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State of Wisconsin
Governor Tony Evers

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: 19-27 **AMENDED**

DATE: **08/02/2019 09/30/2019**

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: Updates to School Closed Hours for Wisconsin Shares Child Care

CROSS REFERENCE: [Wisconsin Shares Child Care Policy and Process Handbook](#), Section 2.4.4.4, Section 2.4.4.6 (Obsolete);
[CSAW Authorizations User Guide](#);
[CSAW Authorizations Processing Various Change Scenarios User Guide](#)

EFFECTIVE DATE: September 1, 2019

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operations Memo is to provide updates to Wisconsin Shares Child Care policy regarding authorizations for school closed hours, including inclement weather-related school closures.

BACKGROUND: Previously, parents who requested an authorization for scheduled school closed hours for their children automatically received 10 additional authorized hours per month in November, December, January, February, and March to be available when school could be closed due to inclement weather. These additional hours will no longer be added automatically beginning with the 2019 – 2020 school year. Parents will need to request additional child care hours for weather-related school closures within 10 calendar days following the closure, the same as other school closed days.

POLICY: Section 2.4.4.6 Authorizations for Inclement Weather Related School Closures in the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Policy and Process Handbook has been incorporated into Section 2.4.4.4 School Closed Hours. Section 2.4.4.6 is obsolete and will be removed with the next

release of the Handbook. Section 2.4.4.5 Zero-Hour Authorizations has been moved to Section 2.4.4.4, and the following School Closed Hours section has been renumbered to Section 2.4.4.4.1. The numbering changes and following policy updates will be incorporated into the next Wisconsin Shares Child Care Policy and Process Handbook release.

The processing and systematic changes will be added to the CSAW Authorizations User Guide and the CSAW Authorizations Processing Various Change Scenarios User Guide with the next release of the User Guides. Although the policy changes are effective with the 2019-2020 school year (September 1), system changes were made on July 31, 2019, to support the new policy as local agencies begin writing school year authorizations.

There will be no maximum amount of school closed hours beginning with the 2019 – 2020 school year. ~~The total school closed hours allowed for November through February and March through June have increased beginning with the 2019 – 2020 school year. The new maximum school closed hours are listed in the revised policy section below.~~ For authorizations that were already in place for the 2019 – 2020 school year at the time of implementation, the 10 hours per month of inclement weather hours for the months of November through March were systematically deleted.

Section 2.4.4.4.1 School Closed Hours

All parents with school-age children who are three (3) years old or older on September 1, may request child care subsidy for days and hours that school is closed according to the school calendar (i.e. for teacher conferences or teacher in-service days) **when the parent will need child care in order to attend work or other approved activity**, or due to inclement weather when the parent ~~will need~~ **needed** child care in order to attend work or other approved activity.

Children with an authorization **only** for scheduled school closed hours **(zero-hour authorization)** may also receive additional child care subsidy when school is unexpectedly closed; this includes closures due to inclement weather as well as closures that are not weather-related.

School closed hours assist with the cost of child care when school is not in session and when school is closed due to inclement weather, including but not limited to: snowstorms, below-zero conditions, hail, or ice.

School closed hours can be requested in advance for by parents who know their work schedule ahead of time but can also be requested within 10 days following the school day closure whether the day was a planned school closed day or unexpected.

~~If scheduled school closed hours were not included in the original authorization or if there is an unexpected school closure, parents must request the additional hours within 10 calendar days after the last date of the school closure.~~ For policy and process regarding short-term authorizations that may be needed to cover holiday and spring breaks, see Section 2.3.10. Agency workers have the option to enter the school closed hours/days using the process described below or may create a separate, short-term authorization as described in Section 2.3.10.

Example 1: Susie has a zero-hour authorization for her school-age child, Derek. She calls on January 15 to request school closed hours for Derek. His school was closed January 4 and 5 due to a snowstorm but the child care program was open and Susie needed to work. Because the request was made within 10 calendar days from the last day the school was closed, the worker may add the additional hours for the days Derek attended child care while school was closed.

Example 2: Katie has a zero-hour authorization for her school-age child, Preston. She calls on May 4 to request school closed hours for Preston because his school was closed from April 20 – 24 due to flooding. Because the request was made within 10 calendar days from the last day the school was closed, the worker may add the additional hours for the days Preston attended child care while school was closed.

~~The total subsidy hours provided for scheduled school closures and other unexpected school closures may not exceed the amounts below.~~

- ~~• **July 1 – October 31:** 30 hours~~
- ~~• **November 1 – February 28:** 130 hours~~
- ~~• **March 1 – June 30:** 100 hours~~

Process: School closed hours are added using the Manage Scheduled School Closed Hours page of CSAW. The authorization worker must use the Comments section on the Manage Scheduled School Closed Hours page to identify the reason for the school closure. ~~will prevent authorization workers from entering additional school closed hours that exceed the maximum amounts listed above.~~

~~In the event that a parent requests school closed hours that exceed the maximum amounts due to excessive inclement weather closures, the worker must confirm that the provider(s) was open and cared for the child(ren) during these closures, and that the parent was participating in their approved activity. The worker can verbally confirm this with the parent and/or provider; additional documentation is not required. Once the worker has confirmed the need for the additional hours, the worker can contact the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy and Technical Assistance Line to request the addition of the school closed hours or days above the maximum in CSAW.~~

Children who are authorized for a before and after school program or a co-located Head Start or 4K program as described in Section 2.4.4.2 may need a secondary zero-hour authorization if care at the school program is not available during school closures, including inclement weather. ~~The authorization worker must assess the child care need and the parent's approved activity to determine if a secondary authorization is needed.~~

Children who are homeschooled, truant, in out-of-school suspension, or expelled and disenrolled are not eligible for child care for school closed or inclement weather hours. Children who are homeschooled, truant, or in out-of-school suspension are also not eligible for an authorization during the typical school day. However, expelled children who are considered disenrolled may be eligible to receive an authorization during the typical school day (see 2.4.4.3.)

Parents in an Approved Activity Search Period (ACTS) or Temporary Break Period (TBRK) are not eligible for additional child care hours (see 2.4.3.4).

The school closed hours are subject to the same 90-day removal policy as all other funds. If the parent received additional subsidy hours for school closures and has not expended all of the funds within 90 days, the funds will age-off and no longer be available to the parent. For the 90-day removal policy, see Sections 2.5.6 and 3.3.4.4.

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.

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