Inclusive Birth to 3 Child Care Pilot

Pilot Basics:

The purpose of the Inclusive Birth to 3 Child Care Pilot program is to:

- Support families of children participating in the Birth to 3 Program in finding regulated, high-quality child care that will meet their child’s needs. Potentially eligible families will receive information about participation in the pilot. Families will also receive information and resources for finding regulated child care, providing both children and their parents with critical support and stability.
- Help reduce financial hardships, such as child care tuition, for families of children participating in the Birth to 3 Program. Families participating in the pilot program may receive up to 12 months of financial support towards the cost of care.
- Connect Birth to 3 Program and child care providers to ensure supports are in place to foster healthy growth, development, and well-being. Children eligible for the Birth to 3 Program may receive services in a variety of locations, including at child care. Providing services in child care settings helps children learn while:
  - In familiar places.
  - Engaged with familiar people.
  - Using toys and familiar objects based on their interests.
- Provide ongoing and steady revenue for the duration of the pilot to child care providers who care for children with special needs. Children in the pilot will receive an authorization for child care for up to 12 months. The funds for child care will be paid directly to the child care provider.

The Inclusive Birth to 3 Child Care Pilot is a Department of Children and Families (DCF) pilot which will support the cost of child care for a limited number of children participating in the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS)’s Birth to 3 Program. This initiative is funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The funding is time-limited and runs from August 2022 through June 2024.

Children may be eligible for this assistance if they:

- Reside in Wisconsin.
- Are under age 3 when their subsidy begins.
- Are enrolled in the Birth to 3 Program.
- Have an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) on file as of July 1, 2022.
- Are a citizen or qualified immigrant.
- Provide a valid Social Security number.
- Are not receiving and have not been determined eligible to receive Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy.
- Are not participating in Partner Up!

Key dates:

Authorizations will begin to be issued for the pilot region (Crawford, Grant, Green, Iowa, Jefferson, Lafayette, and Rock counties) beginning in August 2022, and statewide on October 1, 2022.
Each child may receive an authorization for up to 12 months. No new children will be authorized for the pilot subsidy after June 30, 2023.

**Process:**

The Birth to 3 Program staff will complete the release form (F-82009k) section titled Agency/Organization.

Families will be sent a letter with a release of information to sign and return to the county Birth to 3 Program if interested in participating in the pilot.

When a release is received, the county Birth to 3 Program staff will make a referral to the pilot program for the family through the Program Participation System (PPS). All referrals sent through PPS will go to DCF per a nightly batch send.

Authorization workers at the local county agencies will contact the family to complete an intake process and begin the process of approving a request for the Inclusive Birth to 3 Child Care pilot subsidy.

Families will need to find a child care provider; parents may select any regulated provider that has or is willing to complete a Fidelity Information Services (FIS) contract. This is needed for the subsidy to be deposited into the child care provider’s bank account.

Local Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&Rs) can assist parents in locating a provider or the family can use the Child Care Finder.

Please see the DCF Inclusive Birth to 3 Child Care Pilot Home page or related pages for more information. For additional questions, please contact your DHS Birth to 3 Program Children and Family Program Specialist (CFPS).

**Birth to 3 Program responsibilities:**

As indicated above, the county Birth to 3 Program staff will send each participating family a letter, a release of information to complete and Birth to 3 Program – Parent and Child Rights (F-23134).

When an appropriately completed and signed release of information from the family is received, the service coordinator (SC) will send a referral for the Inclusive Birth to 3 Child Care pilot through PPS.

For children referred, the SC will follow up with families on the need to include services provided at the child care to the IFSP and hold IFSP updates, as needed, to add this location for services.

SC will follow up with families at the next IFSP update to discuss how child care is going, reassess goals and services as appropriate or send/re-send referral, if necessary.

See the DCF Inclusive Birth to 3 Child Care Pilot Birth to 3 Program Service Coordinators page for more information.

**How to make a referral:**

Receive the signed release from a participating parent.

Go into PPS, Service Planning page.
In the Services section, check the field “Child Care,” and enter the date the parent signed the release in the field “Release of Information Signed Date.”

If, after three months of the referral being sent, the family has not found a child care provider, the referral will no longer be active. If the family would like to continue to find a child care provider and participate in the pilot, the referral will need to be resent.

For re-referrals: The SC will go back into PPS/Service Planning page, uncheck the “Child Care” checkbox and click Return; go back to the Service Planning page of PPS, Services section, and recheck the “Child Care” checkbox, adding the release date or the date of a newly signed release, if necessary. Click Return.

For more information on this process, see the PPS User Guide.