

# WISCONSIN SHARES

## SUBSIDY POLICY GUIDE

### *FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS*

**Wisconsin Department of Children and Families**

**In conjunction with**

**Wisconsin Child Care Providers Together-AFSCME**

[www.dcf.wisconsin.gov](http://www.dcf.wisconsin.gov)  
[www.dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/wishares](http://www.dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/wishares)  
[www.wisconsinccpt.org](http://www.wisconsinccpt.org)



This guide does not replace the authority of federal regulations, Wisconsin state statutes and Administrative Rules, Wisconsin Shares Child Care Manual and Operations Memo and any other child care policy documents published by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) or the federal Child Care Bureau to regulate the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program. For the most current information regarding Wisconsin Shares rules and regulations, please refer to [www.dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/WISHARES/provider](http://www.dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/WISHARES/provider)



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## Welcome to the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Assistance Program

Thank you for choosing to serve families enrolled in the Wisconsin child care assistance (subsidy) program, also known as Wisconsin Shares. The program is available to eligible families, but unlike Food Stamps where a **family** needs a debit-like card to pay for services, this program reimburses providers directly on behalf of the **family**. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) and Wisconsin Child Care Providers Together (WICCPT) are committed to increasing the availability of quality child care environments for all Wisconsin families. Quality child care environments ensure that our children are safe, healthy, and ready to succeed.

Families rely on affordable, high quality care in order to help them become self-sufficient and successful or to maintain employment.

**YOU** are an important part of the success of the families you serve!

*If you would like a more complete look at Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy program policies and procedures, you may visit:*  
<http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/wishares>

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is an equal opportunity employer and service provider. If you have a disability and need to access this information in an alternate format, or need it translated to another language, contact the Bureau of Child Care Administration at (608) 261-6317 Option #2. For civil rights questions call (608) 266-5335 or (866) 864-4585 (TTY).

## Purpose of the Child Care Provider Guide

This **child care provider** guide is intended to give providers in group, **in-home** and **family** child care settings an overview of the Wisconsin Shares child care assistance program along with helpful hints for getting started and complying with program policies and procedures. As a provider knowledgeable about the subsidy program, you will be able to assist families in utilizing Wisconsin Shares while complying with all necessary rules and regulations as outlined in state statutes.

**Note:** Terminology that appears in **bold face** type throughout this policy guide can be found in the definitions section located at the end of this guide.

## Purpose of the Wisconsin Shares Program

The Wisconsin Shares program is administered by the Department of Children and Families (DCF). The purpose of the program is to provide child care assistance funding for low-income families, including foster parents, kinship care relatives providing care for children, and subsidized guardians who are:

- Employed or are preparing for employment through **Wisconsin Works**, Food Stamp Employment and Training Program, Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

**OR**

- In high school and working on their high school diploma or equivalent.

The Wisconsin Shares program is regulated under Administrative Rules, state and federal laws and DCF policies. Program oversight is provided by DCF with local administration of the program facilitated through contractual relationships with DCF/Milwaukee Early Care Administration (**MECA**), DHS / Milwaukee Enrollment Services (**MILES**), county Human Service agencies, **tribes**, the United Migrant Opportunity Services (UMOS), and any of these agencies' subcontractors.

Wisconsin Shares reimbursement is subject to the provisions set forth in Wisconsin's federally approved state plan for use of Child Care Development Funds (CCDF) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant funds, current state and federal law, administrative rules, and departmental policies. Reimbursements are made only for child care provided to enable the parent to participate in approved activities associated with the individual's authorization.

## Parents' Rights and Responsibilities

1. Parents have the right to be treated with respect and dignity by county, tribal or state workers and child care providers.
2. Parental choice of their child care provider is a federal and state requirement, contingent upon the chosen provider operating within their regulatory and Wisconsin Shares guidelines.
3. Parents are required to:
  - a. Provide truthful information and supply all required verification when they apply for child care assistance.
  - b. Obtain **authorizations** from their county, tribal agency or **MECA**.
  - c. Have **co-payments** assessed based upon DCF levels deducted from their child care assistance benefit and pay their co-payments to their child care provider.
  - d. Report changes in their household within 10 days after the change if it may affect their eligibility, including but not limited to approved activities, income, **assistance group** (family) size or a change in placements of foster or kinship care children.
  - e. Contact the county, tribal agency, or **MECA** to request an authorization for future payments if a child is in care and his / her name does not appear on the provider's attendance report form or in the Child Care Provider Information System (CCPI).
  - f. Request any payment for extra hours of care from the county, tribal agency or **MECA**.
  - g. Comply with sign in and sign out procedures of their child care program and all related procedures as developed and implemented by DCF.
4. Parental non-compliance with program requirements may result in eligibility ending, fiscal recoupment, legal action, temporary or permanent bars from public assistance, and other actions as deemed necessary by the agencies administering the program.
5. Parents may have additional requirements established by their child care provider as a contractual agreement with the provider.
6. Parents must choose a regulated child care provider for their child unless the situation meets specific circumstances for parents to utilize **in-home care** (See definition of in-home care).
7. Parents are encouraged to choose a high quality child care provider.
8. Both federal and state laws require parents to have **co-payments**.

9. Parents may be required to pay child care providers the cost of the difference between their rates reported to DCF and the amount paid by DCF, additional fees, and other costs associated with child care not covered by Wisconsin Shares.
10. Parents are responsible for notifying their provider when they change locations or plan to end their authorizations.
11. Parents are responsible to use child care reimbursed by Wisconsin Shares only when they are in an **approved activity**.

Families can check their benefits at Wisconsin  
Access: <https://access.wisconsin.gov>

## Child Care Providers' Rights and Responsibilities

1. **Child care providers** have the right to be treated with respect and dignity by parents, county, tribal and state staff.
2. All **child care providers** and their employees, substitutes and volunteers are responsible for adhering to the rules and requirements listed on the **Child Care Attendance Report** form (ARF) as well as the **CARES** Child Care Web Request form.
3. **Child care providers** are responsible for providing counties, **tribes** or **MECA** accurate W-9 tax information, including personal name changes and consistent representation of their business name as they report it to the Social Security Administration (SSA), Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and Wisconsin's Department of Revenue (DOR).
4. **Child care providers** are responsible for notifying their state licenser or certifier, whichever is appropriate, when they plan to change addresses.
5. **Child care providers** may not use or disclose information concerning applicants and recipients of Wisconsin Shares for any purpose not connected with the administration of the program.

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6. Although it is not required, providers should obtain written verification of an existing **authorization** from a county, **tribe** or **MECA** or confirm the existence of an **authorization** online in **CCPI** before providing child care services. Failure to do so may mean that a provider will not be reimbursed by Wisconsin Shares for the child care services they provided.
7. Providers must maintain current, state-approved regulation in one of the following categories: licensed, certified, or operated by a public school board.
8. Licensed child care providers are responsible for providing their private pay rates to the county or **tribe**.
9. Licensed providers are required to submit to DCF in writing the prices they charge to private pay parents. If a provider's prices change, they must again submit, in writing, documentation of the prices they are charging. The county, **tribe** or **MECA** will not authorize to a licensed provider who refuses to submit their prices in writing.
10. Providers must keep the attendance records (sign in / out sheets) for subsidized children for a minimum of 3 years after their last date of attendance.
11. Providers must notify the local child care agency immediately upon becoming aware that a child is no longer attending their child care center. Notification can be completed in one of the following ways:
  - Checking termination box in **CCPI** attendance screen.
  - Noting a "T" on paper **attendance report form** (ARF) or
  - Other communication by fax, email or written correspondence with county staff.
12. Providers must charge all families at the same **rate** whether they are a private pay or Wisconsin Shares subsidy reimbursed **family**. Providers cannot charge Wisconsin Shares families at a **rate** that is higher than their private-pay **families** pay.
13. Providers are responsible for collecting parental **co-payments** assessed by the department and any additional payments that are part of the cost, following the provider's established policies.
14. All providers have the right to due process including the right to appeal decisions under DCF 201.07 regarding Wisconsin Shares payments and suspensions from the program.
15. Appeals must be made within 30 days to the Division of Hearing and Appeals. Information on how to file for an appeal is located at:  
<http://dha.state.wi.us/home/WFS/wfsunit.htm#How%20to%20request%20a%20hearing>

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16. All appeal timelines are subject to the date on the notice, not the date the notice is received.
17. Suggestions to help the appeal process are:
  - Appeal immediately – do not wait.
  - If you change your mind about an appeal, you may rescind your appeal at a later time.
  - Request copies of any and all documentation that supports the agency action.
  - All correspondence should be in writing.
  - If a provider has phone contact with an agency contact person the provider should follow up with a letter or email to the agency.
18. All providers have the right to receive correct payments by EFT or paper check.
19. All providers have the right to written notification when **authorizations** are terminated or changed. (Notices are batched and sent weekly.)
20. Providers have the right to refuse to accept a **family** enrolled in Wisconsin Shares just as they would any **family** seeking their child care services based upon sound business practices.
21. All providers have the right to charge Wisconsin Shares parents for any fees not paid by the program so long as these fees are the same that are charged to private pay parents.
22. All providers have the right to a response to their inquiries and expressions of concern to the **department** and / or local agency.
23. All providers have the right to ask for and, if resources permit, receive technical assistance regarding any aspect of the Wisconsin Shares program.

### **YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO APPEAL**

You have the right to appeal revocations, denials, overpayments, enforcement actions including orders and forfeitures. If any action is taken against your child care business, you will be notified of your right to appeal and the deadline by which you must do so.

## DCF'S Rights and Responsibilities

1. DCF staff has the right to be treated with respect and dignity by **child care providers**, county and tribal staff and parents.
2. DCF may create emergency Administrative Rules and implement changes to the program and must notify providers of the changes if they impact **child care providers**. Most notifications come as inserts with the providers' payment reports or through the Sharing the News newsletter published by DCF.
3. DCF is responsible for establishing Wisconsin Shares program policy changes which are then published through Operations Memos and policy manual releases.
4. DCF is responsible for statewide administration of the Wisconsin Shares program in accordance with federal and state guidelines.
5. DCF is responsible for overseeing and monitoring statewide program integrity of the Wisconsin Shares program.
6. DCF may contract local child care administration and certification to counties, **tribes** and **MECA**.
7. DCF may contract on-site child care at **Wisconsin Works** agencies.
8. DCF may represent the department in program integrity fair hearings.
9. DCF may investigate alleged fraud.
10. DCF may initiate systems programming to main and develop Information Technology (IT) solutions.
11. DCF maintains updates and obtains federal approval for Wisconsin's CCDF block grant plan.
12. DCF provides technical assistance by staffing a full-time help desk for **MECA**, county, **Wisconsin Works** and tribal workers.
13. DCF provides training to counties, **tribes** and **MECA** on child care certification requirements.

## County / Tribal Agency / MECA Rights and Responsibilities

1. County, tribal and **MECA** staff have the right to be treated with dignity and respect by **child care providers**, parents and state workers.
2. Counties, **tribes** and **MECA** perform all of the following functions:
  - Provide information to parents on how to select appropriate child care for their children.
  - Refer parents to local Child Resource and Referral agencies for additional information.
  - Assess eligible parents' needs for child care and write **authorizations** in accordance with state policy.
  - Update authorizations as needed.
  - Select appropriate **co-payments** for parents' authorizations.
  - Review and confirm provider submitted attendance to ensure that all payments accurately reflect children's attendance and Wisconsin Shares policies.
  - Monitor authorization usage and payments to **child care providers**.
  - Maintain accurate W-9 forms for every provider in the system.
  - Enter licensed provider **rates** into the CSAW system.
  - Represent DCF in fair hearings.
  - Investigate fraud.
  - Issue authorizations within two business days of the confirmation of eligibility if the parent has provided complete and accurate verification required for **authorizations** and also **child care provider** information, and if the provider is within their regulated capacity, and all **departmental** program integrity concerns have been addressed.
  - Determine if **special needs rates** are appropriate, or in Milwaukee County, provide training for providers on how to provide care for **special needs** children.
  - Conduct the annual survey of provider **rates**.

**Alert:** DCF frequently sends out important information in the form of a "check stuffer" in the envelope with a check or EFT notice. In addition, **Sharing the News** newsletter is mailed as a check stuffer. Current and past issues of **Sharing the News** can be accessed at <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/WISHARES/newsletter.htm> Providers can sign up to receive email notifications on various child care topics at: <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/listserv.htm>

## Step One: Eligibility for Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program

Individuals may apply for Wisconsin Shares child care assistance at their local county human services or tribal agencies or online through the Wisconsin Department of Health Services **ACCESS** program.

Wisconsin Shares child care assistance eligibility is based upon specific financial and non-financial criteria for a **parent** or person(s) acting in place of a parent. Parents must be in an **approved activity** such as employment or in specific employment and training programs (see Approved Activities).

Case eligibility must be reviewed at six month intervals or whenever a change is reported that affects eligibility. Failure to comply with case review requirements results in an end of eligibility and case closure. If the case stays closed for one month after the last day of the review month, the parent must re-apply for child care assistance.

Six-month reviews do not involve an interview with the parent. Instead, the review requires parents to complete a four-page Six-Month Review form (SMRF) and return it to the eligibility agency along with a month's worth of paystubs. The mainframe computer system for cases automatically sends a reminder notice to parents two months before the SMRF is due, and also sends the SMRF forms and instructions and a due date one month before the SMRF is due.

Twelve-month reviews require an interview with the parent. Interviews may be either in person (face-to-face) or over the telephone. Counties may require a face-to-face interview between the parent and the caseworker. Notices for reviews are sent to the parents 45 days prior to the review.

### Application Procedures

<p><b>Parent applies in person:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parent signs a Request for Assistance (RFA).</li> <li>Intake interview scheduled within 5 business days.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Or</b></p>	<p><b>Parent applies online:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ACCESS.</li> <li>Intake interview scheduled within 10 business days.</li> </ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Filing an RFA or submitting an ACCESS application establishes the filing date for assistance.</li> <li>Most interviews are face-to-face (in-person) or via the telephone.</li> <li>Applicant has 7 days to submit required verification; if they have difficulty, the timeframe may be extended up to 30 business days.</li> <li>Once verification is complete, the agency must determine eligibility within 7 business days. Verification requirements are listed in the Child Care Manual located at Chapter 1, Section 1.7.0: <a href="http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/wishares/pdf/chapter1.pdf">http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/wishares/pdf/chapter1.pdf</a></li> <li>Eligibility may be back-dated up to, but no further back than, the first day of the month of the Application filing date.</li> </ol>		

## Parental Participation in Approved Activities

In two-parent families, both parents, including step-parents and non-marital co-parents, must participate in approved activities, unless one parent is participating in approved activities and the other parent is unable to participate in **approved activity** due to a **disability** or health condition and is unable to care for the child or children. This situation must be verified by a doctor, psychiatrist, or psychologist.

### Examples:

If one parent is employed and the other parent living in the household is not employed and has been verified by a doctor that they cannot participate in an approved activity and are not able to take care of their child, the **family** may be eligible for child care assistance if all of the other financial and non-financial requirements are met.

If one parent is employed and the other parent living in the household is not employed, the unemployed parent would be expected to provide child care and the family would not be eligible.

## What are Approved Activities?

Meeting **Learnfare** program school attendance requirements for teen parents whose parents are in **Wisconsin Works (W-2)**.

Working for a qualified employer or being self-employed and meeting DCF self-employment guidelines.

- All parents who are employed as an approved activity must be working for a qualified employer that has a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN).
- If the approved activity is employment and the parent works for a **child care provider** or a business owned or managed by a **child care provider**, or if the employment appears to be questionable to the county, tribal or **MECA** worker, the following items must be verified in order for the employment to be considered qualified:
  - The employer must have a Worker's Compensation insurance policy for its employees.
  - The employer must comply with Wisconsin minimum wage law for all employees.
  - The employer must file a New Hire report on the employee within thirty days of the hiring date.
  - The employer must report wages to Unemployment Insurance unless exempt.

Being in the **W-2** program or in a Tribal **TANF** Employment Position

Working and going to school for basic educational needs or to a technical college or other educational that maintains participants employment.

Attending high school or equivalent.

Participating in the Foodshare Employment and Training (FSET) program.

**Alert:** Confidentiality and computer security are protected by state and federal laws. Violators may be referred to law enforcement agencies and may be suspended from the Wisconsin Shares program and other sanctions may be levied. Providers should never assist their families in logging on to the ACCESS system and the provider should never log on to ACCESS for their families.

### **Six-Month Review Forms (Blue SMRFs) and 12-Month Reviews**

A reminder letter is sent to parents two months before the Six-Month Review form (SMRF) is due.

SMRFs and instructions are sent to parents one month before they are due.

Parents may now complete SMRFs online using ACCESS.

Agencies send out reminder letters to parents instructing them to set up a review appointment for the 12-month review or agencies send out 12-month review appointments.

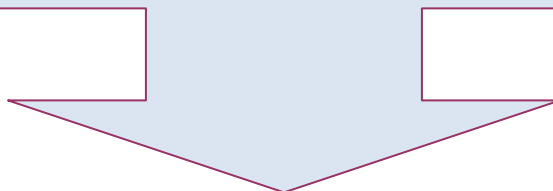
Failure to complete SMRFs or 12-month review requirements results in case closure. Families that have cases that have been closed for a full month after eligibility ends must re-apply (workers cannot re-open a case that has been closed for a full month after the SMRF or review date).

Always ask any new or recently reviewed parent for a copy of the authorization print-out if you have not already received your copy from the county, tribe or MECA. This will alert you to any possible changes in subsidy payment and / or co-payment expected from the parent. You may also verify this information in CCPI:

<http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/ccpi/default.htm>

Parents may view their current authorization online at:

<https://access.wisconsin.gov>



## Step Two: Families Determine Their Provider

Wisconsin law, s. 48.65 Wisconsin Statutes, requires anyone providing child care and supervision for compensation of four (4) or more children under age 7 (years) unrelated to the provider, to be licensed by the state. Exceptions to this law include care provided by relatives, care in a child's own home, and programs run by private / public schools.

Parents looking for child care can locate regulated providers through several sources including:

### Local Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies

[www.supportingfamieliestogether.org](http://www.supportingfamieliestogether.org)

### Licensed Child Care Provider Search

<http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/licensed/search.HTM>

**Child care providers** must be at least one of the following to be reimbursed for child care by the Wisconsin Shares program: Licensed, certified or operated by a public school board.

### Licensed

Licensing rules create separate requirements for three categories of licensed child care. Licensing is administered by DCF through the regional offices of the Bureau of Early Childhood Regulation (BECR).

**Licensed Family Child Care** Centers serve 4 to 8 children with one or more providers.

**Licensed Group Child Care** Centers serve 9 or more children with multiple providers in a commercial setting with at least one administrator.

Day Camps serve 4 or more children age three and older in a seasonal program oriented to the out-of-doors.

## Certified

State law requires counties, **tribes** or **MECA** to certify providers who are caring for children funded by Wisconsin Shares (unless the provider is licensed). To create a pool of regulated providers, most counties, **tribes** and **MECA** have opened certification to also include providers who do not care for Wisconsin Shares children. Counties and **tribes** receive funding as part of their Child Care Administration contract to certify child care providers. Some counties, most **tribes** and **MECA** do the certification themselves, and some counties subcontract certification responsibilities to other agencies.

A certified provider may care for up to 3 children under the age of seven, unrelated to the provider. The provider may care for additional school-age or related children as long as the group size does not exceed 6.

There are two levels of certification for family child care providers: Regular and Provisional.

### Regular Certified Providers

Regular certified providers must have completed the **department** approved entry-level training before regular status can be granted. Also, in some counties, these providers must complete 5 hours of continuing education each year.

### Provisionally Certified Providers

Provisionally certified providers are certified by a county, tribe or **MECA**, but are not required to be licensed. These include family and **in-home** providers. These providers have not completed the entry level of training required by DCF 202, but must complete some required training, specifically SIDS and Shaken Baby Syndrome.

### Certified School-Age Program

School-age certified providers are certified group child care programs serving children 7 and older (See **Certified School-Age Program** in Definitions).

### Step Three: Creating a Child Care Authorization

Once an individual is determined eligible, a county, **tribe** or **MECA** creates an **authorization** based upon their assessment of the family's need for care.

**Authorizations** are written as either Attendance-Based or Enrollment-Based (see **Authorization** types below).

**Authorizations** are written to a specific **child care provider** for a specific number of hours per week.

State statute prohibits **authorizations** to a **child care provider** for the care of their own child or child with whom they reside.

Children may not be authorized for more than 75 hours per week.

Children may not be authorized for more than 12 hours per day; however, the limit may be increased to 16 hours per day if a Wisconsin Shares participant provides additional written documentation of work and transportation that exceed 12 hours per day.

**Child care authorizations** must be based upon the county, **tribe** or **MECA** assessment of all the following:

- The number of hours of child care needed per week for the parents to participate in their approved activities.
- The type of authorization the care is approved for.
- The **co-payment** type.
- The length of care needed, for up to 6 months.

Authorizations for self-employment are only allowed for employment that produces gross monthly **income** equivalent to at least the state minimum wage. Refer to OPS memo 09-60 for additional information regarding self-employment

<http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/em/ops-memos/2009/index.htm> or Child Care Manual

Chapter 3 Section 3.6.1.2

<http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/wishares/pdf/chapter3.pdf>.

## Authorization Types

There are several different types of **authorizations** available to families seeking assistance in paying for child care:

- Attendance-based:
  - Part time.
  - Full time.
  - Second **Authorizations** when over 50 hours are needed.
  - **Sleep Shift.**
  - Zero-Hour.
- Enrollment-based:
  - Part-time.
  - Full time.
  - Second **Authorizations** when over 50 hours are needed.
  - **Sleep Shift.**

County, tribal or **MECA** staff works with families to determine when child care will be scheduled and what type of **authorizations** are needed.

**Authorizations** for child care through licensed group, school-age programs or licensed **family** providers can be enrollment or attendance-based; however, **authorizations** for child care through certified family providers are always attendance-based.

### 1. Attendance-Based Authorizations:

Attendance-based **authorizations** are used when the hours of attendance and / or the parent's work schedule significantly varies from one week to the next. These reimburse the **child care provider** on an hourly basis for only the hours of the child's actual attendance as reported for a given week, up to the maximum number of hours authorized. Certified **child care providers** may only receive attendance-based authorizations.

### 2. Enrollment-Based Authorizations:

Enrollment-based **authorizations** are used to authorize licensed providers when a parent's schedule remains fixed and there will be little variance in the hours used from week to week.

Enrollment-based **authorizations** reimburse the **child care provider** at a weekly **rate** regardless of the number of hours a child attends as long as the child is in attendance for at least one hour each week. These authorizations can be for any number of hours; however, the provider must be a licensed family, school-age program or group center to qualify.

**Authorizations** for child care through licensed family and / or group providers should always be enrollment-based unless the schedule of a child in care is expected to vary widely or if a county, **tribe** or **MECA** has documented 3 separate occasions where the provider **significantly over-reported** the attendance of a child.

### Zero-Hour Authorization

A zero-hour **authorization** may be created when a school-age child will use child care only during short school breaks *and* does not need care on a regular basis. Zero-hour **authorizations** are to be used **only when school is not in session due to school breaks, snow days, etc.**

**Example:** Janie is a school-aged child whose parents work first shift. She needs child care only when school is closed for short-term breaks. Janie can only use Wisconsin Shares funded child care when school is closed for short-term breaks. Her provider records the hours that Janie uses as school hours on the Attendance Form.

Parents may use authorized child care only when they are participating in their approved activity. Non-approved activities such as running errands, social activities, and attending appointments cannot be reimbursed by Wisconsin Shares. Note: Parent illness, layoffs, sick children and vacation time may be covered when approved by the county agency in limited situations (see Holding a Slot).

DCF sends **Authorization Notices** or other written notice to parents and providers when an **authorization** begins, ends or changes. Authorization Notices are batched and sent weekly.

An **authorization** for a licensed provider cannot be created in the subsidy system until the private-pay prices are entered into the subsidy automation system.

Parents must make the request for **authorizations** and **authorization** changes; county, tribal or **MECA** workers may not create or change authorizations for **child care providers** calling on behalf of a parent.

### 50+ Hours Authorization

Children who need more than 50 hours of care per week may receive two authorizations, one full-time and a second part time authorization for the balance of the time needed.

- Second **authorizations** are not issued for children using between 35 and 50 hours a week because DCF is already paying providers the weekly **maximum reimbursement rate** for a full-time slot.
- No child may be authorized for more than 75 hours in one week.

## Sleep Shift Care

Eligible parents who work third shift may be able to receive an **authorization** for day sleep time to maintain employment.

- The amount of authorized hours is determined by the county, **tribe** or **MECA** through negotiations with the parent.
- The local agency negotiates the amount of sleep time authorized per week with the parent. The same **family** may also request child care for the hours of employment as well.
- The total number of hours of both **authorizations** combined cannot exceed 75 hours (total) per week.

## Special Needs Children

Children who have verified **special needs** may be authorized for child care even if they are over age 13 and under age 19. DCF 201 allows counties and **tribes** and other administrative agencies the option, on a case-by-case basis, to calculate a higher **reimbursement rate** for special needs children if the provider verifies their increased costs for providing care for the child (See Special Needs Children-**Reimbursement**). **MECA** provides training for **child care providers** in Milwaukee on how to care for their special needs children instead of paying higher **rates**.

## Head Start / 4-K Wraparound

When wraparound care is available on-site at a Head Start facility for four hours or less, **authorizations** for child care are for the full amounts of child care hours needed, including Head Start hours. Some child care centers provide Head Start, preschool or four- or five-year-old kindergarten activities as components during the day. The full number of hours due for child care should be authorized to the centers, including the hours the child is attending Head Start, preschool or kindergarten activities at the center. If a Head Start child attends a center that is off-site, the authorization should cover only the hours the child attends the center and should not cover the hours the child attends the Head Start program.

**Example:** Kathy is at the Head Start facility from 8 AM to 3 PM every day. Her Head Start activities occur from 8 AM to noon and then she receives wraparound child care at the same site from noon to 3 PM. Kathy's authorization should be for seven hours, plus any transportation time needed each day.

**Note:** Providers should keep track of the dates that each of the parents is due for re-authorization. This date is found on the paper authorization and is also found on the authorization tab in **CCPI**. It is helpful for parents to get reminders about this date from both DCF and their provider.

## Reimbursement

A child care **authorization** from DCF is the only valid agreement that the provider will be paid by the Wisconsin Shares program. It describes the dates for which care will be paid, the maximum number of hours authorized, and the payment amount. Providers who accept children without a valid **authorization** have no guarantee they will receive payment from the Wisconsin Shares child care assistance (subsidy) program.

The Wisconsin Shares child care assistance program reimburses child care providers based upon a maximum **rate** set by the **department** minus parental **co-payment** amounts that are determined based on **family** income, household size, and the number of children needing child care.

Payment to providers for child care provided is initiated from submitted **attendance forms** (ARFs) or attendance entered online on **CCPI**.

ARFs are automatically generated every two weeks and mailed to the provider once the **authorization** is in the system. It is important for the provider to carefully follow instructions listed on the ARF.

Although the **family** is the recipient of the subsidy assistance, payments are made directly to the child care center on behalf of the child, less the state-determined **co-payment**.

Counties, **tribes** and **MECA** confirm (approve) attendance for **reimbursement** after receiving the provider's attendance forms (ARFs) or **CCPI** online attendance if the agency is a confirmation agency.

Attendance reporting is completed every two weeks via a paper attendance form (ARF) or the **CCPI** web-based attendance reporting system. Providers who have **CCPI** security clearance to submit attendance online may suppress in **CCPI** that they want DCF to stop sending ARFs.

The **child care provider** must report actual attendance accurately in order to receive Wisconsin Shares **reimbursement** for providing care to an eligible child. Counties, **tribes** or **MECA** may refuse to approve **reimbursement** for ARFs submitted after three months. To be considered for payment after 3 months, providers must submit sign in sheets for verification. Therefore, providers should submit ARFs to the county, **tribe** or **MECA** for **reimbursement** no later than three months from the date the attendance report was issued, or risk non-payment.

Providers must report the actual hours of attendance for each child in care whether the **authorization** is attendance or enrollment-based.

Wisconsin Shares will not reimburse a provider who is legally responsible for or lives with an eligible child, except in very limited situations when the county, **tribe** or **MECA** has approved the child for **in-home** child care.

No child care payment will be made until actual attendance takes place.

Wisconsin Shares will not reimburse enrollment-based authorizations when 2 consecutive weeks of zero-hours of attendance are submitted unless the county, **tribe** or **MECA** have previously approved the **absence**.

If payment has been made for week one of zero-hour attendance and the week is the second week of the attendance period and the first week of the following attendance period is also a zero-hour attendance week, the subsidy system will recoup the first week that was paid unless the county, **tribe** or **MECA** has previously approved the **absence**.

### School Bank Hours

The system automatically allocates approximately 110 **school bank hours** each trimester for school-age children to be used when the school is not in session due to spring and winter break, snow days, occasional days when the school is closed due to parent / teacher conferences, teacher compensation days, and annual teacher conference, etc.

**School bank hours** are not to be used when a school-age child is ill and cannot attend school. In these cases, the worker needs to create a separate authorization that covers the sick days.

The system automatically marks all children over age 5 as school-age, even if they are not yet enrolled in a school program. If the school-age child is younger than 5, the worker must identify the child as a school-age child (must be 3 and older).

When claiming **school bank hours**, the provider enters the attended hours in the school-age column instead of the 'regular' hours.

If a child has a regular **authorization**, regular hours must be exhausted before **school bank hours** can be claimed.

**Example:** Jane, a first grader, has a regular authorization for 20 hours of care a week. On the week in question, Jane was in care for 13 of her 20 regularly scheduled hours. On Monday of that week, school was closed for a national holiday and Jane was in care for 10 hours. Her provider should turn in 20 hours of regular attendance and 3 school banked hours. For attendance reporting purposes, there are boxes specially marked for entering these extra hours.

## Co-Payments

Under current law, almost every parent must contribute to the cost of their Wisconsin Shares funded child care. DCF calls this amount a **co-payment**.

To determine the co-payment amount, the county, **tribe** or **MECA** worker chooses the co-pay type determined by the type of assistance case. The system then automatically chooses the co-pay level amount based on the **family income**, size and number of children needing care.

The subsidy system deducts the co-pay from the 'beginning **reimbursement rate**', 'provider's private price' or the '**County / Tribal Maximum rate**' (*whichever is the lowest*) for the age group when calculating the authorized amount.

See **Authorization** calculation heading for further details. The co-pay chart is updated annually, usually in March / April and can be found on <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/wishares>.

When a **child care provider's** price is higher than the combined amount of the DCF determined rate and **co-payment**, the parent is responsible for paying the difference between the provider's private price and the amount that the subsidy pays. DCF refers to this amount as the **Parent Share**.

The system deducted co-payment is waived for parents who are minors attending high school, **foster parents** for their foster children, child welfare subsidized guardians in Milwaukee County for their foster children, and for kinship care providers who are receiving **kinship care** benefits and providing care for the child under a court order.

- In these cases, if the parent chooses a provider whose private **price** is less than the county / tribal maximum, the parent does not have a DCF co-pay or **Parent Share**.
- However, if the parent chooses a center whose private-pay price is above the county / tribal maximums, the parent is responsible paying the difference (**Parent Share**).

**Co-payments** for part-time care **authorizations**, whether they are enrollment-based or attendance-based, for a total of 20 hours or less, are assessed half the regular co-pay amount.

If a **family** has multiple children receiving subsidy, the system automatically divides the co-pay between the children based on the number of hours authorized.

## County / Tribal Maximum Reimbursement Rates

State law requires the counties to annually contact all licensed providers in their geographical area to obtain information on the private child care market so maximum **rates** can be calculated for the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program.

### 1. Rate Survey:

Each year counties and **MECA** survey all licensed providers in their county to collect child care prices and related information. The goal of this survey is to establish **maximum reimbursement rates** for the Wisconsin Shares program. Counties and **MECA** send out the survey forms to DCF licensed group and family centers in their county and report the survey results to the DCF.

- On the survey form, the centers report the amounts that they charge private-pay families whose care is not subsidized by public funds.
- The survey collects hourly, daily and weekly prices. Centers must include their written contracts / policies pertaining to the prices they charge for private-pay parents.
- It is important that centers return their survey to their county or **MECA** in a timely manner so the information can be included in the **rate** calculation.

### 2. Calculating the Maximum Reimbursement Rates:

Each year, the Bureau of Child Care Administration (BCCA) in DCF determines the maximum weekly **rates** for the coming year. **Rates** are determined by type of child care program, regulation and age group categories. This process is known as the **market rate survey**. Only licensed group and **licensed family child care providers** meeting all of the following criteria are included in market **rate** calculations:

- Providers caring for private pay children.
- Providers offer open enrollment to the general public.
- Providers that provide full-time care, five days a week at least five hours a day.

**Rates** are obtained for 4 groups by age:

- Under 2.
- Age 2 through 3.
- Age 4 through 5.
- Age 6 through 12.

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BCCA sets **maximum reimbursement rates** so that they will pay for 75% of child care slots in the **rate zone**. Additional information can be obtained at <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/wishares/rates.htm>

Maximum **rates** are set at a weekly amount. DCF uses the **divisor** 35 to convert a weekly maximum **reimbursement** amount for full-time child care to an hourly **rate**.

Licensed family **maximum reimbursement rates** are set in the same way as group **maximum reimbursement rates**. Maximum hourly **rates** for regularly certified providers are set at 75% of the licensed family hourly **rate**. Hourly **rates** for provisionally certified providers are 50% of the licensed family hourly **rate**. The maximum amount payable to a certified provider in one week may not exceed the maximum weekly **rate** for a licensed family provider.

Due to state budgetary constraints, **maximum reimbursement rates** have been frozen since 2006.

**Example:** Satchmo's county licensed family **rate** is \$4.00 / hr. The regular certified provider **rate** would be \$3 (75% of \$4) and the rate for provisional certified providers would be \$2 (50% of \$4).

Remember that providers set their own rates for child care. However, the rates charged for subsidy eligible children must not be more than what is charged to the general public, including any discounts and co-payments.

### Taxes

DCF annually sends a 1099 tax statement to all non-corporation providers and centers that received at least \$600 from Wisconsin Shares during the calendar year. 1099 forms are sent to the **child care provider's** last known address as reported to and entered into the subsidy system by the county, **tribe** or **MECA**.

The department reports to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) the Wisconsin Shares payments made to group and family child care centers through IRS form 1099-MISC.

In order to receive a 1099, the provider must have received at least \$600 in Wisconsin Shares payments during the calendar year and not be a corporation. The law requires the department to mail the 1099 to the providers by January 31.

The department mails 1099 forms to the last known address; if the provider has moved and has not notified their county or tribe or MECA, the mailed 1099 form is more than likely returned to DCF as undeliverable. Therefore, it is important to always report address changes.

## Tax Levies

As self-employed business persons, **child care providers** are responsible for paying their state and federal taxes. If the provider has been delinquent paying the taxes, the tax authorities, IRS and Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR) will issue a tax levy. Before a levy is issued, the provider receives multiple notices from the tax agency. If the collection is unsuccessful, the tax levy is issued as a last resort. DCF is mandated by the IRS code (if DOR, WI Statutes and rules) to collect the taxes owed from the providers' subsidy payments.

Each levy specifies how much must be recouped by DCF Accounting. The levy process delays the provider's payments by 3-4 days because the payment must be intercepted to recoup the tax amount. Once intercepted, Accounting temporarily ends the EFT (if there is one) and manually generates a paper check to the provider. DCF sends a copy of the levy with the check.

DCF does not have the authority to make changes to the levy or refuse to collect unless notified by IRS or DOR directly. If the provider wants to dispute or make changes to the levy, the provider must contact the tax authorities.

## Electronic Fund Transfer (Direct Deposit)

It is highly recommended that providers establish direct deposit for their subsidy payments. Direct deposit eliminates lost check issues. Direct deposit for Wisconsin Shares payments may be established through the county, tribal or **MECA** agency using the form below:

[http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/forms/pdf/dcf\\_f\\_dwsp10791.pdf](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/forms/pdf/dcf_f_dwsp10791.pdf)

**Attention:** Providers receiving EFT payments! Please make sure that you open the EFT remittance envelope as DCF often sends out important information in the form of check stuffers and newsletters.

## Payment Process

### How Do I Get Paid?

Before subsidy **authorizations** can be created for a new provider, the provider must submit the following information to the county, **tribe** or **MECA**.

- W9 form: [http://www.doa.state.wi.us/docs\\_view2.asp?docid=704](http://www.doa.state.wi.us/docs_view2.asp?docid=704)
- Provider rate information (licensed providers only).

After a provider has submitted their W-9 form and rates, payments are made in general only after submitted attendance is approved by the county, **tribe** or **MECA**. Providers need to keep their W-9 and rates updated with the county, **tribe** or **MECA**.

### Attendance Reporting Forms (ARFs)

Providers receive pre-printed **Attendance Report** forms in the mail for each authorized child for 2-week attendance periods. The provider records the actual hours of care provided each day during the period, along with the weekly totals, and returns the report to the county, **tribe** or **MECA**, or enters the attendance via the internet / **CCPI**. Payments are usually issued within 10 working days after the Attendance Report is received by the local agency. Payments may be delayed if the county, **tribe** or **MECA** has program integrity concerns. Information about the web attendance reporting can be found at: <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/ccpi/>

Providers who report their attendance on an ARF must return the forms to their subsidy agency by the deadline specified by the agency for data-entry. In these cases, a county, tribal or **MECA** worker enters the attendance into the subsidy system for the provider. Contact your county, **tribe** or **MECA** for attendance submittal deadlines.

Payments for Wisconsin Shares are issued directly to the provider. Generally, the checks are mailed from Madison on Mondays and Electronic Funds Transfers (EFTs) are deposited on Tuesdays. State and federal holidays and mandated county, tribal or DCF furlough days may delay payments. A remittance report detailing how the payment was generated and the **authorizations** it was based upon arrives on the same day a direct deposit is made or with a check if the provider is unable to use direct deposit.

### Rounding

On a daily basis, providers are to enter the actual hours attended by rounding using the following method:

- Child attends 8 hours and 10 minutes. Round down to 8 hours.
- Child attends 8 hours and 15 minutes. Round up to 8.5 hours.
- Child attends 8 hours and 45 minutes. Round up to 9 hours.

**Example:** Jane is in care five days a week for a total of 17 hours and 30 minutes. Her provider enters 18 hours under the week total actual hours attended column.

## Full-Time Authorization

**DCF 201** states that families using a **child care provider** whose private prices for child care are higher than the **reimbursement** rates paid by the county or **tribe** are responsible for paying the difference between the two rates in addition to the co-payment amount determined by DCF. Together, these two amounts are called the **Parent's Share**.

Full-time care is defined by DCF as care that is provided for at least 35 hours per week. A single full-time authorization pays a county weekly **maximum reimbursement** rate or a provider's rate, whichever is lower. The **maximum weekly reimbursement** rate covers full-time authorizations between 35 and 50 hours.

Individual providers determine their weekly child care rates independent of the **maximum reimbursement rate**. In some cases, the maximum (weekly) **reimbursement** rate paid by DCF may not fully cover the total weekly child care costs. In these instances, parents have a higher **Parent's Share** to cover the costs charged by the provider for a full-time spot.

**Example:** The Smith family uses 45 hours of child care each week. The child care center the Smiths use charges \$160 each week for full-time care up to 40 hours a week. The child care center charges an additional \$4 an hour for each hour that a family uses over 40 hours. The Smith family's total weekly charge for the 45 hours they use is \$180. The Wisconsin Shares maximum reimbursement rate for the Smith's child care is \$165. The Smith family must pay the \$15 difference between the maximum reimbursement rate and the price that the center charges for the 45 hours of care in addition to the pre-determined co-payment.

DCF uses the range of 35-50 hours a week to define the hours covered by the **maximum reimbursement rate**. Full-time child care enrollment-based **authorizations** cover child care provided when at least 35 hours will be used every week.

There are many different circumstances that define full-time care across the state. Providers and families should use individual rate sheets and contracts developed by the provider to make payment arrangements and to determine the weekly rate for child care services. These arrangements should accurately reflect individual provider policies and rates for care.

Licensing has developed a sample contract for family providers. The form may be found at: [http://dpi.wisconsin.gov/ccic/pdf/policy\\_samp\\_fcc.pdf](http://dpi.wisconsin.gov/ccic/pdf/policy_samp_fcc.pdf)

Full-time attendance-based **authorizations** are used with licensed providers when the hours of child care are likely to significantly vary (weekly attendance will regularly drop below 35 hours a week) or if the county, **tribe** or **MECA** have documented 3 separate occasions where the provider significantly over-reported the attendance of a child.

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Full-time attendance-based **authorizations** are used for care given by a certified provider. The weekly **reimbursement** amount will be based upon the actual hours of attendance reported by the provider; however, payment is capped at the maximum county / tribal rate.

**Example:** Jack is authorized on an attendance basis for 35 hours per week with a certified non-accredited provider. The hourly **reimbursement rate** is \$2.30 per hour. When Jack attends 35 hours a week his provider is paid \$80.90 by DCF. One week, Jack attended only 16 hours. Subsidy payment for that week is limited to 16 hours because it is an attendance-based authorization. For that week, Jack's provider will receive \$36.80 from the county. (16 times \$2.30 equals \$36.80) Jack's provider collects the difference between the provider's private price and the amount the subsidy pays, in addition to the pre-determined co-payment.

**Example:** How a **maximum weekly rate** is calculated.

Mary needs a 45-hour authorization for her 2-year-old son who attends Satchmo's Child Care Center. The system first multiplies the 45 hours by the agency hourly rate.

Beginning rate:	(45 x \$6) \$270	{	The system chooses the lowest of the 3
Center charge:	\$220 / wk		
Subsidy weekly ceiling:	\$210 (\$6 / hr)		
Co-payment	\$20	}	
	\$210		
Co-payment	<u>- \$20</u>		
Subsidy weekly payment	\$190		

The parent's fiscal responsibility in this situation would be the \$20 co-payment plus the \$10 difference between the provider rate and the subsidy weekly ceiling.

### Part-Time Authorizations

Part-time child care **authorizations** are used when child care will regularly be given for less than 35 hours a week. Part-time **authorizations** may be attendance-based or enrollment-based.

### Licensed Centers

Licensed providers caring for Wisconsin Shares children with an attendance-based **authorization** will receive a 10% higher rate for that care.

### Regularly Certified Providers

Mary needs 45 hours of child care for her 2-year-old son who attends a regular certified provider's home care. Here is the calculation (regular certified rate is \$3):

Beginning rate:	(45 x \$3)	\$135
Co-pay:	-(\$ 20)	
		\$115

The system divides \$115 by the number of hours needed (45). Authorized hourly rate will be \$2.55 / hour.

### Special Needs Children – Reimbursement

DCF allows counties and **tribes** the option to calculate a higher reimbursement rate for **special needs** children only if the provider verifies their increased costs for providing care for the child.

- Rates for **special needs** children that are higher than the subsidy system calculated rates are determined on a case-by-case basis by counties and **tribes**.
- Since not all **special needs** children require extra care, not all special needs children will qualify for a higher **reimbursement rate**.
- The county / tribal weekly **maximum reimbursement** rates may be exceeded if a higher rate is approved.
- **MECA** in Milwaukee provides training for providers on how to care for **special needs** children instead of calculating higher rates.

### Accredited Providers

A 10% higher rate will be paid to **child care providers** who are **accredited** by a nationally recognized accreditation agency if their current private pay rates are above the regular county **maximum reimbursement rates**.

- The 10% rate is automatically calculated if the provider is marked as accredited in the subsidy system.
- An exception is a licensed provider who is already receiving an additional 10% increase for an attendance-based **authorization**.

Accreditations that qualify for the higher payment are:

1. Group centers:
  - National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).
  - City of Madison Accredited Centers.
  - National After School Association (NAA).

2. Family providers:

- Child Development Associate (CDA).
- National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC).
- City of Madison Accredited Centers.

Send **accreditation** to DCF at the following FAX number: (608) 267-2200.

**Caring for a Child from Another County or Tribe**

When providers care for children who reside in a county different from that of the provider, the higher **maximum reimbursement** rate of the two counties is used. For example: The Smith family lives in County A and their child is cared for by a provider in County B. If County B's rates are higher, County B's rate is used to calculate the **reimbursement** rate.

**Holding a Slot – Illness, Vacations and Absences**

Counties, **tribes** or **MECA** may authorize payment to a **child care provider** to hold a slot for a child. The following conditions must be met before a slot can be held and payment made to **child care provider**:

- The **authorization** must be on an enrollment basis.
- The parent must be receiving Wisconsin Shares for employment prior to the **absence**.
- The parent must intend to return to work at the same employer after the leave.
- The provider must be the same before and after the leave.

A slot cannot be held if the **absence** will be longer than the time limit for the situation.

Situation	Maximum leave (no. of weeks)
Parent is temporarily laid off but will be returning to work within four weeks.	4 weeks
Parent has a temporary <b>break in employment</b> but will be returning to the same <b>approved activity</b> within four weeks. Note that this excludes when a parent loses employment and is seeking new employment.	4 weeks
Parent is on medical leave from employment but will be returning to work within six weeks.	6 weeks
Family is on vacation but will be returning within two weeks.	2 weeks
Child is ill but will be returning to child care within six weeks.	6 weeks
Provider vacation.	1 week

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The county, **tribe** or **MECA** cannot approve multiple consecutive leaves unless the parent has returned to work for at least one week before approving the second leave. In these cases, the child must attend care at least 50% of that week.

The subsidy system pays **child care providers** up to one week's vacation each year when the authorization type is enrollment-based. It is the provider's responsibility to let the county, **tribe** or **MECA** know that they will be closed.

- The closure of the child care program can be due to the provider being on vacation, for a medical reason, for preparation of the center for a season change, or any other reason that the county, **tribe** or **MECA** determines to be valid.
- Providers may take more than one week off each year, however, in these situations Wisconsin Shares subsidy will not pay for the slot. Any provider, regardless of their level of regulation, or the types of **authorizations** affected, may choose to charge parents for time off not reimbursed by the subsidy program.

Working parents are allowed to use authorized child care hours for employer approved paid time off (when in pay status) from work without incurring an **overpayment**.

A parent *must first contact and receive* permission from the county, **tribe** or **MECA** before the payment can be authorized. Examples include:

- Parents who are on paid leave from their employers, such as using sick time, personal time or vacation time, are considered as having good cause for missing their **approved activity**.
- Parents who are on paid leave from their employers are allowed to use their authorized child care hours for the time period that they are excused from work without being subject to an **overpayment** penalty.
- The parent must continue to be employed for the period of time that they are excused from work and immediately thereafter.

A child care participant **overpayment** is created when a child is in child care but the parent is not at their approved activity. The **overpayment** should be recovered from the parent.

The Wisconsin Shares subsidy program will continue to reimburse providers for child care provided for children whose parents are already receiving child care assistance and are serving jury duty; however, Wisconsin Shares **reimbursement** is limited to hours of employment missed for jury duty.

## 10-Day Notice When Changing Authorizations

A 10-day notice to providers is required from DCF when a parent loses eligibility if the parent has reported the change in their status that made them ineligible.

- The 10-day notice provision does not apply when the parent failed to report a change that made them ineligible.
- Parents are responsible for reporting all changes to the child care agency.
- If a change is reported by the provider regarding a family's circumstance, the local agency must confirm this information with this family and take the appropriate action within 10 working days.
- The 10-day period may be used by the parent to find another **approved activity**.
- The child must attend during the 10-day period.

## Attendance Records

Providers caring for children funded by the Wisconsin Shares subsidy program must keep current and accurate daily attendance records.

The most important points to remember are:

- It is suggested that parents sign off on the daily attendance record for their child or children at the end of each week. A space is provided for parents to do so on the Daily Record (sign in sheet).
- If the daily attendance record is called into question, a single parent signature may not be enough to verify that the actual hours of attendance are valid.
- If your records become involved in an investigation into improper payments, these signatures may be your best defense.
- DCF, **MECA**, counties and **tribes** have the right to visit the child care facility to monitor compliance with program requirements, including keeping accurate records.
  - Monitoring may review records on-site, copy records on-site, or arrange to temporarily remove original records for review and copying (while leaving a proper receipt).
  - Providers must provide this access immediately upon request.
- Wisconsin Shares does not pay for transportation for children as a stand-alone service or cost.
- Providers must sign the child in when the child enters care, regardless of whether or not the child is receiving subsidy for that time period.

### Licensed Family:

DCF 250 (licensing rules for family centers) states: “The licensee shall maintain a current, accurate written record of the daily attendance on a form prescribed by the **department** that includes the actual time of arrival and departure for each child for the length of time the child is enrolled in the program. The Daily Attendance Record must include each time a child (including the provider’s own child under age 7) is checked in to and out of care at the facility throughout the day (e.g., preschool, swim lesson, etc.).”

Licensed family providers must use the Daily Attendance Record – Child Care Centers form approved by the **department**. The form is found at [http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/forms/pdf/dcf\\_f\\_2438.pdf](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/forms/pdf/dcf_f_2438.pdf)

**Note:** The 09-11 State budget bill changed the statutes to require licensed providers to keep the attendance records (sign in sheets) for 3 years, including for any children who left the program. Also, programs that close must keep attendance records for subsidy children for at least 3 years.

### Licensed Group:

DCF 251 (licensing rules for group centers) states: “The licensee shall maintain a current, accurate written record of the daily attendance and date of birth of each child for the length of time the child is enrolled in the program. The actual time of arrival and departure for each child shall be recorded if hours of arrival and departure vary among children. Daily Attendance Record — Child Care Centers, may be used to record a child’s daily attendance.”

The form is found at [http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/forms/pdf/dcf\\_f\\_2438.pdf](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/forms/pdf/dcf_f_2438.pdf). If the group center is using electronic attendance software, a print-out of the attendance system may be sufficient documentation for subsidy purposes.

**Note:** The 09-11 State budget bill changed the statutes to require licensed providers to keep the attendance records (sign in sheets) for 3 years, including children who left the program. Also, programs that close must keep attendance records for subsidy children at least 3 years.

### Certified Family Providers:

DCF 202 states: “The certified child care operator shall keep a current written record of the daily hours of attendance of each child in care, including the actual arrival and departure times for each child. Attendance records shall be kept for at least 3 years.”

It is recommended that the certified providers use the Daily Attendance Record form found at [http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/forms/pdf/dcf\\_f\\_62\\_e.pdf](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/forms/pdf/dcf_f_62_e.pdf).

**Certified School-Age Providers:**

DCF 202.09 (6) states: “The certified child care operator shall keep a current, written record of the daily hours of attendance of each child in care, including the actual arrival and departure times for each child. Attendance records shall be kept for at least 3 years”.

It is recommended that the certified providers use the Daily Attendance Record form found at [http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/forms/pdf/dcf\\_f\\_62\\_e.pdf](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/forms/pdf/dcf_f_62_e.pdf).

**Alert:** Wisconsin Shares does not reimburse for registration fees or any other kind of fees charged by child care programs, such as those for activities, transportation, snacks, fees, extended hours, late pick up or early drop off, late payments or any other fees not included in the weekly rate for child care.

## Program Integrity

DCF uses its Fraud Detection and Investigation Unit (FDIU) to develop policies, programs and procedures to prevent fraud, improper payments and **overpayments**. Together with counties, **tribes** and **MECA**, the Program Integrity Unit also investigates potential provider, parent, and agency error, abuse, and fraud that may result in improper payments to a provider on behalf of the **family**.

The single most important step a provider can take to ensure compliance with the Wisconsin Shares program and validate that all payments made were accurate in any investigation into alleged subsidy abuse, **intentional program violations**, or fraud, is to retain their accurate daily attendance records, signed by parents, and any supporting documentation on-site for at least three (3) years. It is also very important during an investigation to fully comply with and aid in the investigation. DCF and AFSCME are committed to eliminating fraud and waste in Wisconsin Shares.

Program integrity means making sure that Wisconsin Shares reimburses only eligible child care programs and not programs that knowingly violate child care policy. Program integrity requires the cooperation of both parents and providers.

If you believe that you have not been paid correctly, you will need to contact the worker who processes payments at your county, tribe or MECA agency.

**Helpful Hint:** It is recommended that any communications providers or parents have with the department, county or tribe regarding authorizations, questions or concerns, or when requesting approval for changes or absences of either the child or provider, be documented in writing for verification purposes if later needed. Fax, email, and written correspondence would all be acceptable forms of written documentation.

To ensure program integrity, **Chapter DCF 201, Administration of Child Care Funds** of the Wisconsin Administrative Rules located at <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/rsb/code/dcf/dcf201.pdf> allows DCF to require the following:

- A provider to submit documentation signed by a parent showing the actual times a child was dropped off and picked up.
- A provider to submit attendance and payment records of private-pay families.
- A provider to have attendance records available at a child care site whenever DCF requests to review them, or request they be sent to DCF.

DCF may also:

- Contact parents to determine a child's actual attendance hours.
- Conduct on-site inspections to monitor the provisions of authorized services.

**Chapter DCF 201, Administration of Child Care Funds** of the Wisconsin Administrative Rules also requires the following:

If a **child care administrative agency** (county, **tribe**, DCF or **MECA**) has given notice to a provider that the provider is in violation of licensing or certification rules, and the provider has not corrected the violation, or if the provider submits false attendance reports, refuses to provide documentation of a child's actual attendance, or gives false or inaccurate child care price information, the **child care administrative agency** (county, **tribe**, DCF or **MECA**) may take one of the following steps:

- Refuse to issue new **child care authorizations** to the provider for a time period not to exceed 6 months.
- Revoke existing **child care authorizations** to the provider.
- Refuse to issue payments to the provider until the provider has corrected the violation.

When the **department** or a **child care administrative agency** refuses to issue new **authorizations**, revokes existing authorizations, or refuses to issue payments to a provider under par. (c), the **child care administrative agency** shall provide written notice to the provider as soon as possible before the effective date of the sanction.

DCF may refuse to authorize payment for child care services to a licensed provider if the provider refuses to submit documentation of the provider's child care prices in response to an agency request.

Providers must maintain appropriate group size and child-to-adult ratios according to their regulatory status. Child care provided when a provider is overcapacity or out-of-ratio is not eligible for subsidy payment because the provider is out of compliance with their state regulatory status.

DCF may issue provider non-compliances, take enforcement actions and may seek subsidy program funding recoupment in the form of overpayments when a provider cannot or will not furnish their attendance records when requested.

All providers are required by DCF to provide documentation, upon request, to the **department** showing the actual times of the attendance of all children in care whether subsidized or private-pay, and attendance and payment records for families that pay child care costs out of their own personal funds.

All **child care providers** are required by DCF to allow on-site inspections by the **department** to monitor the provisions of authorized services and to have attendance records available at the child care site whenever the **department** or subsidy administrative agency requests to review them.

DCF, **MECA**, or a county or tribal agency is to determine whether or not any improper payment was made to a provider.

If a provider cannot furnish their attendance records when requested by the county, **tribe** or **MECA**, the county, **tribe** or **MECA** may seek subsidy program funding recoupment in the form of overpayments. This may also result in licensing or certification non-compliance.

### **New Laws**

Beginning July 2009, new laws were enacted that tightened reporting requirements for providers and gave the **department** and local agencies more authority to enforce the rules. DCF sent out a letter to all providers as a payment insert in October 2009 that explained the new rules. A copy of that letter can be found at [http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/wishares/pdf/provider\\_letter1006.pdf](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/wishares/pdf/provider_letter1006.pdf)

### **Children of Employees**

DCF can no longer pay for children whose parents work for the provider if more than 40% of all children enrolled have parents who work for the provider. DCF will check every month for violations of this rule. If a provider violates this rule, they are given six weeks to come into compliance. If they continue to violate the rule after six weeks, DCF will end all **authorizations** for the children whose parents work for the provider. Additionally, local agencies have the authority to refuse new authorizations if they put the provider in violation of this rule.

### **Written Attendance Records**

DCF has always required providers to maintain accurate attendance records so that the amount billed to the Wisconsin Shares program can be verified. The new law adds to this requirement by stating that:

- The attendance records must be on-site and available to DCF, **MECA**, a county, **tribe**, or its agent. DCF, **MECA**, a county, **tribe**, or its agent at its discretion may accept attendance records up to 24 hours after the initial request.
- The attendance records must show the **actual** start and end times for each child (no rounding).
- The attendance records must be kept for at least three years after the child has stopped attending.

When DCF or local agency staff picks up attendance records, they should show their identification and leave a receipt stating the dates of the records that they picked up.

## Suspension of Payments

The new law gives DCF, **MECA**, counties, **tribes** and local agencies the authority to withhold Wisconsin Shares payments to providers that they reasonably suspect have violated rules of the Wisconsin Shares program. While this law gives a lot of authority to DCF and its agencies, payments will only be suspended if, after an investigation has started, there is strong evidence that a provider is intentionally violating the rules.

DCF may suspend payments to a **child care provider** if the provider, employee or person living on the premises where child care is provided:

- Has been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor that the **department** determines substantially relates to the care of children or the operation of a business.
- Is the subject of a pending criminal charge that the **department** believes substantially relates to the care of children.
- Has been determined to have abused or neglected a child.
- DCF reasonably suspects that the person has violated any provision under the Wisconsin Shares program.

When payments are suspended, the provider has the right to appeal. The provider can also continue to care for children (unless their licensing or certification is revoked or suspended) and should continue to send in attendance report forms. All payments, including those for prior weeks that haven't been mailed yet, will be withheld by DCF until the investigation is complete.

**Example:** Smith Family Daycare is regulated to a licensed capacity of eight children. Smith Family Daycare employs John from 3 PM until 11 PM Monday through Friday. John brings his 18-month-old, three-year-old, and seven-year-old and ten-year-old to work with him. Smith Family Daycare employs Jane from 7 AM until 3 PM Monday through Friday. Jane brings to work with her a seven-month-old, a two-year-old, and a four-year-old. The total number of employees' children on Wisconsin Shares equals 7.

The total number of Wisconsin Shares children in care is sixteen. 43% of the children funded through Wisconsin Shares at Smith Family Daycare are children of employees. The Smith Family Daycare will receive a letter stating that they must fill 60% of their slots with children who are either not receiving Wisconsin Shares funding or who are not children of employees. Smith Family Daycare must take steps to ensure that 10 of the 16 children in care each day are not children of employees and / or are not enrolled in Wisconsin Shares.

## Reasonably Suspect Threshold

Reasonable suspicion is a lower threshold of evidence than probable cause or preponderance of evidence that would be required in a criminal investigation. Rather it requires suspicion supported by articulable facts that wrongdoing "may be afoot," even if probable cause is lacking. In order to establish a reasonable suspicion, a two step process is necessary:

**STEP 1:**

DCF, **MECA**, the county or **tribe** are taking into account several factors. DCF and / or the local agency is not limited to these factors in determining a reasonable suspicion:

- Provider has a Red Flag computer score indicating a high chance of fraudulent activity and at least one in-person visit from DCF or Agency staff.
- Provider has a prior finding of **Intentional Program Violation** entered into the CSAW system.
- Provider offers significant financial incentives (or incentives with significant financial value) to enrollees.
- DCF, **MECA**, county or **tribe** has other compelling evidence that the provider is improperly receiving Wisconsin Shares payments.
- Tip regarding the provider is received on the Fraud Hotline.
- Provider has more **authorizations** than they have slots for.
- Children in care have unusually regular attendance.
- Provider has been cited by either the Child and Adult Care Food Program sponsor or a regulator for being out-of-ratio or overcapacity.
- Provider has had a substantial increase in subsidy payments.
- No Access – If the provider is not able to be accessed at their place of business on the date of the on-site investigation during the provider’s stated hours of operation.
- Minimal Attendance – If less than 25% of the enrolled children are observed to be in actual attendance during the on-site investigation.
- Attendance Records Not Readily Available – Attendance Records not produced immediately upon request during a site visit or no attendance observed during a period of surveillance.
- In addition, if the on-site investigation is in conjunction with a Licensing or Certification monitoring visit, the following In-Person Red Flags also apply:
  1. Attendance Related Licensing / Certification Violation – Facility received more than one attendance related licensing violation.
  2. Out of Regulation Licensing Violation – Facility received more than one enforcement action related to one of the following compliance issues:
    - Over Regulated Capacity.
    - Insufficient Qualified Teaching Staff.
    - Providing Care Outside of Facility of Location.

If a provider has been found to have received **overpayments** of child care funding, that provider will be notified by mail using a **Notice of Payment Adjustment**. The recoupment for providers allowed to remain on the subsidy system will occur at certain percentages based upon the findings of the investigation as to why the overpayment occurred (see table below). If the provider is no longer caring for children, or the provider is no longer caring for subsidized children, the recoupment is paid directly to the county, **tribe** or **MECA** by the provider. Below is a table outlining the percentages by which recoupment occurs.

**Recoupment Percentages:**

<b>Overpayment Type</b>	<b>Payment Percentage Recouped Each Pay Period</b>
Agency Error	10%
Provider Error	25%
Intentional Program Violations	50%

In most cases when **overpayment** occurs, the provider is still able to care for children as a regulated provider and remain an eligible provider for Wisconsin Shares payments. However, when a provider is found to have committed **Intentional Program Violations (IPV)**, he or she can expect regulatory action and possibly criminal proceedings. If at any time a provider finds that an error has been made, it is in the provider's best interest to notify the county, **tribe** or **MECA** immediately.

Provider over-payments can be a result of:

- Reporting more hours of attendance than a child was actually in care.
- Failing to report when a child withdraws from the program.
- Caring for more children than the certification or license allows – even if some of those children were private-pay status.
- Reporting hours that care was given outside of the regulatory hours.
- Reporting care for a particular child that was given beyond the 12 hours allowed per day (you must have permission from the county / **tribe** to do so).
- Reporting hours of attendance at one location when a child was actually in care at another location – even if the same provider owns both locations.

You cannot report and receive Wisconsin Shares payments for:

- The hours a child is in school.
- Absences for “no-shows”, such as when children simply fail to attend or leave child care without notice.
- Vacation periods for the parent, child or yourself without obtaining prior approval from the county, **tribe** or **MECA**.
- Holding a slot for a child without obtaining prior approval from the county, **tribe** or **MECA**.

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- Holidays when a child is not in care (unless the **authorization** is enrollment based).
- Continuous absences due to illness or any other factor that exceeds the guidelines.
- Any of the above reasons if the **authorization** for child care is attendance-based.

If you report attendance in error for any of the reasons above, in error, and make no attempt to correct that error, you can face revocation of regulation, enforcement action from the regulatory agency in the form of monetary forfeitures, suspension of all child care payments (even those for which you did provide actual care in subsequent weeks), criminal prosecution and permanent bar from providing any form of child care in Wisconsin.

If you believe that you have not been paid correctly, you'll need to contact the worker who processes payments for your county, tribe or MECA.

### Report Fraudulent Child Care Activity

1-800-302-FRAUD

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

## Child Care Provider Information (CCPI) Web Site

The **CCPI** system enables **child care providers** and centers to have internet access to the Child Care Subsidy System, the computer system which generates the child care subsidy program's payments. The goal is to provide users with a convenient and practical business tool. Some of the features include:

**Web Attendance:** Users can record attendance using the internet.

**Current Information:** Users can view current, up-to-the-minute information on subsidized children authorized to their center. In some cases, this will be viewable before the paper authorization notice is received.

**Payment Summary:** **CCPI** has summary and detail information about subsidy payments made to providers.

**Print Reports:** Users can create printable reports organized in a manner that will support the provider's business needs. As an example, a report on authorizations scheduled to end as of a certain date will be offered.

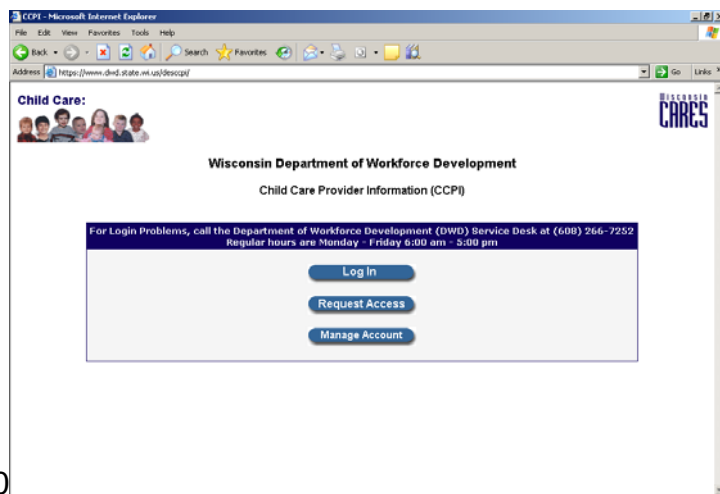
**Historical information:** Historical information can be requested by dates of service and payment.

**Announcements:** The announcements section will provide county / tribe-specific and statewide information of interest to **child care providers**.

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):** Frequently asked questions about the Wisconsin Shares subsidy program, along with contact information for related child care programs such as certification, licensing, grants, etc.

**Online Availability Calendar:** The online calendar provides a monthly calendar view of the hours that **CCPI** is available for entering attendance and / or for other inquiries.

## Instructions On How to Gain Access to CCPI



Follow instructions listed in the "instructions on how to gain access to CCPI" found at:

<http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/ccpi/pdf/newuser.pdf>

## Definitions

Terminology that appears in bold-face type throughout this document can be found in the list below.

**Absence:** Authorized hours of care missed by a child due to illness or unavoidable circumstance.

**ACCESS:** Online application that allows for customers to apply for child care, submit a child care six-month renewal form, or do child care renewal via the internet.

**Accredited:** A child care provider or group center that meets higher quality of care standards under DCF 201.03 and 201.04, up to the maximum as determined by the department.

**Administrative Error:** An error committed by an agency or the department in determining benefits issued for the Wisconsin Shares child care assistance program that resulted in overpayment.

**Approved Absence:** An absence that is determined to meet criteria for a valid reason for absence which allows payments to be made on enrollment based authorizations.

**Approved Activity:** Activities for which child care reimbursement can be made. Examples are work, schooling, participating in programs such as W-2, etc.

**Assistance Group:** The group consisting of the individuals in the household belonging in the same case. This group consists of all family and household members.

**Attendance Report:** The biweekly attendance report form sent by CARES to the authorized child care provider caring for the child subsidized with Wisconsin Shares payments. Attendance reports are also available online through CCPI.

**Authorization:** A written agreement with a provider that the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy will pay the provider for child care under the terms specified in the agreement, including the effective date of the authorization, the location of the provider, **reimbursement** amount, and type of payment.

**Authorization Notices:** Contain the information for each authorization including the hours authorized and whether the authorization is attendance- or enrollment-based or plus the rate that the department will reimburse the child care provider.

**Break in Employment:** Refers to a parent, relative, foster parent, guardian, or person acting in place of a parent, who is working and will be returning to the same employer. Self-employment is not included in the definition.

**CARES** Client Assistance for Re-employment and Economic Support: The CARES system is a statewide, automated, integrated system that supports the major **income** maintenance programs of **Wisconsin Works** (W-2), food stamps, medical assistance, food stamp employment and training, and Learnfare case management program by determining client eligibility, issuing benefits and managing support.

**CCPI** Child Care Provider Information: A website for providers to access Wisconsin Shares child care authorizations information, enter attendance, and generate reports.

**Center Slots:** The number of spaces for children within the certified / licensed capacity of the child care center. The maximum number of children who may be cared for at any one time within the regulated capacity of the child care program.

**Certified Family Child Care / Certified Provider (Regular):** Child care providers who are certified by a county or tribe, but are not required to be licensed. These include family child care providers, and in-home providers. These providers have completed the entry-level training required by DCF (see also provisionally certified family child care).

**Certified School-Age Program:** A certified group child care program serving children 7 and older (3 children between the ages of 5 (five years) and 7 (seven years) may be present).

**Child Care Administrative Agency:** Any agency that has a contract with the department to administer child care funds or any agency that has a subcontract to administer child care funds with an agency that has a contract with the department.

**Child Care Authorization:** The printed form that the department sends out to parents and providers detailing the child care authorization. This includes the type of authorization, the reimbursement rate / rates, the dates the authorization is valid for, the case worker responsible for the authorization and the hours of child care authorized for the children in the family.

**Child Care Funds:** Funding for child care purposes.

**Child Care Provider or “Provider”:** A provider licensed or certified under Wisconsin statutes.

**Child Care Provider Price:** The amount regularly charged by provider to a parent who pays for the child care services out of his or her personal funds.

**Child Care Worker:** A person employed by a child care administrative agency whose duties include determining or re-determining child care subsidy eligibility, authorizing child care funds, making child care payments to providers, or determining and processing the recoupment of child care parent and provider overpayments.

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**Client-error:** Error caused by an individual who is a member of the assistance group reporting incorrect information or failing to report information due to misunderstanding or mistakes that resulted in overpayment of Wisconsin shares child care assistance.

**Co-Payment:** Payment the family is responsible for based on family size, gross income, and number of children in child care as required by DCF 201.08. Co-payments are system deducted from child care program payments.

**DCF 201:** Administrative Rules approved by the Wisconsin Legislature often written at their request to define policies associated with statutes. Administrative Rules have the weight of statutes in the absence of specific law.

**Department:** The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, created July 1, 2008. The Bureau of Child Care Administration (BCCA), Division of Early Care and Education (DECE), Department of Children and Families (DCF) administers the Wisconsin Shares child care assistance program.

**Disability:** Any mental or physical impairment which prevents a person from or makes it unusually difficult to participate in major life activities such as walking, talking, thinking, breathing, hearing, seeing, eating, working, or self-care, as verified by a licensed psychologist or physician.

**Divisor:** The amount of hours of care the department considers full time, which is 35 hours per week. This figure is used to calculate the hourly licensed child care reimbursement rate from the weekly maximum reimbursement rate.

**Effective Dates:** The period for which child care is authorized. Authorizations are between one week and six months in length.

**Eligibility Period:** The term for which an assistance group has been found eligible for Wisconsin Shares. Eligibility periods do not exceed six months.

**Family:** The assistance group, which is defined as an individual who is a custodial parent or placement parent and their dependent children and all dependent children with respect to whom the individual's dependent child is a custodial parent. Family includes any non-marital co-parent or any spouse of the individual who resides in the same household as the individual and any dependent children with respect to whom the spouse or non-marital co-parent is a custodial parent.

**Federal Poverty Level:** The federal government's statistical poverty threshold used in the gross income test to determine financial eligibility.

**Foster parent:** A person licensed under s. 48.62(a). Statutes

**Income:** Money, wages or salary, adjusted income from self-employment, social security, dividends, interest on savings or bonds, income from estate or trust, net rental income or royalties, public assistance, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), pensions and annuities, unemployment insurance, worker's compensation, alimony and other maintenance payments, and veteran pensions.

**In-Home Care / Provider:** A certified child care provider caring for a child in the child's own home.

**Intentional Program Violation:** An individual who is a member of the Wisconsin Shares child care assistance group intentionally making a false or misleading statement, or misrepresenting, concealing or withholding facts that resulted in overpayment under the Wisconsin Shares child care assistance program. An intentional program violation may be determined based upon an administrative hearing, a court finding, a signed waiver of an administrative hearing for an alleged intentional program violation, or consent agreement in lieu of prosecution based on the same facts or events as the intentional program violation.

**Kinship Care:** A program to provide monthly payments to support a child who is being provided care and maintenance by a close relative, called a kinship care relative. The county social services or human service department approves the payment if it is determined that the child needs a place with the relative, the placement is in the best interest of the child, and the relative meets specified conditions.

**Kinship Care Relative:** A relative who may or may not be receiving kinship care benefits and who is one of the following: a stepparent, brother, sister, stepbrother, stepsister, first cousin, nephew, niece, aunt, uncle or any grand person of a preceding generation as denoted by the prefix of grand, great or great-great, whether by having the same ancestor, direct affinity or legal adoption, or the spouse of any person named in this paragraph, even if the marriage is terminated by death or divorce.

**Learnfare:** A program to assist school-age, dependent students 6 through 17 years of age, who are in a W-2 group to attend school regularly and to graduate from school when an adult in the group is participating in a W-2 employment position. The program requires all preteens in pilot counties designated by the department and teenagers to attend school.

**Licensed Family Child Care:** A child care business which is regulated to provide care for no more than eight children at any given time with a single provider.

**Licensed Group Child Care:** A child care business which is regulated to provide care for at least nine children at any given time in a commercial setting with multiple providers.

**Market Rate Survey:** Annual survey conducted by the counties to gather child care prices in the private child care market in their geographical area. The survey results are used to establish maximum rates for the subsidy program.

**Maximum Reimbursement Rate:** The weekly reimbursement rate as determined by a survey of licensed child care providers. The rate is defined by the area in which the child lives. The market rate is the price at which 75% of the child care slots in a geographic area can be purchased. The market rate is determined by the annual market rate survey of licensed child care providers done by the county / tribe.

**MECA** Milwaukee Early Care Administration, Wisconsin Department of Children and Families: MECA was established in 2010 to administer a portion of the Child Care Administration programs formerly administered by Milwaukee County Human Services under contract with DCF.

**Migrant:** A farm worker who travels from another state to Wisconsin or within Wisconsin for the purpose of engaging in agricultural or agricultural related industry, who has or will work on a seasonal basis which requires travel, such that the farm worker is unable to return to his / her primary place of residence within the same day.

**MILES:** Milwaukee Enrollment Services for income maintenance programs (Foodshare and BadgerCare) and Wisconsin Shares child care assistance eligibility. MILES is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

**Minimum Wage:** The state minimum hourly wage is stated in Chapter 104 Wisconsin statutes.

**Notice of Payment Adjustment:** When positive or negative payment adjustments are issued to a child care provider, DCF sends a notice to the provider. The notices are mailed from Madison each Monday for the adjustments made the previous week. If it is a positive adjustment, the amount is included to the provider in the next issuance. If it is a negative adjustment (recoupment), the recoupment will start 2 weeks from the notice date.

**Overpayment:** Money that the Wisconsin Shares program paid for the care of a child that was more than the program requirements indicated should have been paid.

**Parent:** A custodial or placement parent, or biological, adoptive, foster, or treatment foster parent, legal custodian, subsidized guardian or interim caretaker of a child under s. 48.62(5) Stats. in Milwaukee County, kinship care relative, or person acting in place of a parent.

**Parent Choice:** The parent's right to choose any regulated provider or to have the current provider complete the certification process for child care under the Wisconsin Shares program.

**Parent Share:** The difference between the provider's private pay price and the authorized amount.

**Positive or Negative Adjustment:** An increased or decreased payment made to a provider to correct a previous under / overpayment.

**Provisionally Certified Family Child Care:** Child care providers who are certified by a county, tribe or MECA, but are not required to be licensed. These include family child care providers and in-home providers. These providers have not completed the entry-level training approved by DCF, but they must complete SIDS and Shaken Baby Syndrome Prevention training.

**“Provider” or Child Care Provider:** A provider licensed or certified under Wisconsin statutes.

**Rate:** The amount a provider will be paid by the subsidy program.

**Rate Zone:** One of the four pre-determined groups of counties used to determine Maximum Reimbursement Rates for individual counties. The groups are arranged by the percentage of the population that resides within an urban area.

**Regulated Child Care:** Child care providers licensed by the state, certified by the county, tribe or MECA, or who are operated by a public school board.

**Regulated Child Care Setting:** A child care business which is regulated as either: provisionally certified family child care, regularly certified family child care, certified in-home care, certified school-age program, licensed family child care, licensed group child care, day camp, or program operated by a public school board.

**Reimbursement:** Payment for child care services provided by the child care provider.

**“Relative” Kinship Care Relative:** Immediate family is defined as, and limited to, the child's parents, stepparents, foster parents, kinship care caretaker, appointed guardian in Milwaukee County, first cousins, or grandparents, the parent’s children, stepchildren, grandchildren, foster children, adopted children, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces, uncles, and aunts.

**Required Fee:** Any amount of money the family is required to pay toward child care costs, including family share of reimbursement rate (co-pay), debt payments, and incidental fees.

**School:** A school is a public school, private school, DPI registered home school program, vocational, technical and adult education school, DPI approved high school equivalency course, program leading to a GED, regular study of English as a second language, or accredited post-secondary institutions.

**School Bank Hours:** Hours available on days during the regular school year when classes are not in session because school is not open for short-term periods (excludes summer break).

**Significantly Over-Reported:** Defined as a child was reported as being in care when they did not attend, or a child was reported as being in care equal to or greater than the **divisor** (full-time hours which have been standardized to 35 hours per week) when the child was actually in care hours less than the divisor.

**Sleep Shift:** Authorized hours of care for third shift employment to cover the period of time the parent is sleeping during the day.

**Special Need:** An emotional, behavioral, physical, or personal need of a child requiring more than the usual amount of care and supervision for the child's age, as documented by a physician, psychologist, special educator, or other qualified licensed professional. A special need includes a developmental disability.

**Student:** An adult student enrolled in an educational program.

**Temporary Absence:** Generally considered to be an absence of less than six months. With documentation, temporary absences can be extended. Reasons for temporary absence may include hospitalization of a parent, a child, military service, incarceration, extended vacation, and visitation or shared placement with a noncustodial parent, relative or guardian.

**Temporary Absence from Approved Activities:** When a person is not participating in their approved activities. Temporary absences may be approved or granted "good cause" for the absence or they may be denied.

**TANF Temporary Assistance for Needy Families:** Title I of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. The federal block grant program that provides states with the authority and funding to create programs that provide time-limited assistance to the families with children and promote work.

**Tribe:** A Wisconsin American Indian tribe recognized by the federal government.

**Two-Parent Household:** A two-parent household consists of either married parents or non-married co-parents.

**Unregulated Child Care:** Child care providers who are not licensed by the state, certified by the county / tribe, or operated by a public school board.

**Unsubsidized Employment:** Employment for which a W-2 agency provides no subsidy to the employer, including self-employment and entrepreneurship for purposes other than holding a slot.

**Voucher:** An authorization for reimbursement.

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**Wisconsin Works (W-2):** Wisconsin's TANF block grant program for families with dependent children.

**Weekly Ceiling:** The county / tribal weekly reimbursement rate is determined by a survey of licensed child care providers. The weekly ceiling is the price at which 75% of the child care slots in a geographic area can be purchased.

**Alert:** It is important to remember that Wisconsin law links your payments to the **actual address at which your center is located**. You must also, prior to moving the location at which you provide care, notify your regulatory agency and comply with all Administrative Rules regarding moving your location. Failure to do so will result in severe negative action being taken against you not only by Wisconsin Shares and your regulatory agency, but also could trigger a fraud investigation.

If you are reimbursed for child care provided at a location that is not approved and regulated by the department, you will be notified of all overpayments which you **will** have to pay back.

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is an equal opportunity employer and service provider. If you have a disability and need to access this information in an alternate format, or need it translated to another language, contact the Bureau of Early Care Regulation at (608) 266-9314 (general) or (888) 692-1382 (TTY). For civil rights questions call (608) 266-5335 or (866) 864-4585 (TTY).