



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

DECE/BCCSA OPERATIONS MEMO
No: 26-09
DATE: 03/17/2026
Child Care

FROM: David Timmerman, Director
Bureau of Child Care Subsidy Administration
Division of Early Care and Education
Department of Children and Families

SUBJECT: Clarification of the Ages of Eligible Children Policy for Child Care

CROSS REFERENCE: [Wisconsin Shares Handbook](#)
Section 4.3 Ages of Eligible Children

EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operations Memo is to provide clarification to the ages of eligible children requirements and the CARES Worker Web (CWW) system functionality when determining eligibility for the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program.

BACKGROUND: A child must meet the age requirements for child care at application and renewal to be determined eligible for Wisconsin Shares. To be eligible, the child must be under age 13 or under age 19 with a verified disability and is not physically or mentally capable of caring for themselves.

POLICY: This policy will be clarified in the next update to the Wisconsin Shares Handbook.

At **application**, eligibility for child care is determined based on the age of the child *on the day of the child care request*. To meet the age requirement for the program, a child must be under age 13 (which includes 12 years, 11 months) or under age 19 with a verified disability and is not physically or mentally capable of caring for themselves.

At **renewal**, eligibility for child care is based on the child's exact age at the child care interview and *the date populated in the Request/Renewal/Review Date field on the Interview Details page* in CWW.

- A child that is under age 13 (which includes 12 years, 11 months) or under age 19 with a verified disability on the date of the child care interview meets the age requirement for the program. The child will remain an Eligible Child (EC) for child care after completion of the renewal.
- If the child is age 13 or older, or 19 or older with a verified disability on the day of the child care interview, they become an Included Child (IC) for child care after the renewal is completed.

Example 1 (child turns 13 after renewal interview): Ella has a child care renewal due on April 30. The assistance group (AG) consists of Ella, her 12-year-old TJ who turns 13 on April 12 and her 8-year-old son Alex. Ella initiates her renewal and child care interview on April 2 and that date is populated in the Request/Renewal/Review Date field on the Interview Details page, but verification is not received until April 13 (after TJ turns 13). TJ is 12 years old on April 2 and is found to be an Eligible Child (EC) for the new eligibility period which begins May 1. After completion of the renewal, CWW determines both TJ and Alex meet the age requirements to be an Eligible Child (EC) for child care.

Example 2 (child turns 13 before renewal interview): Charlie has a child care renewal due June 30. His AG consists of himself, his 12-year-old Stella and 5-year-old Frankie. Stella turns 13 on June 4. Charlie contacts the local agency to initiate his renewal and his child care interview on June 15, which is the date populated in the Request/Renewal/Review Date field on the Interview Details page. Because this date is after Stella turned 13, she will be an Included Child (IC) for the new eligibility period beginning July 1.

CWW Functionality:

- **No system changes are being made.**
- In 2017, when changes related to the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Phase 3 were implemented, CWW was enhanced to determine eligibility based on a child's age at application and renewal, as well as to allow a 12-year-old child who turns 13 during the eligibility period to remain eligible for child care until the next renewal.
- CWW will continue to use the date of the child care request at application and the date populated in the Request/Renewal/Review Date field on the Interview Details page at renewal, to determine if a child is an Eligible Child (EC) or an Included Child (IC) for child care.

CSAW Functionality:

- **No system changes are being made.**
- If CWW determines a 13-year-old as an Eligible Child (EC) for child care and the child appears as eligible for an authorization in CSAW, agency workers should create an authorization if requested by the parent.

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 Program Integrity technical assistance, Child Care CARES/CWW and CSAW Processing Questions statewide, and policy questions in Milwaukee County, contact the Child Care Help Desk at: childcare@wisconsin.gov or (608) 422-7200.

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