



DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN
AND FAMILIES
Secretary Eloise Anderson
201 East Washington Avenue, Room G200
P.O. Box 8916
Madison, WI 53708-8916
Telephone: 608-266-8684
Fax: 608-261-6972
www.dcf.wisconsin.gov

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
Secretary Kitty Rhoades
1 West Wilson Street
P.O. Box 7850
Madison, WI 53707-7850
Telephone: (608) 266-9622
FAX: (608) 266-7882
www.dhfs.wisconsin.gov

**State of Wisconsin
Governor Scott Walker**

**TO: Income Maintenance Supervisors
Income Maintenance Lead Workers
Income Maintenance Staff
W-2 Agencies
Workforce Development Boards
Job Center Leads and Managers
Training Staff
Child Care Coordinators**

**FROM: Kath McGurk, Director
Bureau of Early Learning and Policy
Division of Early Care and Education
Department of Children and Families**

DECE/BELP OPERATIONS MEMO					
No: 15-24					
DATE: 06/22/2015					
FS	<input type="checkbox"/>	MA	<input type="checkbox"/>	BC+	<input type="checkbox"/>
SC	<input type="checkbox"/>	CTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	FSET	<input type="checkbox"/>
BC+ Basic	<input type="checkbox"/>	BC+ CORE	<input type="checkbox"/>		
CC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	W-2	<input type="checkbox"/>	EA	<input type="checkbox"/>
CF	<input type="checkbox"/>	JAL	<input type="checkbox"/>	JC	<input type="checkbox"/>
RAP	<input type="checkbox"/>	WIA	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/> *
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SUBJECT: Online Education as an Approved Activity

CROSS REFERENCE: Child Care Policy Manual 1.5.2, 1.5.6, and 1.5.7

EFFECTIVE DATE: AUGUST 1, 2015

PURPOSE: The purpose of this memo is to introduce new policy allowing online education as a Wisconsin Shares Approved Activity.

BACKGROUND:

Under Wisconsin Shares policy, parents must be engaged in an approved activity as part of eligibility for child care assistance. Two types of education may qualify as an approved activity under certain circumstances. These types are basic education (including high school, English as a second language courses, and literacy tutoring), and post-secondary education (including technical college or course of study that will produce an employment skill).

The current policy limits access to Wisconsin Shares Child Care subsidies for parents that are enrolled in online education.

PREVIOUS POLICY:

Section 1.5.7 of the Child Care Policy Manual says “Wisconsin Shares child care assistance is not available for online courses that are self-paced and do not require specific log on times for class sessions.

Section 1.5.2 of the Child Care Policy Manual says “Online high school equivalency courses are contingent upon the child care authorizing agency’s approval. Verification of the student’s satisfactory progress is required and the worker shall enter appropriate case comments in CARES.” This section applies to parents age 19 or younger completing high school.

NEW POLICY:

Courses delivered online qualify as part or all of a parent’s basic or post-secondary education activity regardless of whether the course requires specific log-in times or is entirely self-paced.

1. In addition to existing criteria for basic or post-secondary education, online education must:
 - o Be provided by an accredited educational institution, and
 - o Provide credit hours for the completed course for either high school or post-secondary purpose.
2. Course enrollment must be documented by letters or other documents provided by the educational institution.
3. Authorizations for self-paced online education are limited to one hour per week per enrolled credit, plus reasonable travel time. Additional hours can be authorized for summer school if the institution documents that the course is delivered over an accelerated period of time with more hours of instruction provided per week.
 - o Travel time is the time from the provider location to the location that the parent logs into the course.
4. The parent must inform the authorization worker of the location of the computer that will be used for logging into the course. If this is any location but the parent’s home, the worker should consider the reasonableness of the location, and must require verification if questionable.
5. The parent must provide a planned log-in schedule for the worker’s use in establishing an authorization that considers the school schedule as well as factors such as a child’s shared placement or the child’s school schedule, or a second parent’s overlapping approved activity.
6. Once child care is authorized for a semester, students must report if a class is cancelled or they withdraw from a class so that authorizations can be adjusted.
7. The student’s satisfactory progress must be documented.

UNCHANGED POLICY:

- 1 For all online education types:
 - a. The course hours documented by the educational institution and the schedule provided by the parent are only part of the determination of hours eligible for authorization. The worker must also consider any shared placement or child school schedule, and approved activity schedule of a second parent in the Assistance Group. Authorized hours should also reflect any work schedule of the parent who is the online student.
 - b. No child care may be authorized for hours of study or homework.
- 2 The only online basic education that will meet the criteria for credit-bearing coursework provided by an accredited educational institution will be high school.
 - a. For parents age 19 and younger
 - i. The approved activity code is TPHS
 - ii. The authorized weeks of care for this purpose will not count against the parent's 24 month limit for child care for basic education
 - iii. If the teen parent is under the age of 18, they must comply with living arrangement requirements for minor parents attending school.
 - b. For parents age 20 and older
 - i. The approved activity code is EMGE
 - ii. The authorized weeks will count toward the parent's 24 month limit for child care for basic education.
 - iii. The parent must work at least 5 hours per week or 20 hours per month throughout the semester to maintain eligibility for education-related child care.
- 3 For post-secondary education
 - a. The approved activity code is EMTS.
 - b. Regardless of the parent's age, the authorized weeks of care for this purpose will count toward the parent's 24 month limit for child care for post-secondary education.
 - c. Regardless of the parent's age, the parent must work at least 5 hours per week or 20 hours per month throughout the semester to maintain eligibility for education-related child care.
- 4 These policies have no effect on parents whose approved activity code is WWEM (W-2 Placement), FSJS (FSET Job Search), or FSWE (FSET Work Experience). The WWEM code is also used for Tribal TANF.

CONTACTS:

For Wisconsin Shares Child Care policy questions outside of Milwaukee County contact your Bureau of Regional Operations (BRO), Child Care Coordinators at http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/regional_operations/pdf/contact_list.pdf

For Child Care CARES/CWW, CSAW and CCPI Processing Questions statewide and policy questions in Milwaukee County contact the Child Care Help desk at: childcare@wisconsin.gov or (608) 264-1657.

*Program Categories – FS – FoodShare, MA – Medicaid, BC+ – BadgerCare Plus, SC – Senior Care, CTS – Caretaker Supplement, CC – Child Care, W-2 – Wisconsin Works, FSET – FoodShare Employment and Training, BC+ Core – BadgerCare Plus Core, CF – Children First, EA – Emergency Assistance, JAL – Job Access Loan, JC - Job Center Programs, RAP – Refugee Assistance Program, WIA – Workforce Investment Act, Other EP – Other Employment Programs.

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