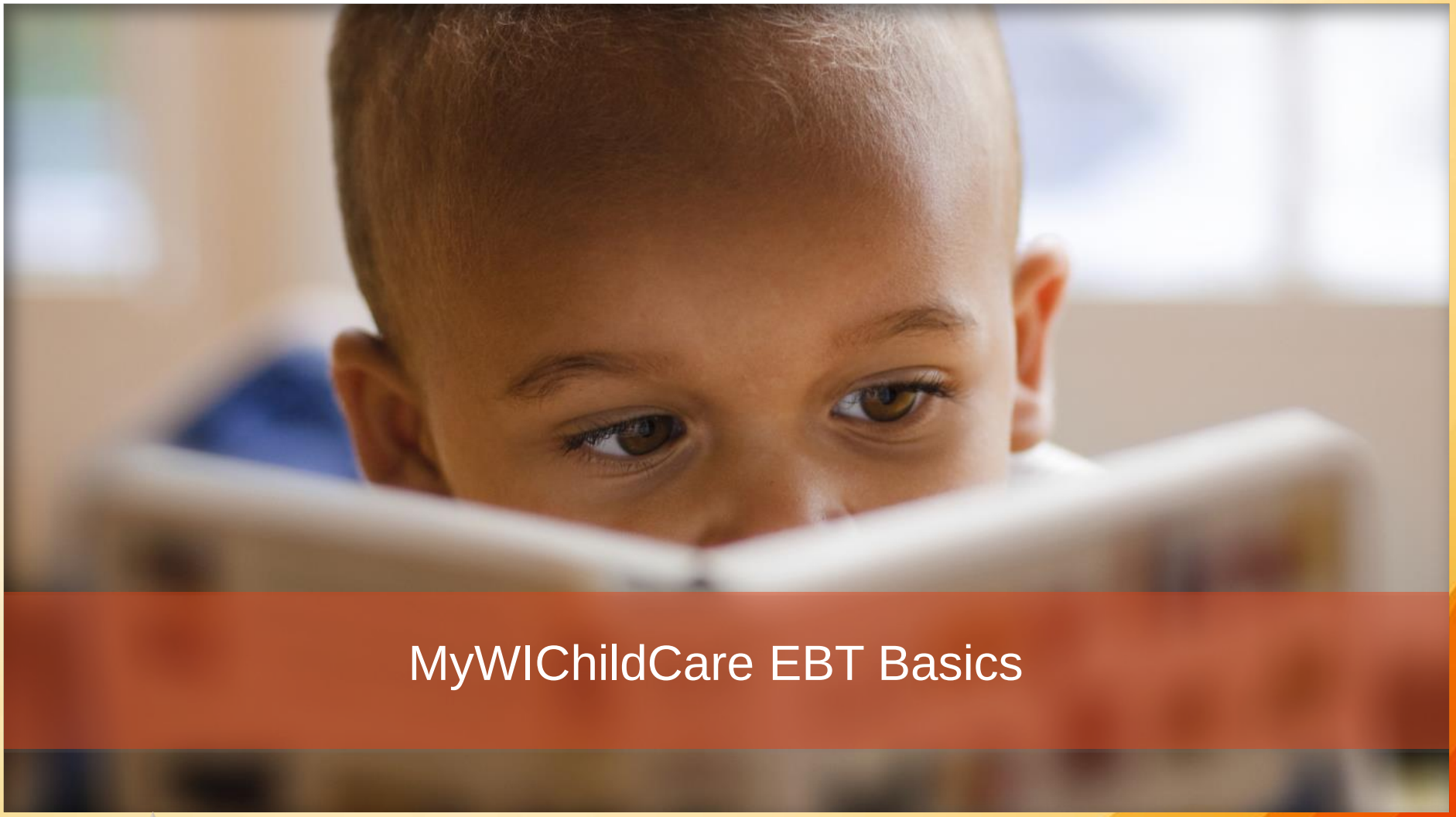

MyWIChildCare EBT Basics

Wisconsin Department of Children and Families

Introduction

Kevin Sime

Project Manager MyWIChildCare EBT Initiative

608 422-6085

Kevin.Sime@Wisconsin.gov

Wisconsin Vision

Current Process:

The Department of Children and Families makes Wisconsin Shares child care payments directly to child care providers.

New Process:

The Department of Children and Families will provide Wisconsin Shares parents with an EBT Card. The parents will initiate payments to child care providers via Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT).

What is an EBT Card?

- EBT is short for Electronic Benefits Transfer
- It is a plastic card, similar to a bank card, issued to benefit recipients.
- The EBT Card is loaded with benefits monthly. In most cases, funds are available on the first of the month.
- **The EBT card can be used *only* to access child care benefits authorized for a specific provider.**

The EBT card cannot be used to obtain cash

MyWIChildCare Card

- The Department of Children and Families is happy to announce the name for the EBT card.

The Benefits of EBT For Parents and Providers

- Reinforces that the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program is a financial benefit program for working parents
- Including parents in the payment process helps parents understand the costs and the value of high-quality child care
- Like private pay parents, the Wisconsin Shares parent may initiate the payment to the provider in advance, before child care is provided
- EBT speeds up payments to providers
- Increases stability for child care operators and strengthens the continuity of care for children
- Eliminates Wisconsin Shares attendance reporting to obtain payment
- Promotes a business relationship between parents and providers to assist parents' transition to the private market
- Provides parents with a role to manage their benefits and ensure their benefits are used appropriately

EBT Parent Pay is consistent with the Federal CCDBG – Reauthorization Law (Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014)

- Family-friendly policies including 12-month eligibility determination period for families receiving child care subsidies
- New payment practices: States must establish policies that reflect generally accepted payment practices
- Paying for absence days when the child doesn't attend care
- Parent-friendly policies that nurture the continuity of care

EBT Implementation Timeline

- **2015-2016**
  - Development, testing, training, and outreach
- **Phase I in production October of 2016**
  - 630 La Crosse-area child care families in 8 counties: Buffalo, Clark, Jackson, Monroe, Pepin, Trempealeau, Vernon and La Crosse
  - Certified and licensed child care providers who serve them
- **Phase II in production February 2017**
  - Includes all counties and consortia not included in Phase I

DCF has contracted EBT vendor FIS

- **FIS is an experienced EBT vendor with many years of EBT experience including:**
  - Wisconsin Foodshare and WIC EBT processing
  - Child care EBT systems in Kansas and Utah
- **FIS responsibilities include:**
  - EBT card issuance and maintenance
  - Loading benefits on EBT cards
  - Financial reporting
  - Customer service and training for providers and parents
  - Provider enrollment and maintenance

How EBT Works

- The Department of Children and Families and the EBT vendor (FIS) will exchange automated data files daily:
  - Demographic information about parents and children
  - Licensed and Certified providers
  - EBT Authorizations: Amount available to pay child care providers
  - Payment transactions to providers
  - Financial information and settlement

File Transfers

DCF ⟷ Provider-Parent- EBT Authorizations Provider Payments ⟷ **EBT Vendor**

Card Issuance and Provider Enrollment

- **EBT Card Issuance**
  - Vendor (FIS) sends the cards to parent/cardholder
  - One card per family, plus one optional second card
  - Cards will be mailed same day or next day (if request for issuance is received after 2:00 pm)
  - Parent/cardholder activates the card and selects a PIN number
- **Provider enrollment**
  - FIS sends contracts to providers
  - Maintains a provider database and issues FIS provider numbers
  - Provides customer service to providers

Vendor ← **Card Issuance/Provider Enrollment** → **Parents and Providers**

Provider Requirements

1. Be a YoungStar participant unless the provider is a Certified In-Home, Out of State, or a temporarily unregulated provider
2. Report their private pay rates to DCF
3. Report changes to rates
4. Enroll with FIS and sign an agreement that includes the provider's Tax ID and checking account information

Provider Notification Step 1

120 days before production release, a postcard will be sent by FIS to providers:

- Introducing FIS as the DCF vendor for MyWIChildCare
- Inform providers an agreement is necessary to accept Wisconsin Shares subsidy payments
- Instructions on how to access and use the FIS ebtEDGE Provider Portal to obtain and submit the agreement electronically

Provider Notification Step 2

- A follow-up letter will be sent 90 days prior to production release to providers that have not yet returned a signed FIS agreement.
  - The mailing will introduce FIS as the MyWIChildCare vendor for DCF
  - Include the FIS contract
  - Instructions
  - FIS Help Desk telephone number
  - FIS Provider Portal instructions

Provider Notification Step 3

60 days prior to production release, FIS will identify the remaining providers that still have not returned the FIS agreement and call them.

- Ensuring the provider understands that they have to sign an agreement with FIS
- Provide access to the agreement
- Answer any provider questions

Provider Notification Step 4

30 days prior to production release, FIS will call the providers a second time that still have not returned the FIS agreement.

- They will receive another postcard that includes the conversion date and messaging that tells them they have to return the FIS Agreement by the conversion date to participate in the Wisconsin Shares program.

MyWIChildCare EBT Process

1. Parent applies for Wisconsin Shares and is found eligible.
2. The child care Worker and parent will determine the family's child care needs.
3. The parent identifies the provider or providers that will care for their children.
4. The worker enters info into the DCF CSAW automated child care system.
5. An EBT Authorization is created and communicated to the parent, FIS, and to the provider. FIS mails the EBT card to the parent.
6. DCF sends child care benefit amounts to the EBT vendor to load the EBT card each month.
7. The parent uses the EBT card to initiate the child care payment or payments to the identified providers.
8. FIS issues payment transaction directly into the provider bank account within 2 – 3 banking business days.

EBT Authorizations

- **Each EBT Authorization includes three elements:**
  - Child
  - Provider designated by the parent
  - Subsidy amount for the child
- **EBT Benefit amount loaded on the card will include:**
  - Monthly Wisconsin Shares subsidy less the copay amount
  - The YoungStar Tiered Reimbursement will be added
  - The benefit total amount on the card will be capped so that it will not exceed the provider's private pay rate or maximum county rate.

Authorized amount $$

Parent Payments to Providers

- Parents will have three easy ways to initiate a payment to providers:
  - IVR / Telephone (most frequently used method in other states)
  - FIS ebtEDGE Website: http://www.ebtEDGE.com
  - Point of Sale device for participating providers
- For each transaction/payment the parent inputs three elements:
  - Child care benefit amount to the provider
  - Provider authorized to care for that child
  - Child's name

Vendor (FIS) Services

- **For Parents, a toll-free phone number and web portal:**
  - To initiate payments to providers
  - To confirm benefit loads, balances, and check transaction history
  - Telephone customer service agents for problem resolution, report lost or stolen cards, etc.
- **For Providers, a toll-free phone number and web portal:**
  - To review individual payment transactions and payment history
  - Trained customer service agents for problem resolution

Who Pays for EBT?

- **DCF pays a per-transaction fee to the EBT Vendor (FIS)**
- **No transaction fees are paid by parents or providers**
- **FIS offers Point of Service (POS) card reader device**
  - *POS is optional* for providers
  - Lease fee: Providers pay the vendor $14.50 per month
    - FIS is responsible to provide and maintain the POS device
    - FIS is responsible to train providers on the use of the POS device
  - POS device reads *only* MyWIChildCare Cards
  - POS machines from third parties will not work for EBT transactions

New DCF Online Parent Portal

- Parents will use their existing ACCESS ID and password to login
- The Parent Portal will be connected to DCF-CSAW
- The parents will be able to view their authorizations, transactions, and history
- The parents can report child care need changes, changes to schedules, and request new EBT Authorizations in the Parent Portal.
- Child Care EBT benefit simulator.

New DCF Online Provider Portal

- Designed using the CCPI model currently used by providers
- Secure password-protected method for providers to connect to DCF
- View authorizations and transactions in real-time
- Upload documents, report rates, and other changes
- Online training and related links
- Later expansion for other purposes: Licensing changes/YoungStar contracts

EBT Communication Activities

- **2015 Outreach and Communication to:**
  - Provider Organizations and Membership - Meetings and Conferences
  - Counties, Tribes, and Child Care Case Workers
- **2016-17 Intensive Outreach and Training for:**
  - Parents
  - Providers
  - Child Care Case Workers
- **2017 General Information for:**
  - Other Partners
  - Legislators
  - Public

Stakeholders and Partners can help!

Assistance with the MyWIChildCare EBT Rollout:

- 2015 - Learn the Basics of EBT Parent Pay
- Ask questions and help DCF Develop a good FAQ page
- 2016 - Review brochures and other informational materials during Provider site visits
- 2016-17 Learn the FAQ and answers
- 2016-17 Take a training session, webinar, and read brochures
- 2016-17 Learn about available EBT Support Resources
- 2017 Be a resource to ***Providers and Parents***

Questions?

Kevin Sime

Project Manager MyWIChildCare EBT Initiative

608 422-6085

Kevin.Sime@Wisconsin.gov

Thank you for attending!