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State of Wisconsin
Governor Scott Walker

TO: **Child Care Eligibility and Authorization Workers
and Supervisors
Income Maintenance Supervisors
Income Maintenance Staff
Training Staff
Child Care Coordinators**

DECE/BELP OPERATIONS MEMO

No: 18-42

DATE: 10/16/2018

Wisconsin Shares Child Care

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

SUBJECT: Wisconsin Shares Authorization Policy

CROSS REFERENCE: [Child Care and Development Block Grant](#);
[Wisconsin Shares Child Care Policy and Process Handbook](#),
Chapter 1: Program Eligibility and Chapter 2: Authorizations;
Operations Memos: [16-20](#), [17-37](#), [17-38](#), [17-45](#), and [18-43](#)

EFFECTIVE DATE: November 1, 2018

PURPOSE: This memo introduces the updated and new policy for Consecutive Authorizations, Authorization Assessments, and Inclusion Rate for Children with Special Needs. This memo should be read in conjunction with Operations Memo [18-43](#): Wisconsin Shares Authorization Begin and End Dates.

BACKGROUND: The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 requires states to create family friendly policies that help families maintain Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy and support continuity of care for children. The Bureau of Early Learning and Policy (BELP) has implemented these requirements in three phases. The first phase eliminated the Six Month Report Form (SMRF) for Wisconsin Shares Child Care and established a 12-month eligibility period (see [Operations Memo 16-20](#)). The second phase established a \$25,000 asset test for families (see [Operations Memo 17-37](#)), allows a child who reaches the age of 13 to continue receiving Wisconsin Shares up to the next annual renewal (see [Operations Memo 17-38](#)), and allows parents who experience a permanent loss of an approved activity to continue receiving

Wisconsin Shares for up to three months while they search for another approved activity (see [Operations Memo 17-45](#)). This third phase further enhances policies to promote continuity of care and reduce fluctuations in the monthly subsidy amount.

CURRENT POLICY: There is no current policy on **Consecutive Authorization Periods**.

NEW POLICY: The following new policy has been added to the Wisconsin Shares Policy and Process Handbook with an effective date of November 1, 2018.

2.3.9 Consecutive Authorization Periods

Authorizations must be written consecutively without any gaps during the 12-month eligibility period. This includes time periods shorter than a calendar month where a child may not be attending the child care provider, but is still enrolled, such as holidays and weekends.

Example 1: Allan has an authorization for his school age child, Jolene. Spring break is the week of March 15 – March 20. Jolene does not need child care the week of March 15 – 20 because Allan will be taking time off to spend with her. The authorization should continue through March with no gaps. The worker should not end the authorization on the Friday of the last day of school and re-start the authorization on the Monday that school starts again.

There are limited exceptions when the authorizations may not be continuous. This includes when there are periods of time of a month or more during which child care is not needed and a parent requests not to have an authorization.

Example 2: Caroline has an authorization for her school age child, Raphael, until the end of the school year on May 18. Caroline requests and needs more hours for the summer for Raphael starting July 15 after he returns from a summer stay with his grandparents in Florida. These authorizations do not need to have consecutive dates because the parent's request is an exception.

CURRENT POLICY: There is no current policy on **When to do an Authorization Assessment**.

NEW POLICY: The following new policy has been added to the Wisconsin Shares Policy and Process Handbook with an effective date of November 1, 2018.

2.4.2 When to do an Authorization Assessment

Authorization assessments ensure that the authorization is written to meet the child care needs that will allow a parent to engage in their approved activity. Workers must write authorizations for the longest period possible: up to the next renewal or the next expected change (see 2.3.8). Longer authorizations reduce fluctuations in the monthly subsidy amount and copayment calculation.

2.4.2.1 Mandatory Authorization Assessments

Authorization assessments must be completed at the following times; the authorization must be based on the assessment results:

- Initial eligibility
- Annual Renewal

In addition, an authorization assessment must be completed at the following times; and the authorization must be based on the assessment results:

- When the parent selects a new provider;
- When school-age children transition from summer break to the fall school year;
- When an eligible adult or minor teen parent is added to the case;
- When there is a calendar month gap or more between the end of one authorization and the start of another authorization;
- At the end of the 24-month education time limit (see 1.3.8.7 and 1.3.8.8); and
- When the need for child care does not align with the provider's hours of operation.

Example 1: Jessie has two school-aged children. The first authorizations for both children begin on January 1 and end on May 31. Jessie does not need child care during the month of June because the children will visit their grandmother that month. However, Jessie needs child care authorizations beginning on July 15. Jessie's worker must complete a new authorization assessment and the authorization must be based on this assessment because more than a calendar month has passed since the previous authorizations ended.

Example 2: From July 15 through August 31, Arturo's school-aged children need full-time child care. When school starts in September, the child care need will change based on the school day, a new authorization assessment is required. The authorization must be based on the assessment results because the children are transitioning from summer break to the fall school year.

2.4.2.2 Optional Authorization Assessments

During the 12-month period between annual eligibility renewals, an authorization assessment may be completed, but is not required, when an authorization was written to an expected change (see Section 2.3.8) or when certain changes are reported.

Examples of changes that fall into this category includes any items not listed in Section 2.4.2.1 and the following, but not limited to:

- A change in the number of child care hours needed to allow the parent(s) to participate in approved activities, including travel between the child care provider and the location of the activity and breaks;
- A change in the overlapping activity schedules of two-parent families;
- When school age children transition from the end of the school year to the summer break;
- A change in children's shared placement schedules;
- Any other change that results in a change in child care need.

It is essential for the authorization worker to gather enough information from the parent to determine the next steps. If it is clear that the change will not affect the authorized hours, no assessment is needed. When no assessment is needed, the worker may extend the existing authorization up to the renewal date or to the next expected change, or use the previously existing authorization assessment information to write a new authorization.

Example 1: Olivia is enrolled in W-2; the child care authorization for her baby was written to the end of her W-2 Employability Plan (EP). Olivia's next EP extended her existing activities for another 6 months. Olivia does not anticipate changing child care providers or making any other changes. No authorization assessment is needed and the authorization worker may extend the current authorization to the end of next EP (or next expected change, or the next Wisconsin Shares eligibility redetermination, whichever comes first).

If the worker completes an assessment but finds that it results in fewer hours, the parent may choose the reduction or may maintain the original number of authorized hours.

- If the parent chooses the reduced hour authorization, the worker must record a comment in CSAW documenting the conversation and the parent's choice for a reduced authorization.
- If the new authorization assessment indicates a reduced number of authorized hours and the parent chooses to keep the hours from the previous authorization, the worker must use the "Copy From Prior Authorization" button in CSAW. For more information about the "Copy From Prior Authorization" button, see the CSAW Authorizations User Guide.

If the assessment indicates an increase to the child care hours, the worker must verify information related to the increase of approved activity hours before increasing the authorized hours.

Note: It is important for workers to explain to parents that having the appropriate number of authorized hours will help to avoid overpaying the provider or underutilizing Wisconsin Shares subsidies.

Example 2: Annabelle works at Main Street Café from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. She has an authorization for 30 hours per week including travel time. In June, she reports that her work hours will change to 1 pm to 4 pm. Annabelle is not planning to change child care providers. The worker completes an authorization assessment and finds that the assessment results in 25 hours per week, including travel time. The worker asks Annabelle if she would like to keep her original authorized hours or if she would like to decrease to 25 hours per week. Annabelle chooses the reduction. The worker documents this conversation and the decision in CSAW authorization comments and completes the authorization.

Example 3: Cassie works at Plastics Manufacturing from 7 a.m. to noon. She has an authorization for her baby, Renee, for 27 hours per week, including breaks and travel time. In January, she reports that her work hours are changing to 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. The worker completes an authorization assessment and finds that the assessment results in

22 hours per week, including breaks and travel time. The worker asks Cassie if she would like to stay with the 27 hour authorization or if she would like to decrease to the 22 hour authorization. Cassie indicates that she would like to stay with the 27 hour authorization. The worker uses the “Copy From Prior Authorization” button and completes the authorization.

CURRENT POLICY: 2.5.9.1 Inclusion Rate for Children with Special Needs

Parents of children with special needs may be eligible for a higher subsidy amount to reflect the increased costs the child care provider incurs in providing care to a child with special needs. The local agency workers may consider additional subsidy amounts for providers caring for children with special needs on a case-by-case basis.

[Form DCF-F-2976](#) must be completed to request and document a higher subsidy amount for a child with special needs. If a higher subsidy amount is approved by the local agency, the increased amount is valid for one year. A new form must be completed every 12 months to evaluate the needs of the child and determine any adjustments to the cost incurred by the provider. A new form must also be completed if there is a change in child care providers to determine the cost incurred by the new child care program.

NEW POLICY: The following new policy has been added to the Wisconsin Shares Policy and Process Handbook with an effective date of November 1, 2018.

2.4.7.1 Inclusion Rate for Children with Special Needs

Parents of children with special needs may be eligible for a higher subsidy amount to reflect the increased costs the child care provider incurs in providing care to a child with special needs. The local agency workers may consider additional subsidy amounts for providers caring for children with special needs on a case-by-case basis.

Form DCF-F-2976 must be completed to request and document a higher subsidy amount for a child with special needs. If a higher subsidy amount is approved by the local agency, the increased amount is valid for one year. If the form expires or the override price ends during the 12-month eligibility period, the override price will remain in CSAW until the next renewal or there is a change in child care providers.

CWW SYSTEM ENHANCEMENTS: There are no system enhancements to CARES Worker Web (CWW) for Authorizations.

CSAW SYSTEM ENHANCEMENTS: There are three system enhancements to support new policy and decrease agency workload.

1. Copy Previous Authorized Hours Button

The *Authorization-Weekly Hours* page is enhanced to include the following functionality:

- A new row labeled *Prior Authorization Total*;
- A button labeled *Copy From Prior Authorization*; and
- Previous information about *Provider Price Type*.

These new enhancements will appear in the driver flow after selecting to derive hours for a new authorization to the same provider as shown below.

Child Care Authorization Hours

[Case Activity Summary](#)
[Review Schedules](#)

Begin Date 08/01/2018 **Status** Pending
End Date 08/31/2018

Weekly Hours					Hours Used for Benefit Calculation				
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4		Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Hours Based on Schedule	01:00	00:00	01:00	00:00	Full Time	01:20	00:00	01:20	00:00
Travel Time	00:20	00:00	00:20	00:00	Above Full Time (50)	00:00	00:00	00:00	00:00
Total	01:20	00:00	01:20	00:00	Average Weekly Hours (Full Time): 00:40 Average Weekly Hours (Above Full Time): 00:00				
Approved	<input type="text" value="01:20"/>	<input type="text" value="00:00"/>	<input type="text" value="01:20"/>	<input type="text" value="00:00"/>	Average Weekly Hours (Full Time): 00:40 Average Weekly Hours (Above Full Time): 00:00				
Prior Authorization Total	28:00	25:00	28:00	25:00					

Average Weekly Authorized Hours: 00:40
Override Hours Related Comments

0 of 500 characters.

Location Category Licensed Group

Provider Price Type *

The new functionality will **not** appear for the following scenarios because per policy the parent does not have the option to keep the same number of hours as were written in the previous authorization:

- When a new authorization is being written at initial eligibility or renewal;
- When there are nonconsecutive authorizations that have a calendar month gap or more between the end of one authorization and the start of another authorization; and
- When the parent changes child care providers.

The new functionality will appear for the following four scenarios; however, it **must not be used** because per policy the parent does not have the option to keep the same number of hours as were written in the previous authorization:

- When school-age children transition from summer break to a fall school year;
- When an eligible adult or minor teen parent is added to the case;
- At the end of the 24-month education time limit (see 1.3.8.7 and 1.3.8.8); and
- When the need for child care does not align with the provider’s hours of operation.

When the *Copy From Prior Authorization* button is used, it will generate the same hours from the previous authorization in the *Approved* row, the same *Provider Price Type* used for the previous authorization and a comment in the *Override Hours Related Comments* stating the authorization was “Copied from prior authorization”.

Child Care Authorization Hours

[Case Activity Summary](#)
[Review Schedules](#)

Begin Date 08/01/2018 **Status** Pending
End Date 08/31/2018

Weekly Hours					Hours Used for Benefit Calculation				
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4		Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Hours Based on Schedule	01:00	00:00	01:00	00:00	Full Time	01:20	00:00	01:20	00:00
Travel Time	00:20	00:00	00:20	00:00	Above Full Time (50)	00:00	00:00	00:00	00:00
Total	01:20	00:00	01:20	00:00	Average Weekly Hours (Full Time): 00:40 Average Weekly Hours (Above Full Time): 00:00				
Approved	<input type="text" value="28:00"/>	<input type="text" value="25:00"/>	<input type="text" value="28:00"/>	<input type="text" value="25:00"/>	Copy From Prior Authorization				
Prior Authorization Total	28:00	25:00	28:00	25:00					

Average Weekly Authorized Hours: 00:40

Override Hours Related Comments Copied from prior authorization
31 of 500 characters.

Location Category Licensed Group

Provider Price Type * Full-Time (Previous: Full-time)

2. Extend Current Authorization

The *Modify Authorization-Basic Details* page is enhanced to extend authorizations that have an end date in the future or that have ended within the last 30 days, prior to the current date.

To access the *Modify Authorization-Basic Details* page, select the *Effective Period* in the *List of Authorizations*.

List of Authorizations								
Child's Name	Date of Birth	Effective Period	Average Weekly Hours	Provider Location Details	Status	School Hours	Child Schedule	
Anne Windsor	09/21/2015	01/26/2018 - 05/01/2018	26:30	3800039963-001 Babies Gumboree 2821 Monroe Street 3E, Madison, WI	Processed	School Hours	Child Schedule	

Then extend the *Authorization End Date* and select *Authorization Summary* at the bottom of the page.

Modify Authorization - Basic Details

Case Details

Case Number	3150943132	Admin Agency	Dane County (13)
Primary Person	Elizabeth Windsor	RFA Date	01/26/2018
Address	741 E Gorham Ave Madison, WI 53703 Dane County	Review Date	12/31/2018
		CC AG Status	Pend

Authorization Period

Status Processed

Begin Date * 01/26/2018

End Date * 12/31/2018

The current authorization was from 1/26/2018-5/1/2018 and it was extended until the renewal date of 12/31/2018.

Basic Details [Edit](#)

Begin Date	01/26/2018	End Date	12/31/2018
Is this child in shared placement ?	No	Authorization Agency	Dane County
Is this child in Pre-K Program ?	No	Head Start Program Type	
Public Transportation	No	Pre Kindergarten Type	
School Closed Need	No	District Name	
Daily Travel Duration	00:00	School Name	
Travel Duration Comments	sdgfsd		
Average Authorized Weekly Hours	26:30	Provider Price Type	Full-Time
Authorization End Reason		Override Price	NA
Comments			

Schedule Details [Edit](#) [Review Schedules](#)

Weekly Hours					Hours Used for Benefit Calculation				
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4		Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Hours Based on Schedule	28:00	25:00	28:00	25:00	Full Time	28:00	25:00	28:00	25:00
Travel Time	00:00	00:00	00:00	00:00	Above Full Time (50)	00:00	00:00	00:00	00:00
Total	28:00	25:00	28:00	25:00	Average Weekly Hours (Full Time): 26:30				
Approved	28:00	25:00	28:00	25:00	Average Weekly Hours (Above Full Time): 00:00				

Average Weekly Authorized Hours: 26:30
Override Hours Related Comments

School Closed Hours [Edit](#)

This authorization indicates no need for school closed hours.

Status Processed

3. Override-Special Need Price Soft Stop

A soft stop will be triggered if a higher Override-Special Need price was previously used than what is currently being entered for a new authorization. Provider prices entered for children with special needs must not be lowered.

Please review the following warning

 Previous authorizations had an override rate of \$5.00 per hour which is higher than the current value. Please confirm the change is correct and resubmit the form.

Child Care Authorization Hours

[Case Activity Summary](#)
[Review Schedules](#)

Begin Date 01/10/2018 **Status** Pending
End Date 02/10/2018

Weekly Hours		Hours Used for Benefit Calculation	
	Week		Week
Hours Based on Schedule	40:00	Full Time	35:00
Travel Time	00:50	Above Full Time (50)	00:00
Total	40:50	Average Weekly Hours (Full Time): 35:00	
Approved	40:50	Average Weekly Hours (Above Full Time): 00:00	
Prior Authorization Total	05:00	<input type="button" value="Copy From Prior Authorization"/>	

Average Weekly Authorized Hours: 40:50
Override Hours Related Comments

0 of 500 characters.

Location Category Licensed Group

Provider Price Type * (Previous: Override (special need) \$5.00/hr)

Override Price

Weekly Hourly

CONTACTS:

For Wisconsin Shares Child Care policy questions outside of Milwaukee County contact your Bureau of Regional Operations (BRO), Child Care Coordinators at BROCCPolicyHelpDesk@wisconsin.gov.

For Child Care CARES/CWW and CSAW Processing Questions statewide, and policy questions in Milwaukee County, contact the Child Care Subsidy and Technical Assistance line at: childcare@wisconsin.gov or (608) 422-7200.

DCF/DECE/BELP/MRD