or postsecondary 24-month time limit when:

- The parent is age 19 or younger and enrolled in high school or a course of study meeting the standards established by the state superintendent of public instruction for the high school equivalency (see 5.1.2.1)
- The parent is participating in a Wisconsin Works (W-2) placement (see 5.1.3) or Tribal TANF (see 5.1.4) and education is part of their Employability Plan (EP) or Individual Self-Sufficiency Plan (ISP)

See the CSAW User Guide – Authorizations for entering dates into the Parent Education Tracking page.

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Section 5.1.3 Wisconsin Works (W-2) Participation

W-2 participation is an approved activity for Wisconsin Shares if there is an Employability Plan (EP) and at least one (1) child in the home for whom child care is needed. Child care may be authorized for any activities assigned on an EP.

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 5.1.4 Tribal TANF Participation

Participation in a Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program is an approved activity for Wisconsin Shares if there is an Individual Self-Sufficiency Plan (ISP) and at least one (1) child in the home for whom child care is needed. Child care may be authorized for all activities assigned on the ISP.

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 5.1.5 FoodShare Employment and Training (FSET) Participation

Participation in the following FSET activities is an approved activity for Wisconsin Shares:

- Job search
- Work experience

No other activities assigned in the FSET program are approved activities for Wisconsin Shares.

The following is a crosswalk of FSET codes from Appendix C: Fundable Component Codes in the FSET Handbook to Wisconsin Shares Activity Type codes on the Child Care Activity Status page in CWW:

Code	Description	CWW CC Activity Status Code
AP	Pre-apprenticeship/Apprenticeship	FSWE-FSET Work Experience
A1	Credential or Certificate Receiving Program	Not an approved activity
BE	Adult Basic Education	Not an approved activity
BR	Integrated Training or Bridge Program	Not an approved activity
CE	Career Planning	FSJS-FSET Job Search
CM	Case Management	Not an approved activity
DR	Driver's Education	Not an approved activity
EL	Language/Literacy	Not an approved activity
EO	Enrollment with Orientation	Not an approved activity
ES	Supervised Job Search	FSJS-FSET Job Search

Code	Description	CWW CC Activity Status Code
HE	High School Equivalency	Not an approved activity
IN	Internship	**Paid:** EMPL-Employment **Unpaid:** FSWE-FSET Work Experience
JR	Job Retention	EMPL-Employment
JS	Job Skills Training Program	Not an approved activity
JT	Job Search Training	FSJS-FSET Job Search
MO	Job Readiness/Motivation	Not an approved activity
OJ	On-the-job Training	EMPL-Employment
SE	Self-Employment Training	Not an approved activity
SF	Full-Time Employment: Subsidized	EMPL-Employment
SP	Part-Time Employment: Subsidized	EMPL-Employment
TE	Transitional Employment (Co-Enrollment)	TRNJ-Transitional Job
TJ	Trial Employment Match Program (TEMP)	EMPL-Employment
UF	Full-Time Employment: Unsubsidized	EMPL-Employment
UP	Part-Time Employment: Unsubsidized	EMPL-Employment
WE	Work Experience/W-2	FSWE-FSET Work Experience (W-2 is WWEM-W-2 Placement)
WF	Workfare	FSWE-FSET Work Experience
WJ	Workfare Job Search	FSJS-FSET Job Search
WX	Work Activity	FSWE-FSET Work Experience

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Section 5.1.6 Learnfare

Participation in the Learnfare program is an approved activity for teen parents whose parent is enrolled in Wisconsin Works (W-2). See the Wisconsin Works (W-2) Manual Chapter 16 for more information about Learnfare.

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Section 5.2 Parents with Medical Exemptions

In a two-parent or three-generation household, a parent with a permanent or temporary medical condition may be eligible for a medical exemption from the approved activity requirement. An individual who is the only parent in the Assistance Group (AG) is not eligible for a medical exemption but may be eligible for a Temporary Break Period (TBRK) (see 5.3).

Some parents may be unable to participate in an approved activity due to a medical condition. These conditions may be temporary or permanent.

To be exempt from the approved activity requirement, the parent must provide documentation from a physician, physician assistant, nurse practitioner, psychiatrist, or psychologist that indicates the parent is both:

- Unable to care for children while another parent in the AG participates in an approved activity, and
- Unable to participate in any approved activity.

Note: When obtaining health-related information, certain confidentiality requirements must be met. For more information about these requirements, see Section 2.3.

Agency workers may provide parents with the Wisconsin Shares Parent Medical Exemption form (DCF-F-5566) to assist them with obtaining documentation. Parents should then give the form to the physician, physician assistant, nurse practitioner, psychiatrist, or psychologist who will be providing the information. Use of the form is voluntary; the required information could be provided on medical facility letterhead or an email directly from the provider instead of completion of the form.

The exemption may be temporary or permanent depending on what is indicated on the medical documentation. When a parent in a two-parent or three-generation household has a temporary leave of absence for a medical reason from their approved activity, they must first be evaluated for a medical exemption. If they do not meet the criteria for a medical exemption, then they must be evaluated for TBRK eligibility (see 5.3). If the condition is permanent, the parent must meet the criteria above for a medical exemption to be eligible for Wisconsin Shares.

The other parent(s) in the Wisconsin Shares AG must be participating in an approved activity (see 5.1) and need child care to participate in that approved activity to receive an authorization. The other parent(s) can also be in an Activity Break Period (see 5.3) when one (1) parent has a medical exemption. However, at least one (1) parent in the AG must be in an approved activity or Activity Break Period if another parent requires a medical exemption.

Example 1 (Temporary Limitation): Mary and John are applying for Wisconsin Shares. They have 6-month-old twins who need Wisconsin Shares subsidy so that Mary can keep her employment. John recently had surgery. He plans to obtain employment after he recovers. His doctor verified that John is unable to take care of his children due to recovering from surgery and that he cannot work at any job for at least four (4) months. John has an exemption from the approved activity requirement until his doctor states that he can care for his children, return to work, or both.

Example 2 (Temporary Limitation): Lola and Jason have authorizations for their two (2) children when Lola has a baby. She is on maternity leave for eight (8) weeks. Lola is temporarily unable to participate in her approved activity, but she is still able to care for her children. Even though this is a two-parent household, Lola is placed in a TBRK period because she does not meet the criteria for a medical exemption.

Example 3 (Three-Generation Household): Sarah, her spouse Jerome, their minor teen child Fanta, and Fanta's baby live in one (1) household. Fanta attends high school and Jerome works full time during the day. Sarah is not employed due to a permanent disability. Sarah provides verification from her doctor that she is not able to work and not able to care for her grandchild while Fanta attends high school and Jerome works. Sarah is eligible for a medical exemption.

Example 4 (Single Parent Household): Annette applies for Wisconsin Shares in July 2024 and is determined eligible. In March 2025, Annette is in an accident. She is unable to participate in an approved activity. However, because she is the only parent in her AG, she is not eligible for a medical exemption. The agency worker reviews her case and determines that she is eligible for a TBRK period.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 5.3 Activity Break Periods

Parents can continue to be eligible and keep their current authorizations at the same number of hours for up to three (3) months following a permanent loss of their approved activity.

If the parent has a temporary break in their approved activity, eligibility can be retained and authorizations must continue at the same number of hours, for a minimum of three (3) months (see 5.3.5.1) but may extend through their next renewal (see 5.3.1.2).

- **Permanent Loss:** A parent who experiences a permanent loss of approved activity may be eligible for an Approved Activity Search Period (ACTS). A parent must expect to not return to the same approved activity to be eligible for an ACTS period.
- **Temporary Break:** A parent who experiences a temporary break in approved activity may be eligible for a Temporary Break Period (TBRK). A temporary break is defined as a parent's time-limited absence from an approved activity due to:
    - Illness,
    - The need to care for a family member,
    - A student or holiday break,
    - An interruption in work for a seasonal worker who is not working between regular industry work seasons, or
    - Any other time-limited cessation of an approved activity as long as the parent continues to be employed or enrolled in the approved activity.

ACTS and TBRK are collectively referred to as Activity Break Periods but have different rules.

Note: If a parent is absent or expected to be absent from their approved activity for less than one (1) calendar month, the approved activity status should not be updated. Neither ACTS nor TBRK apply to absences of less than one (1) calendar month.

For additional criteria that a parent must meet to be eligible for an Activity Break Period, see Section 5.3.1.

Eligibility and any authorizations will end systematically at the end of the Activity Break Period if the parent has not reported a return to his or her approved activity (TBRK) or a new verified approved activity (ACTS). Agency workers do not need to take any action to end eligibility at the end of an Activity Break Period.

If the permanent loss or temporary break in approved activity is not timely reported or discovered until after the Activity Break Period would have expired, a referral must be created in the Benefit Recovery Investigation Tracking System (BRITS).

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 5.3.1 Activity Break Period Eligibility

A parent must have ongoing Wisconsin Shares eligibility, including a verified approved activity, at the time of the permanent loss or temporary break in approved activity to be eligible for an Activity Break Period.

Parents are not immediately eligible for an Activity Break Period when they are:

- Applying for Wisconsin Shares
- Reapplying after one (1) calendar month of closure
- Being added to an ongoing case (Person Add)
- Beginning a new eligibility period (following a renewal)

Parents must have completed the application process [including interview, signature requirements, verification, and confirmation of eligibility in CWW] with an approved activity prior to experiencing the permanent loss of or temporary break in approved activity to be eligible for an Approved Activity Search Period (ACTS) or Temporary Break Period (TBRK). For Activity Break Period eligibility at renewal, see Section 5.3.1.1 and for Activity Break Period eligibility at Child Add (see 5.3.1.2).

Parents must continue to meet all financial and nonfinancial eligibility requirements during the Activity Break Period to maintain Wisconsin Shares eligibility, including reporting changes within 10 calendar days of the change (see 10.1).

Self-employed parents (see 5.1.1.1) are eligible for an Activity Break Period the same as parents who are regularly employed.

If the parent is employed by a temporary employment agency (or “temp agency”), and the parent reports that their job assignment has ended, the agency worker must ask follow-up questions to determine if the parent is eligible for ACTS or TBRK. If the parent expects to receive a new assignment within one (1) calendar month, the parent’s Approved Activity Status in CWW should continue to be Employment (EMPL). The case can be evaluated for an ACTS or TBRK period if the parent:

- Does not expect to receive a new assignment in one (1) calendar month
- Does not know when their next assignment will be
- Reports that they are no longer employed with the temp agency

Parents participating in school-year-based approved activities are eligible for a TBRK period while school is not in session if they intend to return to the same approved activity after the break. This includes:

- Parents participating in basic education (see 5.1.2.2), postsecondary education (see 5.1.2.3), or online education (see 5.1.2.4)

- Teen parents enrolled in high school (see 5.1.2.1)
- Parents employed through a school district
- School bus drivers
- Any other parents whose approved activity is based on the school year

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 5.3.1.1 Activity Break Period Eligibility at Renewal

Neither an Approved Activity Search Period (ACTS) nor a Temporary Break Period (TBRK) can begin the first month of a new eligibility period.

Example 1 (ACTS: New eligibility period): Luna calls the local agency on January 4 to complete her renewal which is due January 31. Luna tells the agency worker that she just lost her job on January 1 and will be looking for new work. The ACTS period would usually begin February 1, the month following the change. However, because ACTS cannot start the first month of the new eligibility period, Luna does not have an approved activity for February. The agency worker updates her Approved Activity Status in CWW to "No" for February, and her Wisconsin Shares eligibility ends systematically on January 31 due to no approved activity rather than no renewal.

Example 2 (TBRK: New eligibility period): Harper calls the local agency on April 12 to complete her renewal that is due on April 30. Harper tells the agency worker that her employer has temporarily closed on April 1. The TBRK period would usually begin May 1, the month following the change. However, because TBRK cannot start the first month of the new eligibility period, Harper does not have an approved activity for May. The agency worker updates her Approved Activity Status in CWW to "No" for May, and her Wisconsin Shares eligibility ends systematically on April 30.

There are different policies for whether an Activity Break Period can cross a renewal depending on whether the break type is ACTS or TBRK.

- **ACTS:** An ACTS period cannot continue after the renewal date. An ACTS period ends at the end of the 3-month period or at the renewal date, whichever comes first.
- **TBRK:** A TBRK period that started prior to the renewal date can cross a renewal and continue
    - for up to three (3) months, or
    - until the next renewal if an eligible child is added during an existing TBRK period (see 5.3.1.2).

These policies apply regardless of whether the renewal is a timely renewal or a late renewal.

Example 3 (TRBK crossing renewal): Gabriella is in a TBRK period from September 1 – November 30, and her renewal date is October 31. When Gabriella calls on October 21 to complete her renewal, the agency worker leaves TBRK as her Approved Activity Status for November. Gabriella can remain in the TBRK period until November 30 (the end of the 3-month period) if she provides all other information necessary to complete her renewal.

Example 4 (TBRK, late renewal): Raquel is in a TBRK period from January 1 – March 31 and her renewal is due February 28. Raquel does not complete her renewal, and her Wisconsin Shares eligibility ends on February 28. On March 10, Raquel calls the local agency to complete her late renewal. Raquel's renewal is completed with TBRK as her approved activity for March and Wisconsin Shares eligibility reopens for March. However, April and May eligibility will fail if Raquel does not have an approved activity entered in CWW for April.

Example 5 (TBRK beginning in renewal month): Billie calls on June 14 to complete her renewal that is due on June 30. At that time, she reports that she was temporarily laid off on May 20 but expects to return to work on July 10. Her TBRK period would be June 1 – August 31. Because the TBRK period begins the last month of her current eligibility period, the TBRK period can cross the renewal. The agency worker completes the renewal with "EMPL-Employment" as the approved activity on the Child Care Activity Status page. After all verification has been provided for the renewal and eligibility has been confirmed, the agency worker goes back to the Child Care Activity Status page to update the approved activity to TBRK and runs and confirms eligibility. The agency worker then goes to the Child Care Approved Activity Break Period page to verify that the dates of the TBRK period (June 1 – August 31) are correctly shown on that page.

Example 6 (ACTS beginning in renewal month): Trystan calls on February 19 to complete his February 28 renewal. He reports that he lost his job on January 25 and has not yet found a new approved activity. The ACTS period would be February 1 – April 30. Because the ACTS period begins the last month of Trystan's current eligibility period, he is eligible for ACTS in February. However, since ACTS cannot cross renewal, he needs to be participating in a new approved activity before eligibility can open for March.

If a parent's renewal is due on the last day of the Activity Break Period, the parent must have a new approved activity or a return to the same approved activity entered in CWW for the month following the renewal date for eligibility to continue.

Example 7 (Renewal due last day of ACTS period): Leonard is in an ACTS period from October 1 – December 31. Leonard's renewal is also due on December 31. Leonard does not complete his renewal by December 31, and his Wisconsin Shares eligibility ends on December 31. On January 10, Leonard calls the local agency to complete his

late renewal. Leonard must have an approved activity for January at the time that he completes his renewal on January 10 for Wisconsin Shares eligibility to reopen.

Activity Break Period After Completed Renewal
An Activity Break Period cannot begin the first month of a new eligibility period. If a permanent loss or temporary break in approved activity is reported while the parent is completing a renewal or if the renewal has already been completed, CWW will prevent the agency worker from entering an ACTS or TBRK period for the month following the renewal.

If an authorization was created, the agency worker must manually end or delete any authorizations for the month following the renewal because the parent does not have an approved activity for that month (see 17.2). This ensures that the same policy to not allow an Activity Break Period to start the first month of the new eligibility period is applied to all parents regardless of when they complete the renewal.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 5.3.1.2 Activity Break Period Eligibility at Child Add

If a parent is in a TBRK and a newly eligible child is added to the case, the TBRK end date is systematically extended to the new renewal date (see 17.2.1).

Example 1 (TBRK and Eligible Child Added): On April 23 Charly reports she is starting a 6-week medical leave. The agency worker updates Charly's Approved Activity Status in CWW to TBRK beginning May 1 – August 31 (the next renewal date). On June 2, Charly reports she had a baby and is now on maternity leave. When the newly eligible child was added, Charly's renewal date was extended to July 31 of next year. Charly's TBRK period can be extended to the new renewal date.

Agency workers must enter a case comment when a parent is in an Activity Break Period, and an eligible child is added and the TBRK is extended to the new renewal date (see 12.1).

If a parent is in an ACTS and a newly eligible child is added to a case, the ACTS period cannot be extended. The ACTS period is still limited to up to three (3) months.

Example 2 (ACTS and Eligible Child Added): Lindsay reports on August 17 she lost her job, and her last day worked was August 12. The agency worker updates Lindsay's Approved Activity Status in CWW to ACTS with a September begin date. The ACTS period created is September 1 – November 30. On October 13 Lindsay reports she had a baby but still does not have an approved activity. Lindsay's new renewal date with the eligible child added is extended; however, the ACTS period is still limited to up to three (3) months. Eligibility and authorizations will systematically end on November 30 if Lindsay does not have a verified approved activity.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 5.3.2 Activity Break Period Dates

Both an Approved Activity Search Period (ACTS) and a Temporary Break Period (TBRK) begin the month following the start of a reported permanent loss or temporary break.

Example 1 (TBRK): Jordyn reports on May 25 that he had surgery on May 20 and will be off work for three (3) months. The agency worker updates Jordyn's Approved Activity Status in CWW to TBRK with a June begin date. A TBRK period is created for June 1 – his next renewal.

If the parent reports a permanent loss or temporary break in an approved activity untimely, the Activity Break Period must be granted. However, the begin date must be backdated to the month following the permanent loss or temporary break.

Example 2 (ACTS reported untimely): Maranda reports on June 15 that she lost her job, but the last day she worked was April 20. Maranda's ACTS period must be backdated to start on May 1 and end on July 31. Maranda must have a verified approved activity entered in CWW for the month of August by July 31 to remain eligible for Wisconsin Shares.

A change in approved activity reported and verified during an Activity Break Period must be entered in CWW with a begin date of the month that the reported change in the approved activity starts (this allows CSAW to display the correct approved activity when the parent requests a new authorization).

Example 3 (ACTS period ended due to verified new employment): Roxanne reports to the agency worker on June 28 that she lost her job on June 21. The agency worker enters the ACTS activity in CWW for July. The ACTS period is set for July 1 – September 30. On August 12, Roxanne reports that she obtained new employment starting August 15. The agency worker pends the Employment page for verification of her new employment. On August 29, Roxanne provides the verification, and the agency worker updates the Approved Activity Status in CWW to EMPL for August.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 5.3.3 Activity Break Period Placement

When the local agency receives the report of a permanent loss or temporary break in approved activity, the agency worker must take action to change the parent's approved activity in CWW to ACTS or TBRK (based on the change reported) for the month

following the change without first contacting the parent to determine if there is a continuing child care need during the break in or loss of activity.

Example 1 (ACCESS report of job loss): George reports through ACCESS on Saturday, March 2, that he lost his job on February 25. On Monday, March 4, when the agency worker receives the report, they update the Approved Activity Status in CWW to ACTS for March. An ACTS period is established for March 1 – May 31. George's eligibility can continue until May 31. George must continue to meet all financial and nonfinancial requirements.

Agency workers must document in case comments if the agency worker entered an Approved Activity Search Period (ACTS) or Temporary Break Period (TBRK) for the parent following a reported change and any response or lack of response from the parent (see 12.1).

Following a permanent loss or temporary break in approved activity, agency workers should only end eligibility for lack of approved activity if:

- The parent states that they do not want to maintain Wisconsin Shares eligibility, or
- The parent is not eligible for an Activity Break Period.

Agency workers should advise parents to leave eligibility open with the ACTS or TBRK activity so that the parent will not need to reapply. If the parent agrees to leave their eligibility open but states they will not use child care, the agency worker must end the authorization (see 17.1) and document this in case comments (see 12.2).

Example 2 (Leave eligibility open): Daniel has an authorization for his child, Andrew. He reports to the agency worker on June 28 that he will be on temporary leave from his job starting June 30. Daniel states that he does not need the authorization or Wisconsin Shares eligibility because he will be caring for Andrew. The agency worker informs Daniel that if he leaves his Wisconsin Shares eligibility open, it will be easier to receive a new authorization and avoid the need to reapply when he goes back to work. Daniel agrees to leave his Wisconsin Shares eligibility in place. The agency worker updates Daniel's Approved Activity Status in CWW to TBRK for July until the next renewal but ends the authorization on June 30.

Example 3 (Request to end eligibility): On August 20, Naomi calls the local agency to report that she had a baby and is on maternity leave from her job. Her maternity leave started August 15, and she expects to return to work on October 15. She currently has an authorization for her older child, Jodie. The agency worker informs Naomi that she may maintain eligibility to the next renewal, and Jodie's authorization may remain at the same number of hours during that time. The agency worker advises Naomi to leave eligibility open so that she doesn't need to reapply when she returns to work. However,

Naomi still requests to end her Wisconsin Shares eligibility. The agency worker changes the Child Care Request in CWW to "No" and her eligibility for Wisconsin Shares ends on September 30 (according to adverse action). Jodie's authorization will also systematically end on September 30; the agency worker does not need to update the authorization end date unless Naomi indicates she will not need child care in September.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 5.3.4 Number of Activity Break Periods

Parents are not limited to one (1) Approved Activity Search Period (ACTS) or one (1) Temporary Break Period (TBRK) within their eligibility period. An ACTS period is limited to a maximum of three (3) months. In contrast, a TBRK can be a minimum of three (3) months and last until the next renewal. A parent must be engaged in a verified approved activity when an ACTS is followed by a TBRK (see 5.3.5). A parent in a TBRK can be followed by an ACTS without a verified approved activity in between (see 5.3.5.1). If a parent reports a new approved activity during an Activity Break Period, but does not verify it, the parent is not eligible for a new Activity Break Period based on the unverified approved activity. However, the parent is eligible to continue utilizing the remainder of the original Activity Break Period.

Once an Activity Break Period has been established, agency workers must not pend or change the Approved Activity Status in CWW until a new approved activity has been verified. Parents will need to verify a new approved activity by the end of their Activity Break Period to maintain Wisconsin Shares eligibility.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 5.3.5 Nonconsecutive Activity Break Periods

Parents cannot be in an Approved Activity Search Period (ACTS) and then immediately follow it with a Temporary Break Period (TBRK). There must be a verified approved activity between the ACTS and TBRK, even if the months of the Activity Break Periods are consecutive.

There is not a minimum number of days that a parent must be engaged in an approved activity to qualify for a new Activity Break Period, but the approved activity must be verified. If any verification received appears questionable, local agencies must follow the guidance in Section 7.6.

Example: Celeste is in an ACTS period from November 1 – January 31 following a job loss in October. On January 9, Celeste reports that she obtained new employment, but only worked for a week. Celeste provides the only paystub she received to verify the employment on January 12. The agency worker updates the Approved Activity Status in CWW to EMPL for January and runs with dates to confirm eligibility for January. Next, the agency worker goes back to the Approved Activity Status page in CWW and updates

the Approved Activity to ACTS for February. The agency worker runs and confirms eligibility. Although it appears that Celeste had consecutive ACTS periods (November to January and February to April), she did have verified employment between the two (2) ACTS periods.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 5.3.5.1 Consecutive Activity Break Periods

If a parent begins a Temporary Break Period (TBRK) that becomes a permanent loss of approved activity, the parent must receive a minimum of three (3) months in a TBRK followed by a maximum of three (3) months in an Approved Activity Search Period (ACTS). Unless the parent reports and verifies a new approved activity before the end of the 3-month ACTS period, the renewal is due, or the parent requests that the local agency end their Wisconsin Shares eligibility (see 5.3.6).

Agency workers should enter TBRK as the Approved Activity Status in CWW for at least three (3) months and then enter ACTS as the Approved Activity Status following the third month of the TBRK period or the month after the parent's permanent loss of approved activity, whichever is more recent. CWW will generate an error message preventing workers from entering a TBRK that is less than three (3) months on the Approved Activity Status page (see Process Help 16.2.1) when followed by an ACTS.

Example 1 (Job loss during TBRK): In April, Aparna goes on medical leave. She has an authorization for her child and is placed in a TBRK period from May 1 until the next renewal. However, in June she reports to her agency worker that she will not be returning to her job. The temporary break from her job becomes a permanent job loss. The agency worker will leave the Approved Activity Status as TBRK for a minimum of three (3) months, from May through July 31 and then enter an ACTS period for a maximum of three (3) months, from August 1 – October 31. Aparna must find a new approved activity by the end of October to remain eligible for Wisconsin Shares.

Example 2 (Job loss during month 7 of TBRK): Joanne recently completed her renewal and has an authorization for her child from October 1 to the next renewal on September 30. In February, Joanne goes on medical leave and is placed in a TBRK period from March 1 – September 30. In April, Joanne reports that she has lost her job. The agency worker must leave the Approved Activity Status as TBRK from March 1 - May 31 to provide the minimum of three (3) months and then enter an ACTS beginning June 1 – August 31 to provide the maximum of three (3) months. If Joanne does not have a new approved activity by the end of August, she will no longer be eligible for Wisconsin Shares.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 5.3.6 Ending an Activity Break Period Early

An Activity Break Period may end earlier than the original time period set in CWW if:

- The parent begins a verified new approved activity during an Approved Activity Search Period (ACTS) or reports that they have returned to their approved activity during a Temporary Break Period (TBRK).
- The parent contacts the local agency and requests that the agency worker end the Activity Break Period or indicates that they no longer want to receive Wisconsin Shares.
- Eligibility ends for any financial or nonfinancial reason. Examples include, but are not limited to:
    - The family moved out of state.
    - A new parent moved into the household who is not participating in an approved activity.
- Another parent in the Assistance Group (AG) reaches the end of their ACTS Period in a two-parent or three-generation family.
- The parent's renewal is due before the end of an ACTS period.

Note: Agency workers are not required to manually override the ACTS or TBRK period in CWW in these situations; updating the case according to the change is sufficient for ending the Activity Break Period. This includes running with dates when necessary (see 11.2).

Example 1: Molly is in an ACTS period from January 1 – March 31 and her spouse Peter is in an ACTS period from February 1 – April 30. If Molly does not start a new verified approved activity by the end of March, eligibility will end because at that time, there is one (1) parent in the AG who is not engaged in an approved activity.

Example 2: On September 6, Anya reports that she lost her job on August 28. Her eligibility renewal is due on October 31. Anya's ACTS period should be from September 1 – November 30. However, her ACTS period will only be for two (2) months because an ACTS period cannot cross renewal. Her eligibility will end October 31 if she does not have a verified approved activity entered in CWW for November.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 5.3.7 Eligibility Ending During an Activity Break Period

Parents can continue their Activity Break Period for the remainder of the time period if Wisconsin Shares eligibility ends but reopens within one (1) calendar month during an Activity Break Period. For processing instructions for this scenario, see Process Help Section 16.2.5.

Note: Even if the parent has an expected return date following a temporary break, the agency worker must not end the TBRK period in CWW until the parent reports that they have returned to their approved activity. Circumstances could change before the parent returns to their approved activity which would require different worker action and create duplicate work. The same policy applies to authorizations (see 17.2.3).

Example: On August 20, Jolene reports that she is going on maternity leave starting August 22 and indicates that she should be returning to work on September 28. The agency worker updates her Approved Activity Status to TBRK for September. The agency worker should enter the TBRK period as September 1 –next renewal or until Jolene reports that she has returned to work.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 5.3.8 Activity Break Period Verification

Parents must start an approved activity and provide verification that they participated in the approved activity before an Activity Break Period can be granted (see 5.3.1).

Agency workers must not require parents to provide verification of a job ending or of a parent starting a temporary break. Parents are also not required to provide job search logs or other verification of searching for an approved activity during an Approved Activity Search Period (ACTS).

New employment or other approved activity following an ACTS period must be verified. A parent must report when he or she returns to an approved activity following a Temporary Break Period (TBRK), but this does not need to be verified unless the parent is also requesting an increase in authorized hours (see 17.1). An increase in income, change in work hours, or decrease in child care need from more than 20 hours per week (full-time authorization) to less than 20 hours per week (part-time authorization) following a TBRK period must be reported (see 10.1).

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Chapter 6 Financial Eligibility Requirements

Section 6.1 Gross Income

Agency workers must include all available earned and unearned income for the Wisconsin Shares Assistance Group (AG) in the financial eligibility test, unless the income must be disregarded (see 6.3).

Income is available if the individual has a legal right to it and can use it for support and maintenance. Taxes and other deductions from a paycheck are included in gross income. Income is presumed to be available, unless proven to be unavailable.

Income is unavailable if the individual cannot access it for a calendar month or more. The individual must verify that the income is unavailable. Verified unavailable income must not be included when determining financial eligibility.

Example 1: Michelle was injured in an accident in November 2021. After a lengthy trial, Michelle is awarded $750,000. When Michelle applies for Wisconsin Shares in April 2022, she tells her worker about the settlement. However, the store's insurance company is not going to pay Michelle until November 2023. Michelle provides the letter that the insurance company sent her as verification, and this income is not counted until November 2023.

Example 2: Jonathan applies for Wisconsin Shares in November. Jonathan's ex-wife has primary placement of their child, JoEllen, but Jonathan is requesting child care for the days that JoEllen is with him. Jonathan's employer withholds funds from his paycheck for child support. Jonathan's gross income, before any deductions or withholdings, is used to determine his eligibility for Wisconsin Shares.

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 6.1.1 Application Income Limit

The gross income limit for new applicants and Assistance Groups that have closed for more than one (1) calendar month is 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).

These amounts were effective February 1, 2026. FPL amounts are updated annually. The current FPL amounts are published at https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wishares/apply.

Assistance Group (AG) Size	Monthly 200% FPL
2	$3,607
3	$4,553
4	$5,500
5	$6,447
6	$7,393
7	$8,340
8	$9,287
9	$10,233
10	$11,180
Each Additional Person Add	$947

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 6.1.2 Ongoing Eligibility Income Limit

The maximum gross income limit for cases after initial eligibility has been established is 85% of the State Median Income (SMI).

These amounts were effective March 1, 2026. 85% SMI and the corresponding Federal Poverty Level (FPL) are updated annually. The current SMI amounts are published at https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wishares/apply.

AG Size	Loss of Eligibility (85% SMI)	Loss of Eligibility (Monthly Dollar Amount)
2	329% FPL	$5,932
3	322% FPL	$7,327
4	317% FPL	$8,723
5	314% FPL	$10,119
6	311% FPL	$11,514
7	282% FPL	$11,776
8	259% FPL	$12,038
9	240% FPL	$12,299
10	225% FPL	$12,561

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 6.2 Counted Income

Income that is included in the financial eligibility test includes, but is not limited to:

- Money, wages or salary
    - This includes income for a spouse temporarily absent from the home due to military service.
    - For individuals enrolled in Trial Employment Match Program (TEMP), Transform Milwaukee Jobs (TMJ), or Transitional Jobs (TJ), only the portion of the wage that is unsubsidized according to the Employer Agreement Form is counted.
- Income from self-employment: the sum of net earnings as reported to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) plus depreciation expenses, personal business and entertainment expenses, personal transportation costs, purchases of capital equipment, and payments on the principal of loans
- Dividends
- Interest on savings or bonds
- Income from estates or trusts
- Net rental income or royalties
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) of adults in the Assistance Group (AG)

- Social Security payments (including old age, survivorship, and disability) of all members in the AG
- Pensions and annuities
- Unemployment insurance
- Worker's compensation
- Alimony and other maintenance payments
- All of the AG's monthly child or family support payments if the amount is greater than $1,250 per month
- Veteran pensions
- Any student financial aid provided by public or private organizations that are not used for tuition and books and are not excluded in Section 6.3
- Capital gains income from selling securities and other property
- Any other amounts paid to members of the AG, unless the income must be disregarded (see 6.3)

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 6.3 Disregarded Income

The income types listed below are excluded from the Wisconsin Shares financial eligibility test:

- Overpayment collections that are withheld from Social Security, Unemployment Compensation or other programs that do not base eligibility on income and assets
- Child Support Payments: Court-ordered child support or family support payments if the total amount paid to the Assistance Group (AG) members for all children is $1,250 or less per month. **Note:** If the total amount exceeds $1,250 per month, the entire amount is counted as income in the Wisconsin Shares financial eligibility test.
- Earned Income and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments of Minor Dependents
- State and federal tax refunds
- Any educational aid received under any state or federal program regardless of how the funds are used, including aid received under the GI bill
- Any educational scholarships or grants provided by public or private organizations that are used for tuition and books
- Work study income

- Foster Care, Kinship Care, Subsidized Guardianship, and Adoption Assistance payments
- Loans (including educational aid loans and private student loans)
- Reverse Mortgage Loan Proceeds (1993 Wisconsin Act 88)
- Job Access Loans
- W-2 payments (Community Service Job [CSJ], W-2 Transition [W-2 T], Custodial Parent of an Infant [CMC], At Risk Pregnancy [ARP], Stipends for Noncustodial Parents [TSP], or Case Management Follow-Up Plus [CMF+]), Emergency Assistance payments, and Wisconsin Shares subsidy payments
- Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA), Matching Grant program payments, and Reception & Placement assistance payments
- The wage subsidy portion of income from Trial Employment Match Program (TEMP), Transform Milwaukee Jobs (TMJ), or Transitional Jobs (TJ) according to the Employer Agreement Form
- Reimbursements: Money paid to the individual to reimburse actual expenses incurred or paid, or both. May include a per diem allowance for travel, uniforms, transportation, out-of-pocket expenses, medical reimbursements, or reimbursement for a volunteer's out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the course of his/her work
- Gifts: Cash gifts, such as for birthdays, graduation, and holidays
- Earmarked Funds (previously titled "Windfalls"): Any amount received that is earmarked and used for the purpose it was paid, such as back medical bills from an accident or injury, funeral and cemetery costs, and replacement or repairs. For medical services which can be provided only at a future date: Disregard any amount earmarked for those services, provided there is a signed agreement specifying: the source and amount of the settlement; the purpose for which it is earmarked; that the amount is held in its own account; and that it is agreed to and understood that if all or part of the settlement is used for a purpose other than for what it is earmarked, that amount used will be considered available income and counted when determining eligibility and copayments
- Federally-funded Benefits: Any income from sources required to be disregarded by federal or state law. Such sources include, but are not limited to: Higher Education Act of 1965; Nutrition Program benefits from National School Lunch Act; Food Stamp Act of 1977; Child Nutrition Act of 1996; Indian Tribal Federal Settlements; Housing Act of 1949; Older Americans Act; Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970; Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Act; Housing and Community Development Amendments of 1978, however, wages from the act may be counted as income; Low Income Energy Assistance Act of 1981; Old Age Assistance Claims Settlement Act; Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA): Adults, Rapid

Response, and Dislocated Workers, National Emergency Grants, and Trade Adjustment Act, unless specifically earmarked for child care expenses

- AmeriCorps and/or VISTA: Exclude income if the stipend amount divided by the number of hours of activity equals less than minimum wage
- Operation Fresh Start: Disregard Operation Fresh Start income unless the agency director verifies that participants are receiving the equivalent of minimum wage. If the Operation Fresh Start participant is receiving minimum wage or more, count the income in determining gross income
- Indian Tribal Judgment Funds Use or Distribution Act: Disregard per capita shares and income of $2,000 per year or less. If the total amount exceeds $2,000 per year, the entire amount is counted as income in the Wisconsin Shares financial eligibility test
- Rehabilitation Act of 1973: Disregard wages, allowances or reimbursements for transportation or personal assistance services costs paid to reasonably accommodate an employee, such as a vehicle modification made to accommodate a disability or a payment by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to support a rehabilitation plan

Note: Any work or activity in which a parent is paid "in-kind" rather than money is not considered income for Wisconsin Shares. This would include goods such as meals, clothing, housing, garden produce, livestock, etc. provided in exchange for services or labor.

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 6.4 Monthly Income Calculations

Unless otherwise stated in Sections 6.4.1, 6.4.2, or 6.4.3, monthly income is budgeted prospectively by making the best estimate of income based upon the information available. When converting income to monthly income:

- Weekly income is multiplied by 4.3 to get a monthly income amount
- Bi-weekly (paid every other week) income is multiplied by 2.15 to get a monthly income amount
- Semi-monthly (paid twice a month) income is multiplied by 2 to get the monthly income amount

Example 1 (Bi-weekly): Mary's pay stub shows that she worked 80 hours during the pay period making $15 per hour. The gross amount is $1,200 and Mary is paid every other week. The agency worker selects "Bi-Weekly" for the pay frequency on the Employment page in CWW and the system calculates a monthly income of $2,580 ($1,200 x 2.15).

Example 2 (Semi-monthly): Dory's pay stubs show that she worked 80 hours during both pay periods making $15 per hour. The gross amount on each is $1,200 and Mary is paid twice each month, on the 1st and 15th. The agency worker selects "Semi-Monthly" for the pay frequency on the Employment page in CWW and the system calculates a monthly income of $2,400 ($1,200 x 2).

During ongoing eligibility, if a parent experiences a temporary increase or decrease for less than one (1) calendar month, the income must not be updated if it does not reflect their ongoing, prospective income.

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Section 6.4.1 Contractual Salaried Income

Contractual salaried income that is annual income (intended to provide support for the entire year) and is not paid on an hourly or piecework basis must be prorated over 12 months.

Example 1: Joe works for a public school as a teacher's aide. Joe has worked there for the last three (3) years and receives a 9.5 month contract every August. He earns $13,480.50 annually. He lives off his salary as a teacher's aide for the full year and does not supplement his income during the summer. Average his income over 12 months: $13,480.50 ÷ 12 = $1,123.40 per month.

Contractual salaried income that is not annual income (intended to provide support for a portion of the year) and is not paid on an hourly or piecework basis must be prorated over the period the income is intended to cover.

Example 2: Nancy works for the public school as a part-time nurse. She receives a contract for 10 months every August. She earns $10,000 per school year. In the summer, she supplements her income as a lifeguard at the city pool. Average Nancy's school year income of $10,000 by 10 months. $10,000 ÷ 10 = $1,000 per month for the school year. Then for the summer months calculate her income by her summer earnings.

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 6.4.2 Fluctuating Income

If the amount of regularly received income varies, use an average.

Example 1: Harold receives a commission payment every quarter. His last commission check was $150. Divide $150 by three (3) months and average it over the three (3) months.

Income that is normally obtained, but received on an irregular basis, is to be averaged over the period between payments.

Example 2: Felicia is a salesperson who doesn't always receive a commission check every quarter. She did not receive a commission last quarter. Her last check was $200 and was received six (6) months ago. Divide the $200 by six (6) months and count $33.33 per month as her income until she reports receiving another commission check.

If neither the amount nor the frequency is consistent or predictable, count it only for the month in which it is received as non-recurring income.

Example 3: Rau receives a sales commission check whenever his company determines that their profits will allow them to pay out commissions. Rau has not received a commission check for nine (9) months although before that he was getting them on a quarterly basis. Rau reports that he received a $175 check this month but doesn't know when he will receive another check. $175 is counted as income in the current month.

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 6.4.3 Non-Recurring Income

Income that is received on a one-time basis is to be budgeted in the month that it is received. Examples of this include lottery winnings, a one-time bonus, or a lump sum payment.

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 6.4.4 Self-Employment Income

Self-employment income for Wisconsin Shares eligibility is defined in statute as the sum of net earnings reported to the Internal Revenue Service plus depreciation expenses, personal business and entertainment expenses, personal transportation costs, purchases of capital equipment, and payments on the principal of loans. See Process Help Section 11.2 for further guidance.

Example: John has been a self-employed construction worker for several years. He generally works many hours during the summer months, and very little during the winter. He applies for Wisconsin Shares in November and provides his previous year's taxes to verify his yearly income and expenses. His net yearly self-employment income plus disallowed self-employment expenses are divided by 12 to determine a monthly income average. Based on his monthly income, he meets financial eligibility criteria for initial eligibility. John reports on January 7 that he has not worked since December 30. This is a normal fluctuation in his business so there would be no change in the income budgeted.

The Tax Cut and Jobs Act (TCJA) of 2017 included a deduction for Sole Proprietorships, S Corporations, and Partnerships. The Qualified Business Income Deduction (QBID) is applied after the Standard Deduction. It has no impact on Wisconsin Shares financial eligibility. The QBID is not an expense and must not be included as an expense to offset self-employment income. If the QBID is entered as an expense in error, agency workers must use the Disallowed Expense Override on the CWW Self-Employment page to add the QBID back into the net earnings.

If two (2) married people own a sole proprietorship business and both claim the business as their approved activity, the agency worker must divide both the income and expenses in half. See CWW Process Help Section 11.2.2.9.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 6.5 Liquid Asset Limit

The asset limit is $25,000 for the Assistance Group (AG). The asset test is required at application and renewal. Only liquid assets are included in the asset test. Liquid assets are an individual's financial resources that are cash or that can be quickly converted to cash without incurring penalties, including cash on hand, as well as funds in checking, savings, money market, and credit union share accounts.

Foster parents, subsidized guardians, interim caretakers, relatives with court-ordered placement who receive Kinship Care payment, and children in tribal placement homes under a substantially similar Wisconsin tribal law, are not subject to the asset test. However, if Wisconsin Shares subsidy is needed for any of their biological or adopted children, the asset test will be part of the eligibility determination.

Any business liquid assets encumbered by a legal entity, such as a Limited Liability Company (LLC), must not be included in the family’s asset test.

Parents can self-declare liquid assets with no further verification when they state that their liquid assets do not exceed $25,000.

If a family claims to have more than $25,000 in liquid assets, the local agency must request documentation of the liquid assets to ensure that eligibility is correctly denied.

Agency workers must document the verification that was received that demonstrates the family exceeded the liquid asset limit in the comments field on the CWW Assets for Child Care page (see 12.1).

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Chapter 7 Verification Requirements

Section 7.1 Verification Requirements

Parents must verify information is accurate by providing documentation that supports eligibility determinations. Agency workers must inform the parent in writing of required verification items and the due date (see 7.4).

Parents are responsible for providing verification and resolving questionable information. If the parent has made reasonable efforts and cannot obtain the information, the agency worker must assist them.

Agency workers must receive verification for all required items and resolve any items that are questionable before confirming eligibility open.

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 7.1.1 Verify Only Once

The items that are verified only once per lifetime are:

- Identity
- Social Security Number
- Date of Birth
- Citizenship

Verify “only once” means once per lifetime in CWW. To ensure these items are only verified once, the local agency must scan copies of documents used as verification and upload them to the Electronic Case File (ECF), except when the information has been verified via data exchange.

If the information was auto populated by data exchange, the item is verified. If the agency worker entered the verification code, the agency worker needs to confirm that the underlying data exchange occurred.

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 7.2 Documentation

Agency workers must use documentation to verify Wisconsin Shares eligibility criteria. Photocopies of documentation should be marked with the date the document was received.

A CWW case comment must contain enough information to describe the nature and source of the information when there is no physical documentation. Situations without documentation include, but are not limited to, collateral contact, agency worker observation, a home visit, or a verbal statement. See Section 12.1 for required eligibility case comments and Section 12.2 for required authorization case comments.

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 7.2.1 Vital Record Documentation

Vital records are maintained by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services and are official records of births, deaths, marriages, and divorce.

When these documents are scanned at the local agency, the local agency must photocopy the original document, stamp the photocopy with "Administrative Use Only", and scan the photocopy into the Electronic Case File (ECF). Originals must be returned to the parent.

Certificates of Naturalization and Certificates of Citizenship are not considered vital records but must be treated as vital records because they are official documents.

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 7.3 Authority to Request Information

The local agency may request any information necessary to make a correct eligibility decision. The local agency must **not** request verification of an item that is not required unless questionable.

Note: The method used to verify information when determining eligibility or conducting an investigation must not violate the parent's rights, privacy, or personal dignity.

A release of information is not required when the agency worker is assisting the parent with obtaining employment verification through collateral contact.

A release of information is also not required to use documents associated with a case or investigation for:

- Locating a person or the assets of a person who:
  - Failed to file tax returns
  - Underreported taxable income
  - Is a delinquent taxpayer
- Identifying fraudulent tax returns
- Providing information for tax-related prosecutions
- Auditing or accounting purposes

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 7.4 Verification Due Date

Parents have seven (7) business days from the mailing date of the Notice of Proof Needed to submit the needed verification to the local agency. If verification has not been received within seven (7) business days, the local agency must run eligibility to generate a Notice of Eligibility informing the parent that Wisconsin Shares has been denied or will be ending.

Parents may request more time to provide verification if they are unable to provide verification by the due date. On a case-by-case basis, agency workers may allow an extension of a maximum of 30 calendar days from the application filing date or renewal due date. If neither the applicant nor the local agency can get the required verification by the 30th day from the application or renewal due date, eligibility must be denied (see 3.7).

For verification requested during ongoing eligibility, the verification due date can be extended to a maximum of 30 calendar days from the mailing date of the Notice of Proof Needed if needed on a case-by-case basis.

The need for more time may be an indication to the agency worker that the applicant requires assistance (see 7.1).

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 7.5 Refusal to Produce Verification

At initial eligibility and renewal, if the parent can produce the verification, but refuses or fails to do so, eligibility must be denied.

During ongoing eligibility, eligibility must not be ended if the parent does not provide financial verification, unless it is required due to a State Wage Income Collection Agency (SWICA) discrepancy (see 7.9.3). If the parent does not have at least one (1) verified approved activity, eligibility must be ended for lack of approved activity rather than not providing verification (see 7.9.2).

If a new person is added to an ongoing case, and the new person fails or refuses to verify financial or nonfinancial information, eligibility must be ended (see 7.9.2).

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 7.6 Conflicting or Questionable Information

If a local agency receives conflicting or questionable information regarding any eligibility item, the agency worker must request verification to support the parent's statements. The verification request must be in writing (see 7.1) and must be received within seven (7) business days or by the 30th day from the application or renewal due date if an extension is granted (see 7.4).

If any form of employment or self-employment verification appears questionable, the agency worker must request a second form of verification and document this in case comments (see 12.1).

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 7.7 Nonfinancial Eligibility Verification

The following nonfinancial eligibility items must be verified. The only sources of verification accepted for Wisconsin Shares eligibility are listed below. For items that are verified through a data exchange, documentation from the parent is not required.

- **Identity of the applicant and all parents in the Assistance Group:**
    - A current or expired photo ID, (except those issued by a city or village) including, but not limited to:
        - Driver's license
        - State-issued ID card
        - Photo Employee ID card
        - Photo Student ID card
        - Military ID card
        - Tribal ID card issued by a federally recognized tribe
        - Photo ID issued by United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)
        - Consular ID
        - U.S. Passport
    - Other acceptable sources:
        - Social Security Administration (SSA) data exchange (see Process Help Section 19.3)
        - Online Wisconsin Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) Driver's License query with a status of valid, expired, suspended, revoked, disqualified, canceled, or denied (see Process Help Section 19.2.1.8)
        - Verification of participation in the Safe at Home program (see Process Help Section 10.1)
- **Social Security Number (SSN) for children for whom assistance is requested**:
    - Application for SSN on form SS-5
    - A letter from the Social Security Administration stating that the application has been received

- Hospital discharge letter that specifically references the application for an SSN
- Verbal report of SSN by parent if verified by the SSA data exchange
  - The parent does not need to provide the child's Social Security card, only the SSN which is verified through the SSA data exchange. If the SSA data exchange returns a mismatch record, the parent may need to provide the child's Social Security card or another official government document with the SSN displayed.
- Social Security card

- **Wisconsin Residency and Residence (home address):**
  - Acceptable sources:
    - Lease agreement or written statement from landlord
    - Utility bill for water, gas, electricity, or phone that includes name and address
    - Mortgage receipt
    - Subsidized housing program approval document
    - Weatherization program approval document
    - Pay stub that includes name, address, and employer
    - State of Wisconsin Driver's license with current address
    - Wisconsin ID card with current address
    - Motor vehicle registration with current address
    - School registration record
    - Any other reliable document or data exchange, if applicable, that verifies Wisconsin residency and residence
  - Unacceptable source examples:
    - ID cards issued by a city or village
    - Child Support KIDS system
    - Returned mail with forwarding address
    - New Hire matches
    - Online Wisconsin DMV Driver's License query and any other source that does not display the address or current residency status
  - Exempt from residency and address verification but must certify that they reside in Wisconsin and during the interview must certify that they intend to continue to reside in Wisconsin:

        - Homeless individuals and families
        - Individuals and families living "doubled up" due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason and coded as 'DB – Doubled Up Housing' in the Address Verification field on the General Case Information page in CWW
        - Safe at Home participants (see Process Help Section 10.1)

Note: Residence verification provided must include the complete address, including apartment number if applicable. A post office box address is not sufficient.

- **U.S. Citizenship of children for whom assistance is requested:**
    - Certified copy of Birth Certificate
    - U.S. Passport
    - SSA data exchange
    - CWW Birth Query (Wisconsin births only)
    - Tribal ID card issued by a federally recognized tribe
    - Certificate of Naturalization
    - Certificate of Citizenship
    - Medicaid Birth Claim as documented by a Wisconsin hospital
- **Immigration status of children for whom assistance is requested:** If the applicant is not a U.S. citizen or U.S national he or she must present immigration documentation that the local agency will verify through SAVE. Any documents issued by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) serve as verification of immigration status. Children of immigrants may have derivative immigration status based on parents' status.
- **Out-of-Home Care Placements**: Foster Care, Subsidized Guardianship, Interim Caretaker Placements and relatives with court-ordered placement of a child (including voluntary guardianship) must be verified through one (1) of the following:
    - Current Voluntary Placement Agreement
    - Emergency Temporary Custody order
    - Current court order under Wis. Stat. Ch. 48 or 938 or any Wisconsin tribal law that is substantially similar to Wisconsin Stat. Ch. 48 or 938
        - **Note:** Court orders from states other than Wisconsin are allowable as verification of a court order.

- Verification of Out-of-Home Placement for Wisconsin Shares Eligibility form (DCF-F-5190-E) or a letter from the child's caseworker (county or tribal) that includes:
    - The name and address of the individual with whom the child is placed,
    - The name and date of birth of the child,
    - The date the out-of-home care placement began,
    - The date the out-of-home care placement will end (if applicable), **AND**
    - The name, date the letter was completed, and contact information for the caseworker.

The following nonfinancial eligibility items must only be verified if questionable.

- **Date of Birth of each Assistance Group member:** Self-declaration unless questionable (i.e., the SSA data exchange returns a discrepancy). If questionable: certified copy of Birth Certificate; Driver's License; U.S. Passport; State-issued ID card; Certificate of Naturalization; Certificate of Citizenship; Tribal ID card issued by a federally recognized tribe; ID issued by USCIS; Any immigration document that has name and date of birth; CWW Birth Query (Wisconsin births only); Medicaid Birth Record
- **Marital status:** Self-declaration unless questionable. If questionable: certified copy of Marriage Certificate or Judgement of Divorce or Legal Separation
- **Legal Parentage:** Self-declaration unless questionable. If questionable: Certified copy of the child's birth certificate; CWW Birth Query (Wisconsin births only); adoption records; a copy of a receipt from Vital Records showing that a Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgement was filed; copies of court documents showing that a paternity action was initiated; Wisconsin Circuit Court Access
- **Shared Placement**: Self-declaration unless questionable. If questionable: legal documents stating child placement as submitted by the parent
    - **Note:** Local agencies must not collect placement documents and make changes to the parent's case without the parent's knowledge.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 7.8 Approved Activity Verification

The following are acceptable sources of verification for approved activities:

Employment: See Section 7.9. All types of documentation that are acceptable for financial verification are acceptable to verify employment as an approved activity.

Employment verification must show that the parent worked at least one day. The parent does not need to provide paystubs for a full 30 days to verify that they have an approved activity or, for Approved Activity Search Periods (ACTS) and Temporary Break Periods (TBRK), that the parent participated in an approved activity prior to the break.

For children placed in out-of-home care whose eligibility is based on their biological or adoptive parents' income at the time they were removed from the home (see 9.2), the caretakers' employment verification does not need to contain income information. All other verification requirements listed in Section 7.9 must be met.

Employment with an employer who pays in cash **and** does not provide any source of employment verification listed in Section 7.9 is not a valid approved activity for Wisconsin Shares.

Transform Milwaukee Jobs (TMJ), Transitional Jobs (TJ), or Trial Employment Match Program (TEMP) jobs: Verified by the Employability Plan in CARES, or through pay stubs.

Apprenticeships: A copy of the signed apprenticeship contract between the applicant, employer, and the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development.

Self-Employment: See Section 7.9.1. All sources of verification that are acceptable for financial verification are acceptable to verify self-employment as an approved activity.

HSED, GED, or High School: Enrollment letter from school. If a teen parent will remain a dependent child on their parent's case, the local agency must collect written documentation from the education institution which identifies that the student is expected to achieve graduation or its equivalent by their 19th birthday. School schedules are not required for teen parents participating in HSED, GED, or High School.

Basic Education and Postsecondary Education: Proof of school enrollment and class schedule if classes have set log in times.

Online Education: Proof of school enrollment in basic or postsecondary education, class schedule if there are set log in times, and documentation from the school showing it is an accredited educational institution and provides credit hours for the completed course(s).

Wisconsin Works (W-2) Placements:
Participation is verified by the W-2 Employability Plan (EP). Agency workers may obtain a copy of the EP from the Electronic Case File (ECF), CSAW, request a copy from the FEP, or ask the parent for a copy.

For Case Management Follow-Up (CMF) and CMF+ placements:

- If the parent is requesting child care for W-2 activities in addition to employment, then the EP and employment verification is needed.
- If the parent only requires child care for employment, then only employment verification is needed.

Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF): Verified by the Individual Self-Sufficiency Plan (ISP). The applicant must provide a printed copy.

FoodShare Employment & Training (FSET): Verified by the FSET Employment Plan (EP). Agency workers may access the EP in CWW (Worker Tools-FSET Tool-Employment Plan), obtain a copy from the ECF, request a copy from the FSET worker, or ask the parent for a copy.

Learnfare: Verified by the Learnfare Case Management Plan. Agency workers may obtain a copy of the Learnfare Case Management Plan from the ECF, request a copy from the FEP, or ask the parent for a copy.

For verification of changes in approved activities, see Section 7.8.2.

The following are acceptable sources of verification for the approved activity exemption:

Medical Exemption: Wisconsin Shares Parent Medical Exemption form (DCF-F-5566) or documentation from a physician, physician assistant, nurse practitioner, psychiatrist, or psychologist that indicates the parent is both unable to work and unable to care for children (see 5.2).

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Section 7.8.1 Self-Declaration of New Employment

When **all** the following conditions have been met, Wisconsin Shares eligibility may be determined based on the parent's self-declaration of new employment or income from new employment:

- The parent is newly employed;
- The parent's employer uses Equifax for employment verification, but the new employment or income from new employment cannot yet be confirmed through Equifax;
- The parent has not yet received any pay stubs;
- The employer has refused to complete an EVF-E, send an acceptable letter, or confirm the parent's new employment or income from new employment through collateral contact; **and**

- The new employment or income from new employment cannot be confirmed through any other data exchange.

In situations where **all** the above criteria have been met, the parent's word serves as temporary verification of employment and/or income until pay stubs or other acceptable written verification is available. The justification for applying this policy must be documented in case comments (see 12.1). Agency workers must follow the instructions in Process Help Section 11.10.1.2 to open and confirm Wisconsin Shares eligibility so that child care authorizations may be written in CSAW.

If the parent is unable to provide verification that they started the job by the verification due date, a referral should be created in the Benefit Recovery Investigation Tracking System (BRITS).

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 7.8.2 Ongoing Approved Activity Verification

During ongoing eligibility, parents must have at least one (1) verified approved activity (see 7.8) or be in an Activity Break Period (see 5.3). If the parent reports the end of one (1) approved activity and the start of a new approved activity, agency workers must first request verification of the new approved activity. If the new approved activity is not verified, then the agency worker must enter an Approved Activity Search Period (ACTS) for the parent.

If a parent does not respond to the request for verification, agency workers must document in case comments that the worker entered an ACTS period for the parent following a reported permanent loss of approved activity. The agency worker must document the parent's response, or lack of response, in case comments (see 12.1).

If the parent reported a second approved activity and continues participating in their first verified approved activity, agency workers must not pend the Approved Activity or end eligibility due to failure to verify the second approved activity. However, parents must verify an increase in approved activity hours if requesting additional authorization hours (see 17.1).

Example 1: Brittany is receiving Wisconsin Shares and is working at Pizza Pub. In August, she reports that she is no longer working at Pizza Pub and has started a new job at Burger House. Brittany's worker requests verification of the new employment at Burger House. Brittany does not respond to the request for verification. Brittany's worker changes the Approved Activity on the Child Care Activity Status page to ACTS which establishes a 3-month ACTS period for Brittany. Brittany must provide verification of an approved activity by the end of the 3-month ACTS period to maintain her eligibility.

Example 2: Bill is receiving Wisconsin Shares and is working at Fitness World. In June, he reports that he started a new job at Smart Smoothies and is still employed at Fitness World. The agency worker creates a new Employment page for Smart Smoothies and pends for verification. Bill does not provide verification by the due date or request an extension. The agency worker updates the Employment page to indicate that verification was not received but does not update the Approved Activity page because Bill's continued employment at Fitness World is not questionable.

If the parent is currently in an ACTS period and reports new employment, agency workers must pend for verification on the Employment page. The Child Care Activity Status page must only be updated after new employment is verified.

Agency workers must not end eligibility if the parent does not provide verification and has time remaining in the ACTS period.

Example 3: Jesse is receiving Wisconsin Shares and works at Emma's Dry Cleaning. He has authorizations for his two (2) school-age children. In June, he is fired from his job. He reports this to the local agency and the agency worker changes the Approved Activity on the Child Care Activity Status page to ACTS. An ACTS period is established for July 1 – September 30. In August, Jesse reports that he started new employment at Lexi's Candy Shop. The agency worker creates a new sequence for the Employment page in CWW and pends for verification. The agency worker does not update the Child Care Activity Status page. Jesse does not provide verification of his new employment. The agency worker enters "NV-Not Verified" on the Employment page in CWW but does not update the Child Care Activity Status page. Jesse's ACTS period will remain in place until September 30.

A return to an approved activity during or following a Temporary Break Period (TBRK) does not need to be verified. Agency workers can update the Child Care Activity Status page after the parent reports they have returned if the parent returns before the end of the Activity Break Period established in CWW (see 5.3.6).

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 7.9 Financial Eligibility Verification

Financial eligibility must be verified during the initial eligibility determination process and at each renewal. If a person is added to an ongoing case, all financial information related to that individual must be verified.

Employment

At application and renewal, each adult in the Assistance Group (AG) must verify earned income by providing documentation of any earned income received in the past 30 calendar days.

Acceptable Sources of Employment Verification

- Dated pay stubs or pay statements for the immediately preceding 30 days. The pay stubs must include the employer and employee name, rate of pay, and number of hours worked.
    - Pay stubs showing year-to-date (YTD) can be used to calculate missing pay stubs. For income that fluctuates, more than 30 calendar days of pay stubs may be used.
        - For more information about calculating missing pay stubs, see Process Help Section 11.5.3.
    - If pay stubs from the past 30 calendar days are not representative of prospective income (see 6.4) or the parent has less than 30 calendar days of pay stubs due to new employment, the local agency must request additional verification to budget income prospectively. If additional verification is requested, but the employer refuses to provide it, the local agency may accept the submitted pay stubs and use the parent's verbal statement of expected future hours and wages to prospectively budget income.
    - If the individual is classified as exempt or salaried under the Fair Labor Standards Act, the employer might not include the hours worked on the pay stubs. This is acceptable verification; the agency worker must not request further verification and no documentation of hours is required.
    - For caretaker parents of children in out-of-home care whose eligibility is based on their biological or adoptive parents' income at the time they were removed from the home (see 9.2), the caretakers' employment verification does not need to contain wages or salary information for the purpose of verifying participation in an approved activity. All other requirements, such as employer and employee name, hours worked, etc. for each type of verification listed must be met.
- A completed Employer Verification of Earnings form (EVF-E) (F-10146) with the employer's signature, number of hours of work per week, company name, and rate of pay.
- An email or letter from the employer bearing the employer's legible name, contact information and signature and includes the employee's name, rate of pay, and hours of work.
- Equifax verification received directly from Equifax or through the Federal Data Services Hub (FDSH) wage match (so long as the parent confirms the data is correct).
- As a last resort, collateral contact with the employer. The agency worker must document the phone conversation in case comments including the date, time, and individual's contact information.

Example: Grant is applying for Wisconsin Shares on December 12. He started a new job on December 4 and only has one (1) pay stub to show his income. Because he started during a pay period, the pay stub also does not reflect the typical number of hours he will be working. The employer states that the information will be available in The Work Number/Equifax and refuses to return the EVF-E. The agency worker scans the one (1) pay stub into the Electronic Case File (ECF) and uses Grant's stated income and ongoing hours to enter his income. The worker must not request additional verification later unless Grant's wages become questionable.

Agency workers are not required to enter the Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) on the CWW Employment page for Wisconsin Shares.

If any form of employment verification appears questionable, the agency worker must document this in case comments (see 12.1) and request a second form of verification (see 7.6).

Note: Local agencies may ask for pay stubs for the entire preceding 30 calendar days when employment is not new and there is an expectation that paychecks would have been issued. The EVF-E is valid verification of employment and income, but if it is questionable whether the parent is completing the form instead of the employer, the local agency must follow guidance in Section 7.6.

Process: Agency workers must update CWW to reflect changes in income by running and confirming eligibility, with dates if necessary, to ensure the income updates for the correct month. The eligibility determination must be confirmed for CSAW to use the new income in determining copayments and copayment periods.

Self-Employment: See Section 7.9.1.

Unearned Income
Unearned income that is included in the Wisconsin Shares budget (see 6.2) for all AG members must be verified.

Types of unearned income verification include but are not limited to:

- Unemployment Compensation award letter (unless the income is auto populated in CWW by the UI data exchange)
- Divorce documents showing family support, child support, maintenance, or financial settlement
- Documentation of court-awarded settlement
- Social Security award letter
- Veteran's Administration award letter

- Financial Aid award letter
- Tax records showing unearned income such as net rental income, royalties, capital gains, etc.
- Bank statements showing dividends, interests on savings or bonds, income from estates and trusts, etc.
- Worker's compensation approval letter
- KIDS records showing child support received by the parent

Biological or Adoptive Parent Income
The agency worker must attempt to obtain the biological or adoptive parent income and AG size at the time the child was removed from the home. This information is typically available from the local Child Protective Services (CPS) agency. The agency worker must enter a case comment (see 12.1) that includes the following:

- Name, title, and telephone number or email address of the individual at the CPS agency with whom the agency worker had contact
- Date and time of the conversation or email response
- Biological or adoptive parents' income and AG size (if available)

See Section 9.2 for the process to enter this income in CWW.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 7.9.1 Self-Employment Income Verification
Income from self-employment must be verified at application and renewal.

Parents who are self-employed must file taxes with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for the self-employment to be an approved activity, even if the business does not have earnings above the IRS' tax filing threshold. Self-employed parents must provide copies of their filed personal and business IRS tax documents, including all schedules and attachments, for the most recent tax year. Agency workers may request verification that the tax forms have been submitted to the IRS if the documents are questionable.

Proof of filing taxes may include:

- Email confirmation if the parent filed online
- A tax form signed by the tax professional who filed on behalf of the parent
- A canceled check if taxes were owed when filing
- Bank statements clearly showing a deposit from the IRS
- Transcript of tax return from the IRS

If verification appears questionable or needs clarification, agency workers must request additional supporting evidence, such as receipts, contracts, or other documentation of income and expenses, to verify that the parent is engaged in self-employment (see 7.6).

If self-employment taxes were filed in the previous year, the previous year's tax information must be used if the parent is applying or completing a Wisconsin Shares renewal **and**:

- It is prior to the next tax filing deadline; or
- The parent has filed for a tax filing extension.

Note: Verification of filing a tax filing extension is not required unless questionable.

If a parent states that the business has had a significant change and the previous year's taxes do not reflect their current income, the parent must provide the previous year's taxes and Self-Employment Income Report Forms (SEIRFs) (F-00107) that cover each month since the significant change, up to the next renewal a maximum of 12 months.

If the business has not yet filed taxes, parents must provide SEIRFs for at least three (3) months up to the number of months until the next renewal a maximum of 12 months depending on the business start month.

Scenario	Verification
Business is new and taxes are not yet filed	SEIRFs
Business' previous year's taxes are not yet filed	Most recently filed taxes
Business' previous year's taxes are filed	Previous year's taxes
Business' previous year's taxes are filed and a significant change is reported	Previous year's taxes and SEIRFs

Example 1 (Ongoing business): Karen applied for Wisconsin Shares in January 2022. She has been operating her own salon for the past five (5) years. At application, her 2021 taxes have not yet been filed. Karen must submit her 2020 taxes. If there has been a significant change, Karen can submit her 2020 taxes and SEIRFs for any months since the significant change. If Karen has never filed taxes, then she is not eligible for Wisconsin Shares.

Example 2 (Significant change): Janette is a self-employed hair stylist. The person who owns the salon retired and Janette decided to purchase the business instead of renting a chair. She contacts her worker and reports this significant change. The taxes she submitted with her renewal are no longer accurate. The agency worker enters the date

of the significant change on the CWW Self-Employment page. CWW will generate the Notice of Proof Needed along with the SEIRFs for all months since the date of the significant change.

Example 3 (New business with limited history): Donna opened a new business in May and is applying for Wisconsin Shares in June. The agency worker enters May for "When did this business begin?" on the CWW Self-Employment page and indicates that taxes have not been filed. CWW will generate a Notice of Proof Needed along with SEIRFs for May, June, and July. Donna must complete the SEIRFs using the first month's actual income and expenses and anticipated income and expenses in the next two (2) months.

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Section 7.9.2 Ongoing Financial Verification

This policy is specific to the period between application and renewal and between subsequent renewal periods.

If a parent reports a change in income and the new household income is still below 85% State Median Income (SMI), the agency worker must request verification of the income. If income is not verified, eligibility will not end due to lack of verification of income. Agency workers must end eligibility with a manual override in CARES Mainframe due to not providing verification of income if:

- A parent is added to an Assistance Group (AG) and does not verify income
- Income over 85% SMI is discovered through a State Wage Income Collection Agency (SWICA) discrepancy or other data exchange and verbal confirmation or verification is not provided (see 7.9.3)
- A SWICA discrepancy is received that shows more than a $250 difference for two (2) consecutive months within a quarter in which there was an application or renewal, and verification is not provided (see 7.9.3)

If an income change is not verified, CSAW will still use the most recent confirmed budget when determining subsidy.

Increases in income must be verified before additional hours can be authorized (see 17.1).

Example: In September, when Joan applies for Wisconsin Shares, she has an approved activity of working at Susie's Alterations. In November, she picks up second shift hours at Fred's Food Mart while remaining employed at Susie's Alterations. She reports this change to the local agency. Joan's income remains under 85% SMI with the new reported income. The agency worker must request verification of the new income at Fred's Food Mart, but Joan will not lose eligibility if she does not verify the income with

Fred's Food Mart. The NV code entered on the Fred's Food Mart Employment page does not cause the case to fail. Joan's worker knows that she is still working at Susie's Alterations, so her approved activity is not questionable. If Joan is requesting additional subsidy for the hours she is working at Fred's Food Mart, she must verify the need for the increased subsidy.

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Section 7.9.3 SWICA Discrepancies

The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) is the State Wage Income Collection Agency (SWICA). The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is required by federal law to exchange information with DWD to identify discrepancies in wages used to determine eligibility. For more information about how SWICA discrepancies are created, see Process Help Section 19.4.2.2.

Local agencies must resolve at least 80% of SWICA discrepancies within 45 days of receipt of the discrepancy. Overpayments related to SWICA discrepancies are not required to be established within the 45-day timeframe.

Upon receipt of the SWICA discrepancy, agency workers must review the discrepancy to determine if it can be resolved without further verification. See Process Help Section 19.6.3 for the SWICA Discrepancy Flow Chart that provides the steps to resolve SWICA discrepancies for all programs. Agency workers must not pend ongoing eligibility if the SWICA discrepancy only reflects historical information.

If the SWICA discrepancy cannot be resolved without further verification, the agency worker must generate a request for verification and allow the parent seven (7) business days to respond (see 7.4).

If a parent does not respond to the request for earned income verification and the case has ongoing eligibility, eligibility will not end due to lack of financial verification (see 7.9.2). Agency workers must not take any action to manually end eligibility if the SWICA discrepancy was for a period during the parent's eligibility period and income does not exceed 85% SMI.

Agency workers must manually end eligibility if verification is not provided and:

- The discrepancy was for a person added to the Assistance Group (AG) during the SWICA quarter.
- There was an application or renewal during the SWICA quarter.
- The SWICA income indicates that the case was over 85% SMI for two (2) consecutive calendar months.

SWICA discrepancy was received for which reason?	If not verified, what happens:
Application or Renewal, difference of $250 or more	Agency worker uses manual override process in CARES Mainframe to fail the case for lack of earned income verification using reason code **767**.
Income over 85% SMI	Agency worker uses manual override process in CARES Mainframe to fail the case for lack of earned income verification using reason code **767**.
Person Add	Agency worker uses manual override process in CARES Mainframe to fail the case for lack of earned income verification at Person Add using reason code **759**.
During the eligibility period (Ongoing Eligibility), income above 200% FPL at last renewal	Agency workers **must not** end current ongoing eligibility when the SWICA discrepancy was for a period during the eligibility period and income was below 85% SMI, even if the income from the SWICA quarter is not verified.

If the case was over 85% SMI for two (2) consecutive calendar months in the SWICA discrepancy quarter, and the parent verifies or verbally confirms that they are still over 85% SMI, the income must be updated on the Employment page and eligibility will end according to adverse action due to being over the income limit. If the SWICA income or other data exchange information shows that the case was over 85% SMI for two (2) consecutive calendar months and the parent does not provide verification or verbally confirm the amount, eligibility must be manually ended for not providing verification.

The local agency should use the Post Load Benefit Correction (PLBC) module in CSAW to determine if the subsidy amount received by the parent was correct. See the PLBC User Guide for further details. An overpayment will not be assessed if the parent failed to report an increase in income that would not have affected eligibility or the subsidy amount.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Chapter 8 Migrant Farmworkers

Section 8.1 Migrant Child Care Eligibility

Migrant farmworker families may apply for Wisconsin Shares through the local agency in their county or tribe of residence or through a nonprofit organization contracted by the department.

Parents applying for Wisconsin Shares through the Migrant Child Care contract (MCC) agency must complete an in-person or telephone eligibility interview. Once a child is determined eligible, the child can remain eligible through the end of the migrant farmworker season.

Parents must meet and provide verification of financial and nonfinancial eligibility for children served under this contract based on Migrant Head Start eligibility criteria.

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 8.1.1 Financial Eligibility

The migrant farmworker family's annual income must:

- Come primarily from agricultural work
- Be at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for the family size

Parents must submit expected income information for the next three (3) consecutive months. The following documentation may be used to verify income:

- Previous year tax forms
- Current pay stubs
- Work agreements (contracts)
- Other proof of income

If the family cannot provide tax forms, pay stubs, or other proof of income for the relevant time period, program staff may accept written statements from employers for the relevant time period and use the income information to calculate total annual income and FPL.

This section last updated 7/1/2024

Section 8.1.2 Nonfinancial Eligibility

Children receiving Wisconsin Shares through the Migrant Child Care contract (MCC) must meet the following nonfinancial eligibility criteria:

- The children being served are under age 13 (which includes 12 years, 11 months), or under age 19 for children with a verified disability (see 4.3).
- The child is a U.S. citizen or qualified immigrant (see 4.5).
- The parents of the child meet the definition of migrant farmworker. This may be supported by a combination of proof that the parent/family:
    - Is employed in migrant farm work; and
    - Has not resided in Wisconsin for 10 months in the past 12 months.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 8.1.3 Documentation Requirements

Parents must provide the following documentation:

- A copy of the child's birth certificate or other documentation to verify the child's citizenship or immigration status (see 7.7)
- A copy of pay stubs or any other form of documentation that verifies household income (see 8.1.1)

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Chapter 9 Out-of-Home Placement Eligibility

Section 9.1 Children in Out-of-Home Care

Wisconsin Shares does not allow categorical eligibility for any families. Foster parents, subsidized guardians, interim caretakers, and relatives caring for a child must meet the same eligibility requirements, including verification of approved activity, just as all other families are required to do.

There are two (2) exceptions to this:

- Parents who are caring for a child that is not their biological or adopted child are not required to cooperate with the Child Support Agency (CSA) for that child (see 4.7.1).
- There is an alternate financial eligibility test for foster care parents, subsidized guardians, interim caretakers, relatives with court-ordered placement AND who receive a Kinship Care payment, and individuals caring for children in tribal placement homes under a substantially similar Wisconsin tribal law (see 9.2).

For Wisconsin Shares, relatives with court-ordered placement includes a relative with legal placement under Wis. Stat. Chs. 48 or 938.

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 9.2 Financial Eligibility

Financial eligibility is tested against 200% Federal Poverty Level (FPL) (see 6.1.1) and is based upon the child's biological or adoptive parents' income at the time the child was removed from the home for the following out-of-home placement types:

- Foster care
- Subsidized guardianships
- Interim caretaker placements
- Court-ordered placements with a relative AND who receives a Kinship Care payment

- Tribal placements under a substantially similar Wisconsin tribal law

For relatives with court-ordered placement who are not receiving the Kinship Care payment, financial eligibility is based on the caretaker relative's income and the income of other individuals who are included in the assistance group.

If a parent adopts a child that was previously placed with them in an out-of-home care arrangement, the adoptive family must meet financial eligibility criteria based on their income. A family who has not previously met the 200% FPL application income limit (see 6.1.1) will need to have income below the application limit for continued eligibility. A family whose income was previously under 200% FPL when they applied will need to have income below the ongoing income limit (see 6.1.2) for continued eligibility.

Example 1: Norma and Derek applied for Wisconsin Shares in August. They have one (1) foster child, Sean. They do not have any biological or adopted children. Their income places them at 275% FPL. However, since Sean is a foster child whose biological parents had income under 200% FPL, he is eligible for Wisconsin Shares. In October, Norma and Derek adopt Sean. Because they have not yet passed the initial income limit for Wisconsin Shares, their income is tested against 200% FPL for November. Since their income is over 200% FPL, Sean is no longer eligible for Wisconsin Shares starting in November.

Example 2: Trish applies for Wisconsin Shares in March for her niece, Lexi. Lexi is placed with Trish under a court order and Trish receives the Kinship Care payment. Trish does not have any biological or adopted children. Trish's income places her at 115% FPL. Lexi's eligibility is based on the income of her biological parents at the time she was removed from the home. However, Lexi would be financially eligible regardless of her biological parent's income because Trish's income is below 200% FPL. In July, Trish adopts Lexi. Her income is used for August. Since Trish's income passed the 200% FPL initial income limit when she applied in March, her income is tested against the ongoing income limit of 85% State Median Income (SMI) for August. Lexi's eligibility continues because Trish's income is below 85% SMI.

The income and Assistance Group (AG) size is usually available from the child welfare professional who is involved in the child's case; a verbal or written statement regarding the income information from the child welfare professional involved in the child's case is sufficient to document the biological or adoptive parent's income. If the biological or adoptive parent's income is verified through a collateral contact with the child welfare professional, the agency worker must enter a case comment that includes the name and title of the individual with whom the agency worker had contact, the telephone number or email address, and the date and time of the conversation or email response. If the child welfare professional is unable to provide the biological or adoptive parents' income and AG size, the child must be considered financially eligible. The agency worker must follow the process below for entering this correctly in CWW.

Process: If the child welfare professional involved in the child's case can provide the biological or adoptive parents' income and AG size, the agency worker must enter the information on the Manual Child Care Eligibility page in CWW. The agency worker must manually determine the FPL based on the income amount and AG size. If the family's FPL is 200% or less, the agency worker must enter "S – Passes the income test" as the Eligibility Result.

If the biological parent's income is more than 200% FPL, the agency worker must enter "F – Fails the income test" as the Eligibility Result. Eligibility is then systematically tested against the caregiver household income at 200% FPL. If the caregivers' household income exceeds 200% FPL, the children in out-of-home care are not eligible for Wisconsin Shares.

If the child welfare professional is unable to provide the biological or adoptive parents' income and AG size, the agency worker must leave the Family Size and Total Income fields blank and enter "S – Passes the income test" as the Eligibility Result. The agency worker must enter a case comment (see 12.1) that the child welfare professional was unable to provide the information.

Note: This financial eligibility determination and verification exception is separate from the requirement that all parents must verify participation in approved activity (see 7.8)

For Wisconsin Shares, approval to receive the Kinship Care payment qualifies as receiving the Kinship Care payment. Being on the waitlist does not qualify as receipt of a Kinship Care payment. Proof of Kinship Care payment approval may be provided by written confirmation from or collateral contact with the Kinship Care Coordinator.

Note: Confirmation provided by the Kinship Care Coordinator must state that the Kinship Care payment has been approved. Stating that the family will probably receive the Kinship Care payment does not qualify as approval to receive a Kinship Care payment.

If the Kinship Care payment status is verified through collateral contact, the agency worker must enter a case comment (see 12.1) that includes the name and title of the individual with whom the agency worker had contact, the telephone number or email address, the date and time of the conversation or email response, and whether the family has been approved to receive the payment.

Foster care parents, subsidized guardians, interim caretakers, relatives with court-ordered placement who receive the Kinship Care payment and individuals caring for children in tribal placement homes under a substantially similar Wisconsin tribal law who need Wisconsin Shares for their biological or adopted children must meet financial

eligibility requirements for their own children (see 6.1). The financial eligibility exception only applies to the children in out-of-home care.

This section last updated 7/1/2024

Chapter 10 Reporting Requirements

Section 10.1 Reporting Requirements

Parents receiving Wisconsin Shares must report changes that may impact eligibility or authorizations to the local agency within 10 calendar days after the change. Parents can report changes by calling or visiting the local agency or online through ACCESS Report My Changes (RMC). Parents are informed of their rights and responsibilities for reporting changes through their Notice of Eligibility, Quarterly Subsidy Authorization Notice, and ACCESS Renew My Benefits (RMB), Apply for Benefits (AFB), and Add a Program (AAP) application documents.

Income Changes

The income reporting requirements depend on whether the Assistance Group (AG) is at or below 200% Federal Poverty Level (FPL) or above 200% FPL.

- An AG at or below 200% FPL must report if their gross monthly household income, whether earned or unearned, exceeds 85% of the State Median Income (SMI).
- An AG above 200% FPL must report if their household's gross monthly income, whether earned or unearned, increases by $250 or more.

All parents must report if their monthly gross income exceeds 85% of the State Median Income (SMI).

The Child Care Notice of Eligibility and Quarterly Subsidy Authorization Notice display the income reporting requirement for the AG.

Note: Parents are not required to report decreases in monthly household income; however, doing so may increase a family's subsidy amount by reducing the hourly copayment per the reduction in income.

Child Care Authorization Changes

A change in child care providers must be reported before the change occurs. If a parent intends to change to a new child care provider next month, the change needs to be reported before the last business day of the current month to receive subsidy funds for the new provider. There are limited exceptions (see 17.3 and 17.3.1).

An individual must report within 10 calendar days after the change if someone in the household:

- Has a decrease in child care need from more than 20 hours per week (full-time authorization) to less than 20 hours per week (part-time authorization) or no longer needs child care
- Receives a provider price discount
- Has not attended their authorized child care provider for 20 consecutive calendar days

All Other Eligibility Changes
Parents must report within 10 calendar days after the change if anyone in the household:

- Has a new address
- Moves out of state
- Has a change in where he or she is staying, including a change that is only temporary
- Moves into or out of the home
- Gets married or divorced
- Has a new child in the home
- Has a change in the composition of the AG, such as:
    - A child is adopted
    - A parent becomes a foster parent, subsidized guardian, or interim caretaker
    - Legal parentage between a child and the second parent living in the home is established
- Has a change in their approved activity, such as:
    - A new job
    - Enrollment in basic or postsecondary education if child care is needed for the activity
    - Permanent loss of approved activity
    - Temporary absence from their current approved activity that is expected to last longer than a calendar month

Questionable or contradictory verification or reporting must be resolved or referred for Front-End Verification according to the local agency's fraud plan (see 7.6).

Failure to report changes may result in an overpayment based on the results of an audit and investigation, if a parent received subsidy funds that they were not eligible to receive (see Appendix VI – Client Investigations).

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Chapter 11 Ending Eligibility

Section 11.1 Ending Eligibility

During a parent's eligibility period, the local agency must end a parent's eligibility if any of the following conditions are met:

- The gross income of the Assistance Group (AG) exceeds 85 percent of the State Median Income (SMI) for a household of the same size
- The parent is not participating in an approved activity or an Activity Break Period
- The local agency or the department determines that the parent committed an Intentional Program Violation (IPV), and the department establishes a sanction after completing the IPV review process
- The parent fails to meet nonfinancial eligibility criteria
- The primary person moves out of the state
- The parent fails to provide required verification

Parents will not lose eligibility for failing to verify increases in income below 85% SMI during the eligibility period (see 7.9.2) but must verify income at renewal.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 11.2 Ending Eligibility After Adverse Action

Sometimes agency workers must run eligibility with dates in CWW to end eligibility at the end of the current month. All other instances of eligibility ending follow Adverse Action logic.

Agency workers must run eligibility with dates after Adverse Action to confirm Wisconsin Shares closures for the next consecutive month for the following reasons:

- When the parent no longer resides in Wisconsin
- When there are no eligible children in the household
- When the required verification was not returned within seven (7) business days from the Notice of Proof Needed mailing date, excluding when a Good Cause Claim was requested

For processing instructions related to running eligibility with dates for Wisconsin Shares, see Process Help Section 16.1.

Note: For ongoing cases that fail to verify earned or unearned income, running with dates will not cause the Assistance Group (AG) to fail (see 7.9.2).

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Chapter 12 Case Comments

Section 12.1 Eligibility Comments

Eligibility-related case comments must describe information from any contact with a parent that is relevant to their case. This includes applications, renewals, and reported changes. CWW provides comment boxes on several of the eligibility-related pages and a Case Comments page where all case comments are recorded.

The following information must be documented in case comments or comment boxes:

- A summary of the interview at initial application and eligibility renewal, including a description of any outstanding verification requirements (see 3.3 and 3.8)
- Missed appointments and unsuccessful attempts to contact the parent for a telephone interview (see 3.3)
- Eligibility determination details when an eligible child is added to the case and the renewal date is extended (see 3.5.1)
- The supervised living arrangement of a parent who is under the age of 18 and residing in an independent living arrangement that is approved by a licensed or public child welfare agency and supervised by an adult (see 4.2 and 5.1.2.1)
- The local agency's determination that participation in basic education, postsecondary, or online basic or postsecondary education will facilitate the individual's efforts to maintain employment (see 5.1.2.2, 5.1.2.3, and 5.1.2.4)
- When a parent is in an Activity Break Period and an eligible child is added and the TBRK is extended to the new renewal date (see 5.3.1.2)
- Entry of an Activity Break Period following a reported permanent loss of or temporary break in approved activity (see 5.3.3)
- The verification that was received demonstrates the family exceeds the liquid asset limit (see 6.5)
- The receipt of any form of verification that appears questionable or falsified (see 7.6)
- The justification for applying the self-declaration for new employment policy (see 7.8.1)

- Details of the phone conversation or email from collateral contact with an employer, child welfare professional, or other third party (see 7.9 and 9.2)

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 12.2 Authorization Comments

CSAW provides comments boxes on several of the authorization-related pages in addition to a Case Comments Summary page where authorization related comments are recorded.

The following information must be documented in case comments or comment boxes:

- The reason for the authorization end date (see 15.3)
- A statement describing the reason for a delay in the authorization being completed within two (2) business days of the authorization assessment (see 16.1)
- A summary of the reason(s) for the difference in hours between the approved activity verification and the reported child care need if the difference crosses the part-time/full-time threshold or the threshold from full-time to above full-time (see 16.1.1.1)
- The reason for the difference between the approved hours and the requested hours, as well as the rationale for the hours that were ultimately approved, if the agency worker determines that the parent's self-declared need does not reasonably align with their approved activity (see 16.1.1.1)
- Whether the criteria are met for including education hours in an authorization for a child in 4K or Head Start (see 16.1.1.3)
- The reason for school closed hours/days (see 16.1.1.4.2)
- The reason for a short-term emergency authorization for a school-age child during the typical school day when school is in session (see 16.1.1.4)
- A summary of documentation that shows the entire child care need (including travel time, gap time, sleep time) when the child care need exceeds 12 hours per day (see 16.1.2)
- The approval or denial of an inclusion rate (see 16.4.1)
    - **Note:** Agency workers must not include any health information or diagnosis in case comments (see 2.3)
- A description of discounts the parent receives from the provider (see 16.4.2)
- A summary of the discussion with a parent regarding child care need following a reported change (see 17.1), including whether the parent opted for fewer hours following an offer of continuity of care (see 17.1.2)

- When a newly eligible child is added to the case, a parent is in a TBRK and the authorization end date for any eligible children with a current authorization is extended to the new renewal date (see 17.2.1)
- A summary of the situation for approved hardship authorizations (see 17.3.1)
- A description of attempted contacts to the parent before ending an authorization for excessive unexplained absences (see 17.4)

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Chapter 13 Parental Choice

Section 13.1 Residing with a Child Care Provider

Parents have the right and responsibility to choose a regulated child care provider who is participating in the YoungStar Quality Rating System.

Children may not receive an authorization to attend a provider location where the parent or person residing with the child:

- Is employed by a certified child care provider at the same location
- Is self-employed as a certified or licensed child care provider and will be the provider for their own child(ren)

Parents who are child care providers may apply for a waiver to send their child(ren) to another child care provider (see 13.2). A child who lives with a child care provider who is not their parent can attend a different child care provider without a waiver.

Example: Yuko lives with his parent and grandparent. Yuko's grandparent is a licensed family child care provider. Yuko cannot receive an authorization to attend his grandparent's child care program because they live in the same household, but he can receive an authorization to attend another child care program. Yuko's parent does not need to apply for a waiver for Yuko to attend a different provider because the child care provider (the grandparent) is not the parent.

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 13.2 Waivers

Parents who are child care providers may apply for a waiver to receive an authorization for their child(ren) to attend another child care provider. The waiver request must be made in writing using the Request for Waiver of Eligibility Restrictions for Child Care Assistance form (DCF-F-432-E). The local agency must grant or deny the waiver request within 10 business days of receipt of the completed waiver application. Waivers must

be approved based for each individual child. If approved, the agency worker may write authorizations for the child(ren) to receive care at another regulated provider.

The waiver must only be granted when:

- The parent/provider is a foster parent
- The parent/provider is a relative with a court order for placement and is receiving a Kinship Care payment for the child
- The parent/provider is a legal guardian receiving subsidized guardianship payments for the child
- The child has a disability, as verified by a physician or other qualified medical professional, and the child's parent/provider is unable to care for the child at the provider's own home or group center
- The child's parent is a dependent minor parent who is enrolled in high school or a course that is approved by the state superintendent of public instruction for granting a high school graduation equivalency and resides with a person who is a parent and child care provider
- The parent is requesting child care assistance to participate in a second approved activity other than providing child care. This does not apply to certified providers who are not allowed to hold outside employment during the facility's hours of operation. For the parent to receive an authorization, the activity must be outside the hours of operation and the parent must provide valid verification.

Example: Mayumi is Amiko's foster parent. Mayumi is also a licensed family child care provider. Amiko may not have a child care authorization to attend Mayumi's child care program because Mayumi is Amiko's foster parent and they live in the same house. However, Mayumi can receive a waiver to send Amiko to a different child care provider because Mayumi is a foster parent.

Note: For questions about granting a waiver, contact the Child Care Help Desk at childcare@wisconsin.gov.

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Section 13.3 In-Home Child Care

Authorizations can be written for child care provided in the child's own home under any one (1) of the following circumstances as long as the in-home child care provider is certified:

- Three (3) or more children from the same family are receiving Wisconsin Shares subsidy and are being cared for by this provider

- 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
- The needs of a child with a disability could only be met in his or her home

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Chapter 14 Provider Requirements

Section 14.1 Child Care Provider Regulation

Parents may receive authorizations to providers located in Wisconsin who are:

- Licensed
- Certified
- A child care program established or contracted for by a Wisconsin public school board and monitored by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Bureau of Early Care Regulation (BECR)

For more information about licensing categories, see the Wisconsin Child Care Licensing Rules and Manuals page on the DCF website.

Authorizations may begin the date the provider becomes regulated if all other requirements in Section 14.3 are met (see 15.1 and 15.2).

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 14.2 Out-of-State Child Care Providers

Parents may select a child care provider that is located outside of Wisconsin as long as the child receiving care resides in Wisconsin (see 4.4). Out-of-state child care providers must be regulated in their own state and must submit their current license information to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Bureau of Early Care Regulation (BECR).

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 14.2.1 Out-of-State Provider License Renewal

Out-of-state child care providers accepting Wisconsin Shares are notified by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) three (3) months prior to the license expiration date that license renewal information is needed for any existing authorizations to continue.

A one-month grace period following the license expiration date is allowed for providers to submit updated information. DCF will mail a notice to parents when their child care provider is in the grace period and their authorization is at risk of ending if the provider does not submit updated license information by the due date.

If the provider submits the updated licensing information to DCF prior to the end of the grace period, the agency worker may authorize child care beginning that day. If the updated licensing information is not returned by the end of the grace period, all Wisconsin Shares authorizations will end systematically on the last day of the grace period month. Parents cannot receive new authorizations to the provider location until there is new licensing information entered in WISCCRS.

If updated licensing information is returned to DCF after the grace period, an authorization can be backdated to the license begin date, subject to the requirements in Sections 15.1 and 15.2.

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 14.3 Mandatory Contracts

To receive Wisconsin Shares payments, providers must have a:

- YoungStar Participation or Wisconsin Shares Participation Contract; and
- Fidelity National Information Services (FIS) Contract.

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 14.3.1 YoungStar Participation or Wisconsin Shares Participation Contract

All certified family providers, licensed family providers, licensed group child care centers, licensed day camps, and public-school programs must participate in YoungStar. The YoungStar Contract must be entered in the YoungStar Case Management System (CMS) before an authorization can be written to the provider location.

For purposes of determining an authorization begin date (see 15.1 and 15.2), an authorization can start on the date the child care provider's completed YoungStar or Wisconsin Shares Participation Contract was entered in CMS if all other requirements are met.

Newly certified and licensed child care providers receive a pending rating until their first YoungStar rating is complete. Authorizations may be written to a provider with a pending YoungStar rating; there only needs to be a completed YoungStar Participation Contract entered in CMS to meet the requirements for an authorization begin date.

Out-of-state and certified in-home child care providers are exempt from YoungStar participation but must sign a Wisconsin Shares Participation Contract to be eligible for Wisconsin Shares authorizations.

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 14.3.1.1 Contract Renewal and Grace Period

Child care providers accepting Wisconsin Shares must renew their YoungStar or Wisconsin Shares Participation Contracts every two (2) years. Providers receive a letter from the Department of Children and Families (DCF) informing them of their upcoming renewal three (3) months prior to the YoungStar or Wisconsin Shares Contract anniversary date. 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 Participation Contract renewals.

Parents are notified by DCF when their child care provider is in the grace period and their authorization is at risk of ending if the provider does not complete the renewal by the due date.

During the grace period, no new authorizations can be written, but existing authorizations can continue up to the last day of the grace period month. If the provider returns the YoungStar or Wisconsin Shares Participation Contract prior to the end of the grace period, the provider's new participation period begins, and the agency 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 systematically on the last day of the grace period month. Parents cannot receive new authorizations to the provider location until there is a new YoungStar or Wisconsin Shares Participation Contract entered in the YoungStar Case Management System (CMS).

If a YoungStar or Wisconsin Shares Participation Contract renewal is returned after the grace period, an authorization can be backdated to the date the contract was received and entered in CMS, subject to the requirements in Sections 15.1 and 15.2.

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 14.3.2 Fidelity National Information Services (FIS) Contract

All child care providers must complete a contract with FIS to receive Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) payments from parents. A FIS contract must be entered into the FIS system before an authorization can be written to the provider, but nothing regarding the contract is a factor in determining the authorization begin date (see 15.1 and 15.2).

FIS will send an IRS Form 1099-MISC on or before January 31 of each year to all child care providers that were paid more than $600 in Wisconsin Shares subsidy in the previous tax year. The 1099-MISC does not account for funds returned to the

department via a Voluntary Repayment Agreement (VPA) and FIS cannot update the 1099-MISC to adjust this.

If any of the information included in the FIS contract changes (i.e., bank account used for deposits, change of director or owner, changes in W-9 tax forms, etc.), the child care provider must submit the new information to FIS. FIS contracts do not need to be renewed.

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 14.4 Provider Prices and Registration Fees

Child care providers set their own prices and fees. Licensed providers, public school programs, and out-of-state providers must submit their full-time and part-time weekly prices in writing to the local agency or through the Child Care Provider Portal. This is required before authorizations can be written and before the effective date of a price change.

All providers who require parents to pay a registration fee, regardless of regulation type, must submit their fee amounts in the Child Care Provider Portal or in writing to the local agency before parents can receive funds to pay registration fees (see 19.2). If a provider does not charge registration fees, this must be indicated in the Child Care Provider Portal or reported to the local agency.

If prices or fees already exist and there are current authorizations or fee payment requests, the local agency must record the provider's price or fee in CSAW with a begin date set for the first of the following month or a future month. If prices or fees exist, the effective date of the new price or fee cannot be a past date.

If prices or fees do not exist or there are no current authorizations or fee payment requests, prices and fees can be entered with a past effective date. Prices and fees are separate; if prices exist with current authorizations but there are no fee payment requests, fees can still be entered with a past effective date and vice versa.

Example: Kid Zone has four (4) children with authorizations to their facility. No families have requested registration fee payments for this provider. They have full-time and part-time prices entered. On January 15, Kid Zone reports a change in prices. They also report their fee amounts for the first time. The fee amount can be entered with a past effective date (i.e., December) because there are no fee requests. However, the price change can only be effective February 1 or later because there are existing authorizations.

This section last updated 12/1/2023

Section 14.4.1 Licensed Provider Prices

A weekly full-time price must be entered in CSAW before agency workers can write full-time authorizations to a licensed provider location. If the child care provider does not submit a weekly full-time price, the local agency must work with the provider to choose one (1) 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 in CSAW for a weekly full-time price.
- If the child care provider has a daily price, multiply the daily price by five (5) and enter that amount in CSAW for a weekly full-time price.

A weekly part-time price must be entered into CSAW before agency workers can write part-time authorizations to a licensed provider location. If the child care provider does not submit a weekly part-time price, the local agency must work with the provider to choose one (1) of the following options based on the provider's discretion:

- If the provider has a full-time weekly price, divide it by 35; then use that amount and multiply by 30 and enter that amount in CSAW for a weekly part-time price.
- If the provider has an hourly price, multiply that price by 30 and enter that amount in CSAW for a weekly part-time price.
- If the child care provider has a daily price, multiply the daily price by four (4) and enter that amount in CSAW for a weekly part-time price.

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Section 14.4.2 Certified Provider Prices

Certified providers are not required to submit their prices because their prices are not a factor in calculating the subsidy amount. The maximum hourly rate for regularly and provisionally certified providers is set at 90% of the county's licensed family hourly rate. Monthly maximum rates are not set for certified providers; however, monthly subsidy payments are capped at the licensed family monthly maximum (see 18.5.1).

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 14.5 Written Payment Agreement

Child care providers are required to have a written payment agreement with each family that receives Wisconsin Shares to attend their location. The written payment agreement contains information about the provider's payment policy including the actual price of care for each child in care. The written payment agreement between the provider and parent must include all the following:

- The provider's monthly or weekly child care price for that family
- The provider's days and hours of operation

- Any fees that the provider charges
- Any discounts or scholarships that are available to parents, and any discounts or scholarships that the parent is receiving
- The parent's payment schedule
- The provider's anticipated closure dates
- Payment expectations for the child's anticipated and unanticipated absences and days when the provider is closed
- Parent procedures for termination of a child's enrollment
- Provider procedures for termination of a child's enrollment
- Parent and provider signatures and the date signed

Note: Providers may use the department's Parent/Provider Written Payment Agreement form (DCF-F-5224-E) or develop their own form that has the same information.

Providers must keep a copy of each current written payment agreement at the location where child care is provided. The provider must keep copies of expired written payment agreements for at least three (3) years after the child's last day of attendance at a location where they can be made available to the department within 24 hours.

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Section 14.6 Prohibited Actions

Providers may not do any of the following:

- Require a parent to disclose the balance in the parent's subsidy account
- Require a parent to provide the parent's eligibility notice or authorization notice
- Require a parent to provide the parent's EBT card, account number, or personal identification number (PIN) to the provider
- Possess a photocopy, photo, or other image of a parent's EBT card
- Possess or request a parent's account number or PIN
- Charge higher prices for parents who are receiving Wisconsin Shares, before any discounts the provider offers are applied, than parents who are not receiving Wisconsin Shares (see 16.4.2)
- Bank subsidy payments to apply to future months of care (see 18.7)

If a report or referral is received indicating that a provider is engaging in a prohibited action, immediate action must be taken, including confiscating the EBT card(s) or

making a referral to the Child Care Fraud Mailbox at DCFMBchildcarefraud@wisconsin.gov.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 14.7 Provider Record Keeping

Providers must maintain accurate attendance records. The attendance records must contain the children's exact daily arrival and departure times. These times must not be rounded. These records must be submitted to the local agency or the department within 24 hours after receiving a request for records. If the provider chooses to mail the records, original records should be provided; if the records are faxed or emailed, electronic copies are acceptable. Providers must either:

- Use the department's Daily Attendance Record – Licensed Child Care Centers form (DCF-F-2438); or
- Use their own form or computer program if it captures the same information as DCF-F-2438.

The provider's attendance records must be retained on site for the length of time the child is enrolled in the program, and for three (3) years after a child's last day of attendance at the child care facility. Providers that end their participation in the Wisconsin Shares program must still adhere to this policy. Not completing and/or retaining these records may result in an assessment of an overpayment to the provider, and/or a permanent suspension from the Wisconsin Shares program.

Providers should maintain records of all payment transactions including Wisconsin Shares subsidy payments, out-of-pocket payments made by the parent, and any other payments made by the department. Providers have access to the ebtEDGE Provider Portal and Child Care Provider Portal to verify transaction information. Providers should give parents a receipt for all payments made, including subsidy payments.

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 14.8 Provider Reporting Requirements

Providers are required to report to the local agency if a Wisconsin Shares child has not attended within the previous 30 calendar days. Any facility, license, or staffing changes must be reported to the provider's licensor or certifier. Price changes for licensed providers and registration fee changes for all providers must be submitted to the local agency through the Provider Portal or in writing.

Licensed providers who plan to close their center for more than two (2) weeks are required to document and report the closure by submitting a Notice of Voluntary Temporary Closure to the local agency and the Bureau of Early Care Regulation (BECR).

Licensed providers are required to report all seasonal closings at least five (5) calendar days before the closing to the local agency and the Bureau of Early Care Regulation (BECR).

The Department of Children and Families conducts audits to confirm child care providers comply with program rules. If a provider is found to be out of compliance, they will receive a Provider Explanation Letter (7m letter) (see Appendix IX – Provider Program Integrity).

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 14.9 Provider Closures

Parents may use their subsidy to pay child care providers in the following closure scenarios:

- Two (2) weeks of closures per calendar year
- Closures for state government legal holidays as defined in Wis. Stat. s. 230.35(4)(a)

During child care provider closures, parents may request a second authorization to a different provider.

This section last updated 12/1/2023

Chapter 15 Authorization Periods

Section 15.1 Authorization Begin Dates at Application and Renewal

When the parent completes the authorization assessment within 30 calendar days of the Request for Assistance (RFA) date or the start date of the new eligibility period, an authorization may begin on the most recent of the following dates:

- The RFA date
- The start date of the new eligibility period following a completed renewal
- The date the child began attending the child care provider
- The date that the child care provider the child is attending met the criteria in Sections 14.1, 14.2 (as applicable), and 14.3.1

For relatives with court-ordered placement under Wis. Stat. Chapters 48 or 938 who also receive the Kinship Care payment, the authorization may be backdated to the first of the month of the RFA date if the above criteria were met and the child was placed with the caregiver on or before the first of the month.

Note: Although the provider must have a contract with FIS entered in the FIS system to receive Wisconsin Shares payments, the date the FIS contract is entered is not a factor for determining the authorization begin date (see 14.3.2). Similarly, even though a licensed provider must have full-time and/or part-time prices entered in CSAW for parents to receive authorizations to the provider, the date the prices are entered is not a factor for determining the authorization begin date (see 14.4).

For authorizations that must start more than 30 calendar days in the past, the local agency must contact the Child Care Help Desk at childcare@wisconsin.gov for review and approval.

If the parent does not provide all the necessary information to complete an authorization assessment within 30 calendar days of the RFA date or the start date of the new eligibility period, the new authorization may only be backdated to the first of the month in which the authorization assessment was completed.

Example 1 (Application): Phil applies for Wisconsin Shares on May 15. He completes the eligibility requirements and is determined eligible on June 8. He provides the necessary information for the authorization assessment, including the name of the provider location that his children have been attending since April, when eligibility is confirmed on June 8. The provider was in compliance with the Wisconsin Shares requirements listed above prior to Phil's RFA date. Eligibility will begin May 1 in CWW, and the authorization in CSAW may begin on May 15 because the authorization assessment was completed within 30 calendar days of the RFA date.

Example 2 (Reapplication): Charlotte was receiving Wisconsin Shares for her child, Olivia, and her renewal was due March 31. She did not complete her renewal, so her Wisconsin Shares eligibility ended on March 31. Charlotte reapplies for Wisconsin Shares on May 9 and is again determined eligible for Wisconsin Shares. Because the case was closed for more than one (1) calendar month, this requires a new application. Olivia's authorization can begin on May 9, if Olivia was attending the child care program on this date, the provider met the Wisconsin Shares requirements listed above, and Charlotte completes the authorization assessment by June 8.

Example 3 (Application with Kinship Placement): Imani has a nephew, Tyler. Tyler was removed from his parents' home and placed with Imani on March 10. Imani applies for Wisconsin Shares on April 15. Eligibility is confirmed open for Tyler on April 17. Tyler has been attending the same child care provider since he was removed from his parents' home on March 10. The agency worker creates an authorization for Tyler with a begin date of April 1.

Example 4 (Renewal): Amina's renewal is due April 30. She completes the interview and provides all verification on April 20. Amina's new eligibility period starts May 1. She

completes the authorization assessment on May 25. The authorization may be backdated to begin May 1 because she completed the authorization assessment within 30 calendar days of the start of her new eligibility period.

Example 5 (Late renewal): Anthony's case was due for a Wisconsin Shares renewal on May 31. Anthony did not complete his renewal timely, and his Wisconsin Shares eligibility ended on May 31. On June 28, Anthony completed the renewal interview, provided his written signature, and submitted all required verification. Eligibility re-opened effective June 1 in CWW because he completed the late renewal within one (1) calendar month of Wisconsin Shares eligibility ending. Anthony completed his authorization assessment on June 30. Anthony's worker backdates the authorization to June 1 because the authorization assessment was completed within 30 calendar days of the start of his new eligibility period, his child attended the provider throughout the month of June, and the provider was in compliance with the Wisconsin Shares requirements.

Example 6 (New Provider): Sasha is open for Wisconsin Shares but does not have an authorization for her child, Gabe. On July 3, a new child care provider opened near Sasha's work and she wants Gabe to begin attending the provider. The child care provider became regulated on July 3 and the YoungStar contract was entered into the YoungStar Case Management System (CMS) on July 6. The authorization for Gabe can begin on July 6, which is the date the provider met the Wisconsin Shares requirements, if Gabe was attending the provider.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 15.2 Authorization Begin Dates During Ongoing Eligibility

After the agency worker runs and confirms eligibility in CWW for an Assistance Group (AG), the AG has ongoing eligibility. Ongoing eligibility begins the calendar month following the completion of the Request for Assistance (RFA) in accordance with Section 3.2 and the first month of a new eligibility period in accordance with Section 3.8.

During ongoing eligibility, an authorization assessment must be completed within 30 calendar days of an authorization end date for the new authorization to be backdated to the previous authorization.

If the parent requested an authorization and provided all necessary information for the authorization assessment within 30 calendar days of the authorization end date the authorization may be backdated to the previous authorization, regardless of when the agency worker processes the request.

An authorization may be backdated to the previous authorization as long as:

- The child was attending the child care provider during the backdated period; and
- The child care provider that the child is attending has met the criteria in Sections 14.1, 14.2 (as applicable), and 14.3.1.

Note: Although the provider must have a contract with FIS entered in the FIS system to receive Wisconsin Shares payments, the date the FIS contract is entered is not a factor for determining the authorization begin date (see 14.3.2). Similarly, even though a licensed provider must have full-time and/or part-time prices entered in CSAW for parents to receive authorizations to the provider, the date the prices are entered is not a factor for determining the authorization begin date (see 14.4).

The earliest the authorization can begin is on the date that the above requirements are met.

For authorizations that must start more than 30 calendar days in the past, the local agency must contact the Child Care Help Desk at childcare@wisconsin.gov for review and approval.

If the parent did not request or provide the necessary information for the authorization assessment within 30 calendar days, the new authorization may only be backdated to the first of the month in which the authorization assessment was completed. The new authorization must follow the requirements provided in Section 17.1.1.

Example 1 (Within 30 calendar days): Khan's authorization for his child, Anisa, ended on September 10. Anisa continued to attend the same provider. On Friday, October 9, Khan requested an authorization beginning September 11 and submitted all necessary information to complete the authorization assessment through his MyWIChildCare Parent Portal account. However, the authorization was not completed until the following Monday, October 12. The agency worker sees that the request and necessary information was provided within 30 calendar days of the previous authorization ending and backdates the new authorization to September 11.

Example 2 (More than 30 calendar days): Toby had an authorization for his school-age child, Abby, that ended on June 4. On July 7, he calls his worker to request a summer authorization for Abby and provides all necessary information for the authorization assessment. Because he requested the new authorization more than 30 calendar days from the end of the previous authorization, the new authorization can only be backdated to July 1 even though Abby has continued attending the same provider since June 4.

Example 3 (Within 30 calendar days, renewal verification received late): Betty's renewal is due September 30, the same date her child Estelle's authorization is ending. On September 19, she started her renewal, requested her child care to continue at the

same provider, and completed the authorization assessment. Betty needed to provide employment verification by September 29 to complete her renewal; however, the verification was received on October 5, after the verification due date but within the month following her renewal. As long as Betty is determined eligible for Wisconsin Shares, the authorization can be backdated to October 1.

Example 4 (Within 30 calendar days, new provider): Charlie had an authorization for his child, Janice, that ended on March 25. On April 9, a new child care provider opened and began providing care. The provider became regulated on April 3 and the YoungStar contract was entered into CMS on April 6. Janice began attending the new provider on April 9 and Charlie called to request an authorization to this provider on April 13. Although Charlie requested a new authorization within 30 calendar days of the previous authorization ending, the authorization to the new provider can only begin on April 9. This is the date that Janice began attending and the provider met the Wisconsin Shares requirements. Charlie could request an authorization for March 26 to April 8 if Janice was attending her previous provider or a different provider who met the Wisconsin Shares requirements.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 15.2.1 Authorization Begin Dates for a Child Added During Ongoing Eligibility

When a newly eligible child is added during ongoing eligibility, the parent must complete the authorization assessment within 30 calendar days of the start date of the new eligibility period. An authorization may begin on either:

- The date the child began attending the child care provider, or
- The date that the child care provider the child is attending met the criteria in Sections 14.1, 14.2 (as applicable), and 14.3.1

If the parent did not request or provide all the necessary information to complete an authorization assessment within 30 calendar days of the newly eligible child being added, the new authorization may only be backdated to the first of the month in which the authorization assessment was completed.

Example 1 (Existing Child and a Child Add): Grace has an authorization for her child, Tucker, which ends at renewal on May 31. On February 14 Grace reports the birth of her child, Elizabeth, born on February 10. Elizabeth is added to the case and confirmed eligible before adverse action in February. The renewal date is extended to March 31 of the following year. Grace completed the authorization assessment and will be returning to work on May 1. The authorization for Elizabeth can begin on May 1 since that will be her first day attending the provider. Tucker's authorization can be extended to the new renewal date of March 31 of the following year, unless there is an expected change that occurs prior to the new renewal date (see 15.3).

Example 2 (Existing Child and a Child Add): Lola has an authorization for her child, Morgan which ends at renewal on September 30. On August 28 Lola reports the birth of her child, Daniel, born on August 25. Daniel is added to the case and confirmed eligible after adverse action in August. The renewal date is extended to October 31 of the following year. Lola completed the authorization assessment and will be returning to work on October 15. The authorization for Daniel can begin on October 15 since that will be her first day attending the provider. Morgan's authorization can be extended to October 31 (the new renewal date) unless there is an expected change that occurs prior to the new renewal date.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 15.3 Authorization End Dates

Agency workers must write authorizations with an end date of the next renewal date or the next expected change, whichever comes first. Agency workers must document in case comments the reason for the authorization end date (see 12.2).

Expected changes include, but are not limited to:

- A change in the school year that results in a higher or lower child care need for a school-aged child for summer or fall
- The end date of an approved activity, such as:
    - Wisconsin Works (W-2) employability plan or FoodShare Employment and Training (FSET) employment plan reviews
    - The end of a parent's school term
- The end of the 24-month education time limit for eligible parents who are participating in Basic Education (see 5.1.2.2), Postsecondary Education (see 5.1.2.3), or Online Education (see 5.1.2.4)
- A change in a child care provider
- A parent's plan to move out of state

When a newly eligible child is added to a case and a new renewal date is established, authorizations for eligible children on the case can be extended to the new renewal date, except if the child no longer meets the age requirement for child care (see 3.5.1).

If there are multiple expected changes, the authorization must end on the earliest date.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 15.4 Consecutive Authorization Periods

Authorizations must be written consecutively without any gaps during the eligibility period whenever possible. This includes time periods shorter than a calendar

month when a child may not be attending the child care provider but is still enrolled, such as weekends or holidays.

Gaps between authorizations may occur when:

- Child care is not needed
- The child is not enrolled
- The parent does not request an authorization
- The parent requests not to have an authorization for a specific time period

If the parent requests a new authorization after there has been a gap of one (1) calendar month or more between authorizations, the agency worker must complete an authorization assessment and the authorized hours must be based on the assessment results (see 17.1.1).

Example 1 (Weekends): It is October 20 and Jeanette is requesting an authorization to a new provider for her child, Sonja. Sonja's last day at Busy Bees Child Care will be Friday, November 13, and she will be starting at Chicks and Chickadees Child Care on Monday, November 16. The agency worker could either:

a) end the authorization to Busy Bees on Saturday, November 14, and start the new authorization to Chicks and Chickadees beginning Sunday, November 15; or

b) end the authorization to Busy Bees on Sunday, November 15, and start the new authorization to Chicks and Chickadees beginning Monday, November 16.

Regardless of the method, the agency worker includes the weekend in authorization begin and end dates to avoid a gap during an eligibility period.

Example 2 (Holiday): Dee has an authorization for her child, Nina. In November, Nina will not be attending the child care provider on Thanksgiving Day and the day after Thanksgiving because Dee will not be working. However, the authorization should continue through November with no gaps because Nina is still enrolled and the time period is shorter than a calendar month.

Example 3 (Spring Break): Allan has an authorization for his school age child, Jolene. Spring break is the week of March 15 – March 20. Jolene does not need child care the week of March 15 – 20 because Allan is taking time off to spend with her. The authorization should continue through March with no gaps because Jolene is still enrolled, and the break is shorter than a calendar month. The agency worker does not end the authorization on the Friday of the last day of school and re-start the authorization on the Monday that school starts again.

Example 4 (Vacation-No Request): Leo has a summer authorization for his child, Ken, through August 15. His family will be taking a two-week vacation before school starts. Leo does not request a new authorization when the previous authorization ends. On September 4, Leo requests a backdated school-year authorization to start on September 1. These authorizations do not need to have consecutive dates because Leo did not request an authorization for the period between authorizations.

Example 5 (Vacation-Parent Requests Gap): Caroline has an authorization for her school age child, Raphael, until the end of the school year on June 8. Caroline calls to request an authorization for Raphael starting July 15, after he returns from a summer stay with his grandparents. She states that she does not need an authorization from June 9 – July 14. These authorizations do not need to have consecutive dates because the parent requested the gap between authorizations.

Example 6 (Not Enrolled-Changing Providers): Alex's school age child, Noah, has a summer authorization at Amazing Apes Day Camp through Friday, August 28. School will begin Tuesday, September 8, and Noah will be attending Space Center Child Care during the school year. The agency worker ends the authorization to Amazing Apes on Friday, August 28, and writes a new authorization to Space Center beginning Tuesday, September 8. These authorizations do not need to have consecutive dates because Noah's enrollment at Amazing Apes ends on August 28 (the last day of the day camp) and his new enrollment at Space Center does not start until September 8. The gap is allowed because Noah is not enrolled at either provider locations during the gap period.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Chapter 16 Authorization Assessments

Section 16.1 Authorization Assessments

Agency workers must complete an authorization within two (2) business days of the parent providing all necessary information for the authorization assessment. Any delay in completing the authorization within two (2) business days must be documented in case comments (see 12.2).

Parents are required to provide the number of weekly hours for which they need child care.

Authorized hours are based on:

- The highest weekly hours within a month for which the child needs child care to allow the parent to participate in their approved activity, including time needed for lunch and breaks, a gap between approved activities, sleep hours, etc.
- Travel time between the approved activity and the child care location, including time to walk from parking lots or bus stops, changing into uniforms, etc.

- Overlapping schedules of two-parent and three-generation families
- The child's school day
- Shared placement arrangements
- School closed hours for school-age children (3 years or older)
- Other factors that affect the family's child care need

The exact schedule of attendance is determined between the parent and the provider. Only the total number of child care need hours are necessary for the authorization. Agency workers should discuss the factors above with parents to ensure the child receives the maximum number of hours for which they are eligible.

If the parent has a varying child care need, the child is eligible to receive the highest weekly hours within a month for which the parent needs child care.

Example 1 (Varying work schedule): Monroe works varying shifts at Albany Crafts and needs child care for his child, Robin, whenever he is working. Some weeks he works 15 hours, while other weeks he works 25 hours. The worker enters 25 hours (the highest number of weekly hours that Monroe needs) as the approved hours in CSAW.

When a parent has shared placement of a child, the child is eligible for the highest number of hours that each parent needs within a month. Parents are responsible for ensuring that they do not pay the provider more than the provider's price for the care of that child.

Example 2 (Shared placement, same provider): Logan and Haley have 50/50 shared placement of their child, Camilla. Each parent has Camilla three (3) days some weeks and four (4) days other weeks. Both parents are eligible for authorizations based on having Camilla four (4) days of the week. Camilla attends the same provider, regardless of placement. If this creates a full-time authorization for Camilla on both cases, Logan and Haley must collaborate to ensure they don't pay the provider more than the provider's full-time price for Camilla.

Example 3 (Shared placement, different providers): Jacob and William have shared placement of their child, Gianna. Each parent has Gianna every other week. Both parents are eligible for Wisconsin Shares and are requesting full-time authorizations. Gianna attends Exploring Learning on the weeks she is with Jacob and Koala Hugs on the weeks she is with William. Both parents work full-time and need care whenever they are working. Each provider charges for full-time enrollment, including weeks when Gianna does not attend to hold her slot. Both parents are eligible for full-time authorizations and can pay the providers based on Gianna's full-time enrollment at each provider.

Wisconsin Works (W-2) Financial and Employment Planners (FEPs) do not determine the child care needs for families that participate in the W-2 program. The agency worker must use the activity information from the W-2 Employability Plan (EP) and the parent's stated child care need to complete the authorization assessment.

If an authorization-related agency error occurs, an overpayment must not be established but the authorization must be corrected.

This section last updated 11/1/2024

Section 16.1.1 Authorization Hours

Parents can self-declare their child care need for all approved activities. Parents can also self-declare whether they meet the policies for education hours to be included in the authorized hours when a child is in Head Start or 4K (see 16.1.1.3). For parent education, the schedule for classes with set log in times is collected as part of approved activity verification (see 7.8) to determine alignment with the self-declared child care need (see 16.1.1.1) but the schedule does not need to be entered in CSAW or case comments.

Child care need includes any time the child is at the child care provider related to the parent's approved activity, including sleep hours for the parent (see 16.1.1.2), gap time (see 16.1.1.5), travel time (see 16.1.1.6), etc. These times must be included in the total hours when entering the Approved Hours in CSAW.

Note: Approved activity verification (i.e., class schedule, W-2 Employability Plan (EP), paystubs, etc.) is collected during the eligibility determination process (see 7.8). Agency workers may view the Electronic Case File (ECF) for scanned documents.

If the parent does not know their child care need for new employment with a varying or on-call schedule, the agency worker should write the authorization based on the parent's best estimate. Authorizations must still be written for the longest period possible (see 15.3).

If the parent has on-call employment, the authorized hours must only include hours when the parent actually works and not include hours when the parent is waiting to be called. If the parent has a varying schedule or travel time need, the child is eligible to receive the highest weekly hours within a month for which the parent needs child care (see 16.1).

Example 1 (Varying schedule): Daniel has the following work schedule: 20 hours in Week One (1), 45 hours in Week Two (2), 25 hours in Week Three (3), and 15 hours in Week Four (4). The agency worker enters 45 hours as the authorized hours in CSAW.

Example 2 (On-call employment): Kris is a nurse and works 36 hours every week. She is also on call every other Saturday. The authorized hours entered in CSAW do not include the Saturday on-call times. If Kris is called into work, she can request additional hours after the days she works for the hours she needed.

Authorizations of 20 weekly hours or less are part-time authorizations; full-time authorizations are more than 20 weekly hours. The weekly approved authorization hours are multiplied by 4.348125 to determine the final monthly authorized hours, which is converted to a part-time or full-time subsidy amount (see 18.5).

Parents with a child care need of more than 50 weekly hours are eligible for an above full-time authorization, which is a full-time subsidy amount with an additional weekly add-on for the hours above 50 weekly hours up to 75 weekly hours.

Education

For education, parents must provide the class schedule for all classes with set in-person or online log in times throughout the week. Workers need to collect the schedule to verify the parent's approved activity (see 7.8) but do not need to enter the schedules into CSAW or document the schedule in case comments.

Authorized hours for education are based on the total number of class hours, as well as any other work experience, clinicals, or school hours where an instructor provides or supervises the parent's activity. Study time must not be included in the authorized hours unless the parent has a verified learning disability. A learning disability must be verified by the parent's current or previous educational institution or a medical professional. If the parent has a verified learning disability, the authorization may include study time for a maximum of one (1) hour per week per enrolled credit.

Study time must be included in the authorized hours for parents who are participating in W-2 (see 5.1.3) or Tribal TANF (see 5.1.4) and have study hours included on their Employability Plan (EP) or Individual Self-Sufficiency Plan (ISP).

Authorized hours for **self-paced** online education are limited to one (1) hour per week per enrolled credit. Additional hours can be authorized if the institution documents that the self-paced course is delivered over an accelerated period with more hours of instruction provided per week. For accelerated programs, the authorized hours can include the weekly hours needed for the parent to complete asynchronous classes (i.e., prerecorded lectures), as well as any other work experience, clinicals, or school hours where an instructor provides or supervises the parent's activity. Time for homework or other class commitments must not be included in the authorized hours because these are not hours of instruction provided or supervised by an instructor.

Example 3 (Blended learning): Ashley is attending college and has three (3) classes. Class A meets in-person on campus on Tuesday and Thursday. Class B allows students

to choose if they will attend in-person or virtually and the class meets Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Ashley has elected to attend the class virtually. Class C is entirely online and is not part of an accelerated program. Ashley will need to complete assignments for Class C on a predetermined schedule, but there are no scheduled class times. The authorized hours include the hours Ashley needs for Class A and Class B and up to one (1) hour per week per enrolled credit for Class C. Ashley will need to give the agency worker her class schedule for Class A and Class B to verify her approved activity, but the agency worker does not need to document the schedule.

Example 4 (Accelerated program): King is enrolled in an accelerated nursing program. The program expects students to complete 40 hours per week of class and study time. Some classes have set log-in times, while other classes are asynchronous (King can watch a prerecorded lecture at any time). King also has some clinical hours. There are strict deadlines for completing coursework. King needs child care for his child, Sasha, for class and study time. Sasha's authorization includes the hours King has for the scheduled classes, as well as the weekly hours he needs for asynchronous instruction. Because this is an accelerated program, the asynchronous class time can exceed the one (1) hour per week per enrolled credit limit. Sasha's authorization also includes time for King's clinical hours. However, hours for study time are not included in Sasha's authorized hours because these are not hours of instruction provided or supervised by an instructor.

This section last updated 11/1/2024

Section 16.1.1.1 Approved Activity and Child Care Need Alignment

All parents must provide verification of participation in an approved activity (see 7.8). However, parents can self-declare their child care need (see 16.1.1). The parent's self-declared child care need must align with the total number of hours on the approved activity verification. Alignment means that the request is reasonably related to the verified hours. The hours requested do not need to exactly match the verified approved activity hours.

If the parent's self-declared schedule and approved activity verification obtained during eligibility determination do not align, but the difference is within full-time (above 20 weekly hours) or part-time (20 hours or less), the worker should enter the parent's self-declared hours; no further follow-up is needed.

Example 1: Vicki is requesting an authorization for her child, Leah. Her paystubs show that she works 24 hours per week. Vicki requests 35 weekly hours for Leah's authorization. The agency worker enters 35 weekly hours as the authorized hours in CSAW because Leah is eligible for a full-time authorization based on Vicki's verified work hours. No follow-up questions are necessary because the difference between 24 weekly hours and 35 weekly hours is within full-time and does not change the subsidy amount.

Example 2: Lacey is participating in Wisconsin Works (W-2) and is requesting an authorization for her child, Andre. Her W-2 Employability Plan (EP) has five (5) hours per week of W-2 activities. Lacey requests 20 hours for Andre's authorization. The agency worker enters 20 weekly hours as the authorized hours in CSAW because Andre is eligible for a part-time authorization based on Lacey's EP activities. No follow-up questions are needed because the difference between five (5) weekly hours and 20 weekly hours is within part-time and does not change the subsidy amount.

If the difference crosses the threshold from part-time approved activity hours to full-time authorized hours, or the threshold from full-time to above full-time (see 16.1.1), agency workers should review the following items to account for the difference:

- Unpaid Lunch Breaks
- Other Unpaid Breaks
- Unusual circumstances that may not be reflected in pay stubs, including but not limited to:
    - 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
    - Parent was sent home early due to low workload
    - Parent was called into work due to increased workload
- Parent is requesting child care based on the highest weekly hours needed within a month and CWW has averaged hours
- Sleep hours (see 16.1.1.2)
- Head Start or 4K times when the parent is in their approved activity only part of the school program hours (see 16.1.1.3)
- Gap time coverage (see 16.1.1.5)
- Travel time (see 16.1.1.6)
- Any other explanation that reasonably explains a difference between the self-declared child care need and the approved activity verification

If the inclusion of the items above brings the self-declared child care need into alignment with the verified approved activity hours, the agency worker must accept the parent's stated child care need. A summary of the reason(s) for the difference must be

documented in case comments (see 12.2). Specific details about the difference (i.e., exact travel times, start or end times of gaps, etc.) do not need to be documented. Agency workers may request additional verification if the answers provided are questionable.

Example 3: Ray attends college and is requesting an authorization for his child, Alan. His school schedule shows that he has 15 hours of class per week. Ray requests an authorization for 25 hours per week. Because this crosses the full-time threshold, the agency worker asks follow-up questions to understand the 10-hour difference. Ray indicates that the 25 hours includes travel time and a gap between classes that occurs on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The agency worker documents that the authorized hours include travel time and gap time and enters 25 weekly hours as the authorized hours in CSAW.

Example 4: Lindsey requests an authorization for 30 weekly hours for her child, Tom. The approved activity verification she provided indicates that she works 20 hours per week. When the worker asks about this difference, Lindsey explains that she works third shift and leaves Tom at the child care provider until the morning so that she can sleep and avoid waking Tom up in the middle of the night. Her request also includes travel time to drop him off at the child care provider before work. The agency worker determines this reasonably aligns with the verification, documents the reasons in case comments, and enters 30 weekly hours as the authorized hours in CSAW.

If the agency worker determines that the parent's self-declared need does not reasonably align with their approved activity, the reason for the difference between the approved hours and the requested hours, as well as the rationale for the hours that were ultimately approved, must be documented in case comments (see 12.2).

Example 5: Hannah requests an authorization of 40 weekly hours for her child, Zoe. The approved activity verification she provided indicates that she works 15 hours per week. When the worker asks about this difference, Hannah indicates that she prefers to have Zoe attend the child care provider full-time because it allows her to do other things during the day after she is done with work. The agency worker determines this is not reasonably related to Hannah's need to participate in her approved activity. The worker discusses Hannah's schedule with her and determines that Zoe needs 20 hours based on Hannah's schedule and travel time. The agency worker documents in case comments that the requested 40 weekly hours were reduced to 20 weekly hours because Hannah did not need 40 hours to participate in her approved activity and that the 20 approved hours are sufficient to cover work and travel time. The agency worker enters 20 hours as the authorized hours in CSAW.

Example 6: Aiden works full-time and is requesting an authorization for his school-age child, Jack, in October. He requests 45 hours based on his 40-hour work schedule and his need to enroll Jack full-time at the provider. Since Jack is in school, the agency

worker asks follow-up questions to understand the need for the full-time authorization. Aiden tells the worker that he works first shift but since he needs both before and after school care, Jack is enrolled "full-time" with the provider. He explains that the provider enrolls children "part-time" if they only need before or after school care (not both). The agency worker explains that even though this is how the provider defines full-time, the actual weekly hours needed are used to determine the authorization hours for Wisconsin Shares. Aiden and the agency worker discuss Aiden's schedule and determine that Jack needs 18 hours per week based on the actual before and after school care, including travel time for Aiden. The agency worker documents that the requested 45 hours were reduced to 18 hours due to the misunderstanding of the "full-time" definition and that the 18 approved hours are sufficient to cover work and travel time. The agency worker enters 18 weekly hours as the authorized hours in CSAW.

This section last updated 11/1/2024

Section 16.1.1.2 Sleep Hours

Parents who work third shift may request an authorization for child care for sleep time based on the parent's need to sleep to remain employed. The local agency will determine a reasonable number of authorized hours on a case-by-case basis. The same family may also request child care for the hours of employment.

Agency workers must consider the maximum hours per day when determining authorized hours (see 16.1.2). This maximum includes hours of employment, travel time, gap time, and any sleep hours requested by the parent.

Example 1: Theresa works third shift and sleeps during the day. Theresa requests a child care authorization for her child, Milo, only for the hours that she sleeps. She requests an authorization for 24 weekly hours, which Theresa indicates is around 7 hours per day of sleep time plus travel time. The local agency determines that the requested hours are reasonable and enters 24 weekly hours as the authorized hours in CSAW.

Example 2: Ximena requests an authorization for 54 weekly hours. She tells the agency worker that this amount includes three (3) 12-hour work shifts plus five (5) hours of sleep time, and 30 minutes of travel time each way for each shift. Because the limit for a child to be in care at a licensed group provider is 14 hours in a 24-hour period, only 14 hours of care may be authorized for each shift, resulting in 42 weekly hours. Ximena must also provide written documentation showing the work, travel, or other factors that show a child care need of more than 12 hours per day. After Ximena provides the documentation, the agency worker enters 42 weekly hours as the authorized hours in CSAW.

This section last updated 11/1/2024

Section 16.1.1.3 Co-located Head Start and 4K Community Approach Programs

Child care authorizations must always be based on the parent's need for child care while the parent is participating in their approved activity. However, when the 4K community approach program or Head Start program is located at the same location and address as a licensed child care program and not at a school (as listed in CSAW), the education hours may be included in the authorized hours based on the criteria listed below. The school program provider and the licensed child care provider must have the same provider number and location number in CSAW to meet the definition of co-located.

Note: 4K community approach refers to a collaborative model in Wisconsin where school districts partner with child care providers to deliver 4-year-old kindergarten (4K) at the child care provider's location.

Head Start or 4K Community Approach

If the school program is located at a different site than the licensed child care provider, the authorization must cover only the before and/or after school care outside of the school program.

The school program hours can be included in the authorized hours if **all** of the following are true:

- The parent is engaged in his or her approved activity at least part of the school program hours;
- The school program 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 authorization must not include the school program hours.

Agency workers must ask the parent if each of the above requirements are met (with yes or no answers). Parents can self-declare the answers to these questions. Agency workers must document whether the criteria for including the education hours in the authorized hours are met in case comments (see 12.2).

Example 1 (Different locations): Charlie attends the Head Start program located at 1256 Water Street and the licensed child care program that is located at 1536 Water Street. Charlie's authorization is limited to the hours he will spend at the licensed child care program located at 1536 Water Street because the child care and the Head Start programs are in different locations.

Example 2 (Meets criteria): Dara attends a 4K community approach program that is located at the licensed child care center where she is enrolled. Dara's parent, Savannah, needs full-time child care during her work hours. The 4K community approach program is provided at Dara's licensed child care center for three (3) hours per day, and Savannah indicates that the three (3) hours are entirely within her work day. Dara's authorization may be written to include the education hours because all requirements are met.

Example 3 (Head Start greater than four (4) hours): Cary attends a Head Start program that is overseen by the local public school board, and that is located at the licensed child care center where she is enrolled. Cary's parent, Victoria, needs child care 40 hours per week while she works, plus travel time. The agency worker asks follow-up questions to determine if the criteria for including Head Start education hours in the authorized hours are met. Victoria states that the Head Start program is six (6) hours per day. Cary's authorization may only include the hours that Cary attends the licensed child care program and not the school program hours because the Head Start program hours are more than four (4) hours per day.

Example 4 (No overlapping schedule): Melissa attends a Head Start program that is overseen by the local public school board and is located at the licensed child care center where she is enrolled. The Head Start program hours are during the morning and Melissa's parent works in the afternoon. She leaves Melissa at the center after the Head Start program ends through the end of her shift. Because Melissa's parent is not engaged in her approved activity during any part of the school program hours, those hours would not be included in Melissa's authorization.

Example 5 (Sleep hours do not count): Josh attends a 4K community approach program that is located at the licensed child care center where he is enrolled. Josh's parent works third shift and is only requesting an authorization for daytime sleep hours. The authorized hours can only include the child care hours plus travel time, not the school program hours, because Josh's parent is not in an approved activity during any part of the school program hours.

Example 6 (Partial overlapping schedule): Melvin attends a Head Start program that is located at his licensed child care provider. Melvin's parent, Raquel, works 12 weekly hours. Raquel requests 25 weekly hours for Melvin's authorization. The agency worker asks about this difference between her self-declared child care need and her verified work hours. Raquel explains that she needs child care in the morning, and then the school program starts while she is working and ends two (2) hours after she is done working. She leaves Melvin at the child care provider until the end of the program. Because Raquel works during at least some of the school program hours, the agency worker determines that this requirement is met.

Early Head Start, 3K, and Get Kids Ready
All the hours from an Early Head Start, 3K, and Get Kids Ready program are hours that can be included in the authorization if the program is co-located with the child care provider location.

Example 7 (Get Kids Ready): Danielle enrolls her child, Flora, in the Get Kids Ready program located at her licensed child care provider. Since the Get Kids Ready program is co-located with the licensed child care provider, all hours from the Get Kids Ready program can be included in Flora's authorization.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 16.1.1.4 School-Age Children Authorizations

Wisconsin Shares does not allow authorizations for time during the typical school day for children in grades K 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 county. A child's school bell schedule does not need to be entered in CSAW or documented in case comments.

Children in grades K through 12 can receive authorizations 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).

An authorization may be written for a school age child during the typical school day when school is in session if a short-term (defined as less than 30 days) emergency occurs in which the child needs to attend virtual school at a child care provider while the parent participates in their approved activity.

After reviewing the parent's authorization request and if it is still unclear if the situation meets the need for an authorization, the agency worker should contact the Child Care Help Desk at childcare@wisconsin.gov for review and approval or denial. A short-term emergency authorization must be documented in case comments (see 12.2).

Example: Sadie is in first grade and breaks her arm during recess. Sadie's mom Nichole has reached out to the school who said they will allow Sadie to attend virtual school for three weeks while she heals. Nichole contacts her local agency to request an authorization for Sadie at her current after-school child care provider for the three weeks during the typical school day while Nichole participates in her approved activity. The worker enters the authorization for the three-week time period.

The following children are not eligible for an authorization during the typical school day or for school closed hours:

- Children who are homeschooled

- Children who are truant
- Children between the ages of 6 and 18 who are required to be enrolled in school per the Department of Public Instruction and are not enrolled (excluding expelled children while the parent searches for a new education arrangement)
- Children who are suspended from school

Expelled children who are considered disenrolled may be eligible to receive an authorization during the typical school day while the parent searches for a new education arrangement. The parent will have been notified by the school if the child is expelled and disenrolled. If a child's enrollment status is questionable, the parent must provide verification of the child's school enrollment status.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 16.1.1.4.1 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 during school closures. These authorizations won't have weekly/monthly hours calculated in CSAW. Instead, the agency worker will add school closed hours upon the parent's request for each day that school is closed, and the parent expects to be engaged in their approved activity.

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 16.1.1.4.2 School Closed Hours

Parents with children who are enrolled in school may request authorized hours when they need child care to participate in their approved activity and school is closed due to:

- Planned closures, according to the school calendar (i.e., teacher conferences, teacher in-service days, etc.)
- Unplanned closures (i.e., inclement weather, emergency maintenance, etc.)

Parents can also request additional hours if an in-person school changes from an in-person day to a virtual school day due to inclement weather or another emergency and they need to participate in their approved activity.

Example 1: Keith has a part-time after school authorization for eight (8) hours per week. On March 29, an ice storm hits and the school changes to a virtual school day instead of cancelling school for the day. Keith's dad Aaron contacts the local agency and requests school closed hours for the day at Keith's after school provider so that he can participate in his approved activity. Since Keith has a part-time authorization, the agency worker adds school closed hours for March 29.

Children who have before and/or after school care at one (1) provider may need a second authorization to a different provider for when school is closed. If a child only needs care when school is closed, the agency worker can create a "zero hour authorization" in CSAW (see 16.1.1.4.1).

Only children with part-time authorizations (20 weekly hours or less) or zero hour authorizations are eligible to receive additional funds for days when school is closed. A parent with a full-time authorization (more than 20 weekly hours) or an above full-time authorization (50-75 weekly hours) for their school-age child must be advised to use their current authorized hours to meet their school closed need.

Example 2: Tara previously worked full-time, third shift, but now works first shift for 15 hours per week. She has a 45-hour authorization for her child, Tina. She uses these hours in the evenings and on weekends. In March, Tara calls to request school closed hours for Tina for March 4 and the week of spring break (March 21—March 25). The agency worker informs Tara that the school closed hours cannot be authorized because she already has a full-time authorization.

School closed hours can be requested in advance by parents who know their school closed need ahead of time. School closed hours can also be requested within 10 calendar days after the school day closure whether the day was a planned school closed day or an unexpected closure. The 10 calendar days begins the day after the last day of the school closure or school closure period. A school closure period means multiple consecutive school closed days. Agency workers must document the reason for the school closure in case comments (see 12.2).

Example 3: Susie has a zero hour authorization for her school-age child, Derek. She calls on January 15 to request school closed hours for Derek. His school was closed January 4 and 5 due to a snowstorm but the child care program was open, and Susie needed to work. Because the request was made within 10 calendar days from the last day the school was closed consecutively, the agency worker may add the additional hours for the days Derek attended child care while school was closed.

Example 4: Jessica has a zero hour authorization for her school-age child, Laura. She calls on February 17 to request school closed hours for Laura because school was closed on February 5 and February 10. Because the request was made within 10 calendar days of February 10 but not February 5, the agency worker adds the additional hours only for February 10 for when Laura attended child care while school was closed. The agency worker does not add school closed hours for February 5 because Jessica requested the hours more than 10 calendar days after the school closure.

The following children are not eligible for school closed hours:

- Children who are homeschooled

- Children who are truant
- Children between the ages of 6 and 18 who are required to be enrolled in school per the Department of Public Instruction and are not enrolled
- Children who are suspended from school
- Children who are expelled and disenrolled

Parents can self-declare the additional hours needed when school is closed. If the parent does not know the exact number of hours needed, agency workers should enter the daily default amount of 10 hours. The parent's need for 10 hours does not need to be verified.

Parents in an Approved Activity Search Period (ACTS) or Temporary Break Period (TBRK) are not eligible for additional child care hours, including additional school closed hours (see 17.2.1).

The school closed hours are subject to the same 90-day removal policy as all other funds (see 18.7). If the parent receives additional subsidy hours for school closures and has not expended all the funds within 90 calendar days, the funds will age off and no longer be available to the parent.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 16.1.1.5 Gaps Between Approved Activities

When a gap between approved activities occurs on the same day, the gap must be included in the authorized hours if the parent needs care during the gap time and the request is reasonable.

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

When determining whether a request is reasonable, agency workers must consider the following factors:

- **Home Time:** Picking up the child and taking them home between the approved activities would cause the parent and child to be home for an unreasonably short period
- **Child Insufficient Sleep:** Picking up the child would cause the child to have fewer than eight (8) hours of potential sleep time
- **Travel Greater than Activities:** The number of activity hours for the first and the second activities are less than or equal to the travel time needed (job to child care to home, then home to child care to work)

- **Disruption of Child Schedule:** Picking up the child would interrupt mealtime or nap time
- **Child Wellbeing:** Picking up the child would disrupt the child's routine

Local agencies should consider the circumstances of the case, including the child's ability to have stable child care arrangements and the overall wellbeing of the child, and proceed according to their discretion.

Example 1: Hillary works and goes to school. Her child, Lisa, needs to attend child care whenever Hillary is at work or school. Hillary's work and school hours are verified at 18 hours per week. However, Hillary requests 25 hours per week because she leaves Lisa at the child care provider during a gap in her activities. She tells the worker that if she had to pick Lisa up and drop her off between the two (2) activities, they would only be home for 30 minutes. Because they would be home for an unreasonably short period, the agency worker must include the requested gap time in Lisa's authorized hours.

Example 2: Hayley works first shift and her spouse, Natalie, attends school during the day. Natalie reports that their child, Aurora, needs care during the day while Hayley works and Natalie attends classes. Natalie indicates that she is available for three (3) hours in the middle of the day between classes, but she prefers to leave Aurora at the child care provider because Aurora struggles with having multiple transitions during the day. Because picking up Aurora for three (3) hours and then dropping her off again would negatively impact Aurora's wellbeing, the agency worker must include the requested gap time in Aurora's authorized hours.

Agency workers must consider the maximum hours per day when determining authorized hours (see 16.1.2). This maximum includes hours of employment, travel time, gap time, and any sleep hours requested by the parent.

This section last updated 11/1/2024

Section 16.1.1.6 Travel Time

Travel time is the amount of time the parent needs to travel from the child care location to their approved activity and from the approved activity back to the child care provider location. For sleep hours and online education when the parent logs in from home, travel time includes the time the parent needs to travel from the child care provider to home for sleep or their education activity. Parents do not need to provide their travel time and approved activity time separately.

Agency workers must ensure that adequate travel time is included in the number of authorized hours by confirming with the parent that their self-declared child care need includes travel time.

Agency workers are not expected to manually calculate a daily average of varying travel need and can use the maximum amount of daily travel need.

This section last updated 11/1/2024

Section 16.1.2 Maximum Hours Per Day

Children may not be authorized for Wisconsin Shares for more than 12 hours in a 24-hour period unless written documentation is provided describing a parent's work schedule, travel time, or a combination of work and travel time that exceeds 12 hours in a 24-hour period. Written documentation may include a parent's written statement or other verification already provided for approved activity (see 7.8) or financial eligibility (see 7.9) and must demonstrate the entire child care need (not only the part that exceeds 12 hours). Documentation must be scanned into the Electronic Case File (ECF) and summarized in case comments (see 12.2).

If written documentation is provided describing a child care need of more than 12 hours in a 24-hour period, child care may be authorized up to the following limits:

- Licensed Providers and Day Camps: Up to 14 hours in a 24-hour period, including travel time.
- Certified Providers: Up to 16 hours in a 24-hour period, including travel time.

Out-of-state providers will have a status of Licensed or Certified in CSAW and CSAW will use the associated daily limit as described above.

Example 1 (Certified): Donna was recently determined eligible for Wisconsin Shares and contacts the local agency to request an authorization for her child, Violet. She tells the agency worker that she needs 76 weekly hours because she needs care for her four (4) 12-hour work shifts each week, as well as sleep time and travel time. Violet will be attending a certified child care provider. The 12-hour shifts prompt the agency worker to have further discussion about her schedule. Violet explains that Donna would be in care for 19 hours within a 24-hour period (12-hour shift + six (6) hours sleep time + one (1) hour travel time). The agency worker explains that because a child cannot be authorized to a certified provider for more than 16 hours per day, only 16 hours of care per day can be authorized. Donna must also provide written documentation showing the work, travel, or other factors that causes her to need child care more than 12 hours in a 24-hour period. After Donna provides the documentation, the agency worker enters 64 weekly hours as the authorized hours in CSAW (maximum that can be authorized for the times Donna will be in care).

Example 2 (Licensed): Carol is requesting an authorization for her child, Johnny, to attend a licensed child care provider. Carol tells the agency worker that she needs 53 weekly hours because she works 12-hour overnight shifts three (3) times a week and needs five (5) hours of sleep time and 30 minutes travel time for pick up only. This

means that Johnny would be in care 17.5 hours within a 24-hour period (12-hour shift + five (5) hours sleep time + 30 minutes travel time). Because a child cannot be authorized to a licensed provider for more than 14 hours per day, only 14 hours of care per day can be authorized. Carol must also provide written documentation showing the work, travel, or other factors that causes her to need child care more than 12 hours in a 24-hour period. After Carol provides the documentation, the agency worker enters 42 weekly hours as the authorized hours in CSAW (maximum that can be authorized for the times Johnny will be in care).

Subsidized hours are capped at 75 hours per week. For more information about the subsidy calculation, see Section 18.5.

This section last updated 11/1/2024

Section 16.2 Self-Employment Authorizations

Authorizations for self-employment have different policies depending on whether the business has been in operation for more or less than 24 months.

If the self-employment business has been operating for 24 months or less, see Section 16.2.1.

If the self-employment business has been operating for more than 24 months, see Section 16.2.2.

Foster care parents, subsidized guardians, interim caretakers, relatives with court-ordered placement receiving the Kinship Care Payment, and individuals caring for children in tribal placement homes under a substantially similar Wisconsin tribal law are not subject to the minimum wage calculation policy in Section 16.2.2.

This section last updated 11/1/2024

Section 16.2.1 New Self-Employment Authorizations

During the first 24 months a parent is engaged in a new self-employment business, the local agency must authorize child care for the hours the parent is engaged in self-employment and needs child care to engage in that activity. The authorization may be up to full-time (50 hours per week, including travel time) until the renewal following the 24th month of the new self-employment business.

After the renewal following the 24th month of new self-employment, the business is considered ongoing. At that time, the weekly authorized hours must be limited to the parent's monthly gross self-employment earnings divided by the Wisconsin minimum wage divided by 4.3 (see 16.2.2). Foster care parents, subsidized guardians, interim caretakers, relatives with court-ordered placement receiving the Kinship Care Payment, and individuals caring for children in tribal placement homes under a substantially

similar Wisconsin tribal law are not subject to the minimum wage calculation for those children.

If the parent's self-employment business began prior to the date he or she applied for Wisconsin Shares, the agency worker must use the actual start date of the self-employment to determine the 24-month new self-employment period. If the business started more than 24 months prior to the application date, it is an ongoing business (see 16.2.2).

Example 1 (Self-employment prior to application): Mary Jo began self-employment on May 6, 2021, but did not apply for Wisconsin Shares until July. The agency worker entered May 2021 on the Self-Employment page in CWW as the start of the self-employment business. Mary Jo's 24th month of self-employment is April 2023, but her renewal is not due until June 2023. Her authorization may remain in place until her renewal due date in June 2023. Beginning with the authorization assessment completed with her June 2023 renewal, her weekly authorization hours are limited to her monthly gross self-employment earnings divided by the Wisconsin minimum wage divided by 4.3.

A parent may be eligible for up to a full-time authorization for a new instance of self-employment only once. If a parent starts a new self-employment business during the 24-month period, or at any time in the future, they do not receive a new 24-month period during which they are eligible for full-time authorization(s) regardless of income. The 24-month clock continues to count down even if the business closes or Wisconsin Shares eligibility ends.

Example 2 (Initial eligibility with new self-employment): Rosa starts a business selling designer shirts. At the same time, she applies for Wisconsin Shares. Her child, Louisa, is eligible for an authorization based on Rosa's stated child care need (up to 50 hours per week, including travel time) until the renewal after 24 months from the business' start month. Once the business is considered ongoing, Louisa's weekly authorized hours are limited to Rosa's monthly gross self-employment earnings divided by Wisconsin's minimum wage and then divided by 4.3.

Example 3 (Ongoing eligibility with new self-employment): Richard is employed working as a delivery driver for ABC Trucking and is receiving Wisconsin Shares for his child, Aubrey. In September, he reported that he quit his job and will now be starting his own delivery business. He requests 45 weekly hours for Aubrey's authorization. Because Aubrey is eligible for a full-time authorization until the renewal that follows the 24th month of new self-employment, the agency worker enters 45 weekly hours as the authorized hours in CSAW based on Richard's request.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 16.2.2 Ongoing Self-Employment Authorizations

Self-employment is considered ongoing after the renewal that follows the 24th month of new self-employment or when the business has been operating for more than 24 months at application. The 24-month clock begins when the self-employment business begins, not when the parent applies for Wisconsin Shares.

An authorization assessment is required at each renewal. The authorized hours for ongoing self-employment cannot exceed the minimum wage calculation, which is the monthly gross self-employment income divided by Wisconsin's minimum wage and then divided by 4.3, rounded up to the next whole number. This is the maximum number of hours a child can receive; parents can always request fewer hours than the maximum.

Foster care parents, subsidized guardians, interim caretakers, relatives with court-ordered placement receiving the Kinship Care Payment, and individuals caring for children in tribal placement homes under a substantially similar Wisconsin tribal law are not subject to the minimum wage calculation for those children. The minimum wage calculation applies for any biological or adopted children in the household.

For ongoing businesses, the total authorized hours, including travel time, cannot exceed the calculated number. If the number of hours requested for child care is less than the calculated amount, agency workers must use the requested number of hours including travel, up to the calculated hours. Self-employed parents are eligible for school closed hours for school-age children in addition to the maximum calculation for part-time authorizations (see 16.1.1.4.2).

Example 1 (Ongoing self-employment): Tiffany's cake business has been in operation for three (3) years and has a monthly gross income of $600. CSAW will calculate a maximum number of hours that can be authorized based on $600/month divided by $7.25 to get 82.75 monthly hours, and then divided by 4.3 which equals 19.24 rounded up to 20 weekly hours. The total is displayed on the CSAW Case Activity Summary page. If Tiffany's child care need exceeds 20 hours per week, the worker must override the derived hours in CSAW to 20 hours per week to ensure that the total authorized hours, including travel time, do not exceed the maximum amount calculated on the CSAW Case Activity Summary page. If Tiffany's child care need is 10 hours per week, up to 10 hours of travel time per week can be added to the authorized hours.

Example 2 (Changing self-employment): Jonathon is a mechanic and has been operating his business from his home for the past three (3) years. He is receiving Wisconsin Shares for his child, Joseph. Now, Jonathon wants to close the mechanic shop and start a new business as a handyman. Jonathon has expended his new 24-month self-employment period. His handyman business is new, but he is not eligible for another new 24-month period. Joseph's weekly authorized hours must be based on

Jonathon's monthly gross self-employment earnings divided by the Wisconsin minimum wage and then divided by 4.3 and rounded up.

When there are two (2) self-employed parents that have different maximum calculated hours in CSAW, the agency worker must use the lesser of the two (2) calculations for the maximum authorization amount.

Example 3 (Two-parent household, different minimum wage calculations): Kabo has been operating his farm for 10 years and works during the day. His spouse, Doua, has operated her own self-employment business making purses for five (5) years. They need Wisconsin Shares for their child, Tia, while they both work during the day. Kabo's monthly gross self-employment earnings divided by the Wisconsin minimum wage divided by 4.3 results in a maximum of 35 authorized hours per week. Doua's calculation results in a maximum of 20 authorized hours per week. Tia can receive a maximum of 20 authorized hours per week because the authorized hours must be based on the lesser of the two (2) calculations.

Example 4 (Two-parent household, no overlapping schedules): Keisha and Rick are married and have four (4) children. Rick has an auto repair business. Rick works at the auto repair business first shift Monday through Friday and on Saturday mornings. The auto repair business produces a monthly gross income of $1,000. Keisha has her own small business selling home décor. The monthly gross income from Keisha's business is $600. Keisha works 15 hours per week, always in the evenings after Rick is home. Keisha and Rick do not have overlapping schedules; therefore, they are not eligible for an authorization.

Example 5 (Two-parent household, shared self-employment business): Mary and Tom are married and share a sole proprietorship business selling honey. Their monthly gross income of $1,000 is divided equally on two (2) Self-Employment pages in CWW. The maximum weekly authorized hours calculation uses $500 for Mary and $500 for Tom. Because the calculations are the same, the maximum weekly authorized hours will be $500 divided by the Wisconsin minimum wage and then divided by 4.3 and rounded up. ($500/$7.25/4.3 = 16 total monthly hours allowed which also includes travel time).

In a two-parent household where one (1) parent is in a new self-employment period and the other parent is engaged in ongoing self-employment, the authorization can be up to full-time (50 hours per week, including any travel time that is needed) until both parents have used their 24-month new self-employment period. Authorizations must be based on the parents' overlapping schedules and child care need.

Example 6 (Two-parent household, new and ongoing self-employment): Casey is self-employed as a hair stylist. Her business has been in operation for five (5) years. In May, she applies for Wisconsin Shares. Because her business started more than 24 months ago, it is considered ongoing and her child's authorization must be based on the

minimum wage calculation. In August, her child's other parent, Matt, moves into the home. Matt is starting his own business as a landscaper. Their child's authorization can be up to full-time, based on their overlapping schedules, until the renewal following the 24th month of Matt's new self-employment.

For additional two-parent policies, see Section 16.3.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 16.3 Two-Parent and Three-Generation Families

The local agency must only authorize child care in two-parent or three-generation families for the period of overlap in the parents' approved activities.

Note: Agency workers must confirm with the parent that the self-declared child care need only includes times when all parents are participating in their approved activities (plus travel time, gap time, sleep time), but do not need to document each parent's schedule.

When determining the authorization for a teen parent's child, the agency worker must 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 parent's children, the dependent teen parent's schedule is not considered in the overlap. The agency worker must 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 second shift and Alana works first shift. The child care authorization is limited to the overlap in work and travel time for both parents. Alberto is available to care for their child until he drops her off with the provider in the afternoon and leaves for work. Alana picks the child up after she gets done with work. The authorized hours include the entire time that the child is at the provider, from the time Alberto drops the child off to go to work until Alana picks the child up after work.

Example 2: Melissa is 16 years old. She and her baby live with her parents. The agency worker must consider the overlapping approved activity hours of Melissa and both of her parents 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 parent, Choua, and her 3-year-old sister Nancy. The agency worker must consider only Choua's approved activity 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 activities.

In two-parent and three-generation family situations where one (1) parent is unable to work and unable to care for the children as documented by a physician, physician assistant, nurse practitioner, psychiatrist, or psychologist, child care may be authorized for the time period when the other parent is participating in an approved activity (see 5.2).

This section last updated 11/1/2024

Section 16.4 Provider Price Type

Whether to use 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 are 20 hours per week or less (but not zero), use the part-time provider price.
- If the authorized hours do not vary from week to week and are more than 20 hours per week (e.g., 20 hours and 15 minutes), use the full-time provider price.
- If authorized hours vary week to week and any of the weeks are more than 20 hours, use the full-time provider price.
- When the authorization is only for school closures (see 16.1.1.4.1), use the full-time provider price.

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Section 16.4.1 Inclusion Rate

Parents of children with disabilities may be eligible for a higher subsidy amount ("inclusion rate") to offset any increased costs the child care provider may incur in providing care to a child with a disability. Not all children with a disability require the child care provider to have specialized training, to provide any additional services, or to make environmental adaptations. However, when a request for an inclusion rate is submitted, the local agency may consider additional subsidy amounts on a case-by-case basis. The Wisconsin Shares Inclusion Rate Request form (DCF-F-2976-E) must be completed to request and document a higher subsidy amount for a child with a disability.

The inclusion rate must support the child care provider's additional expenses in caring for the child (e.g., specialized training, services, one-on-one staffing for the child, and/or environmental adaptations), but must not include healthcare services such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, or nursing care. It is the provider's responsibility to comply with all aspects of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). For more information on how the ADA applies to child care providers, please visit https://www.ada.gov/resources/child-care-centers/.

The parent must provide documentation from a physician, psychologist, special educator, or other qualified professional showing that:

- The child has a disability; **and**
- Identifies the specific emotional, behavioral, physical, or personal needs of a child requiring more than the usual amount of care and supervision for the child's age in the child care setting.

The parent may provide copies of the following supporting documentation to identify and clarify the specific accommodations that are needed within the child care setting:

- An Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) from the Birth to 3 Program
- An Individualized Education Program (IEP) from a school district
- A 504 plan (a plan developed to ensure accommodations are provided to allow the child to participate fully in school)

The child care provider must document the specific additional child care expenses that are necessary to meet the child's needs in the child care setting. This must be written on or added as an attachment to the Wisconsin Shares Inclusion Rate Request form before the parent submits the request to the local agency.

If a higher subsidy amount is approved by the local agency, the effective date is the date that the form is approved and signed by the local agency and is valid until the next renewal. A Post-Load Benefit Correction (PLBC) may be necessary if benefits have already been issued for the current month.

A new form must be completed at each renewal to evaluate the ongoing and changing needs of the child and determine any adjustments to the cost incurred by the provider. Also, if the child changes child care providers, a new form is required to document and verify the costs for the new child care provider, as each child care provider may have different circumstances to meet the needs of the child.

The approval or denial must be noted in case comments (see 12.2) and the reason for the inclusion rate must be documented on the Wisconsin Shares Inclusion Rate Request form. Supporting documentation must be scanned into ECF. Agency workers must provide the parent with a copy of the Wisconsin Shares Inclusion Rate Request form showing the approval or denial and the reason for a denial.

The hourly rate for any authorized hours above 50 hours per week will be paid at the county's hourly maximum rate for that provider rather than the higher approved inclusion rate.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 16.4.2 Provider Discounts

A discount is any price a licensed provider charges the parent which is lower than their regular rate before any subsidy is applied. Any amount of the child care cost that another program (such as AmeriCorps) pays is also considered a discount. A discount a child care provider applies to the parent's share after the subsidy is paid is not considered a discount for the purposes of Wisconsin Shares.

Providers often have different rate structures based on the number of hours or days of care. However, CSAW can only accept one (1) weekly full-time and one (1) weekly part-time provider price. A difference between the weekly price in CSAW and the amount the provider charges the parent based on their standard rate structure is not a discount.

Providers must inform parents of discounts. It is the parent's responsibility to inform the agency worker that the child care provider is offering a discount when requesting an authorization. Providers are required to have a written payment agreement with parents that includes any discounts or scholarships available to parents and any discounts or scholarships the parent receives (see 14.5). Parents must report to the agency worker that the child care provider has offered a discount within 10 calendar days after receiving this information. The discounted price will become effective the month after the discount is reported and entered in CSAW.

Only discounts that are consistently applied to the provider's regular rate should be entered into CSAW. A discount that is applied intermittently, such as a discount for making a full payment at the beginning of the month, is not considered a discount for the purposes of Wisconsin Shares. This is because the parent may not be able to take advantage of the discount each month.

Example 1: Allison's child, Kate, attends Kiddie Korner for 35 hours per week. The provider offers a 5% discount on the monthly bill if the parent pays by the 4th of the month. In April, Allison received this discount because she was able to pay her Parent Share by April 4. The 5% discount should not be entered in CSAW because it is unknown whether Allison will be able to receive this discount each month.

The agency worker must enter the discounted price into CSAW. If the parent is not sure of the exact amount, the agency worker must 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 agency worker must find out the amount the other program will pay to determine the rate that will be entered in the Override Price field in CSAW.

CSAW generates an error message if the price entered in the Override (Discount) Price field is not lower than the maximum rate. If agency workers see this error message, they should disregard the provider discount and change the Provider Price Type back to Part-Time or Full-Time. The discounted price must be documented in case comments (see

12.2) even if it is not used for the subsidy calculation to document the parent reported the discount and the agency worker attempted to enter it in CSAW.

Example 2: Judy's two (2) children are attending Sammy's Day Care. The provider's regular rate for each child is $350 per week. Because Judy has two (2) children in care, the provider offers a discounted price of $300 per week for each child. When entering the discounted price in CSAW, the agency worker receives the following error message: "Override Price: Weekly Override price cannot be more than agency rate of $225." Because the provider's discounted price is higher than the initial hourly amount and agency ceiling, CSAW will not accept the discounted price. The agency worker changes the Provider Price Type back to Full-Time and documents the discount in case comments.

Example 3: Sandy works for a child care provider, 123 Child Care, and receives an employee discount of 10% off the regular provider price. Sandy requests an authorization to 123 Child Care and informs the local agency that she also works there. Sandy does not inform the local agency of the discounted price. This is discovered six (6) months after the authorization started and would have resulted in Sandy receiving a lower subsidy. An overpayment should be established from the begin date of the authorization through the end of the current month.

Discounts can only be applied to subsidy payments for parents using licensed child care providers. Discounts are disregarded for certified child care providers. This is because the maximum hourly rate for regularly and provisionally certified providers is set at 90% of the licensed family hourly rate and certified providers are not required to provide prices (see 14.4.2).

Example 4: Randy's Licensed Group Child Care is giving Audrey a 50% discount because she works for the provider. The child care provider's weekly price is $300. The weekly amount after the discount is applied to the provider's regular weekly price is $150. The discounted amount should be entered on the Weekly Hours page in CSAW by selecting the Override (Discount) option in the Provider Price Type field and entering the discounted price in the Override Price field. CSAW uses the discounted price for the subsidy calculation instead of the regular provider price because it is lower than the initial hourly rate and the agency ceiling.

Example 5: Bella's child, Luna, has an authorization for 28 hours per week. Bella is enrolled in AmeriCorps, which provides a weekly stipend of $200 to help cover the cost of child care. When Bella informs her agency worker, the worker subtracts the amount that AmeriCorps will pay from the provider's weekly price that is entered in CSAW – this is the discounted price. The agency worker then enters the discounted amount into CSAW and CSAW accepts the discounted price because it is lower than the initial hourly amount and the agency ceiling.

Initial Hourly Amount: $847.90 per month ($6.95 per hour x 122 hours per month)
Agency Ceiling: $1,057.69 per month
Provider's weekly price: $325
Subtract AmeriCorps subsidy: $200
Discounted Price: $325-$200 = $125 (Entered as Override (Discount) weekly amount)
Monthly discounted provider price: $543.52

Capped Subsidy (before copay): $543.52

Example 6: Because Pa has two (2) children enrolled in Alice's Wonderland Child Care, the child care provider gives Pa a 50% discount on her Parent Share for the second child. After the Wisconsin Shares subsidy has been paid for her second child, Pa's outstanding balance is $150. The provider gives her a 50% discount on this Parent Share leaving $75. Since the provider price discount is only applied to the Parent Share, it must not be entered for CSAW to use in the Wisconsin Shares subsidy calculation.

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 16.5 Refusal to Authorize to a Provider

The local agency may refuse to issue an authorization to a provider if:

- The agency worker has verified that the provider currently has 2.5 or more authorizations per regulated slot
- A child care provider has a pending criminal charge alleging that they have committed a serious crime or have been convicted of committing a serious crime
- The child care provider has been convicted or is charged with a crime for which the offense substantially relates to the care of children; or the department or local agency determines that the offense substantially relates to the operation of a business
- The department or local agency reasonably suspects that the person has violated any provision under the Wisconsin Shares program
- More than 40 percent of all children (including non-Shares children) enrolled at a specific location are children of the provider's employees or children who live with the provider's employees, and the provider fails to restore compliance within six (6) weeks after the Department or local agency determines that the provider has fallen below the required 60 percent threshold of qualifying children

Authorizations cannot be written unless:

- The child care provider submits their prices to the local agency
- The child care need matches the provider's hours of operation
- The criteria in Chapter 14 Provider Requirements are met

Chapter 17 Authorization Changes

Section 17.1 Authorization Changes

Parents must report changes that impact any of the authorization components defined in Chapter 16. In some instances, a change requires a new authorization to be based on the assessment results (see 17.1.1). Other times, the new authorization may continue at the same number of hours as the previous authorization (see 17.1.2).

After a parent reports a change that impacts any of the authorization components defined in Chapter 16, the agency worker must complete an authorization assessment. An authorization assessment means the agency worker has a discussion with the parent about their child care need. A summary of the discussion must be documented in case comments (see 12.2).

If the parent's child care need has not changed, and the parent is eligible to maintain the hours per Section 17.1.2, the agency worker must not update the authorization. If the criteria in Section 17.1.1 are met, or if the parent requests a part-time authorization despite being eligible for a full-time authorization based on continuity of care, the agency worker must:

- End the current authorization
- Complete a new authorization using the most recently reported information.

The new authorization must start the beginning of the next month if there is an existing authorization that covers the entire current month.

If an assessment indicates an increase to the authorized hours because of an increase in approved activity hours, the agency worker must verify eligibility information related to the increase of approved activity hours before increasing the authorized hours (see 7.9.2). Increases due to other reasons, such as a change in travel time needed, do not need to be verified unless questionable.

Example 1: Shantell works 40 hours per week. Her child, Tara, has an authorization for 45 hours per week (unpaid lunch and travel time included). In June, Shantell reports that her work hours have decreased to 10 hours per week. The agency worker determines that this is only a decrease in work hours and the criteria for the authorization to be based on the assessment results are not met. The agency worker asks Shantell if she plans to continue using the same full-time authorization. Shantell indicates that she

does. The worker documents the conversation in case comments and does not update the authorization.

Example 2: Robin works 25 hours per week. Her child, Brandon, has an authorization for 30 hours per week, which includes travel time. She calls the local agency today to report that her hours have decreased to 10 hours per week. The agency worker asks Robin if she plans to continue using the same full-time authorization. Robin indicates that she is only sending Brandon when she is working and does not need a full-time authorization. The agency worker ends the current authorization at the end of the current month and creates a new authorization. The worker writes the new authorization with a start date of the first of the following month and enters the decreased child care need plus travel time based on Robin's request. The agency worker documents the conversation with Robin, including her request for decreased authorized hours, in case comments.

Example 3: Erica works first shift and has a full-time authorization for her school-age child, Jonas, during the summer. It is now August and Erica contacts the local agency to request an authorization for Jonas during the school year. Since Erica currently uses the full-time authorization for daytime care and her school-age child is transitioning from summer break to the fall school year, the authorization must be reduced to avoid authorizing during the typical school day. The agency worker ends the current full-time authorization, starts a new authorization for the school year, and updates the authorized hours to align with Erica's need for part-time care during the school year.

This section last updated 11/1/2024

Section 17.1.1 Assessment Results Authorizations

An agency worker must assess an Assistance Group's child care need (see 16.1) and the authorization must be based on the assessment results at all the following times, unless the parent is in an Activity Break Period:

- Initial eligibility
- Renewal
- When the parent selects a new provider
- When school-age children transition from summer break to the fall school year
- When an eligible adult or minor teen parent is added to the case
- When one (1) calendar month or more has passed since the parent's previous authorization ended
- At the end of the 24-month education time limit (see 5.1.2.5)
- When the child care needs no longer align with the provider's hours of operation

Agency workers must not reduce authorization hours while the parent is in an Activity Break Period unless the parent requests fewer hours.

If a reported change is not one (1) of the above situations, or if the parent is in an Activity Break Period, the Continuity of Care Authorizations policy (see 17.1.2) must be followed.

Agency workers must correct an error in authorization, even if the error results in a lower number of authorized hours.

Example 1 (More than one (1) calendar month): Jessie has two (2) school-aged children. The authorizations for both children began on January 1 and end on May 31. Jessie does not need child care during the month of June because the children will visit their grandparents that month. However, Jessie needs child care authorizations beginning on July 15. Jessie's worker must complete an authorization assessment before the July 15 authorizations are written and the authorized hours must be based on this assessment because more than one (1) calendar month has passed since the previous authorizations ended.

Example 2 (Fall school year transition): From July 15 through August 31, Arturo's school-aged children need full-time child care. When school starts in September, the agency worker completes an authorization assessment. The authorization for the school year must be based on the assessment results because the children are transitioning from summer break to the fall school year.

Example 3 (ACTS-Second parent moves into the home): Roberta is in an ACTS period when Jackson, the biological parent of her child, moves into the home. Roberta and Jackson's child, Craig, has an authorization for 35 hours per week. Jackson has an approved activity of working 20 hours per week. Since Roberta is in an ACTS period, the agency worker does not update the authorization. Jackson's availability will be considered the next time an authorization must be based on the assessment results. If Roberta requests fewer hours because Jackson is now able to care for Craig, the authorized hours can be reduced based on her request.

Example 4 (TBRK-Provider change): Lauren is working 40 hours per week and her child, Kalie, has an authorization to ABC Child Care Center for when Lauren is working.

Change 1 (Decrease in hours, continuity of care): In January, Lauren's work hours decrease to 20 hours per week. She calls to report this change. The agency worker determines that this is only a decrease in work hours and the criteria for the authorization to be based on the assessment results are not met. The agency worker asks if she would like to maintain the same number of hours for Kalie's authorization. Lauren chooses to maintain Kalie's authorization at 40 hours per week. The agency

worker documents the conversation in case comments and does not update the authorization.

Change 2 (Temporary break, maintain hours): In March, Lauren goes on maternity leave. A TBRK period is entered for April 1 – next renewal. Lauren chooses to maintain Kalie's authorization at 40 hours per week while she is on maternity leave. The agency worker leaves the current authorization in place and documents the conversation in case comments.

Change 3 (Change providers): In April, Lauren decides that she wants to change providers for May. The agency worker ends the current authorization for April 30 and creates a new authorization to Julie's Jumpin' Beans beginning May 1. Because she is in a TBRK period when hours cannot be decreased unless the parent requests a decrease, the agency worker asks if she would like to maintain the same number of hours for Kalie's authorization. Lauren chooses to maintain Kalie's authorization at 40 hours per week. The agency worker documents the conversation in case comments and does not update the authorization.

Example 5 (ACTS-Fall school year transition): Nora is in an ACTS period from July 1 – September 30. Her child, Phillip, had an authorization for 40 hours per week when she lost her job and she requested that the authorization continue during the ACTS period. Phillip is starting school in-person on September 9. Nora calls to request a part-time authorization for the school year for Philip to attend the after-school program at the child care provider. The agency worker creates a part-time authorization because Nora requested the decreased hours.

Example 6 (TBRK-Fall school year transition): Ben is in a TBRK period from August 1 – next renewal. His child, Ethan, had an authorization for 30 hours per week when he began his temporary break and Ben requested to continue the full-time authorization during the break. Ben uses these hours during evenings and weekends. Ethan returns to school on September 5. Because Ben uses these hours during evenings and weekends, not during the typical school day, the authorization does not need to be reduced for the transition from summer to the fall school year. If Ben is continuing this arrangement during the school year, he does not need to report when Ethan begins school because he has not had a change in child care need.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 17.1.2 Continuity of Care Authorizations

During the eligibility period, an authorization assessment must be completed when an authorization is written to an expected change (see 15.3) or when certain changes are reported.

For all reported changes not listed in Section 17.1.1, or when the parent reports a change listed in Section 17.1.1 but is in an Activity Break Period, the authorized hours must be based on continuity of care. Reported changes include but are not limited to:

- A decrease in child care need from more than 20 hours per week (full-time authorization) to less than 20 hours per week (part-time authorization) to allow the parent(s) to participate in their approved activities, including travel between the child care provider and the location of the activity
- A change in the overlapping activity schedules of two-parent families
- When a school-age child transitions from the end of the school year to summer break
- A change in a child's shared placement schedule
- Any change that results in a change in child care need, except when the child care need no longer aligns with the provider's hours of operation which will require an authorization to be based on the assessment results (see 17.1.1)

Following the reported change, the parent may:

- Choose an authorization for the reduced hours
- Maintain the original number of authorized hours
- Request an authorization for any number of hours between the original authorized hours and the new assessment results

If the parent chooses to maintain authorized hours, the agency worker must document the reported change in case comments but must not update the authorization (see 17.1). If the parent chooses the reduced hour authorization or any number of hours between the original authorized hours and the new assessment results, the agency worker must document the conversation and the parent's choice for a reduced authorization in case comments (see 12.2).

If at any time the parent informs the agency worker that the child will attend the child care provider part-time when they have a full-time authorization, or less than 50 hours when they have an above full-time authorization, the agency worker must create a new, reduced authorization that aligns with the parent's request. Parents are required to report when they have a decrease in child care need from more than 20 hours per week (full-time authorization) to less than 20 hours per week (part-time authorization) or when they no longer need child care (see 10.1). If a parent reports a change in hours that is still within part-time or within full-time, agency workers must document the reported change in case comments but must not update the authorization (see 17.1).

Example 1: Annabelle works at Main Street Café 25 hours each week. She has an authorization for 30 hours per week which includes travel time. In June, she reports that

her work hours have decreased to 15 hours per week. Annabelle is not planning to change child care providers. The agency worker asks Annabelle if she would like to keep her original authorized hours or if she would like to decrease her authorization to part-time. Annabelle chooses the reduction. The agency worker documents this conversation and the decision in case comments and creates a new part-time authorization.

Example 2: Cassie works at Plastics Manufacturing 35 hours each week. She has an authorization for her baby, Renee, for 40 hours per week, which includes travel time. In January, Cassie reports her work hours have decreased to 22 hours per week. The agency worker documents this decrease in hours but does not update the authorization because 22 hours plus travel time is still a full-time authorization.

Example 3: Eric has an above full-time authorization for his child, Josiah, at 56 weekly hours because he has been working overtime. In February, he stops working overtime and changes to a standard 40 weekly hour schedule. He contacts the local agency to request a decreased authorization because he only sends Eric when he is working and does not need the additional funds for above full-time care. The local agency documents the conversation, including Eric's choice for a reduction in authorized hours, and writes a new authorization based on the 40 weekly hours, including any travel time that Eric needs.

If the parent chooses to keep the original number of hours, the parent must intend to send their child to the provider for those authorized hours. If the parent consistently sends the child to their provider for significantly fewer hours but makes a full subsidy payment to the provider for the full number of hours, the local agency may conduct an investigation to determine if an error occurred.

Example 4: Roxanne loses her job and is placed in an Approved Activity Search Period (ACTS). She tells her agency worker that she would like to continue sending her children to child care using the same schedule as when she was working (40 hours per week). The agency worker leaves her current authorization in place. However, Roxanne only takes her children to child care for 10 hours per week and continues paying the child care provider the same full-time amount. Roxanne is required to report a change in child care need and her case must be evaluated by the local agency to determine if an error occurred.

Parents have the option to use authorization hours during whichever time they prefer if the provider is open and regulated during that time.

Example 5: Mariana has an authorization for her child, Paulo. Mariana is working third shift when she loses her job, and Paulo's authorization is for overnight care. Mariana contacts the local agency, and the agency worker updates the Approved Activity Status in CWW to ACTS. The agency worker does not need to update Paulo's authorization.

Mariana can continue using the same number of authorized hours to send Paulo to child care during the day while she looks for a job. Mariana will need to work out the child care schedule with her child care provider.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 17.1.3 Authorization Assessments Following Activity Break Periods

If a Temporary Break Period (TBRK) crosses a renewal, an authorization assessment must be completed for the month following the end of the TBRK period and the authorized hours must be based on the assessment results. This would be considered their renewal authorization assessment (see 17.1.1) because the authorization assessment completed at the renewal may not have been reflective of their child care needs after they return to their approved activity.

Example 1: Christy begins a Temporary Break (TBRK) period on August 1. Her renewal is due on September 30. Christy's TBRK period in CWW is from August 1 – October 31. Christy completes her renewal on September 12 and states that her child will be attending the same child care provider for the same hours. The agency worker creates a new authorization to start on October 1 and end on October 31, the last day of Christy's TBRK period because the renewal authorization assessment must be completed at that time, using the same number of hours as her previous authorization. The worker must complete an authorization assessment when Christy returns to work so that the authorization starting November 1 is based on the assessment results.

When an Activity Break Period ends during the eligibility period (not at renewal), an authorization assessment is not needed unless the parent reports a change impacting the authorization (see 17.1).

Example 2: Terra is in an ACTS period from June 1 – August 31. On August 25, she reports that she started a new job and provides verification. Her previous authorization was for 25 hours per week, but she is only scheduled for 20 hours per week at her new job. The agency worker determines that this is not a reason for the authorization to be based on the assessment results and informs Terra that her new authorization can continue at the 25-hour level if she plans to continue sending her child to the provider for those hours. Terra states that she would like to keep the same hours. The agency worker documents the conversation in case comments but does not update the authorization because Terra decided to maintain the authorized hours.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 17.2 Activity Break Period Authorizations

During an Approved Activity Search Period (ACTS) or Temporary Break Period (TBRK), parents may continue using the current authorization or request a reduced authorization. If an existing authorization ends during a break period, agency workers

must offer the parent an authorization for up to the same number of hours as the child's previous authorization, unless the criteria in Section 17.1.1 for an Assessment Results Authorization are met. Parents can change providers during an Activity Break Period, the same as all other authorizations. Changes during a month when the parent is in an Activity Break Period are still subject to the policy in Section 17.3.

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Section 17.2.1 Activity Break Period Authorization Hours

Parents are not eligible for an increase in hours (including additional school closed days [see 16.1.1.4.2]) during an Activity Break Period. This also includes a parent's change in schedule in a two-parent or three-generation household.

In a two-parent or three-generation household in which more than one (1) parent is participating in an Activity Break Period, the local agency must maintain authorizations at the same number of hours until all parents are again engaged and participating in approved activities. Authorized hours may be reduced at the parent's request, but authorized hours cannot be increased even if there is a change in one (1) parent's schedule or other change resulting in an authorization assessment (see 17.1.1 and 17.1.2) during the Activity Break Period.

If a parent is in a TBRK and an eligible child is added to the case, the TBRK end date can be extended to the new renewal date (see 5.3.1.2) for any eligible children on the case with a current authorization. Agency workers must case comment when a TBRK end date is extended to the new renewal date (see 12.2)

Example 1: Cora is in a Temporary Break Period (TBRK), and her spouse, Finn, is in an Approved Activity Search Period (ACTS). Their child, Leo, has an authorization for 20 hours per week. Finn obtains new employment and provides financial verification showing he works 40 hours per week, while Cora remains in a TBRK period. Leo's authorized hours remain at 20 hours per week (or less at the parent's request) during Cora's TBRK period because authorized hours cannot be increased during a TBRK period.

Example 2: Penelope is in an ACTS period. Her child, Hazel, has a school-year authorization of 10 hours per week for before and after school care. When school lets out for the summer, Penelope wants to send Hazel to the full-time summer camp program at her child care provider and is requesting 40 hours per week based on her previous work schedule. However, Hazel is not eligible for an increase in hours due to Penelope being in an ACTS period. Penelope can use the 10 hours per week based on Hazel's previous authorization for summer camp because it is at the same provider and location, but she will need to pay the rest of the child care cost out-of-pocket.

Example 3: Kristine has a school-year authorization for her child, Ingrid, when she loses her job. Kristine is placed in an ACTS period from November 1 – January 31. In December, Ingrid's school is closed for several days due to inclement weather. Kristine calls to request additional school closed hours. However, because Kristine is in an ACTS period, no additional hours can be added to Ingrid's authorization.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 17.2.2 Children Not Previously Authorized

The intent of the Approved Activity Search Period (ACTS) and the Temporary Break Period (TBRK) is to continue benefits at the same level following a permanent loss or temporary break in the parent's approved activity. If the child does not have an authorization that started prior to the day the parent lost their approved activity or began an absence from their approved activity, then there are no benefits to continue at the same level. Parents may maintain eligibility even if their child does not have an authorization (see 4.8).

A new authorization can only be created or have the end date extended if:

- The child had an authorization that started prior to the day the parent lost their approved activity or began an absence from their approved activity, **or**
- The child had an authorization that ended within the 30 days prior to the day the parent lost their approved activity or began an absence from their approved activity.

The child's authorization prior to the Activity Break Period should continue through the Activity Break Period unless:

- The parent requests fewer hours
- The parent decides that they no longer need an authorization

Authorizations during an Activity Break Period must be consecutive. There cannot be a gap in authorizations during a time when benefits are being continued at the same level. If a change creates a gap of any length between authorizations during an Activity Break Period, the parent is not eligible for the new authorization that would follow a gap.

Example 1: Khloe has three (3) children: Sydney (age 2), Ja'mal (age 5), and Demarcus (age 8). Khloe has an authorization for Sydney but does not have authorizations for her school-age children. On May 9, she reports that she lost her job on May 7 and also requests authorizations for Ja'mal and Demarcus starting on May 27. Because they did not have authorizations that started prior to the day that Khloe lost her job (May 7), they are not eligible for authorizations during Khloe's ACTS period. However, Khloe can choose to maintain Sydney's authorization at the same number of hours until the end of her 3-month ACTS period.

Example 2: Rhonda has two (2) children: Roberta (age 6) and Chad (age 8). She does not have authorizations for the children during the school year, but she previously requested authorizations for June 1 – August 31 for both children. On May 8, Rhonda reports that she lost her job that day, and is placed in an ACTS period for June 1 – August 31. Because the summer authorizations did not start prior to the day that Rhonda lost her job (May 8), she is not able to keep the future authorizations. The agency worker must delete the future authorizations for both children. Rhonda may still maintain Wisconsin Shares eligibility without authorizations.

Example 3: Pam had a part-time authorization during the school year for her child, Tina, for February 1 – June 12 and then a full-time summer authorization for June 20 – August 31. On June 20, she reports to the local agency that she lost her job on June 15. Pam's ACTS period will be July 1 – September 30. Tina's full-time authorization may not be used for Pam's ACTS period because it has not started by the date Pam lost her job. However, she may choose to maintain the hours from the part-time authorization during the ACTS period because that authorization started prior to the day that Pam lost her job.

Example 4: Catalina has one (1) child, Javier (age 8). Javier had an authorization from January 1 – March 22 at Rosa's Playhouse. On April 20, Catalina reports that she started maternity leave on April 18. A TBRK period is created from May 1 – the next renewal. The agency worker extends Javier's authorization to the next renewal because the authorization ended within the 30 days prior to the first day of Catalina's maternity leave (April 18).

Example 5: Nan has an authorization for her child, Mai, to Sparkling Stars from March 3 – June 30. She recently lost her job and was placed in an ACTS period for June 1 – August 31. On June 25, she reports that after Mai's authorization ends on June 30, Mai will be attending a day camp through the end of summer. However, the day camp does not have a slot available for Mai until July 5. Mai is not eligible for an authorization to the day camp because there is a gap between the end of Mai's enrollment at Sparkling Stars on June 30 and the begin date of her attendance at the day camp on July 5. If Mai's attendance at the day camp started the day after her enrollment with Sparkling Stars ended, she would be eligible for an authorization to the day camp because there would be no gap between authorizations.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 17.2.3 Ending Activity Break Period Authorizations

Eligibility will end systematically at the end of an ACTS if a parent has not started a new verified approved activity. If the parent has not returned to their approved activity by the end of a TBRK, eligibility will systematically end in CWW (see 5.3.1). Authorizations will end systematically in CSAW on the last day of the last month in which the child was

eligible if there is no eligibility for the following month. Agency workers must let eligibility and authorizations end systematically and not take any action to end eligibility or authorizations manually due to the end of an Activity Break Period.

If Wisconsin Shares eligibility closes in CWW for a different reason during an Activity Break Period (see 5.3.7), the authorization will also end systematically in CSAW at the end of the last month of the child's eligibility. If Wisconsin Shares eligibility is closing according to adverse action (see 11.2), agency workers do not need to take action to end an authorization earlier unless:

- The parent indicates that they do not plan to use child care; **or**
- The case is closing due to the parent not being eligible for an Activity Break Period the first month of the new eligibility period after the renewal has been completed (see 5.3.1.1).

If Wisconsin Shares eligibility closes and reopens in CWW within one (1) calendar month while the parent is in an Activity Break Period, the agency worker will need to recreate the previous authorization in CSAW as the authorization will have been systematically ended when eligibility ended.

If eligibility closes at the end of an Activity Break Period and reopens in CWW within one (1) calendar month because the parent gains a new approved activity or returns to their approved activity, the local agency must follow the policy in Section 15.2 for determining the authorization begin date.

Example 1 (Eligibility closes and reopens): Krystal is in an ACTS period from June 1 – August 31 and her child, Mallory, has an authorization at Kelly's Kuddles. When Krystal's ACTS period is ending in August, Krystal does not have a new approved activity for September. Wisconsin Shares eligibility systematically ends on August 31. On September 23, Krystal reports that she has started a new job and provides verification. Eligibility reopens effective September 1. Mallory has been attending Kelly's Kuddles since her authorization ended. However, Mallory's new authorization can only begin on September 23 because this was the date that both criteria of Krystal participating in an approved activity and Mallory attending the child care provider were met.

If a parent who is in a TBRK period intends to return to their approved activity prior to the end of the TBRK period, the authorization should remain in place until the parent reports that they have returned to their approved activity.

Example 2 (TBRK): Adeline reports on January 12 that she had a baby and is on maternity leave until February 28. The agency worker updates her Approved Activity Status in CWW to TBRK for February 1 – next renewal. Adeline has an authorization for her older child, Phoebe. The agency worker extends Phoebe's authorization to the next renewal. However, the authorization will be ended systematically at the next renewal

date when eligibility ends if Adeline does not report she has returned to work. Adeline will need to report when she returns to work and if she has a change in child care need from more than 20 hours per week (full-time authorization) to less than 20 hours per week (part-time authorization) following her return to work.

Example 3 (ACTS): Mia lost her job on March 10 and the agency worker updated her Approved Activity Status in CWW to ACTS for April 1 – June 30. Mia's child, Milo, has an authorization with an end date of Mia's renewal date, August 31. The agency worker does not need to update Milo's authorization (unless Mia requests changes to the authorization). If Mia does not have a verified approved activity by June 30, Mia's eligibility in CWW and Milo's authorization in CSAW will systematically end on June 30.

If eligibility is ending according to adverse action due to a parent's permanent loss of or temporary break in approved activity during the renewal month, agency workers must end or delete any authorizations created for the new eligibility period (see 5.3.1.1). This is to ensure that the same policy to not allow an Activity Break Period to begin the first month of the new eligibility period is applied to all parents regardless of when they complete the renewal.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 17.3 Changing Authorizations During a Month

When an authorization has been established for a full month, parents may receive an authorization to a different provider only if:

- An agency or parent error occurred in which funds were loaded to the EBT card for the incorrect provider;
- The child has not attended the provider during the current month, and the parent has not spent any of the current month's subsidy funds; **or**
- The situation meets the Hardship policy in Section 17.3.1.

If the parent is eligible for an authorization to a different provider in a month, the agency worker must end the current authorization at the end of the current month and write a new authorization to the new provider.

Example 1: On November 15, Jennie requested an authorization for her child, Luke, at ABC123 Childcare beginning November 18. On November 17, Abby from Abby's Angels calls Jennie to inform her that she has an opening at her child care center and Jennie is at the top of the waiting list. Jennie had been on the waiting list for Abby's Angels for six (6) months and would prefer that Luke attend this child care provider. She immediately contacts her agency worker requesting to change her child care provider. Jennie had not paid any of her subsidy benefit to ABC123 Childcare and Luke had not attended this provider at all. The agency worker ends the authorization to ABC123 Childcare on

November 30, creates a new authorization to Abby's Angels beginning November 18, and requests to have the funds to ABC123 Childcare retracted.

Example 2: Dorothy's child, Dean, has an authorization to Lake Kids. Dean has been attending Lake Kids for the past four (4) months. Dorothy stops sending Dean to Lake Kids at the end of February and starts sending him to Eagles Child Care on March 1. However, she didn't call until March 9 to request a new authorization to Eagles Child Care. She hasn't paid any of her March funds to Lake Kids. Since Dean did not attend Lake Kids in March and Dorothy did not pay any March subsidy funds to Lake Kids, the agency worker requests a retraction of the funds to Lake Kids from Dorothy's EBT card and creates a new authorization starting March 1 to Eagles Child Care.

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 17.3.1 Hardships

Families may experience situations that are no fault of their own that prevent them from using the originally authorized child care provider. These situations are often unexpected and are considered hardships. If continuing with the original child care provider would cause a hardship for the family, the family may be eligible for an authorization to a new provider during the current month.

To be eligible for an authorization in this situation, the Wisconsin Shares Assistance Group (AG) must meet one (1) of the following situations and the situation must create a legitimate and unforeseen hardship for the child(ren) to continue to attend the current child care provider for the remainder of the current month:

- The child is relocated from their current residence so the family can escape domestic abuse and it is not reasonable to travel to the current child care provider.
- The child has a temporary or chronic illness and is not able to attend their current child care provider due to that illness, but another child care provider can care for the child at their facility.
- There is alleged abuse or neglect of the child by the current child care provider and a complaint has been made to the appropriate regulatory agency.
- The child is expelled from the current child care provider for behavior issues.
- The needs of a child with a disability 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.

- 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 (1) parent passes away or unexpectedly leaves a two-parent or multi-generational Wisconsin Shares Assistance Group and the current child care provider either does not have the capacity to handle the family's additional child care need, or the hours of operation 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 and makes it impossible for them to continue to attend the same provider.
- The child care provider is temporarily closed and is located within an area affected by a state of emergency that has been declared by the Governor.
- 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 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. Local 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 Child Care Help Desk at childcare@wisconsin.gov for review and approval or denial.

The request for the new authorization must be made by the parent within 10 calendar days of the start of the unforeseen circumstance. Agency workers may approve a hardship authorization on a case-by-case basis that is requested beyond the 10-calendar day reporting requirement. There may be circumstances that prevent a parent from requesting a timely hardship authorization. These circumstances may include, but are not limited to, a domestic abuse situation, a child care provider losing their license/certification, or a family being evicted from their home. Agency workers must review each case to determine the circumstance for the late request and whether it should be approved or denied.

In situations where a hardship authorization is granted due to circumstances regarding the child (for example, the child is expelled from their current child care provider for behavior issues), all other children on the case may also change providers if those children were attending the same child care provider as the child receiving the hardship authorization.

The local agency will determine the duration of the authorization for the new child care provider, depending on the circumstances and point in time in the current month that the hardship is requested. Hardship authorizations do not need to be for a full month.

Local agencies must document every case reviewed for a possible hardship authorization on the CSAW Hardship page. See the CSAW User Guide – Authorizations for more information about this page. A hardship authorization must also be documented in case comments (see 12.2).

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 17.4 Excessive Unexplained Absences

Parents must report within 10 calendar days if their child has not attended their authorized child care provider for 20 consecutive calendar days (see 10.1). Child care providers are required to report to the local agency when a child in subsidized care has not attended within the previous 30 calendar days (see 14.8).

If the child has excessive unexplained absences, the agency worker must review the authorization with the parent to determine if the authorized hours are accurate. Upon receiving the notification from the child care provider that the child has not attended for 30 calendar days, the local agency must make at least two (2) attempts to contact the parent using different methods before ending the authorization. The local agency must document these attempts in case comments (see 12.2). The various methods to contact the parent include, but are not limited to:

- Phone calls
- Parent Portal messages
- Manual notices

If a provider is found to have received payment for a child who was absent for more than 30 calendar days, agency workers must create a referral and submit it to the Child Care Fraud Mailbox at DCFMBchildcarefraud@wisconsin.gov. If the provider continues to receive payment after the child has not attended for 30 calendar days, the department may establish a forfeiture or provider overpayment for care not provided.

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Chapter 18 Subsidy

Section 18.1 Subsidy

Wisconsin Shares subsidies assist eligible, low-income parents with the cost of child care while they participate in approved activities. CSAW considers several factors to determine the amount of subsidy for which a child may be eligible.

Copayment

The copayment is the amount that is reduced from the subsidy amount based on household income and family size (see 18.2). CSAW subtracts the copayment from each child's subsidy amount prior to loading funds to the MyWIChildCare card.

Note: The parent is responsible for paying the difference between their subsidy amount and the provider's price. This may be more than the copayment reduced from the subsidy amount. This difference is usually referred to as the "Parent Share" (see 18.8).

Subsidy Amount

The subsidy amount is the final amount of funds that are loaded to the parent's MyWIChildCare EBT card. CSAW considers many factors to determine the subsidy amount, including but not limited to:

- The county where the provider is located
- The number of subsidized hours of care for the child
- The provider's regulation category

See Section 18.5 and the CSAW User Guide – Benefit Calculations for more information about how the subsidy is calculated.

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Section 18.2 Copayments

CSAW determines the copayment that will be subtracted from the subsidy amount based on the:

- Copayment Type (see 18.3)
- Assistance Group's Federal Poverty Level (FPL) (based on family size and income)
- Number of children in subsidized child care
- Sum of subsidized hours for all children in the Assistance Group (AG)

CSAW subtracts a portion of the AG's copayment from each child's subsidy based on the percentage of total subsidized hours that each child has at each location. The total copayment assessed for each child will not exceed 152 hours per month per child, even if the child attends multiple providers. The maximum family copayment will not exceed 760 monthly subsidized hours when considering all the children in the AG. Children with a Reduced copayment type (see 18.3) are calculated separately from the family copayment.

See the current Wisconsin Shares Copayment Schedule.

The department revises the Copayment Schedule annually based on changes made to the FPL (published annually in the Federal Register). The Copayment Schedule lists monthly FPL levels in 5% increments (e.g., 70%, 75%, 80%, etc.) and assigns an hourly copayment according to an AG's FPL. When the AG's FPL is between two (2) levels, CSAW will use the lower of the two (2) FPL percentages. If the family is in the Exit Period, CSAW will use the family's actual FPL and will not round to the lower FPL percentage (see 18.2.1).

Example: Sean's income places his family at 164% FPL. Sean's copayment per hour will use the copayment for the 160% FPL copayment level.

For more information about subsidy calculations, see:

- CSAW User Guide - Benefit Calculations for more information about how the family's copayment is determined and applied to each child with an authorization.
- Appendix II - Benefit Calculation Examples for examples of how CSAW calculates benefits.

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Section 18.2.1 Exit Period Copayments

During the Exit period (see 18.4.2), the copayment is determined differently. CSAW still uses the copayment per hour, but it is set at the 200% FPL copayment level. CSAW then adds an extra family copayment to the total hourly copayment amount. The extra family copayment is determined by increasing the family's copayment $1 for every $5 by which the Assistance Group's (AG's) gross income exceeds 200% FPL.

See Appendix II - Benefit Calculation Examples for an example of how CSAW calculates benefits in this scenario.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 18.2.2 Copayment Equals or Exceeds Subsidy Amount

A parent assumes the full cost of care when the parent's copayment equals or exceeds the subsidy amount. This means that a parent will not receive any subsidy even though the child is eligible for an authorization. A parent may assume the full cost of care during any Copayment Period.

Agency workers must not end eligibility or end the authorization due to the parent(s) assuming the full cost of care. An Assistance Group (AG) can retain eligibility as long as they continue to meet financial and nonfinancial requirements. The authorization must remain in place because a family may need to request more hours or report a decrease in income at any time. However, a parent may request that the local agency end the authorization at any time, and the local agency must comply with this request.

See Appendix II - Benefit Calculation Examples for examples of how CSAW calculates benefits in this scenario.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 18.3 Copayment Types

The Wisconsin Shares copayment types are as follows:

- **Regular:** The Regular copayment type 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 when a family does not qualify for a Reduced Copayment Type.
- **Reduced Copayment Types:**
    - **$0 Copayment Types:** These copayment types apply $0 copayment reduction to the subsidy amount.
        - Foster: Used for children residing with a foster care parent, subsidized guardian, or interim caretaker.
        - Kinship: Used for children residing with a relative under a court-ordered placement (with or without the Kinship Care payment).
        - W2 Participant: Used when a parent is open for Wisconsin Works (W-2).
        - Learnfare: Used for children of teen parents participating in the Learnfare program due to their custodial parent participating in W-2. See the Wisconsin Works (W-2) Manual Chapter 16 for more information about Learnfare.
        - Assistance groups at or below 100% FPL have a $0 copayment.
    - **Minimal Copayment Types (Based on 65% Federal Poverty Level [FPL]):** These copayment types apply a copayment based on 65% FPL instead of

the placement family's (Non-Court Ordered Kinship) or the family's (Teen High School and W-2 Emp End, Unsub Emp Begin) actual income level.

- Non-Court Ordered Kinship: Used when children are residing with a relative and there is no court order for the child's placement.
- Teen High School: Used for children of teen parents under the age of 20 years old who are enrolled in high school or its equivalent.
- W-2 Emp End, Unsub Emp Begin: Used for children of W-2 participants who move from a W-2 employment position (Community Service Job (CSJ), W-2 Transition (W-2 T), or Trial Employment Match Program (TEMP) placement) to regular employment.

Note: It is a recommended best practice that agency workers remind parents with a $0 copayment that this does not mean they will have a $0 Parent Share. The Parent Share will be established between the provider and the parent based on the difference between the provider's price and the subsidy amount the parent receives.

If a family is within their eligibility period, the agency worker must not apply any copayment type change that would increase the family's copayment per hour until the next eligibility renewal. The agency worker must enter the new copayment type in CSAW with the day following the next renewal date entered as the Begin Date.

Example 1: Ravi is a W-2 participant and is receiving Wisconsin Shares. His children Kiara and Sai have authorizations with a W2 Participant copayment type. In May, Ravi discontinues participation in W-2. Since the change from the W2 Participant copayment type to the Regular copayment type would cause an increase in the copayment amount, the agency worker enters the new Regular copayment type with a begin date of the day after Ravi's renewal date.

Example 2: Melody and Jennifer are married and have a foster child, Joshua, placed with them. They are determined eligible for Wisconsin Shares in April, and Joshua's authorization uses the Foster copayment type ($0). In October, Melody and Jennifer adopt Joshua. Since the change from the Foster copayment type to the Regular copayment type causes an increase in the copayment amount, the agency worker enters the new copayment type with a begin date of the day after their next renewal date.

When an eligible child is added to a case and the renewal date is extended, the authorizations for any eligible children on the case can be extended to the new renewal date (see 3.5.1). If there will be a change in the copayment type in CSAW that will result in an increase in the family's copayment per hour, the agency worker must enter a new

Begin Date. The new Begin Date is the first of the month following the new renewal date established when the newly eligible child is added.

Example 3: Gabriella is receiving Wisconsin Shares for her foster child, Rome who has an authorization using the Foster (FOS) copayment type. Gabriella's renewal is due June 30. In February, Gabriella reports she has adopted Rome and the agency worker updates her copayment type in CSAW to Regular (REG) with a Begin Date of July 1, the month following the next renewal date.

On April 12, Gabriella reports the birth of her son Riley and a new renewal date of May 31 the following year is established for all eligible children on the case. Rome's copayment type needs to be updated to REG; however, since the renewal date has been extended to May 31, the new Begin Date is June 1 the following year, which is the first of the month following the new renewal date.

For more information about using copayment types in CSAW, see the CSAW User Guide – Authorizations.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 18.4 Copayment Periods

There are two (2) Copayment Periods that help stabilize a family's subsidy amount during the eligibility period. After CWW determines initial eligibility for the Assistance Group (AG), CSAW will assign the AG to one (1) of these two (2) Copayment Periods based on their Federal Poverty Level (FPL).

CSAW will automatically determine which Copayment Period to assign the AG based on the AG's FPL at application and renewal. Agency workers must continue to enter reported changes that may affect eligibility or the authorization into CWW and CSAW. CSAW will automatically determine whether the changes entered should impact the copayment per hour. The two (2) Copayment Periods are:

Copayment Period	Assistance Group FPL	Copayment Per Hour Status During Eligibility Period
Copayment Stabilization	At or below 200% FPL	Will not increase
Exit	Above 200% FPL	May increase

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 18.4.1 Copayment Stabilization

If an Assistance Group's income is at or below 200% FPL at any time, CSAW will assign the Assistance Group (AG) to the Copayment Stabilization period. During the Copayment Stabilization period, CSAW will not allow increases in income to increase the AG's copayment per hour until the AG's next eligibility renewal. Once CSAW has

assigned the AG to the Copayment Stabilization period, CSAW will not assign the AG to the Exit period (see 18.4.2) until the AG's next eligibility renewal.

Example: At application in June, Brad's income places his AG at 175% FPL. In September, Brad receives a $1.00/hour raise, which brings his AG's income up to 190% FPL. CSAW will not increase Brad's copayment per hour above the 175% FPL copayment level until his next renewal.

This section last updated 11/1/2024

Section 18.4.2 Exit

If the Assistance Group's income is above 200% FPL at renewal, CSAW will assign the Assistance Group (AG) to the Exit period. During the Exit period, CSAW will increase the AG's copayment starting the month after the agency worker enters the new income in CWW. CSAW determines the copayment during the Exit period by adding an additional family copayment to the total hourly copayment for the 200% FPL copayment level (see 18.2.1). CSAW will continue to increase the AG's additional family copayment following subsequent income increases until the family assumes the full cost of care (see 18.2.2).

Example 1: Gloria's income places her AG at 212% FPL at renewal in July. CSAW assigns Gloria's AG to the Exit period and sets the AG's copayment based on 212% FPL. In September, Gloria starts a new job, which places her AG at 218% FPL. The AG's copayment increases based on 218% FPL. In March, Gloria receives a raise and her AG's income increases to 220% FPL. The AG's copayment increases based on 220% FPL.

When income remains above 200% FPL, the copayment adjusts accordingly whenever income increases or decreases. Copayments do not remain at a lower level when the AG is in the Exit period if income remains above 200%. If an income decrease moves the family to the Copayment Stabilization period (see 18.4.1), the AG's copayment will decrease to the lower level and will remain capped at the lower level until the AG's next renewal (see 18.4.3).

Example 2: Paula's income places her AG at 216% FPL at renewal in August. CSAW assigns Paula's AG to the Exit period and sets the AG's copayment based on 216% FPL. In October, Paula's income decreases to 205% FPL. CSAW decreases the copayment based on 205% FPL. In December, Paula's income increases to 225% FPL. CSAW increases Paula's copayment based on 225% FPL. Paula's copayment does not remain at the 205% FPL copayment level because the copayment is reactionary in the Exit period.

This section last updated 7/1/2024

Section 18.4.3 Moving Between Copayment Periods

CSAW will only assign an Assistance Group (AG) to the Exit period (see 18.4.2) at the AG's renewal. If an AG's FPL decreases to at or below 200% FPL, CSAW will reassign the AG to Copayment Stabilization (see 18.4.1) at any time without regard to the renewal date and the AG's copayment per hour will remain capped at the lower level until the AG's next renewal.

Example (Exit to Stabilization): At renewal in July, Mai's income places her AG at 206% FPL. CSAW assigns Mai's AG to the Exit period. In September, Mai loses her job, and her AG's income decreases to $0. Mai's worker offers her the Approved Activity Search period (ACTS), which she accepts. CSAW reduces Mai's copayment per hour to the 65% FPL copayment level and reassigns Mai's AG to the Copayment Stabilization period. In November, Mai starts a new job, and her AG's income increases to 210% FPL. Mai remains in the Copayment Stabilization period, and her copayment remains at the 65% FPL copayment level until her next renewal.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 18.5 Subsidy Calculation

The variables described below are components of the subsidy calculation. When these factors change, the subsidy amount may also change (see 18.6).

- The family's Federal Poverty Level (FPL), which is based on the Assistance Group (AG) size and household income
- The AG's Copayment Period (see 18.4)
- Monthly Authorized Hours: The approved weekly authorized hours, capped at 35 hours (the full-time cap), converted to a monthly number, plus school closed hours

  Note: The benefit calculation uses 30 weekly hours to determine the subsidy amount when the child's weekly authorized hours are 20 hours or less (part-time authorization) and 35 weekly hours when the child's weekly authorized hours are more than 20 hours (full-time authorization). Any school closed hours (see 16.1.1.4.2) are added to part-time authorizations after the 30 weekly hour conversion. School closed hours are calculated for individual days based on the parent's child care need (see 16.1.1.4.2).

- Copayment Type (see 18.3)
- Capped Subsidy: The subsidy is capped at the lowest of the following three (3) amounts:
  - Initial Hourly Amount (hourly maximum from the Wisconsin Shares County and Tribal Subsidy Maximum Rates (see 18.5.1) multiplied by the monthly hours of care);
  - Monthly Provider Price; and

    - Monthly maximum from the Wisconsin Shares County and Tribal Subsidy Maximum Rates (see 18.5.1).
- Above Full-Time Hours: The number of average weekly hours above 50 and up to 75 per week (see 16.1.1), converted to a monthly number. This additional amount is added after the capped subsidy comparison.
- Out of State Accredited Adjustment: The Agency Rate and Agency Ceiling in the CSAW Benefit Calculation are increased by 10% for out-of-state providers whose accreditation is accepted by YoungStar.

For further details on the subsidy calculation, see the CSAW User Guide - Benefit Calculations.

This section last updated 11/1/2024

Section 18.5.1 Subsidy Maximum Rates

The department publishes the Wisconsin Shares County and Tribal Subsidy Maximum Rates. Hourly and monthly maximum rates are established by:

- Provider county or tribe
- Provider type (licensed group, licensed family, regularly certified, or provisionally certified)
- The age of the child in care

The maximum rates are based on statewide surveys of licensed child care providers regarding the child care prices they charge. The department has the authority to freeze the maximum rates due to budget constraints. Unlike copayments and Federal Poverty Level (FPL) amounts, maximum rates are not updated on an annual basis.

Hourly maximums for regularly and provisionally certified providers are set at 90% of the licensed family hourly maximum. Monthly maximums are not set for certified providers; however, the monthly subsidy payments are capped at the licensed family monthly maximum.

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Section 18.6 Changes Impacting Subsidy

Some changes may impact the subsidy amount during the eligibility period.

Change	Impacts Subsidy?
Assistance Group (AG) composition or income	Only according to Copayment Period rules (see 18.4)
Child's relationship to a parent	No

Child's age	No
Change in subsidized hours	Yes, but not hourly copayment
Change in providers	Yes
Provider price increase or discount	Depends (see 18.6.3)
Expiration of Inclusion Rate form	No
Provider's regulation category	Yes
Updates to the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), Copayment Schedule, or Maximum Rates	Yes

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 18.6.1 Eligibility Changes

A change to the Assistance Group (AG) composition or income can change the AG's Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for the next month's subsidy calculations. This may or may not impact the copayment per hour based on Copayment Period (see 18.4). It will not result in a higher Copayment Period.

A change in the child's relationship to the parent, such as the adoption of a foster child, will not result in a higher copayment type (see 18.3) until the next eligibility renewal.

Process: When an agency worker enters changes into CWW, the information will interface with CSAW and the subsidy amount for future months will recalculate. The new subsidy amount will be effective the first day of the month after the change was entered and confirmed in CWW or the first of the recurring month if the change was entered after Adverse Action in CWW. If it is after Adverse Action and the change must take effect the immediately following month, agency workers must run with dates to ensure the change takes effect for the correct month (see 11.2).

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Section 18.6.2 Authorization Changes

A change in subsidized hours for any child, including adding a new authorization, deleting an existing authorization, or ending an authorization (either by allowing the authorization to end systematically or by the agency worker manually ending the authorization) can impact the:

- Initial Hourly Amount (see 18.5)
- Family copayment amount (see 18.2)
- Copayment distribution among children (see 18.2)
- Provider Price Type used in the subsidy calculation (see 16.4)

A change in subsidized hours will not impact the family's hourly copayment.

Note: If the child's copayment has already reached the 152-hour monthly cap (see 18.2), no additional copayment will be charged.

A change in providers will impact the provider price that is used in the subsidy calculation. If the new provider is in a different county/tribe than the previous provider, the subsidy calculation will use the Maximum Rates for the new county/tribe (see 18.5.1).

A change in the child's age will not change the age bracket used for Provider Price or Maximum Rates (see 18.5) until the next eligibility renewal.

If an eligible child is added to a case, the eligibility period is extended and a new renewal date is established. The authorizations for any eligible children on the case can be extended to the new renewal date (see 3.5.1). CSAW will continue to use the same age bracket for the Provider Price and Maximum Rates in the monthly subsidy calculation for any child with an authorization until the month after the new renewal date.

Agency workers must continue to use an "Override (Disability)" Price Type for the applicable provider until the next renewal if the child's Wisconsin Shares Inclusion Rate Request form (DCF-F-2976-E) (see 16.4.1) expires during the eligibility period. Agency workers must not enter the "Override (Disability)" Price Type if the family or provider indicates that they no longer need the increased subsidy amount or if the child changes providers.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 18.6.3 Provider Changes

When a child care provider submits new prices, the agency worker must enter the new prices in CSAW and the subsidy calculation will use the new provider's price for the next month's calculations. If the new provider price is higher than the Initial Amount or Agency Ceiling the subsidy amount will not change (see 18.5). For information about entering new Provider Prices, see the CSAW User Guide - Child Care Provider Screens.

When a child care provider gives a family a discounted price for an ongoing authorization, the agency worker must apply the discounted price to authorizations as of the first of the next month, and the subsidy calculation will use the discounted price instead of the provider's regular price. For information about entering a Provider Price discount, see the CSAW User Guide - Authorizations. When a child care provider stops giving the family a discounted price the removal of the discount is effective the date the family no longer receives the discount.

Example: Aziz is an employee at the child care provider that his child, Omar, attends. He receives a 50% employee discount. Omar has an authorization for January 1 through

December 31. In June, Aziz stops working for the child care provider. He is placed in an Approved Activity Search Period (ACTS). Omar will continue to attend the same child care provider, but Aziz is no longer eligible for the employee discount after his last day of employment on June 18. When Aziz reports this to the local agency, the agency worker ends the current authorization on June 30 and starts a new authorization on July 1 that does not include any discount. The agency worker also issues an ad hoc payment for the additional amount that Aziz is eligible for due to not receiving the discount for the last 12 days of June.

A change in the provider's regulation category, such as a change from certified to licensed or vice versa, can affect the provider's category that is used in the subsidy calculation at the beginning of the next month.

Note: For information about how changes in Licensing/Certification can affect the authorization, please see Changes in Licensing/Certification User Guide (DCF-P-5271).

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Section 18.6.4 Departmental Mass Changes

The annual updates to the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) used in eligibility determination and copayment calculation can result in a change to the family's FPL and resulting copayment per hour. The update may cause the family to move to a lower Copayment Period as of the effective date of the annual updates but cannot result in the family moving to a higher Copayment Period.

An update to the Wisconsin Shares County and Tribal Subsidy Maximum Rates (see 18.5.1) can impact the maximum rates used for the subsidy calculation as of the effective date of the new Maximum Rates. Unlike copayments and FPL amounts, maximum rates are not updated annually.

Note: New FPL numbers and Maximum Rates are published with an effective date of the first of the following month.

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Section 18.7 Subsidy and Registration Fee Availability

Wisconsin Shares subsidy for ongoing authorizations and registration fees for future months are loaded to the parent's EBT card the evening of the last day of the month. When an authorization begins in the current month or a past month, the funds are usually loaded to the EBT card the night that the agency worker writes the authorization. Registration fee funds will also load overnight when the fee is entered for the current month or a past month.

Subsidy funds and registration fee funds are available for use up to 90 calendar days from the date the funds were loaded to the parent's EBT Card. Any amount not expended by the 90th day will be returned to the state. When a parent makes a payment to a provider the funds are deducted from the parent's subsidy balance in a last-in/first-out system.

Example: Ricardo has an authorization for March 1 – June 12 for his child, Zeus. His EBT card is loaded with $300 in subsidy funds on March 1. He does not pay any funds to the provider in March. An additional $300 for April is loaded to his card on April 1. If Ricardo only pays $300 to his provider in April, these would be the April funds. He would need to pay more than $300 to access the March funds. He must use the March funds before May 29 or any remaining March funds will age off the card. If May benefits are loaded to the card before he spends the March funds, he would need to pay both the May funds and March funds to avoid losing his March funds.

Subsidy funds can be used to pay the entire provider bill for the current month or a past month. Use of subsidy funds is not limited to attendance. Subsidy funds cannot be paid to a provider and banked to apply for future months. If a provider needs to return funds, see Appendix VIII – Returning Funds. Subsidy payments can only be applied to the child with the authorization to that provider.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 18.8 Parent Share

Wisconsin Shares is not intended to cover the full cost of child care. When the provider's price is more than the Wisconsin Shares subsidy amount, the parent is responsible for out-of-pocket costs to pay any remaining balance to the provider. This remaining balance is the "parent share."

After an authorization is created for a child, the family receives a written notice that includes the subsidy amount and number of authorized hours (see 19.1). The parent should use this notice to help determine their out-of-pocket cost. For more information, see https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wishares/maxrates.

This section last updated 12/1/2022

Chapter 19 Registration Fees

Section 19.1 Registration Fee Eligibility

Parents may receive funds for registration fees that their provider charges. Registration fee amounts are specified in Section 19.2.

Registration fees are fees that a provider might:

- Initially charge to enroll or register the child

- Charge on an annual basis to continue the child's enrollment

Registration fees are not transportation fees, supply fees, late pick-up fees, etc. that a provider charges separately from a registration fee. Subsidy funds from an authorization can be used to pay those fees (see 18.7), but they are not considered registration fees.

To receive funds for a registration fee to the provider, the child must have:

- An existing authorization to that provider
- An authorization to that provider that begins 30 calendar days or less in the future
- An authorization to that provider that ended within the past 30 calendar days

For authorizations that begin more than 30 days in the future, the earliest the parent can request a registration fee is 30 calendar days before the authorization begins. The agency worker must advise the parent that they will need to contact the local agency within the period that meets one of the requirements above to request and receive the registration fee funds.

The provider must charge a registration fee for the parent to be eligible to receive funds for registration fees. Parents cannot request funds for registration fees more frequently than the provider charges them. Registration fee funds are limited to one (1) payment per child per provider location within 30 calendar days. If a parent's request for registration fee funds is questionable, the local agency should follow the guidance in Appendix V – Red Flag Reports and Referrals for client referrals.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 19.2 Registration Fee Limits

Parents may request funds to pay a provider's registration fee. The amount is limited to the provider's actual fee amount up to $125 for each child. If the provider's registration fee amount is more than $125, the parent must pay any remaining amount out-of-pocket or with regular subsidy funds, if available (see 18.7). Each registration fee request for the child can be for the provider's fee amount up to $125. The two (2) payments cannot be combined to create a higher one-time payment.

The parent must request any funds needed to pay the provider's fee. Funds for registration fees are never automatically added to a parent's EBT card and agency workers must not issue funds without the parent's request.

Example 1: Rick is requesting an authorization for his child, Mike. Rick tells the agency worker that the provider charges a $100 enrollment fee. After the agency worker

completes the authorization, they create a registration fee request for $100. Both the subsidy amount and the registration fee amount are loaded overnight to Rick's EBT card.

Example 2: Kai has an authorization for his child, Bai. The provider charges Kai an enrollment fee in June for Bai's enrollment in their summer program. The provider's fee is $150. When the agency worker processes Kai's request, $125 will be loaded to Kai's EBT card because this is the maximum amount he can receive for Bai. Kai will need to pay the remaining $25 of the registration fee to the provider out-of-pocket or by using authorization subsidy funds.

Parents are limited to receiving funds for registration fees twice in a 12-month period for each child, regardless of the amount. The only time a parent can receive more than two (2) payments in 12 months is if the agency made an error in issuing a previous registration fee.

Example 3: Amanda received $100 in January to pay a registration fee to her provider, Jill's Day Care, for her child, Frank. In April, she changed providers. Frank began attending Susie's Stupendous Students and Susie's required a registration fee of $75. Amanda requested the $75 fee, and the funds were loaded to her EBT card. In June, Amanda registered Frank for a day camp during the summer. The day camp requires a registration fee of $50. When Amanda requests the fee for the day camp, her request is denied because she has already received two (2) fee payments for Frank in a 12-month period. Even though she did not receive the maximum amount of $125 for the previous two (2) fees, she is not eligible for a third fee payment because fee payments are limited to two (2) in a 12-month period.

For shared placement, each parent who has the child eligible on their case can request and receive funds to pay registration fees for the provider's fee amount up to $125 twice in a 12-month period. Workers must remind parents to communicate with the other parent (if possible) to avoid paying the same provider twice for the same registration fee. If a provider needs to return funds, see Appendix VIII – Returning Funds.

If the family is charged a per family amount and not a per child amount, the agency worker must split the family fee amount equally between the children with authorizations to that provider and enter a request for each child.

Example 4: Cindy has three (3) children that she is enrolling at Jenna's Gems. Jenna's Gems charges a per family registration fee of $120. Jenna contacts the local agency to request funds to pay this registration fee. The worker splits the fee among the three (3) children and enters a request for $40 for each child.

Example 5: Fatima has three (3) children. Fatima is enrolling all three (3) children at Beloved Children. Beloved Children charges a per child enrollment fee of $50. Fatima requests registration fees for each of the children. The worker enters the $50 request for each child.

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Chapter 20 Authorization Correspondence

Section 20.1 Parent Authorization Notices

Parents with completed authorizations will receive a written Quarterly Subsidy Authorization Notice that contains three (3) months of detailed authorization information. The notice contains the following information:

- Child's name
- Date of birth
- FIS Child ID
- Child care provider name, provider number, and location number
- FIS provider ID
- Monthly authorization effective periods
- Monthly authorized hours
- Monthly Wisconsin Shares subsidy amount

The notice also indicates which months the child has an authorization during the next 12 months and any school closed hours that were requested for a future month.

The Quarterly Subsidy Authorization Notice is mailed approximately 10 calendar 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

An updated notice is sent when authorizations are updated within the last 10 calendar days of the month and when a Post-Load Benefit Correction (PLBC) is completed for an authorization.

When a change is made to a current month's authorization or for a past month using PLBC, an updated Quarterly Subsidy Authorization Notice is generated that day and will include an additional section listing the details of the change.

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Section 20.2 Provider Letters

A Wisconsin Shares Child Care Provider Letter is mailed to providers on the last business day of each month. The authorization information letter includes the following information:

- The child's name, date of birth, and the start and end dates of all current and future authorizations
- Any backdated authorizations added since the last notice was sent
- Any authorizations that were deleted or ended by the agency worker or the system, and that were previously listed in an earlier notice

The letter also specifies when authorization dates have been changed.

The Wisconsin Shares Child Care Provider Letter does not include payment or authorized hours information. This information is confidential and must not be disclosed to the provider (see 14.6).

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Chapter 21 Fair Hearings

Section 21.1 Parent Appeals

Parents have the right to appeal decisions made regarding their case, including but not limited to:

- Overpayments, including the determination, amount, lien/levy action, or certification to the Department of Revenue
- Denial of an application in whole or in part
- Failure to act on an application within 30 calendar days
- Reduction, suspension, or termination of child care subsidy payments
- The determination of the amount and initial eligibility date of receipt of child care subsidy payments, including registration fee amounts and denials
- Denial of a request for a hardship authorization (see 17.3.1)
- Issuance of an Intentional Program Violation (IPV)

Local agencies are notified of a parent's appeal through the Fair Hearing Tracker in CWW and/or appeal notice sent by the Division of Hearing and Appeals.

An Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) decides if the local agency's findings and calculations were correct. If the local agency's determination is upheld, the local agency and parent will receive a decision dismissing the appeal. If the parent's appeal is upheld, the ruling remands the matter to the local agency to rescind or recalculate the overpayment amount. The local agency must carry out the remand order within 10 calendar days.

For more information on the parent appeal process, please refer to the Child Care Program Integrity Resource Library.

This section last updated 12/1/2023

Section 21.1.1 Parent Overpayment Appeals

Overpayment appeal requests must be submitted to the Division of Hearings and Appeals (DHA) within 45 days of the date of the notice. Appeal requests can be written or verbal. If a verbal request is made to the local agency, the request must be submitted in writing by the local agency and signed by the petitioner. Local agencies who receive a hearing request must immediately date-stamp the request and forward it to DHA.

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Section 21.1.2 Parent IPV Appeals

Parents must submit appeal requests in writing to the Division of Hearings and Appeals (DHA) within 30 calendar days of the date of the Intentional Program Violation (IPV) Notice. The request must include a copy of the IPV notice. Requests for a hearing sent to any entity other than DHA do not constitute a proper request.

Parents may continue to receive benefits while the IPV appeal is pending.

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Chapter 22 Collections

Section 22.1 Parent Overpayment Recovery

Once an overpayment is established, local agencies coordinate with the Public Assistance Collection Section (PACS) at the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to recover any improper payments. Collections will occur for an overpayment due to an administrative error, parent error, provider error, or Intentional Program Violation (IPV).

To begin the repayment process, agency workers must:

- Establish all parent overpayments in the Benefit Recovery Investigation Tracking System (BRITS)
- Mail notices informing the parent of the overpayment (see Appendix VII – Client Sanctions)

This section last updated 7/1/2026

Section 22.1.1 Parent Repayment Agreement

Parents who have received an overpayment notice must complete and sign a Repayment Agreement (RPA). Parents must make a repayment schedule by contacting the Public Assistance Collection Section (PACS).

If multiple individuals are jointly liable for an overpayment, each will receive a separate RPA; however, an individual and their spouse may both sign one (1) RPA. Each liable individual is responsible for the debt until it is repaid in full.

All RPAs and payments from parents must be sent to the PACS at:

PACS
P.O. Box 8938
Madison, WI 53708-8938

Local agencies must send any check payments received for an overpayment to the PACS. If a local agency receives a cash payment, the local agency must transmit the funds to the PACS by depositing the cash and making a check payable to the PACS for the amount of the payment.

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Section 22.2 Provider Overpayment Recovery

The department establishes and collects all child care provider overpayments. Providers can complete a Repayment Agreement (RPA) and make a repayment schedule by contacting the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Bureau of Finance.

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Section 22.2.1 Provider Repayment Agreements

If multiple persons are jointly and severally liable for an overpayment, each will receive a separate Repayment Agreement (RPA); however, an individual and their spouse may both sign one (1) RPA. Each liable individual is responsible for the debt until it is repaid in full; therefore, if one (1) liable individual misses a payment or becomes delinquent, the other individual is still responsible for the debt.

Local agencies must send any checks or other payment types received from providers for overpayments to the Bureau of Child Care Subsidy Administration at the following address:

Bureau of Child Care Subsidy Administration
Attention: Operations Program Associate
P.O. Box 8916
Madison, WI 53703-8916

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Section 22.3 Dunning Notices

A Dunning Notice informs the parent or provider that they have a past due payment and failure to complete and return a repayment agreement or payment of the debt could result in delinquency and further collections actions.

If a parent or provider receives three (3) Dunning Notices over the life of the debt, the claim becomes delinquent, and the debt is referred for additional collection action including levy, warrant/lien, and Department of Revenue (DOR) state tax intercept.

If a parent or provider is delinquent on a current Wisconsin Shares overpayment, and receives another overpayment, the second overpayment is automatically considered delinquent, without the parent or provider receiving any additional Dunning Notices.

Referring a Provider for Delinquency

If a parent or provider receives three (3) Dunning Notices over the life of the debt, the following collections actions can be used:

- Levy
- Warrant/Lien
- Department of Revenue Tax Intercept

When a parent or provider appeals a tax intercept action, the DCF Office of Legal Counsel (OLC) will appear and defend the tax interception delinquency collection action.

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Section 22.4 Delinquency Collections Appeals Process

The Public Assistance Collection Section (PACS) prepares exhibits and defends delinquency collection actions against both parents and providers. Certain circumstances will require PACS to seek local agency assistance in obtaining documents to support the collection action that are not readily available.

Even though overpayment merits are not properly considered at collection hearings, the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) has discretion to allow them to be discussed. When issues related to the merits of an overpayment are introduced at a delinquency hearing, PACS will request that the Division of Hearing and Appeals (DHA) reschedule a separate merit hearing. PACS will alert the parent or provider and the ALJ that time limits for appealing the merits have likely passed. DHA will notify local agencies via email of the merit hearing. The local agency is required to follow the current procedure for merit hearings, including filing motions to dismiss if the appeal was filed untimely.

If a merit hearing or departmental review already occurred, PACS will provide that information at the time of the delinquency hearing and will request no additional hearing to be scheduled.

When a merit hearing or departmental review results in the need to address a delinquency collection action, the local agency should request to reschedule the merit hearing to a separate delinquency hearing. Local agencies are not expected to defend collection actions just as PACS does not defend local agency decisions and overpayments.

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Section 22.5 Local Agency Retention of Records

The department and local agencies are responsible for retaining all records, including letters and notices sent by the local agency, for a minimum of three (3) years after an overpayment claim reaches a zero balance or the debt is written off.

This section last updated 10/1/2023

Appendices

Appendix I Statutes and Administrative Rules

Statutes	Policy/Description
Wis. Stat. s. 49.145	WISCONSIN WORKS (W-2); ELIGIBILITY FOR EMPLOYMENT POSITIONS: Includes nonfinancial and financial criteria for W-2 that may be applicable to Wisconsin Shares.
Wis. Stat. s. 49.155	WISCONSIN SHARES; CHILD CARE SUBSIDY: Includes all Wisconsin Shares-specific statutes. • Wis. Stat. s. 49.155(1m) ELIGIBILITY: Includes child age, approved activities, nonfinancial and financial criteria. • Wis Stat. s. 49.155(3m)(e) DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD CARE FUNDS: 40% Rule (Only applicable to licensed providers). • Wis. Stat. s. 49.155(6m) CHILD CARE PROVIDER RECORD KEEPING: Requirement to maintain and retain attendance records. • Wis. Stat. s. 49.155(7) REFUSAL OF PAYMENT TO CHILD CARE PROVIDERS: Reasons the department may refuse to issue authorizations to child care providers. • Wis. Stat. s. 49.155 (7m) PENALTIES: Includes provider penalties and liability.
Wis. Stat. s. 66.0438	LIMITATIONS ON LOCALLY ISSUED IDENTIFICATION CARDS: Specifies which locally issued identification cards may not be used to establish residency.
Wis. Stat. Ch. 227	ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE AND REVIEW: Rules for hearings and appeals.
Administration Code(s)	**Policy/Description**
Wis. Admin. Code DCF s. 101	WISCONSIN WORKS: Includes nonfinancial and financial criteria for that may be applicable to Wisconsin Shares.
Wis. Admin. Code DCF s. 102	CHILD SUPPORT COOPERATION FOR W-2: Provides the child support cooperation and good cause requirements (applies to W-2 and Wisconsin Shares).

Wis. Admin. Code DCF s. 201	CHILD CARE SUBSIDY PROGRAM: Includes all Wisconsin Shares-specific Administrative Rules. Program Integrity References: • DCF s. 201.038: ○ (5) WRITTEN PAYMENT AGREEMENT: Specifies what must be included in the parent-provider written payment agreement. ○ (6) NONDISCRIMINATION: Prohibiting providers from charging private pay parents different prices than parents receiving Wisconsin Shares. ○ (7) CONFIDENTIALITY: Prohibited actions for a provider to obtain a parent's subsidy or EBT card information. ○ (8) INACTIVE ASSISTANCE GROUP: Requirement for providers to report 30 days of nonattendance. • DCF s. 201.039(8): EMPLOYEE OF CERTIFIED PROVIDER: Prohibiting authorizations for children residing with an employee of a certified child care provider. • DCF 201.04: ○ (5)(b)2 Receiving payment for providing care at an unauthorized location. ○ (5)(b)3 Operating over capacity violations. ○ (5)(b)4 Providing care outside regulated hours/licensing violations. ○ (6)(e) Authority for local agencies to make on-site inspections to monitor provision of authorized services.
Wis. Admin. Code DCF s. 202	CHILD CARE CERTIFICATION: Certification requirements for certified providers • DCF s. 202.08(6) MAXIMUM NUMBER OF CHILDREN: Capacity limits for certified providers.

Wis. Admin. Code DCF s. 250	FAMILY CHILD CARE CENTERS: Licensing requirements for family providers • DCF s. 250.055(1)(h) SUPERVISION: Outside activity or occupation prohibition • DCF s. 250.055(2) GROUPING OF CHILDREN: Capacity limits for licensed family child care centers.
Wis. Admin Code DCF s. 251	GROUP CHILD CARE CENTERS AND CHILD CARE PROGRAMS ESTABLISHED OR CONTRACTED FOR BY SCHOOL BOARDS: Licensing requirements for group providers and school programs • DCF s. 251.055(2) GROUPING OF CHILDREN: Capacity limits for group child care centers and child care programs established or contracted for by school boards
Wis. Admin. Code DCF s. 252	DAY CAMPS FOR CHILDREN: Licensing requirements for day camps • DCF s. 252.425 SUPERVISION AND GROUPING OF CHILDREN: Capacity limits for day camps

Appendix II Benefit Calculation Examples

This Appendix provides examples of how benefits are calculated in certain scenarios. CSAW completes these calculations systematically; these examples are for illustrative purposes to show how the system works. For more information, see the CSAW User Guide – Benefit Calculations.

Note: The benefit calculation uses 30 weekly hours to determine the subsidy amount when the child's weekly authorized hours are 20 hours or less (part-time authorization) and 35 weekly hours when the child's weekly authorized hours are more than 20 hours (full-time authorization) (see 18.5).

Copayments Under 200% FPL

Example 1 (Two (2) children, one (1) provider)

Juniper's income places her family at 115% FPL. Juniper's two (2) children, Fantasia and Kyle, attend Sally's Day Care Center for 20 hours per week each. Juniper's total family copayment per month is $170.30.

The calculation details are:
Copayment Per Hour for 115% FPL: $0.65
Fantasia: Part-time authorization based on a child care need of 20 hours per week. 30 weekly hours (part-time conversion) x 4.348125 weeks per month = 130.44 (131 monthly hours)
Kyle: Part-time authorization based on a child care need of 20 hours per week. 30 weekly hours (part-time conversion) x 4.348125 weeks per month = 130.44 (131 monthly hours)
Total Monthly Family Hours: 131 + 131 = 262
Total Family Copayment: $0.65 x 262 = $170.30

In the summer, Juniper's two (2) children begin attending 40 hours per week each. Juniper's full-time total family copayment is $197.60.

The calculation details are:
Copayment Per Hour for 115% FPL: $0.65
Fantasia: Full-time authorization based on a child care need of 40 hours per week. 40 hours per week x 4.348125 weeks per month = 173.92 (174 monthly hours, capped at 152 monthly hours)
Kyle: Full-time authorization based on a child care need of 40 hours per week. 40 hours per week x 4.348125 weeks per month = 173.92 (174 monthly hours, capped at 152 monthly hours)
Capped Monthly Hours for Copayment: 152 + 152 = 304
Total Family Copayment: $0.65 x 304 = $197.60

Example 2 (Two (2) children, two (2) providers)

Monique works 30 hours per week on second shift. Monique's income places her family at 175% FPL. Monique has two (2) children, Genesis and Jasmine. Genesis attends Lil' Buddies for 28 hours per week. Jasmine attends Jumpin' Around in the afternoon for eight (8) hours per week, and Lil' Buddies in the evenings for 28 hours per week. Monique's total family copayment is $376.96 per month.

The calculation details are:
Copayment Per Hour for 175% FPL: $1.24
Genesis: Full-time authorization based on a child care need of 28 hours per week. 35 weekly hours (full-time conversion) x 4.348125 weeks per month = 152.18 (153 monthly subsidized hours)
Jasmine: (Jumpin' Around) Part-time authorization based on a child care need of eight (8) hours per week. 30 weekly hours (part-time conversion) x 4.348125 = 130.44 (131 monthly subsidized hours)
(Lil' Buddies) Full-time authorization based on a child care need of 28 hours per week. 35 weekly hours (full-time conversion) x 4.348125 = 152.18 (153 monthly subsidized hours)
Jasmine Total Hours for Copay: 131 + 153 = 284 monthly hours (capped at 152 monthly hours for copayment)
Total Monthly Family Hours: 152 + 152 = 304 monthly hours for copayment (437 uncapped monthly hours)
Family Copayment: $1.24 x 304 = $376.96

The copayment distribution is:
Genesis: 153 monthly hours ÷ 437 monthly uncapped hours = 35.01% of copayment
Copayment distribution: $376.96 x .3501 = $131.98
Jasmine Authorization for Jumpin' Around: 131 monthly hours ÷ 437 monthly uncapped hours = 29.98% of copayment
Copayment distribution: $376.96 x .2998 = $113.01
Jasmine Authorization for Lil' Buddies: 153 monthly hours ÷ 437 monthly uncapped hours = 35.01% of copayment
Copayment distribution: $376.96 x .3501 = $131.98

Copayments Over 200% FPL

Renee's income places her family at 207% FPL at renewal in April. Based on that information, Renee's family is determined to be in the Exit period. Renee's two (2) children, Suki and Sahara, attend Joe's Quality Day Care for 15 hours per week each. Renee's total family copayment is $413.52.

The calculation details are:
Copayment Per Hour for 200% FPL: $1.46

Suki: Part-time authorization based on a child care need of 15 hours per week. 30 weekly hours (part-time conversion) x 4.348125 weeks per month = 130.44 (131 monthly hours)
Sahara: Part-time authorization based on a child care need of 15 hours per week. 30 weekly hours (part-time conversion) x 4.348125 weeks per month = 130.44 (131 monthly hours)
Total Monthly Family Hours: 131 + 131 = 262 monthly hours
Initial Copayment: $1.46 x 262 = $382.52

Additional Exit Copayment: $31 (207% FPL for an AG Size of 3)
Total Family Copayment: $382.52 + $31 = $413.52

Renee receives a raise in December that places her family's income at 212% FPL. Renee's total family copayment increases to $436.52.

The calculation details are:
Copayment Per Hour for 200% FPL: $1.46
Total Monthly Family Hours: 262
Initial Copayment: $1.46 x 262 = $382.52
(This part stays the same, as Renee has not requested additional hours)

Additional Exit Copayment: $54 (212% FPL for an AG Size of 3)
Total Family Copayment: $382.52 + $54 = $436.52

Assuming the Full Cost of Care

Example 1 (No Subsidy Amount)

At her renewal in August, Ebony's income places her family at 265% FPL. Ebony has one (1) child, Aiesha, who is 4 years old and attends Bundles of Fun in Ashland County for 10 hours per week. Bundles of Fun is a Certified provider.

The calculation details are:
Copayment Per Hour for 200% FPL: $2.34
Aiesha: Part-time authorization based on a child care need of 10 hours per week. 30 weekly hours (part-time conversion) x 4.348125 weeks per month = 130.44 (131 monthly hours)
Total Monthly Family Hours: 131
Initial Copayment: $2.34 x 131 = $306.54
Additional Exit Copayment: $234 (265% FPL for an AG Size of 2)
Total Family Copayment: $306.54 + $234 = $540.54

Ashland County Certified Hourly Maximum for 4-year-old: $3.99
Initial subsidy amount (prior to any reductions): $3.99 x 131 hours per month = $522.69

In this example, Ebony's total family copayment ($540.54) exceeds her initial subsidy amount ($522.69). As CSAW subtracts the total family copayment from the subsidy amount prior to loading the funds, no funds would be loaded to Ebony's EBT card.

Example 2 (Small Subsidy Amount)

At her renewal in August, Sarafina's income places her family at 270% FPL. Sarafina has one (1) child, LaTanya. LaTanya is 6 years old and attends Reading Rainbow in Washburn County for 10 hours per week. Reading Rainbow is a Certified provider.

The calculation details are:
Copayment Per Hour for 200% FPL: $2.34
LaTanya: Part-time authorization based on a child care need of 10 hours per week. 30 weekly hours (part-time conversion) x 4.348125 weeks per month = 130.44 (131 monthly hours)
Total Monthly Family Hours: 131
Initial Copayment: $2.34 x 131 = $306.54
Additional Exit Copayment: $252 (270% FPL for an AG Size of 2)
Total Family Copayment: $306.54 + $252 = $558.54

Washburn County Certified Hourly Maximum for 6-year-old: $4.38
Initial subsidy amount (prior to any reductions): $4.38 x 131 = $573.78

In this example, the initial subsidy amount ($573.78) is $13.25 more than the total family copayment ($558.54). The $15.24 would be loaded to Sarafina's EBT card. Sarafina will remain eligible in CWW due to continuing to meet financial and nonfinancial requirements, and her authorization must remain in place (unless Sarafina requests that the agency worker end the authorization).

Parent Share

Destiny has two (2) children, Laylah and Malik, who attend Smiles R Us in Milwaukee County for 25 hours per week each. Laylah is four (4) years old and her total Wisconsin Shares monthly subsidy amount is $1,137.70. Malik is two years old and his total Wisconsin Shares monthly subsidy amount is $1,289.89. Smiles R Us is a Licensed Group center and charges $1,521.84 per month ($350 per week) for four-year-old children and $1,717.51 ($395 per week) for two-year-old children.

Destiny is responsible for paying the provider the difference between the subsidy amount and the amount the provider actually charges. Destiny's monthly subsidy amount for both children is $1,137.70 + $1,289.89 = $2,427.59 and the provider's actual price for both children is $1,717.51 + $1,521.84 = $3,239.35. The provider price of $3,239.35 minus the subsidy amount of $2,427.59 equals $811.76. Destiny can expect to pay a total "parent share" of $811.76 to the provider for the month. The provider may choose to charge Destiny a lesser amount, but this is a decision between Destiny and her provider.

The calculation details are:
Copayment Per Hour for 175% FPL: $1.24
Laylah's Monthly Hours: Full-time authorization based on a child care need of 25 hours per week. 35 weekly hours (full-time conversion) x 4.348125 = 152.18 (153 monthly subsidized hours, 152 copayment hours)
Malik's Monthly Hours: Full-time authorization based on a child care need of 25 hours per week. 35 weekly hours (full-time conversion) x 4.348125 = 152.18 (153 monthly subsidized hours, 152 copayment hours)
Total Family Hours for Copayment: 152 + 152 = 304
Total Family Copayment: $1.24 x 304 = $376.96
Amount distributed to each child: $188.48 (50% of the sum is applied to each child because each is enrolled for the same number of hours)

Laylah's Authorization: 153 hours per month
Milwaukee County Licensed Group Hourly Maximum for a 4-year-old: $8.72
Monthly Maximum for Licensed Group for a 4-year-old in Milwaukee County: $1.326.18
Monthly Provider Price for a 4-year-old at Smiles R Us: $350/week x 4.348125 = $1,521.84
Laylah's Subsidy Amount after Copayment: $1,326.18 - $188.48 = $1,137.70
Expected Parent Share for Laylah: $1,521.84 - $1,137.70 = $384.14

Malik's Authorization: 153 hours per month
Milwaukee County Licensed Group Hourly Rate for a 2-year-old: $9.72
Monthly Agency Ceiling for Licensed Group for a 2-year-old in Milwaukee County: $1,478.37
Monthly Provider Price for a 2-year-old at Smiles R Us: $395/ week x 4.348125 = $1,717.51
Malik's Subsidy Amount after Copayment: $1,478.37 - $188.48 = $1,289.89
Expected Parent Share for Malik: $1,717.51 - $1,289.89 = $427.62

Appendix III Local Agency Program Integrity Management

This Appendix provides department expectations and requirements for local agency program integrity efforts.

Local Agency Fraud Plans

Local agencies are required to submit an annual Agency Fraud Plan for review to the Bureau of Child Care Subsidy Administration (BCCSA) as required by the annual Child Care Contract Scope of Services. The Scope of Services requires that the Agency Fraud Plan identify local agency operations, outline procedures, and show responsibility for ensuring program integrity as required under the Child Care Fraud Plan Guidelines. Under the contract, local agencies must follow all policy and procedural requirements.

Subcontracting

Under the terms of the Child Care Contract, local agencies may subcontract for all or part of the required program integrity activities. The local agency is responsible for ensuring that subcontractors are following all required fraud investigation and overpayment procedures.

Agency Operations Audits

Additional audits may be performed by the BCCSA Program Integrity Section to further support local agencies in identifying errors in the Wisconsin Shares program, and to recognize their accomplishments in correctly completing case eligibility and authorization processes. Local agencies are required to correct any discovered errors. Local agencies may be required to complete a corrective action plan to prevent future errors of the same type.

Data Tracking Requirements

Local agencies are required to maintain data and total counts of the following information to be provided to the department each year in their Agency Fraud Plans:

- Fraud allocation amount
- Amount of allocation spent per year
- What the fraud allocation was spent on
- Total number of:
    - Client case referrals
    - Open client case referrals
    - Administrative Errors*
    - Client Errors*
    - Client IPVs established
    - Client investigations completed

- Overpayment for each sanction type
- Client appeals for overpayments and Intentional Program Violations (IPVs)
- Client remands
- Client remands not completed within the 10-day grace period
- Collusion cases investigated
- Cases presented to the District Attorney (DA), and accepted by the DA
- Provider referrals
- Provider investigations completed
- Provider overpayments
- Provider errors
- Administrative errors
- Provider remands
- Provider remands that were not processed within the 10-day timeframe
- Provider appeals
- Providers terminated from the Wisconsin Shares program

*Some or all data for these errors may be found in the Benefit Recovery Investigation Tracking System (BRITS) Data Warehouse. If a local agency logs all their administrative errors in BRITS, then the BRITS Data Warehouse would fully encompass all the data. However, there may be certain circumstances where the data in BRITS is not all encompassing.

Program Integrity Data Exchange Discrepancies

State Wage Income Collection Agency (SWICA) Discrepancies

When a SWICA discrepancy is received for a case (see 7.9.3), the local agency must correct the case if ongoing eligibility is impacted. After the correction is made an investigation must occur, and an overpayment must be established if applicable. SWICA investigations are the same as an investigation if a parent failed to report a change in income. Agency workers are expected to contact the parent or a third-party source to resolve the discrepancy and to request verification when necessary.

Case comments must be added in CWW to document the actions taken and overpayments completed. Overpayments related to the SWICA match are not required to be completed within the 45-day timeframe (see 7.9.3).

Prisoner Data Exchange Discrepancies

CWW creates discrepancies for individuals who are included in a parent's Assistance Group (AG) and are incarcerated for more than 30 calendar days (see Process Help Section 19.4.2.3). A household composition investigation should take place if a prisoner data match referral is received.

Appendix IV Error Prone Profile and Front-End Verification

Local agencies are encouraged to use the Child Care Error Prone Profile (EPP) Checklist available on the Child Care Program Integrity Resource Library. Local agencies must measure all cases against the EPP in a consistent manner to avoid biased selection for Front-End Verification (FEV).

FEV must occur when a parent has contact with the local agency and reports information matching three (3) or more characteristics from the EPP. If the results uncover an error that would have affected eligibility, subsidy amount, copayment amount, or authorization, the agency worker must take the appropriate action to deny or pend eligibility and/or authorization(s). Agency workers must also assess for possible sanctions, up to and including overpayments and Intentional Program Violations (IPVs).

The following characteristics **must not** be used as part of an EPP:

- Race
- National Origin
- Ethnicity
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion
- Age
- Political Belief
- Disability
- Association with a person with a disability
- Marital Status
- Gender Identification (including gender expression)

FEV Procedure

1. Case meets three (3) or more characteristics on the Child Care Error Prone Profile Checklist or the local agency's error prone profile.
2. Referral for FEV is made in the Benefit Recovery Investigation Tracking System (BRITS).
    a. Specify any error-prone reason(s) of concern and refer the case using the FEV filter in the BRITS referral.
    b. In the referral comment section, provide specific information on why the case is being referred.
    c. Upload a copy of the completed Child Care Error Prone Profile Checklist.

3. Agency worker performs a more in-depth verification than the routine verification for eligibility determination.
4. Agency worker verifies the accuracy of information provided by the client at application, review, or time of a change.
5. Agency worker provides the eligibility staff with their results for use in verifying eligibility for program services.
6. Establish client overpayment and/or IPV if applicable.

Appendix V Red Flag Reports and Referrals

Provider Red Flag Reports

Red Flag Reports are automatically generated reports available in WebI. The Red Flag Reports identify providers that may be violating a policy or where there is a reasonable suspicion of fraudulent activity. The findings from these reports are then utilized to generate possible referrals.

Provider Red Flag Reports in WebI include (but are not limited to):

- Provider Overcapacity Report
- Unusual Payment Timing Report
- Unusual Revenue Growth Report

Client Red Flag Reports

Red Flag Reports identify potential program integrity issues. Each report identifies a set list of criteria that have been flagged for review. Local agencies should use these reports as a source of referrals for further review and to identify fraud trends. The Client Red Flag Reports are located in Web Intelligence (WebI).

Reports include:

- Cards Replaced Within 12 Months
- Expungement
- Funds About to Expire
- Inactive EBT Cards For More Than 30 Days With a Balance Amount

The Bureau of Child Care Subsidy Administration (BCCSA) recommends local agencies prioritize reviewing the *Expungement* report and the *Inactive EBT Cards For More Than 30 Days with a Balance Amount* report. The *Expungement* report identifies cases where funds have aged off the EBT cards after not being used within a 90-day period. The *Inactive EBT Cards For More Than 30 Days With a Balance Amount* report identifies cards that have not been used for 30 calendar days and have a balance. **After funds have aged off the card, they cannot be reissued.**

Local agencies must perform a detailed case review on cases identified in these reports. This includes interviewing parents and/or providers to determine if the authorized hours are correct. After reviewing the case and verifying that no payment to the provider is necessary, the local agency may end a child's authorization and retract all subsidy funds in the parent's account.

Referrals

Provider referrals must be sent to the Child Care Fraud Mailbox at DCFMBCHILDCAREFRAUD@wisconsin.gov. Client investigation referrals must be entered into the Benefit Recovery Investigation Tracking System (BRITS) and screened prior to investigation. For additional client screening guidance, refer to the Client Referral Screening Process located in the Child Care Program Integrity Resource Library.

The department and local agencies are responsible for establishing a tracking method for all provider-based referrals that include the source, the allegation, background information, and the resulting action. A provider referral tracking template is available in the Child Care Program Integrity Resource Library.

When submitting a referral to the Child Care Fraud Mailbox, local agencies must include the referral reason, provider name or number, location number, client name or case number, date of incident, and contact information of complainant. If information is incomplete, please submit all information received from the complainant.

Client Referral Examples

Examples of scenarios that warrant a child care client referral include, but are not limited to:

- Frequent provider changes (four (4) or more in a year)
- Employment and/or income cannot be confirmed through data exchange
- Employer has refused to complete an EVF-E, send an acceptable letter, or confirm the parent's employment and/or income through collateral contact
- Parent shares the same address as their provider
- Parent is the provider and fails to report self-employment
- Parent is in possession of a MyWIChildCare EBT card that is not their own
- Parent has given their EBT card to an unauthorized person, including the provider
- Parent requests three (3) or more hardship in a year
- Parent has three (3) or more Approved Activity Search Periods (ACTS) or Temporary Break Periods (TBRK) in a year
- Parent overstates child care need to avoid paying a copayment or parent share
- Child(ren) are not attending the center, but payments are being made
- Parent's approved activity is questionable due to:
    - Failure to respond to a request for verification following a report of a change in employment
    - Questionable EVF-E

- Parent is not in their approved activity, and any ACTS or TBRK periods would have expired
- Suspicion of fraudulent documentation
- Report of parent and provider colluding to commit fraud (including kickbacks)
- Frequent requests in a short period for registration fee funds to the same provider

Provider Referral Examples

Examples of child care provider fraud referrals that local agencies should submit to the Child Care Fraud Mailbox include, but are not limited to:

- Care is being provided at a location where the child does not have an authorization
- Care is being provided at an unauthorized and unregulated location.
- Certified provider is holding outside employment during the facility's hours of operation
- Children who attend the center also reside with the provider
- Payments are being made to the provider for children who have not attended for 30 or more calendar days
- Payment is being made to a provider for a child who has never attended the provider location
- Two (2) or more no access visits by department or local agency staff have occurred
- Missing or incomplete attendance records
- Children in attendance are not on attendance records or are missing arrival and departure time(s)
- Children not appearing on the attendance record for over 30 calendar days
- Children signed in on attendance records are not present
- Prefilled arrival or departure times for children for future dates or times
- Recording arrival and departure times on a schedule (i.e., Monday - Friday 7 a.m. – 4 p.m.)
- Rounding of arrival and departure times
- Suspicious record completion (i.e., attendance records appear to be completed in one (1) sitting vs. as children arrive and depart)
- Provider does not have a Written Payment Agreement with each family receiving Wisconsin Shares subsidies

- Provider has no policy regarding payment practices
- Provider is not following their established payment practices
- Provider is reported as making the payment on behalf of a parent using the parent's EBT card information
- Compromised MyWIChildCare EBT card or information
- Report of a possible compromised EBT card or card/parent's EBT card information observed in provider's possession
- Suspicious expulsions and disenrollment of children
- Temporary and permanent closures of a provider location or locations
- Frequent closures for provider "vacations"
- Frequent unexpected or unannounced closures
- Provider receiving payment for closure(s) more frequently than outlined in Section 14.9
- Provider calls to determine the amount of funds on a parent's EBT card
- Provider calls to request assistance in resetting an EBT card PIN that is not their own
- Providing kickbacks to parents
- Reports of a provider offering a discounted price to children of employees, but the provider denies offering discounts
- Reports of provider offering discounts to all employees except for employees receiving subsidy
- Charging subsidy families more than private pay families
- Report of parent and provider colluding to commit fraud (including kickbacks)
- Suspect the YoungStar rating is not accurate
- Suspect misuse of Child Care Counts funds
- Suspicious "Volunteer" parents:
    - Parents observed at location but not picking up or dropping off a child
    - Volunteer parents being listed as present at the facility when they are not
    - Volunteer parents who have reported wages from the provider

Appendix VI Client Investigations

Client investigations are conducted to determine if a parent received subsidy funds that they are not eligible to receive, or if the parent has violated any statute or administrative rule. **Local agencies must complete an investigation prior to establishing any overpayment.** It is recommended that local agencies complete client investigations within 30 calendar days once assigned.

To investigate, agency workers must:

- Analyze documents
- Conduct interviews
- Review case files
- Review policy

These reviews determine whether a parent is receiving the correct subsidy amounts. Agency workers must determine if the parent submitted false information or materials to the department or local agency to obtain, maintain, or maximize the subsidy funds. This is known as an Intentional Program Violation (IPV). If the parent submitted false information or materials to the department or local agency, an IPV must be established and coded as an IPV in CWW and the Benefit Recovery Investigation Tracking System (BRITS). All investigation materials must be uploaded to the BRITS Referral Document section unless a local agency supervisor chooses to only use the Electronic Case File (ECF) due to investigation confidentiality concerns. This decision must be documented in the BRITS referral comment section.

Local agencies must have an established process for completing client investigations. Local agencies are encouraged to use client program integrity desk aids from the Child Care Program Integrity Resource Library.

Errors and violations occur typically at application or renewal, when a parent does not report a change within 10 calendar days, or when a parent commits fraud. An individual does not need to receive payment or services for the local agency to pursue an IPV if the violation occurred prior to the parent receiving subsidy at initial application or renewal.

Client Error Types

Client Error Type	Definition
Parent Errors	When a parent untimely or fails to report a change within 10 calendar days that would decrease their subsidy amount. This results in an overpayment. An investigation must occur prior to establishing an overpayment.

Client Error Type	Definition
Administrative Errors	When eligibility information is not entered correctly that results in the parent receiving more subsidy than they were eligible for. Local agencies must review what contributed to the error and implement process improvement to reduce future errors.
Intentional Program Violations (IPVs)	When a parent intentionally makes a false or misleading statement, misrepresents or withholds facts, or intentionally commits any act that constitutes a violation of federal or state law for the purpose of using, presenting, transferring, acquiring, receiving, possessing, or trafficking benefits.

Appendix VII Client Sanctions

Overpayments

An overpayment occurs when a parent spends more subsidy funds than they were eligible to receive due to a client error, agency error, or Intentional Program Violation (IPV). All parent overpayments, whether due to an administrative error, client error, or IPV, must be formally established to be repaid by the client (see 21.1).

Overpayments must be established in a timely fashion. Parent overpayments should be entered into the Benefit Recovery (BV) subsystem of CARES within 30 calendar days after the overpayment is calculated and/or IPV is approved. An overpayment notice will be systematically generated, and a manual overpayment notice must be sent to the client. For additional overpayment procedural guidance, refer to the Child Care Program Integrity Resource Library.

When establishing an IPV, local agencies must:

- Contact the Bureau of Child Care Subsidy Administration (BCCSA) through the Child Care Help Desk at childcare@wisconsin.gov.
- Attempt to contact the parent before establishing an IPV. All attempts to contact a parent regarding an overpayment or IPV must be recorded in CWW case comments.

If a client overpayment has been entered in BV incorrectly, the agency worker must make the correction. If the system is not allowing a correction, the Request For Write-Off or Adjustment form (DCF-F-140-E) must be completed and submitted to PACS.

IPV overpayments are approved by the administering agency, including the department, and local agencies under contract with the department. A Wisconsin Shares IPV must be approved by BCCSA prior to its entry in CWW. Local agencies must wait until an IPV has been approved before an authorization may be changed or ended due to fraud.

Overpayment Dates

If the error occurred during:	Overpayment begins:
Application	at application date
Renewal	at renewal date
Any other point in time	on the 1st day of the following benefit month

If there is fraud or if adverse action rules apply the local agency should contact the Child Care Help Desk at childcare@wisconsin.gov for assistance.

Overpayment end dates are the last day of the month in which the overpayment was discovered, or the last day of the month in which the last subsidy payment was issued. The overpayment end date is whichever is later.

Client Overpayment Information Chart

Overpayment Type	Statute of Limitations	Sub-Type
Client Error Overpayment	Six (6) years after the first day the error impacted the case	• Untimely or unreported change of approved activity • Untimely or unreported income change that impacts subsidy amount • Untimely or unreported change in household composition • Untimely or unreported change in residency • Untimely or unreported change in child care need • Untimely or unreported change of provider or provider location number • Untimely or unreported provider discount • Paying the previous provider after a hardship was approved • Paying a provider that a child has not attended in the previous 30 calendar days
Agency Error Overpayment	One (1) year after the first day the error impacted the case	• Incorrect entry of eligibility information • Failure to enter a reported change that affects eligibility
Intentional Program Violation Overpayment	Six (6) years after the first day the error impacted the case	• Misrepresentation of income

Overpayment Type	Statute of Limitations	Sub-Type
		• Misrepresentation of household composition • Misrepresentation of child care needs • Misrepresentation of residency • Misrepresentation of participation in an approved activity • Selling access to a subsidy account (Trafficking) • Providing false or fraudulent documentation • Misrepresentation of hardship need • Using child care subsidy (as a parent) to pay themselves as a provider • Collusion

Overpayment Notices

The department and local agencies are required to send system-generated and manual overpayment notices. Notices must be mailed to the parent. Overpayment notices are generated to all liable individuals on the claim and mailed to the individuals' last known address in CWW. If the person liable for the claim is no longer active on the case but is active on another case, CWW generates a separate overpayment letter to the primary person on that case. CWW generates an overpayment notice to the person who is liable for the claim even if the person liable is not the primary person.

Overpayment Notice Types

System Generated Notice	Manual Notice	Additional Liable Individuals Notice
A Child Care (CC) Overpayment Notification that is mailed to the parents' last known address in CWW	A Child Care (CC) Client Overpayment Notice (DCF-F_DWSW11250-E)	If an individual is manually added as liable for an overpayment, the notice for the newly added person will be automatically generated from CARES. The added individual

System Generated Notice	Manual Notice	Additional Liable Individuals Notice
		must be manually mailed the same CC Client Overpayment Notice (DCF-F-DWSW11250-E)
A Repayment Agreement (RPA) will be sent separately on the second business day of the following month that the claim was entered	The CC Overpayment Worksheet (DCF-F-452-E) or its functional equivalent that shows the calculation of the overpayment	The added individual must be manually mailed the same CC Overpayment Worksheet (DCF-F-452-E) or its functional equivalent that shows the calculation of the overpayment.

IPVs

When an IPV is entered in CWW, eligibility for the individual will be systematically denied for the following durations:

- First Violation (1R): Parent is denied Wisconsin Shares benefits for six (6) months.
- Second Violation (2R): Parent is denied Wisconsin Shares benefits for 12 months.
- Third Violation (3R): Parent is permanently denied Wisconsin Shares benefits.

The denial of benefits during the IPV penalty period will be imposed whether the case is open for other programs or closed. Only the individual(s) determined to have committed an IPV may receive the penalty. For additional IPV procedural guidance, refer to the Child Care Program Integrity Resource Library.

Collusion

Collusion is defined as multiple parties, such as providers and parents, collaborating to defraud the Wisconsin Shares program to receive financial benefit. Collusion is an IPV. Local agencies must contact the Child Care Help Desk at childcare@wisconsin.gov for further instruction when potential collusion is identified.

Examples of collusion include:

- Cash refunds or “kickbacks”
- Paying for care for children not on the case
- Giving a MyWIChildCare EBT Card, account number, or PIN to a provider or other individual
- Parent issuing payments to a provider who never opens for operation

- Creating a shell company

Criminal Prosecution

After the local agency determines the IPV has occurred, the local agency may decide to take additional enforcement action(s). The additional enforcement action(s) include referral for criminal prosecution. The local agency should communicate with its legal counsel to discuss and establish thresholds and criteria regarding when to refer individuals to local law enforcement or the district attorney for consideration of possible criminal prosecution.

Cases of collusion and other highly egregious cases may be referred for criminal prosecution. BCCSA should be notified of any cases referred for criminal prosecution through the Child Care Help Desk at childcare@wisconsin.gov. When notifying BCCSA, agency workers must include the parent's name, case number, violation type, and other programs that are involved with the charges. Local agencies may determine the appropriate timeframe to alert BCCSA.

Appendix VIII Returning Funds

Retractions

A retraction means funds are removed from a parent's MyWIChildCare EBT card. Removing incorrectly issued funds from the parent's EBT card can prevent an overpayment from occurring because the funds are returned to the department. Local agencies must submit all retraction requests to the Child Care Help Desk at childcare@wisconsin.gov.

Retraction Process FAQ

When should local agencies request retractions?

- When funds loaded (but not spent) to an incorrect provider or incorrect provider location
- When a provider closure prevents a child from attending
- When there is an agency error
- When the parent was ineligible for funds
- In cases of hardship
- When the child did not attend the provider location for the previous 30 calendar days
- When there is a history of expungements
- When there is a change in provider within a month (not a hardship)
- When the parent has not paid any subsidy to the provider within the past 90 calendar days

What needs to be included in the request?

- Child's Name
- Case Number
- Provider Number and Location Number
- The benefit load month for which the funds need to be retracted
- The reason for the retraction request (this needs to be only a few words)
- County the provider is located

Voluntary Repayment Agreement (VPA)

The VPA process occurs when a provider agrees to return funds to the Wisconsin Shares program. Providers cannot be compelled to return funds through the VPA process.

The VPA may only be used when funds were paid to the provider. If the funds are still on the card, see Retractions. DCF reserves the right to reject any VPA submissions that do not align with the below allowable reasons for a VPA submission.

If the provider elects to return the funds through a VPA, the provider must complete the Voluntary Repayment Agreement form (DCF-F-5178-E).

VPA Process FAQ

Question	Answer
When should providers return funds through a VPA?	Providers can voluntarily return funds for the following circumstances, including but not limited to: • Child was absent for 30 calendar days or more • Payment was made to an incorrect provider or incorrect provider location • Provider refused to care for the child or disenrolled the child • Provider was closed, except for closures listed in Section 14.9 • Parent was ineligible for the funds paid to the provider • Provider received funds in error
Where should providers return VPAs?	Bureau of Child Care Subsidy Administration (BCCSA), Program Integrity: Childcare@wisconsin.gov
How should providers return the VPA?	Providers may return a VPA via mail, email, scan, or fax.
What happens when the VPA transaction is not successful?	BCCSA will halt all benefit recovery efforts. The local agency and/or DCF is responsible for determining if a referral or investigation is appropriate.
Can providers mail the VPA to BCCSA with a manual check?	Yes. See the Contact Us tab for BCCSA's mailing address.
What if the provider refuses to use a VPA?	A VPA cannot be enforced upon a provider. However, the local agency is responsible for determining if a referral or investigation is appropriate.

Appendix IX Provider Program Integrity

The department investigates reports of provider program integrity violations. This Appendix is intended for department staff.

Provider Investigations

Provider investigations are conducted by the Bureau of Child Care Subsidy Administration (BCCSA) to determine if a provider follows Wisconsin Shares, licensing, certification, YoungStar, and Child Care Counts policies. An investigation must be completed prior to establishing any sanction.

During an investigation, an auditor/investigator may:

- Make an unannounced site visit
- Conduct interviews
- Request and review attendance records
- Request and review additional documents
- Utilize surveillance services

Local agencies that are a Tier 1 for Provider Program Integrity for more than two (2) years may request provider investigation training by contacting the Child Care Help Desk at childcare@wisconsin.gov.

Provider Errors

Provider errors occur when a provider reports incorrect information, fails to report information, or violates any Wisconsin Shares, licensing, certification, YoungStar, or Child Care Counts policies. Provider errors often result in an overpayment.

Types of Provider Violations (not an exhaustive list)	Definitions
Providing care at an unauthorized location	Providers who claim attendance for children at a location that is not authorized and/or regulated.
No access	The provider failed to provide access to the child care facility during the regulated hours of operation.
Overcapacity	A provider received payment for care when the provider was in violation of the limits on the maximum number of children in care.
Providing care outside of regulated hours	A provider was in violation of the terms of the provider's license, such as the age of children served by the center or hours,

Types of Provider Violations (not an exhaustive list)	Definitions
	days, and months of operation of the center.
Duplicate records	It is discovered that two (2) or more attendance records for the same date(s) with different attendance times.
Contradictory records	The attendance/classroom/tracking records demonstrate contradictions, such as: the times on the records for specific children overlap, there are gaps in care, or it is unclear whether they were in care.
Missing records	The provider received Wisconsin Shares subsidy funds and is unwilling or unable to provide attendance records that have been requested by the department or local agency.
Missing and/or illegible attendance times	Attendance records were missing an arrival or departure time or the time was illegible; therefore, the Department was unable to determine the actual hours children were in care as a result of incomplete attending times.
Submitting incorrect information to the Registry Program Profile linked to YoungStar Rating	When a provider misrepresents information on the Registry Program Profile that impacts the YoungStar rating, or when a provider fails to keep their Registry Program Profile current.
Failure to report if a child has not attended within the previous 30 days	A provider fails to notify the local agency when a child has not attended within the previous 30 days.
Retaining payment after refusal of care	A provider refused to care for a child and received and retained payment when the child did not attend in the previous 30 calendar days
Receiving payment for unregulated days	A provider received payment for days when the provider was not regulated.
Provider with outside employment	A provider had children signed in on the attendance records while engaged in outside employment.
Improper possession of parent's EBT card information	A provider is found in possession of EBT cards, card numbers, and/or PIN numbers.
No written payment agreements	A provider failed to have written payment agreements for all subsidized children.

Types of Provider Violations (not an exhaustive list)	Definitions
YoungStar Registry violation	The Registry Program Profile was inaccurate, resulting in a higher rating than the provider was entitled to.
Child Care Payment Programs Violation	According to the Child Care Payment Programs application(s), the provider submitted false or misleading information to the Department and/or failed to meet the terms and conditions.

Provider Post-Investigation Activities

Provider Explanation Letter (7m Letter)

The 7m letter outlines all violations discovered and is sent out by the department after an investigation or audit. The 7m Letter provides details regarding the violated rules and policy(ies), and requests that the provider respond within 15 calendar days. The 7m letter must be sent via regular and certified mail.

If a provider has not responded within 10 calendar days, the investigator must attempt to contact the provider to confirm delivery and understanding of the letter. The investigator should encourage the provider to submit a response to the department. It is not required that a provider respond to the 7m letter. An overpayment cannot be established before the 15 calendar days if the provider has not responded.

Technical Assistance Letter

Local agencies should document any Technical Assistance (TA) given to providers via a TA letter. See the Program Integrity Resource Library for the Provider TA Letter Template and Instructions document. This letter documents any errors discovered and the local agency's recommended solution. It is recommended that this letter be signed by the provider and returned to the local agency.

7m Provider Meeting

A child care provider must be given an opportunity to provide the department an explanation of any false, misleading, or irregular information submitted to the department or if a child care provider fails to comply with the terms of the program. The provider’s response may be verbal (an arranged meeting or via telephone), or in writing. It is encouraged that the providers give an explanation in person via a provider meeting.

Provider Sanctions

Overpayments

A provider overpayment occurs when a provider receives subsidy funds while they are out of compliance with Wisconsin Shares, licensing, certification, or YoungStar policies.

The department must take all reasonable steps necessary to recover provider overpayments after discovery.

To calculate a provider overpayment, agency workers must:

- Identify the violation
- Determine the overpayment period
- Verify funds have not already been recovered from the client for the same time period
- Verify that subsidy funds have been paid to a provider

Forfeitures

Forfeitures may be imposed on a provider if the provider intentionally or egregiously violates a provision of Wis. Admin. Codes.

The forfeiture amount is based on a progressive enforcement system of first, second, and third violations. If the violation is considered a serious violation, the forfeiture may be from $100 - $10,000.

Serious Violations include:

- A provider is found to be in possession of a photocopy, photo, or other image of a parent's EBT card
- A provider is found to be in possession of a parent's subsidy account number or PIN
- A provider fails to notify the local agency that a child who receives subsidy to attend their center has not attended within the previous 30 calendar days

Violation Occurrence	Serious	Not Serious
First Violation	Provider is issued a forfeiture of $100 for each violation.	Department provides a signed Technical Assistance Letter regarding the issue(s) to ensure the provider understands all program requirements.

Violation Occurrence	Serious	Not Serious
Second Violation	Provider is issued a forfeiture of $200 for each violation.	Department issues a warning letter
Third Violation	Provider is issued a forfeiture of $100-$10,000 for each violation and the provider may be suspended from the Wisconsin Shares program.	Provider is issued a forfeiture of $100-$10,000. Department may follow up with the provider within the next six (6) months to determine if the violation(s) have been corrected.

Stipulations

The BCCSA issues stipulations to providers. A stipulation is issued to a provider in lieu of a permanent suspension in cases where the violations meet the criteria for a permanent suspension, but the violations do not appear intentional, the provider is receptive to the corrections, and there is evidence that the provider will come into compliance in the future. If a stipulation is issued, an audit should be conducted after six (6) months. This allows the department or local agency to return and monitor progress of compliance for violations initially discovered and to offer additional Technical Assistance. This process assists in maintaining the department's mandate for having accessible, high-quality child care centers. Overpayments must be assessed for any violations discovered in correlation with the stipulation.

Permanent Suspension

Providers may be permanently suspended when they intentionally make a false or misleading statement, misrepresent or withhold facts, or commit any act that constitutes a violation of state or federal law for the purpose of using, presenting, transferring, acquiring, receiving, possessing, or trafficking benefits. If the department approves the suspension, the provider will not be allowed to participate as a provider in the Wisconsin Shares program indefinitely and will receive an overpayment to recover any misappropriated funds.

Permanent Suspension FAQs

Question	Answer
Who determines permanent suspensions?	The local agency or department may recommend a permanent suspension and provide the investigation report and details to support the recommendation. The DCF Division of Early Care and Education Division Administrator or designee makes the final

Question	Answer
	determination to approve a permanent suspension.
What is a provider IPV?	• Intentional misleading statements or misrepresentation of information • History of repeated violations and/or non-compliance • Numerous Wisconsin Shares program violations are discovered • Egregious overpayments are discovered • Previous stipulation was not followed • Possessing and/or utilizing a parent's MyWIChildCare EBT card, account number, and/or PIN, or any representation of these items to issue payment to themselves • Cashing out benefits or providing "kickbacks" to parents
What should local agencies do if they believe a permanent suspension is warranted?	Submit the case to BCCSA for review via the Child Care Help Desk. The local agency should provide a brief summary of reasons for the permanent suspension. Once received, a BCCSA team member will contact the requestor for additional information. The agency worker will have to complete and submit a recommendation document that will be provided by BCCSA. All requested permanent suspensions will be heard at the monthly permanent suspension meeting. The requestor must attend the permanent suspension meeting and present their findings to the panel for approval.

Permanent Suspension Meeting

If an investigator recommends a permanent suspension, a meeting must be held with the lead investigator/auditor, BCCSA Managers, DCF OLC, and DECE administration. The investigator must explain why they are recommending permanent suspension. Additionally, they must explain and provide detailed evidence to support the accuracy of the overpayment period, the overpayment amount, and the egregiousness of the

violations. The panel will then approve or deny the permanent suspension request. If a permanent suspension is granted, a notice will be sent within 48 hours or within two (2) business days. Any overpayments attached to the suspension must be entered in CSAW and coded as IV by the following week. An overpayment letter must also be mailed to the provider by the following week.

Provider Appeals

Providers may appeal:

- Overpayment amounts
- Issuance of a permanent suspension from receiving Wisconsin Shares payments

Providers must submit appeal requests in writing to the Division of Hearings and Appeals (DHA) and indicate which decision they wish to appeal within 30 calendar days of the date of the enforcement notice. The request must include a copy of the enforcement notice.

The provider appeal process entails, but is not limited to:

1. Provider appeals decision
2. DHA notifies DCF Office of Legal Counsel
3. Exchange of Exhibits
4. Proposed Decision
5. Final Decision
6. Stipulation (if applicable)
7. Investigator completes action as directed by ALJ (if applicable)



Wisconsin Department of Children and Families

The Department of Children and Families is an equal opportunity employer and service provider. If you have a disability and need to access services, receive information in an alternate format, or need information translated to another language, please call the Division of Early Care and Education at 608-422-6002. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind or speech disabled can use the free Wisconsin Relay Service (WRS) – 711 to contact the department.