

Division of Early Care and Education

# 2017 Annual Report Early Care and Education in Wisconsin



March 2018





# Division of Early Care and Education 2017 Annual Report: Early Care and Education in Wisconsin

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The *Division of Early Care and Education 2017 Annual Report: Early Childhood in Wisconsin* summarizes data related to children and families supported by programs in the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF), Division of Early Care and Education (DECE). This report highlights information about regulated child care programs serving Wisconsin families and the activities throughout the Division that support program quality improvement, fraud reduction, and improved access to affordable high-quality child care.

Information highlighted in this report has been collected from bureaus and programs within DECE including: the Bureau of Early Care Regulation (BECR), the Bureau of Early Learning and Policy (BELP), the Bureau of Program Integrity (BPI), and Milwaukee Early Care Administration (MECA). Please refer to the Appendix for an Organizational Chart of DECE.

## **Report Interpretation**

The DECE Annual Report is produced using data collected and stored in DCF automated information systems including: Child Care Statewide Administration on the Web (CSAW), CARES Worker Web (CWW), Wisconsin Child Care Regulatory System (WISCCRS), and YoungStar Case Management. These automated information systems are designed for use by child care eligibility workers, authorization workers, licensing specialists, certification specialists, YoungStar technical consultants, and program integrity staff to support and connect program-wide staff activities and to supply information and documentation regarding services provided to families and children.

This report is available on the Internet at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/childcare/pdf/2017-dece-annual-report.pdf>

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# DECE Vision, Mission, and Values

## **Vision**

All children will have access to high-quality early care and education

## **Mission**

To support low-income working families by sharing the cost of child care and to promote the social well-being of all children and families through safe, high-quality early education experiences

## **Values**

<i>Respect</i>	Treat others with the highest degree of dignity and fairness
<i>Accountability</i>	Deliver transparent, fiscally responsible, and programmatically sound services
<i>Collaboration</i>	Work in synergy with stakeholders to deliver quality services
<i>Consistency</i>	Continually deliver reliable services to customers
<i>Effectiveness</i>	Ensure that services strengthen the economic and social well-being of families
<i>Efficiency</i>	Systematically share resources to optimize services



# Early Learning and Policy

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## **Bureau of Early Learning and Policy**

The Bureau of Early Learning and Policy (BELP) administers the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program and oversees YoungStar, Wisconsin's Child Care Quality Rating and Improvement System. The Bureau also provides support to the Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge, a grant that aligns Wisconsin's resources to improve the quality of care provided to Wisconsin's children.

## **Mission**

To provide access to high-quality child care and early education experiences, to enhance children's development, to support their families in work and parenting roles, and to effectively manage the Wisconsin Shares program





## Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program

The Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program helps low-income families with the cost of child care while they are working or preparing to enter the workforce. Wisconsin Shares is implemented at the local level by 71 counties and nine tribes. In Milwaukee County, Milwaukee Early Care Administration (MECA) provides direct services for child care authorizations, and the Department of Health Services' Milwaukee Enrollment Services determines financial and non-financial eligibility.

In 2017, Wisconsin Shares implemented MyWICChildCare statewide. Under MyWICChildCare, parents with Wisconsin Shares authorizations receive their approved child care subsidy on an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card, similar to the FoodShare card. Parents directly pay their child care provider, instead of the State reimbursing providers for the cost of child care provided.

During 2017, Wisconsin Shares:

- Supported 38,862 unique families
- Supported an average of 39,226 children per month
- Served 68,246 unique children

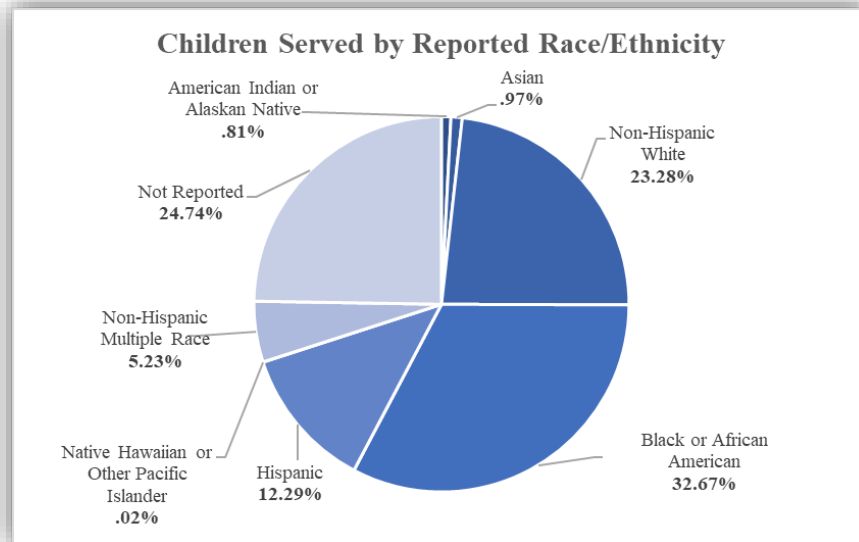
The following tables provide additional description on Wisconsin Shares participants.

### Children Served by Wisconsin Shares by Age

Children Served by Wisconsin Shares by Age <sup>1</sup>				
Age Groups <sup>2</sup>	Age	Number	Percent of Total	Cumulative Total
00 - <02 Years	0	3,206	4.70%	3,206
	1	6,351	9.31%	9,557
02 - <06 Years	2	7,509	11.00%	17,066
	3	8,411	12.32%	25,477
	4	7,830	11.47%	33,307
	5	7,030	10.30%	40,337
06 - <09 Years	6	5,587	8.19%	45,924
	7	4,979	7.30%	50,903
	8	4,665	6.84%	55,568
09 - <13 Years	9	4,105	6.02%	59,673
	10	3,394	4.97%	63,067
	11	2,598	3.81%	65,665
	12	1,652	2.42%	67,317
13 - <14 Years	13	859	1.26%	68,176
14 - <15 Years	14	55	0.08%	68,231
15 - <16 Years	15	9	0.01%	68,240
	16	2	0.00%	68,242
16 - <17 Years	17	4	0.01%	68,246

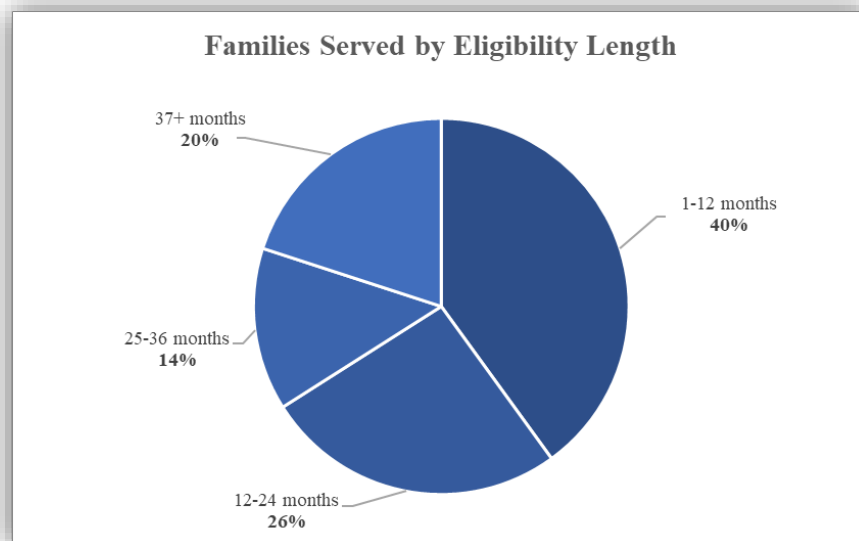
<sup>1</sup> Data as of December 31, 2017.  
<sup>2</sup> Color-coded groups detail how data in the data warehouse is combined into age groups.

## Children Served by Reported Race/Ethnicity



Note: The reporting of race and/or ethnicity is optional and does not affect Wisconsin Shares eligibility.

## Families Served by Eligibility Length



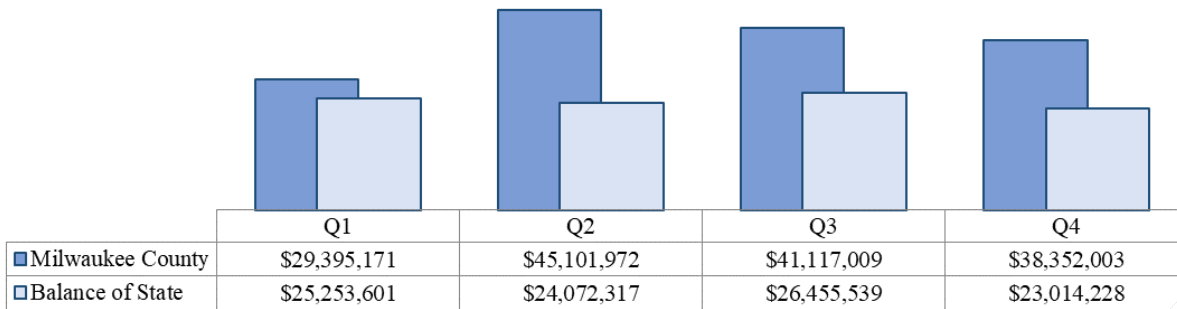
Note: Cases with ongoing eligibility were measured as if their eligibility end date was December 31, 2017.

## Quarterly Statewide Expenditures

Calendar Year 2017	Statewide Issuances
Quarter 1	\$54,648,770
Quarter 2	\$69,174,289
Quarter 3	\$67,572,549
Quarter 4	\$61,366,230
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$252,761,838</b>

## Expenditures by Quarter

■ Milwaukee County      ■ Balance of State



### Average Wages and Hours Worked by Parents

Average Wages and Hours Worked per Served Parent		
	Average Hourly Wage	Average Weekly Hours
Milwaukee	\$12.27	34.7
Balance of State	\$12.93	34.0
Statewide	\$12.61	34.3

### Approved Activity Summary for Individuals Served by Wisconsin Shares

The Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program assists low-income families with a portion of the cost of child care while they are working or participating in activities that will lead to work. To be eligible for the child care subsidy, a parent, foster parent, relative, or person acting in place of a parent must require child care to be able to participate in one of the following activities: employment, high school or Learnfare (if a parent is over 20 years of age, they must also be working), Wisconsin Works (W-2) activities, education while working, Tribal TANF activities, or FoodShare Employment and Training (FSET) work search or work experience activities.

In accordance with the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Reauthorization of 2014, Wisconsin Shares added the approved activity type of “Approved Activity Search” in October 2017. Using the “Approved Activity Search,” a qualifying parent who has lost their approved activity may be granted up to three months of Wisconsin Shares eligibility so that he or she can search for a new approved activity.

In a representative sample taken in December of 2017:

- 80% of served Wisconsin Shares participants were eligible because of employment
- 20% were participating in other approved activities
- .33% of participants had the activity type of Approved Activity Search

## **YoungStar: Wisconsin's Quality Rating and Improvement System**

YoungStar, Wisconsin's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), was developed to improve the quality of child care for Wisconsin children. YoungStar establishes a consistent standard for measuring child care quality based on educational qualifications, learning environment and curriculum, business practices, and health and well-being of children. Programs are evaluated and rated using a 5 Star rating scale.

YoungStar addresses several key issues in Wisconsin's child care system. YoungStar:

- Improves the overall quality of child care
- Creates a clear, understandable tool for parents to choose quality child care
- Creates incentives for providers to improve services, particularly for low-income children
- Supports ongoing child care quality improvement by linking higher-quality care to higher Wisconsin Shares subsidy amounts through YoungStar Quality Adjustments.

YoungStar offers child care providers technical assistance, micro-grants, professional development counseling, and a variety of training opportunities to support quality improvement efforts. YoungStar offers parents resources and the Child Care Finder application ([childcarefinder.wisconsin.gov](http://childcarefinder.wisconsin.gov)) to help them identify key elements of quality in child care so they can choose the best program for their children.

Beginning July 1, 2016, Supporting Families Together Association (SFTA), became the administrator of all YoungStar services across the state. SFTA contracts with Wisconsin's ten Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) agencies to provide services to local provider communities.

Child care programs must be regulated and participate in YoungStar to be eligible to receive Wisconsin Shares subsidy payments.



## **YoungStar Program Highlights**

### **Validation Study Results Inform Future Changes**

Final results of the YoungStar validation study were released in 2016. The research found that YoungStar does differentiate among programs of varying observed quality. Specifically, programs rated 2 Star had lower observed levels of quality than programs rated 3 Star, 4 Star, or 5 Star. Also, the total number of points in all four rating domains predicted observed quality. The differences were statistically significant and meaningful. This suggests that the YoungStar rating system achieved validity as a measure of child care quality.

Following the results of the validation study, DCF successfully partnered with the University of Wisconsin – Madison, Institute for Research on Poverty (IRP) to begin refining the YoungStar rating scale into one that better predicts and supports children's outcomes. Working together with an advisory group made up of key early education stakeholders throughout 2017, changes to the rating scale will be made for 2019. The revised rating scale will emphasize developmentally appropriate interactions and materials, as well as inclusion of learning centers in all classrooms/programs.

### **YoungStar Adjustment**

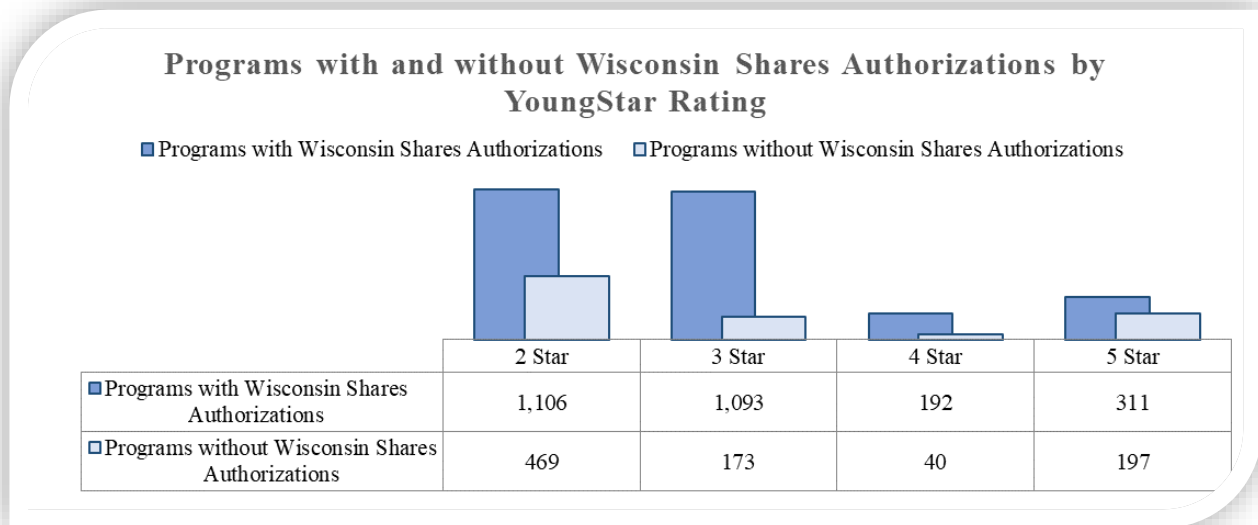
YoungStar continues to reward the highest quality programs across Wisconsin by providing a YoungStar Adjustment that is paid directly to 4 Star and 5 Star providers who have current Wisconsin Shares authorizations. YoungStar Adjustments, for up to 10% or 25% of current Wisconsin Shares authorization amounts, respectively, are made directly to the parent-selected program to support quality services within the program's setting.

### **Bi-Annual Rating**

Beginning in 2017, programs participating in YoungStar will be rated every two years. This gives programs more time to improve their quality between ratings. All currently participating program sites were divided between even year and odd year rating groups in 2016. The change to less frequent YoungStar ratings was requested by multiple programs and early education associations. Programs may, and are encouraged to, receive on-site coaching support annually to continue their quality improvement efforts.

## YoungStar Data

As of December 31, 2017, there were 4,957 regulated child care programs in Wisconsin. Of those, 3,770 programs (76%) participated in YoungStar, and were therefore eligible to accept Wisconsin Shares payments. 2,830 programs (75% of YoungStar participants) provided care for a child participating in Wisconsin Shares.



Note: As of Dec. 31, 2017, there were 9 YoungStar programs that were rated 1 Star. Wisconsin Shares authorizations cannot be made to programs rated 1 Star. An additional 180 programs were in the process of being rated.

As of December 31, 2017, a total of 42,012 children from families participating in the Wisconsin Shares program were authorized to attend YoungStar rated child care programs. The table below details the distribution of these children by the YoungStar rating of their child care program. Approximately 77% of children were in high-quality care, which is defined as programs rated 3 Star, 4 Star, or 5 Star.

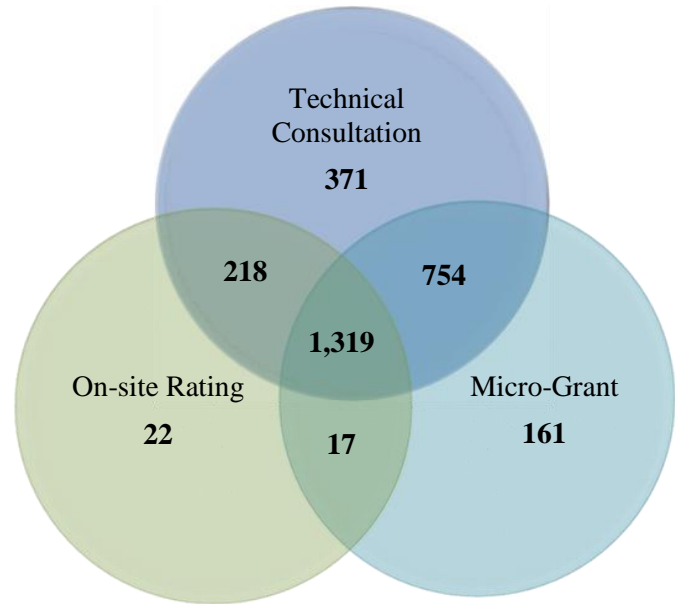
Children from Families Participating in Wisconsin Shares by YoungStar Level <sup>1</sup>					
Region	2 Star	3 Star	4 Star	5 Star	Total
Southeastern	353	2,606	158	582	3,699
Milwaukee	6,040	12,379	1,595	3,749	23,763
Northeastern	828	2,128	443	1,083	4,482
Northern	366	649	184	254	1,453
Southern	1,338	2,286	407	2,133	6,164
Western	850	1,078	172	351	2,451
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,775</b>	<b>21,126</b>	<b>2,959</b>	<b>8,152</b>	<b>42,012</b>

<sup>1</sup> Families participating in Wisconsin Shares cannot receive authorizations to providers rated 1 Star.

### YoungStar Support Service Use

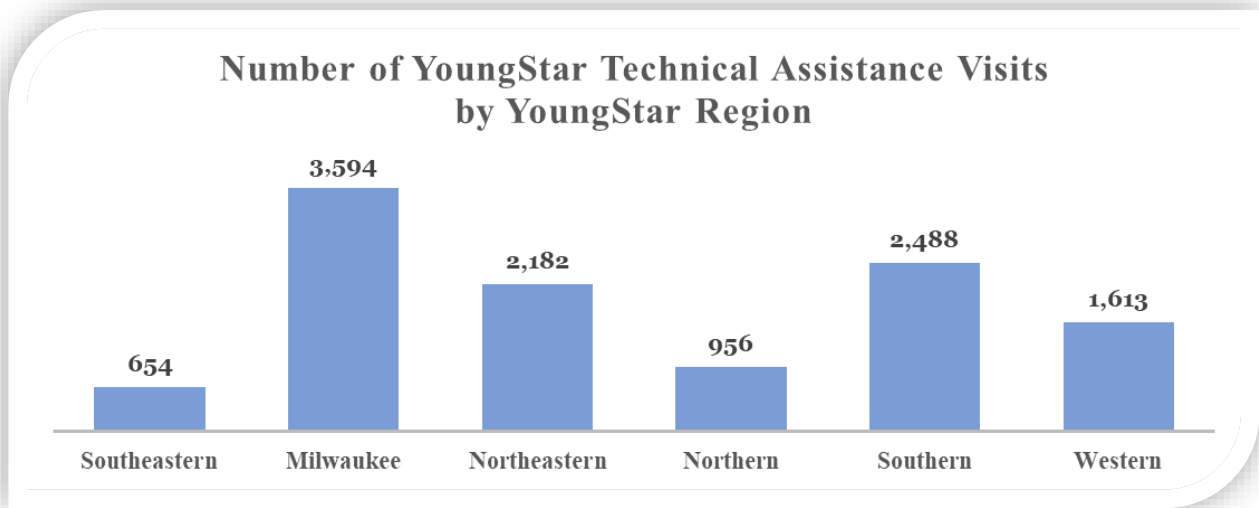
In addition to rating programs on a scale of 1 Star to 5 Star, YoungStar provides a variety of free and low-cost supports to child care programs to encourage continuous quality improvement efforts. These services include on-site mentoring and consultation, micro-grant awards, and relevant trainings. In 2017, 2,701 programs received at least one on-site service.

There were 2,862 programs in 2017 that received at least one YoungStar support service. Forty-six percent (1,319 programs) utilized all three available services. Seventy-eight percent of programs receiving technical consultation also received a micro-grant.



### YoungStar Technical Assistance

YoungStar technical assistance is provided to child care programs (when requested) to work on collaborative goals for program enhancement. Technical consultation support is available on-site to programs for an average of ten hours per program, per year. YoungStar provided 11,487 technical assistance visits to 2,668 child care programs.



## T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Wisconsin

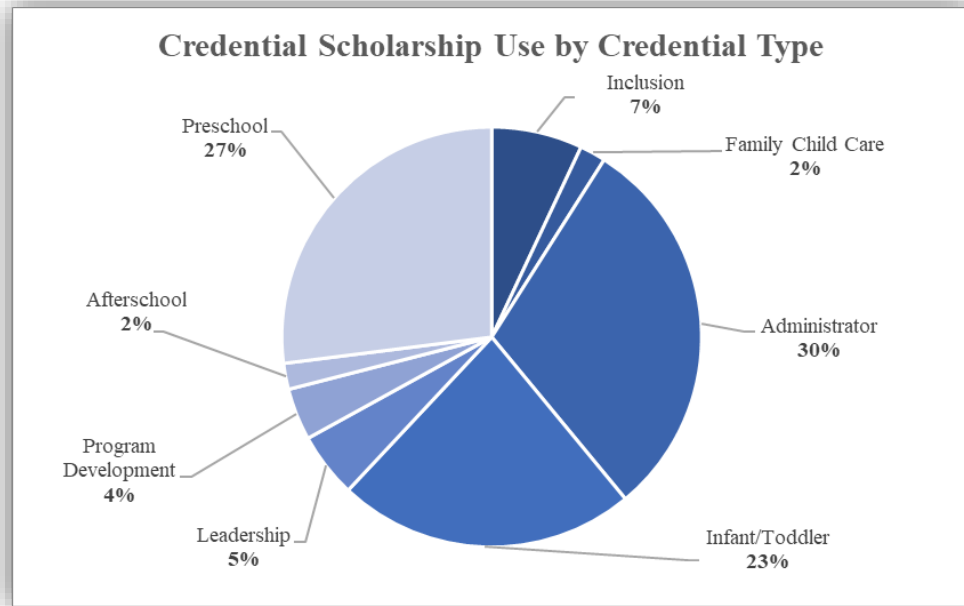
T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Wisconsin is a statewide scholarship program designed to help teaching staff in child care centers and afterschool programs, Head Start teachers, family child care providers, and center directors and administrators advance their educational qualifications while continuing their current employment in regulated early childhood and school-age care settings. T.E.A.C.H. links education, compensation and commitment to improving the quality of early education.

T.E.A.C.H. offers a variety of scholarship models designed to meet the diverse needs of the workforce. All models support credit-based education in Wisconsin institutions of higher education. In fiscal year 2017, T.E.A.C.H. awarded a total of 392 scholarships to recipients who, in conjunction with continuing recipients, completed more than 4,900 courses. By working in partnership with programs and scholarship recipients, T.E.A.C.H. pays the largest share of expenses related to the completion of a credential, degree, or coursework undertaken to improve a YoungStar rating. T.E.A.C.H. also provides counseling, administrative support, and a contract completion bonus.

<b>T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Wisconsin – Fiscal Year 2017</b>		
<b>Scholarship Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Number of Active Contracts</b>
9-18 Credits	A one-time opportunity to complete 9-18 credits of early childhood coursework	21
Bachelor's Degree 19+ Credits	Scholarship for providers interested in earning 19 or more credits	87
Associate's Degree 19+ Credits	Scholarship for providers interested in earning 19 or more credits	95
Bachelor's Degree	A 1-year (3-semester) renewable scholarship for providers interested in earning 9 or more credits	75
3 to 8 Credits	A flexible scholarship designed for providers interested in earning 3-8 credits over 3 semesters	160
Associate's Degree	A 1-year (3-semester) renewable scholarship for providers interested in earning 9 or more credits	239
The Wisconsin Registry Credential	A 2-year scholarship awarded for <i>The Wisconsin Registry Credential Program</i>	620



Providers with administrator and preschool credentials were the most common recipients of T.E.A.C.H. scholarships associated with the 620 active Credential contracts.



## REWARD Wisconsin

The REWARD Wisconsin Stipend Program is a compensation and retention initiative for members of the early care and education workforce who are at Registry Level 9 or higher. Incremental salary supplements are awarded based on the participant’s educational attainments and longevity in the field, with the average annual stipend award totaling \$545. This program encourages increased education and retention through increased compensation.

<b>REWARD Wisconsin Activity for Fiscal Year 2017</b>	
Active agreements during the fiscal year	4,178
Recipients active during the fiscal year	3,675
Agreements awarded during the fiscal year	1,298
First time recipients	177
Average years of experience	13.3
Average years at program	8.6
Turnover rate	90 (2.2%) <sup>1</sup>
Discontinued participation rate	42 (1.0%) <sup>2</sup>
Average stipend	\$545
Percent of recipients who have received T.E.A.C.H.	24%
Programs represented	727
Counties served – by recipient’s county of employment	64
Counties served – by recipient’s county of residence	66
<sup>1</sup> Of the 90 turnovers, 79 went to other child care programs, and 11 left the profession.	
<sup>2</sup> Of the 42 individuals who discontinued participation, 26 were because their program no longer met program eligibilities, 16 because of unreturned materials.	

# Early Care Regulation – Licensing and Certification

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## **Bureau of Early Care Regulation**

The Bureau of Early Care Regulation (BECR) is responsible for the licensing and regulation of child care. The Bureau regulates family and group child care centers and day camps. BECR also provides training and consultation to child care certifiers employed by counties, tribes and subcontracted agencies.

## **Mission**

To promote and protect the health, safety and welfare of children in child care settings by ensuring the quality and safety of care in licensed facilities through monitoring for compliance with licensing standards

Regulation requirements for family child care, group child care, and day camps promote practices that are intended to enhance the health, safety and welfare of children in care. BECR works to ensure licensing requirements are met through inspections of licensed and license exempt child care facilities. In addition, BECR monitors certified child care providers in Milwaukee County as well as delivers training and consultation to certifiers employed by counties, tribes and subcontracted agencies in the balance of the state.



The Bureau of Early Care Regulation has been implementing new requirements resulting from the reauthorization of the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant in 2014. The block grant is used by states and tribes to administer early childhood programs including Wisconsin Shares, child care quality initiatives, and regulation. The 2014 reauthorization resulted in several initiatives that impact regulated child care including required annual health and safety rule monitoring, revised caregiver background check requirements, monitoring of license exempt programs, emergency planning, new training requirements focusing on health and safety, and pre-service and continuing education for licensed and certified providers.

Types of regulated child care include:

- Certified Care (care for up to 3 children under age 7, but may care for a group maximum of 6 that includes day care children ages 7 and older and/or their own/related children under the age of 7)
- Licensed Family Child Care (up to 8 children under the age of 7)
- Licensed Group Child Care (9 or more children under the age of 7)
- Day Camp (seasonal program for 4 or more children ages 3 and up)

It is estimated that together, licensed, certified and license exempt child care programs served nearly 238,000 children in Wisconsin in 2017.

## Licensed Providers, Capacity and Estimated Enrolled Children

As of December 31, 2017, there were 4,018 licensed child care centers and day camps in Wisconsin. Of the 4,018 licensed centers, 57% (2,280) were licensed group centers, 41% (1,642) were licensed family centers and (2%) 96 were licensed day camps. The overall number of licensed child care facilities operating in 2017 was about the same as the number operating in 2016 (4,030). While the number of group child care centers remained the same between 2016 and 2017, the number of family child care centers dropped by 2% during this same period. The number of day camps increased by 8% during this period.

An estimated 220,259 children were served in licensed child care centers and day camps in 2017. The following chart shows the number of licensed providers, capacity, and estimated number of children enrolled by license type.

Licensed Child Care				
	Total Number of Providers	Total Daytime Capacity	Total Nighttime Capacity	Estimated Number of Enrolled Children <sup>1</sup>
<b>Licensed Group</b>	2,280	133,282	8,908	189,113
<b>Licensed Family</b>	1,642	12,470	1,984	19,223
<b>Licensed Day Camp</b>	96	8,965	0	11,923
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,018</b>	<b>154,717</b>	<b>10,892</b>	<b>220,259</b>

<sup>1</sup> The estimated number of enrolled children in licensed care is calculated by multiplying licensed capacity by 1.33. Due to part-time care, slots are often filled by more than one child.

## License Exempt Public School Programs

Wisconsin's license exempt public school programs are child care programs operated by or under contract with public school districts. Pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 120.13(14), a child care program established and provided by a school board is not required to be licensed but must comply with the applicable child care licensing standards governing the operation of licensed group child care centers. BECR is the designated state agency responsible for monitoring license exempt programs receiving Wisconsin Shares. As of December 31<sup>st</sup> 2017, there were 191 license exempt programs subject to annual monitoring by BECR licensing specialists. These programs had a capacity of 9,808 and served approximately 13,044 children.

## Monitoring of Licensed Programs

Licensing specialists are responsible for monitoring licensed group and family child care centers and day camps. Each licensing specialist's caseload includes a mix of group and family centers and day camps. Throughout the year, BECR staff is involved in opening new and relocated licensed child care centers, closing licensed centers, and conducting routine monitoring of all licensed programs.

Licensed centers and camps must be visited at least once per year by a licensing specialist to review compliance with the administrative rules. In practice, the average number of visits to centers is about two per year. Over a two-year period, all applicable administrative rules must be reviewed for each center. In 2017, BECR licensing specialists reviewed over 1.3 million administrative rules at licensed child care facilities. Approximately 98% of the monitored rules were met, with only 2% of monitored rules resulting in a rule violation.

<b>Total Rules Reviewed by Licensing Specialists in 2017</b>	
<b>Total Rules Reviewed</b>	<b>1,346,061</b>
Rules Met	883,077
Rule Violations	16,282
Rules Determined Not Applicable on Day of Visit	446,702

The information collected at the child care monitoring visits is readily available to parents and others who visit the [Wisconsin Regulated Child Care Search](#) on the DCF website. Regulatory information includes hours of operation, capacity, compliance and noncompliance statements, correction plans, and fines and enforcements. Results from visits are posted as soon as the next day following a licensing visit.

In addition to monitoring visits, licensing specialists provide technical assistance and consultation to centers, conduct complaint investigations, and license new centers. BECR licensing specialists made 7,350 visits in 2017 to licensed centers. An additional 267 visits were made to unregulated child care locations in response to allegations of unlicensed care. The following table shows the visit reasons and number of visits in 2017.

Purpose of Visit	Number of Visits
Complaint Regarding Licensed Center	384
Complaint Regarding Unlicensed Center	267
Enforcement Action Compliance Verification	134
Initial Licensing Study	684
License Amendment	140
Monitoring for Licensing	5,390
Pre-licensing Technical Assistance	15
Technical Assistance for Licensed Facility	317
Verification of Correction Plan Compliance	286
<b>TOTAL<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>7,617</b>

<sup>1</sup> Licensing specialists attempted 542 visits in which they were unable to gain entry during licensed hours of operation.

### Licensing Complaint Investigations

BECR received 1,241 complaints concerning licensed child care centers in 2017. This compares to 1,165 complaints received in 2016, an increase of 6% between 2016 and 2017. In 2017, 511 complaints regarding licensed child care were substantiated while 705 complaints were unsubstantiated. A complaint is considered substantiated when at least one of the allegations contained in the complaint results in issuance of a rule violation. BECR also received 287 complaints alleging unlicensed child care in 2017; 98 unlicensed complaints were substantiated while 190 complaints were unsubstantiated.

2017 Complaint Investigation Results		
	Licensed Complaints	Unlicensed Complaints
<b>Received</b>	1,241	287
<b>Substantiated</b>	511	98
<b>Unsubstantiated</b>	705	190
<b>Closed</b>	1,216	288

### Self-Reports

Child care licensees are required to report to BECR certain incidents, injuries and deaths that occur in licensed care. Licensing specialists review these reports to determine whether rule violations may have been a factor. During 2017, BECR reviewed and closed 1,634 self-reported incidents and/or injuries involving a child in licensed care. Of those self-reports that required additional investigation, 29 resulted in one or more violations. Twenty-one additional investigations conducted in response to a self-report did not result in a violation.

## Serious Injuries and Deaths

There were 1,236 serious injuries (injuries that required medical attention) in licensed child care centers during 2017. There were 1,153 injuries in group child care, 61 injuries in family child care, and 22 in day camps. During the same year, there were four deaths in licensed child care centers.

Six referrals for child protective services investigation resulted in a substantiated finding of child abuse or neglect in 2017. Two of these substantiations occurred while the child was in the care of a licensed center.

## Licensed Provider Satisfaction Survey

Throughout the year, BECR reviews licensing feedback provided through three customer satisfaction surveys. The surveys gather responses from current and closed child care licensees and license applicants. In 2017, 358 current and former licensees and applicants provided responses to the surveys. Below are some of the highlights.

### Feedback from Licensed or Formerly Licensed Providers

- Ninety-one percent (91%) of respondents indicated their licensing specialist clearly explained the purpose of the visit.
- Ninety-four percent (94%) indicated their licensing specialist was professional and courteous.
- Ninety-two percent (92%) indicated their licensing specialist clearly explained the results of the visit.

### Feedback from Applicants for Licensure

- Twenty-three applicants responded to the applicant satisfaction survey.
- Ninety percent (90%) of those respondents indicated that the assistance provided by BECR staff was helpful or extremely helpful.

## Certified Child Care Centers and Capacity

As of December 31, 2017, there were 748 certified family providers and 4 certified school-age programs. This is a 9% decrease in certified providers, compared to 2016. An estimated 4,698 children were enrolled in certified child care in 2017. The following table shows the number of certified child care centers and the estimated number of children enrolled in certified care in 2017.

Certified Child Care				
	Total Number of Providers	Group Size	Children Under the age of 7	Estimated Number of Enrolled Children <sup>1</sup>
<b>Certified Family</b>	748	4,402	2,231	4,488
<b>Certified School-Age</b>	4	158	0	210
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>752</b>	<b>4,560</b>	<b>2,231</b>	<b>4,698</b>

<sup>1</sup> The estimated number of enrolled children in certified family care is calculated by multiplying the number of providers by 6. The estimated number of enrolled children in certified school-age care is calculated by multiplying capacity by 1.33. Due to part-time care, slots are often filled by more than one child.



## Monitoring of Certified Child Care Centers

Monitoring of certified family child care and certified school-age care is conducted by certifiers employed by counties, tribes, subcontracted agencies and in Milwaukee County, BECR licensing staff.

Certifiers and BECR licensing specialists conducted 1,396 visits to certified centers in 2017 to monitor, provide technical assistance, verify compliance and conduct complaint investigations.

In addition, 248 attempted visits were made to certified centers in 2017. All certified providers received at least one visit between 2015 and 2017. Beginning in November of 2017, all certified providers must receive one unannounced monitoring visit each year.

Purpose of the Visit	Number of Visits
Annual Visit/Monitoring/294 Verification/Other	825
Complaint Visit	29
Expired Re-Certification Visit	16
Initial Provider Visit	214
Re-Certification Visit	239
Relocation Visit	31
Technical Assistance Visit	42
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,396</b>

## Enforcement Actions

Licensing and certification staff may initiate enforcement actions when, because of the severity of violations and/or a pattern of repeated violations, the health, safety and welfare of children in care is at risk. Progressive enforcement refers to a series of actions taken to gain compliance with administrative rules when previous efforts, such as citing the violation or providing technical assistance, have not worked. Enforcement actions are authorized in statute and can ultimately lead to revocation of a license or certification. Regulation enforcements are posted on the public website. The table to the right summarizes enforcement actions related to licensed programs in 2017.

2017 Licensing Rule Enforcements	
Denial – DHS-12/Other	22
Forfeiture/Direct Forfeiture	225
Orders/Stop Operating Orders	266
Revocation – DHS-12/Other	68
Summary Suspension	4
Warning Letter/ Warning Letter No Access	221
2 <sup>nd</sup> Probationary License Due to Noncompliance	23
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>829</b>

This table summarizes enforcement actions related to certified programs in 2017.

2017 Certification Rule Enforcements	
Denial – DHS-12/Other	18
Revocations	14
Suspensions	16
Warning Letter	28
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>76</b>

## Caregiver Background Checks

During 2017, the BECR Caregiver Background Unit (CBU) completed 5,051 Department of Justice background checks and 439 FBI checks for licensed providers.

# Program Integrity

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## **Bureau of Program Integrity**

The Bureau of Program Integrity (BPI) was created as part of the Division's reorganization in 2014 to better allocate resources to oversee program integrity for the Division's programs.

## **Mission**

To enforce compliance and integrity of the Wisconsin Shares and YoungStar programs by monitoring, investigating, and recovering misapplied funds

BPI pursues a variety of remedies including establishing and applying overpayments, monitoring and investigating unusual EBT card activities, and pursuing collection activities in collaboration with DCF Finance. BPI enforces other actions as well, such as stipulations and permanent suspensions. BPI also provides oversight, monitoring, and guidance for counties, tribes, child care programs, and Wisconsin Shares participants.





## Wisconsin Shares Provider Investigations

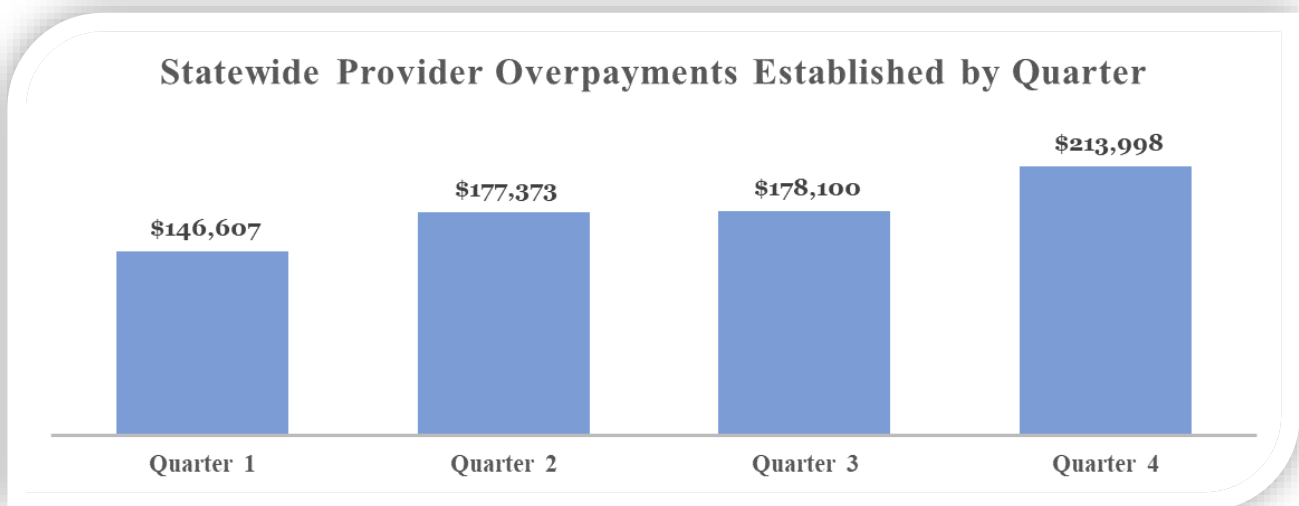
BPI received 3,280 referrals from the fraud mailbox and the quarterly red flag reports. All referrals were screened, resulting in one of the following actions:

- (1) Closed** – The referral was unsubstantiated and did not warrant any further investigation.
- (2) Technical Assistance Letter (TA)** – The referral identified an error correctable with technical assistance being provided to the child care provider.
- (3) Preliminary Investigation** – The referral identified potential risks and required further investigation. Further review and investigation are conducted on incoming referrals during the preliminary investigation stage.

If the preliminary investigation uncovers additional violations, a history of non-compliance, and/or indications of fraud or overpayment, then a formal investigation is opened. BPI completed 757 investigations, including 575 preliminary and 182 formal investigations. The table below summarizes the outcomes of the 182 formal investigations completed.

Formal Investigation Outcomes	
No Overpayment	30
Overpayment Only	103
Overpayment and Stipulation	22
Termination (with or without overpayment)	27
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>182</b>

BPI and county agencies established a total of \$716,078 in child care provider overpayments due to errors and/or inadequate billing or payment practices. The chart below summarizes overpayments established each quarter.



## Wisconsin Shares Parent Investigations

BPI reviews and approves intentional program violation (IPV) activities statewide. An IPV occurs when an individual is found to be intentionally providing false or misleading statements, withholding information, or committing an act that violates state or federal laws for the purpose of using, transferring, acquiring, possessing, or trafficking benefits.

Seventy-two IPV's were established totaling \$277,836.57. In addition, \$68,198.18 was established in Client Error overpayments - when a portion of the overpayment is not a result of the client committing an intentional violation - for an overall total of \$346,034.75.

2017 Statewide Client IPV's Established	
Quarter 1	19
Quarter 2	24
Quarter 3	16
Quarter 4	13
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>72</b>

BPI provides guidance and technical assistance to local and tribal agencies responsible for establishing overpayments for clients. A client/parent overpayment occurs when a participant receives benefits for which they are not eligible. A total of 1,105 client/parent overpayments were established, totaling over \$2,011,648.

## Program Integrity and the MyWICChildCare Initiative

With the release of the MyWICChildCare initiative, BPI strove to adapt program integrity policies and procedures to meet the new payment structure.

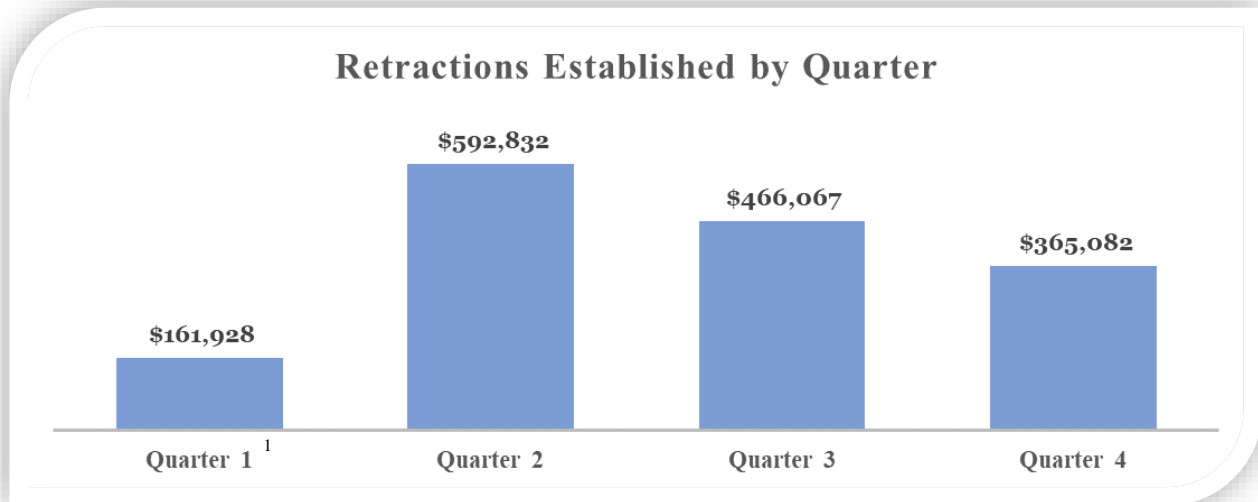
To do so, BPI:

- Developed new program integrity red flag reports to identify trends or unusual activity with the new program data.
- Revised the program integrity policy chapters.
- Provided ongoing technical assistance to local agencies to help prevent misuse and abuse of public funds.
- Established new investigative procedures to combat inappropriate possession of parent MyWICChildCare EBT cards.
- Introduced new types of fund recovery, including retracting inaccurately issued funds on MyWICChildCare EBT cards and the Voluntary Repayment Agreement (VPA).

## Retractions

BPI developed and initiated a new method of fund recovery called Retractions. Retractions were designed for situations where funds were incorrectly loaded to a parent's MyWICChildCare EBT card and need to be removed to prevent an overpayment. Funds are removed from the card and returned to Wisconsin Shares.

A total of 3,703 retractions were completed for a total amount of \$1,585,909.06. The chart below summarizes statewide retractions established for each quarter of 2017.

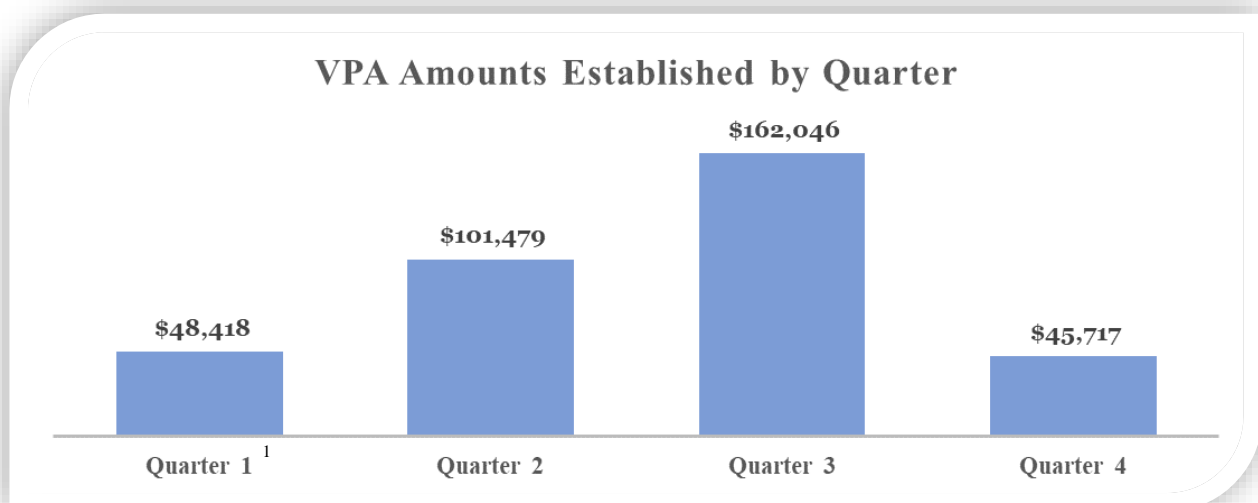


<sup>1</sup> The process for retractions began in mid-February 2017.

## Voluntary Repayment Agreements

BPI initiated a new method of fund recovery called Voluntary Repayment Agreements (VPAs). VPAs were created for situations where payments were made incorrectly to the provider, and the provider wished to return the funds. They were designed to alleviate some of the financial responsibilities of parents and are pursued in lieu of parent overpayments.

A total of 1,041 VPAs were completed for a total amount of \$357,659.70. The chart below summarizes statewide VPA amounts established each quarter in 2017.



<sup>1</sup> The VPA process began in late January 2017.

## Technical Assistance (TA)

In August of 2016, BPI began to track the amount of technical assistance provided to local agencies. BPI provides technical assistance to local agencies on numerous issues such as how to complete investigations, how to process overpayments, and system questions.

In 2016, the TA mailbox received approximately 12.3 requests per month. In 2017, the average was 247 technical assistance requests per month. A total of 2,962 TA requests were received in 2017.

2017 Statewide TA Requests Received	
Quarter 1	290
Quarter 2	1,011
Quarter 3	830
Quarter 4	831
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,962</b>



# Milwaukee Early Care Administration

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## **Bureau of Milwaukee Early Care Administration**

Child care provider certification, authorization for child care subsidies, and certain program integrity activities for Milwaukee County are provided by the Bureau of Milwaukee Early Care Administration (MECA). The Department contracts with the Department of Health Services for basic eligibility determination for residents applying for Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy assistance.

### **Mission**

To promote excellence in early childhood care and education in Milwaukee County and to ensure that Milwaukee residents have access to affordable, high-quality child care that enhances children's development and supports low-income families' ability to work

MECA provides multiple services to Milwaukee County, including:

- Authorization services for Wisconsin Shares recipients
- Provider services to ensure timely subsidy payments to child care providers
- Client Program Integrity services for the Wisconsin Shares program

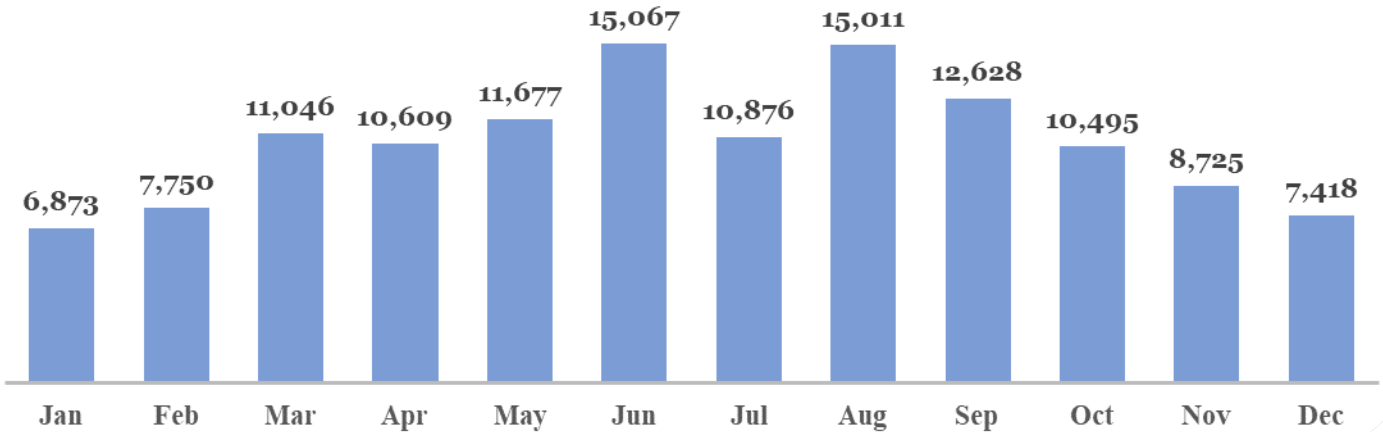
MECA works in combination with Milwaukee Enrollment Services (MiES) to determine and manage participant eligibility and services of the Wisconsin Shares program. MiES manages all aspects of Income Maintenance, determining eligibility and issuing benefits to Milwaukee County residents.



## Wisconsin Shares Authorizations

A total of 128,173 authorizations were processed for Wisconsin Shares participants in Milwaukee County.

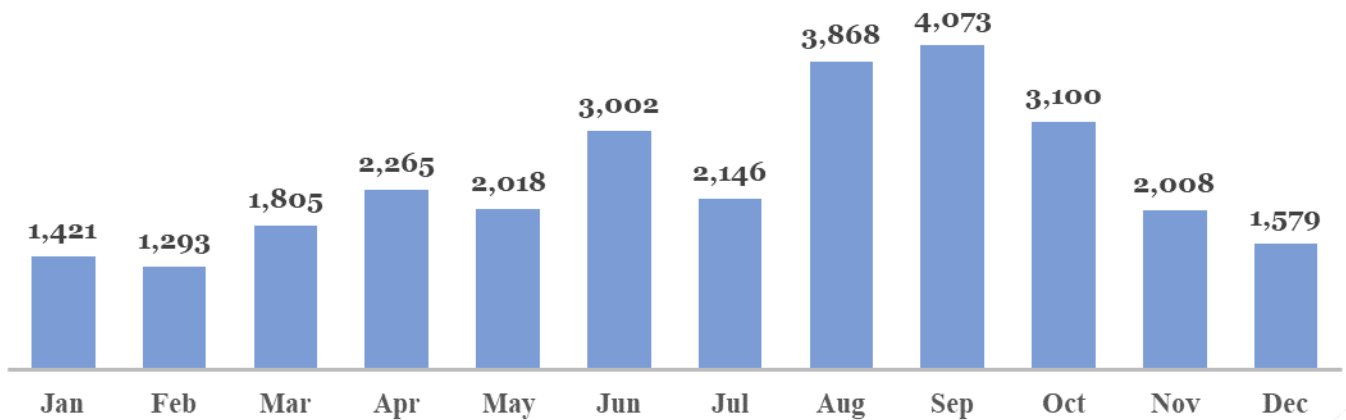
### Authorizations Processed in Milwaukee County by Month



## Number of Walk-In Services

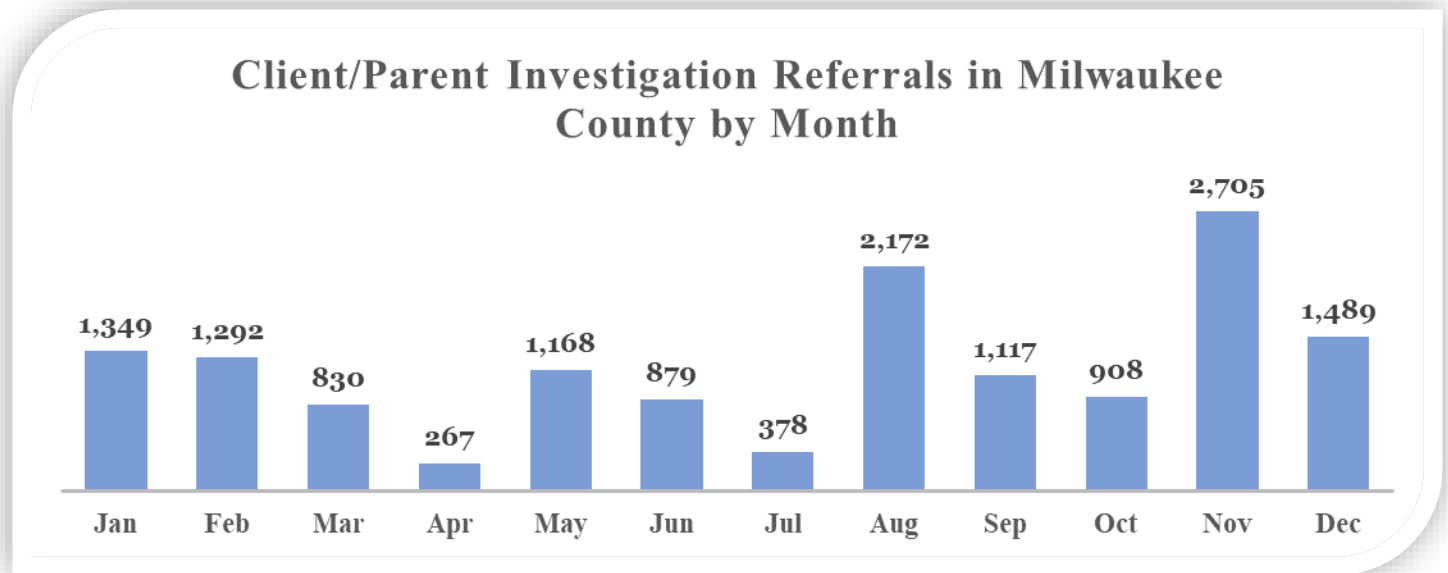
MECA offers services to families via the Internet, phone, and face-to-face. MECA served 28,578 individuals through walk-in services, a decrease from 29,461 in 2016. The chart below summarizes the number of walk-in services provided each month in 2017.

### MECA 2017 Walk-In Services Provided



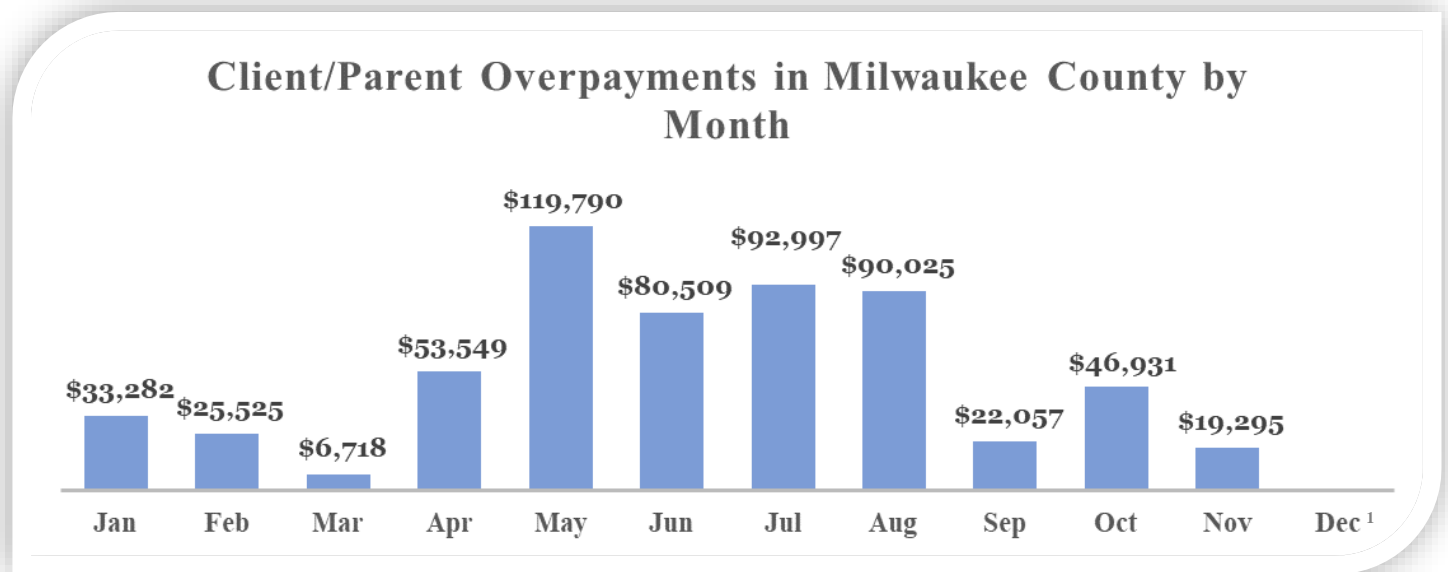
## Client/Parent Investigation Referrals

A total of 14,554 client referrals were received in 2017, up from 8,321 in 2016.



## Client/Parent Overpayments

MECA established \$590,679 in client/parent overpayments in 2017, which is \$1,492,928 less than in 2016.



<sup>1</sup> MECA conducted a 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter project which resulted in no overpayments during December.



# Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant

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Five Years. Three agencies. Countless lives touched.

Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) was a federal grant awarded to Wisconsin in 2013 to enhance the state's early childhood system. RTT-ELC was a cross-departmental grant that used the talent, experience, vision, and programs of three state departments: Children and Families (designated as the lead agency by the Governor), Public Instruction, and Health Services. Wisconsin was awarded \$34 million in this grant to combine talents and experiences on several projects to benefit Wisconsin children and families. The Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant ended December 2017. The following is a brief summary of the goals, accomplishments, and results of ten RTT-ELC projects.

## Project 1: Early Learning Systems

### Action: Support Public/Private Partnerships and Coordination with Tribal Nations

The CETE (Children's Empowerment Through Education) Network was created to support existing and emerging local early childhood partnerships and connect them in a collective effort.

### Impacts and Results

\$849,852 was granted to early childhood coalitions for training, financing, support, and tools to help them engage more community partners, particularly in the private sector.

### Tribal Nation Relationships

A Tribal State Connections Workgroup held quarterly meetings to increase communication and collaboration among Tribal representatives, state departments and associations.

- *90-day Action Plans: The Tribal Nations engaged in training and utilized the action plans to prioritize change activities for their communities.*
- *\$75,000 in mini-grants were awarded to eight Tribal Nations to address priorities and activities identified in their 90-day Action Plans.*



## Project 2: Inclusion and Screening Technical Assistance

### Action: Support the Inclusion Initiative

The inclusion initiative was designed to provide additional training and assistance to child care providers who serve children with special needs by supporting inclusive child care settings. Website content was created for both providers and families, and two Early Childhood Inclusion Institutes were held.

### Impacts and Results

Included in the web content are multiple local and state inclusion resources, links to national resources, tip sheets for child care providers, the Inclusive Practices for Young Children modules, and Wisconsin UNITES (Understanding the Need for Inclusive Training and Educational Support) modules. The first Early Childhood Inclusion Institute in the state involved approximately 200 professionals from the early childhood field, including YoungStar Technical Consultants and statewide disability resource agency staff, convening



for two days of professional development. The goals: develop a common language and understanding of inclusion throughout the regional network of service and technical assistance providers; and support a cohesive system of inclusion services by using communication and partnership. The second Early Childhood Inclusion Institute focused on the components of high quality inclusive practices.

### **Screening and Assessment**

The Comprehensive and Aligned System for Early Childhood Screening and Assessment: Wisconsin’s Blueprint, 3rd Edition was finalized and printed.

## **Project 3: YoungStar and 4K Alignment**

### **Action: Promote Community Child Care Approaches and Alignment**

This work aimed to improve the alignment and collaboration between private child care and public 4K programming.

### **Impacts and Results**

The Wisconsin DPI State Superintendent’s Advisory Council on 4-Year-Old Kindergarten and Community Approaches continued to promote state department collaboration around effective practices. A guide was created to foster alignment and to support the ongoing collaboration of child care and DPI 4K programs.

## **Project 4: High-Needs Families in Quality Care**

### **Action: Campaign YoungStar to parents**

The promotional campaign included three educational videos, “What is YoungStar?”, “Toxic Stress,” and “Start with Experience”; paid advertising; user-friendly website revisions to create a more user-friendly version of the site; a child care finder search application; and grassroots outreach. Collateral materials continue to be used by families and community partners and are available on the YoungStar website.

### **Impacts and Results**

During the campaign:

- 6,000 new YoungStar website users, 4,820 unique visitors/month
- 8,250 unique visitors/month to the Child Care Finder website, doubling the website traffic
- 82.8% of website traffic came to the site via YoungStar ads
- 40+ hours of ads watched on YouTube

## **Project 5: Quality of YoungStar**

### **Action: Support Providers**

This project supported a variety of scholarships, training, and bonus opportunities for child care providers.

### **Impacts and Results**

During the campaign:

- \$852,700 distributed to providers through 1,116 Challenge Awards ranging from \$300 to \$1,300 in recognition of an increase in their program’s quality rating
- \$3,000,000 in funds used to provide access to free credit-based instruction for YoungStar participating child care providers rated 2 or 3 Stars
- 1,300 students supported by the Educational Opportunities Grant
- 9 Tribes awarded a micro-grant from the Gardens to Children project, impacting 492 Tribal children
- 2,250 Environment Kits distributed to providers rated 2 and 3 Star

- 71 early care and education programs were awarded a micro-grant for starting new or expanding existing gardens
- 1,500 T.E.A.C.H. scholarship contracts awarded to providers rated 2 or 3 Star
- 8,300 Registry Career Level Certificate applications funded
- 33 YoungStar participating child care providers awarded accreditation scholarships
- 5,000 hours of additional on-site technical assistance for providers

## **Project 6: YoungStar Validation Study**

### **Action: Validate YoungStar**

The Wisconsin Early Child Care Study was undertaken to examine the validity of the YoungStar rating scale. The study was designed to answer two questions: whether the rating scale is able to differentiate programs according to their levels of independently observed quality, and whether children who attend higher-rated programs gain more in terms of school readiness over a school year than children attending programs rated at lower levels.

### **Impacts and Results**

The study revealed that the YoungStar rating scale differentiates among programs of varying observed quality. Results of the study led to follow-up research and YoungStar refinements which will allow the rating scale to better predict children’s outcomes. As such, two changes will be made to YoungStar rating criteria: refinements of the 3 Star educational threshold for Lead Teachers/Group Leaders and family child care providers; and programs will be required to demonstrate developmentally appropriate materials, interactions, and learning.

## **Project 7: Model Early Learning Standards**

### **Action: Embed Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards and Pyramid Model Training in More Provider’s Everyday Practice**

### **Impacts and Results**

During the campaign for Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards:

- 4,800 attendees received training
- 45 new trainers approved statewide
- 5 new focus projects completed

During the campaign for Pyramid Model:

- 4,800 attendees received training
- 1,000 slots purchased for future on-line Pyramid Model training
- 2 Pyramid Model Academies hosted
- 1 new training series for infants and toddlers
- 81 sites implementing the Pyramid Model program
- 1 article published: Breaking the Cycle: Supporting parent-child relationships through the “Parents Interacting with Infants” Intervention

## **Project 8: Family Engagement**

### **Action: Increase Parental Involvement**

The goal of this work was to increase families' engagement in their children's early care and education.

### **Impacts and Results**

During the campaign:

- “Parent Cafés” were offered in 14 different counties, and 161 sessions ultimately served 1,862 total attendees. Twenty-four Parent Cafés were held in a language other than English (Spanish, Hmong, and Swahili), and 15 supported families and children with special needs. The Parent Cafés introduced the Strengthening Families Five Protective Factors, engaged families in discussions around how to promote child development, increased the confidence of parents and families in advocating for the best outcomes for their young children, fostered leadership skills in parents and families, and offered information about organizations within the community that provide family support.
- Mini-grants were awarded to 18 communities to encourage local cross-sector collaboration around cohesive, community-wide approaches to family engagement.
- Funds supported the Early Childhood Parent Ambassador Program, which trained a cadre of parents to advocate for high quality early care and education.

## **Project 9: Professional Development Framework**

### **Action: Align Early Childhood Professional Development**

### **Impacts and Results**

During the campaign:

- Statewide Intersecting Interests Conferences were hosted to promote consistent cross-sector professional development systems.
- 2 early childhood competency booklets were designed for professional growth and training activities.
- The Higher Education Articulation Summit was hosted to promote collaboration in career pathways, articulation efforts, and credit for prior learning.
- The Wisconsin Early Childhood System Portfolio website was created for building and sustaining the Wisconsin Early Childhood Systems infrastructure.

## **Project 10: Data-Driven Decisions**

### **Action: Integrate Early Childhood Data Systems**

The technical and policy foundation for the ECIDS, which will promote analysis of de-identified and cross-departmental data, was built.

### **Impacts and Results**

Linking data from DCF, DPI, and DHS allows agency researchers, analysts, and content experts to better understand how children receive services, and ultimately enables data-driven decisions, improving outcomes for children, families, and communities. The ECIDS is supported by data systems at each agency.

- DCF created a cross-program data warehouse called LIFT.
- DHS created a Customer Hub.
- DPI continues to use its data warehouse called WISEdash.

# Appendix: Division of Early Care and Education Organizational Chart

