



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

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

DECE/BCCSA OPERATIONS MEMO

No: 20-25

DATE: 10/30/2020

Child Care

**SUBJECT: Child Care Provider Temporary Closures Due to COVID-19**

**CROSS REFERENCE:** [Wisconsin Shares Child Care Policy and Process Handbook](#), Sections 4.5.1, 4.8.4, 4.9.2, and 4.11.1.2.2.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** March 12, 2020

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this Operations Memo is to provide local agencies with policy regarding child care provider temporary closures due to a COVID-19 exposure.

**BACKGROUND:** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, child care providers may be required to temporarily close their facility if there is an exposure to COVID-19 in order to ensure the health and safety of children, families, and staff. During these uncertain times, the Department recognizes that providers need to be supported in order to remain in operation. Therefore, the Department will not be requiring providers to return subsidy funds for a temporary closure lasting up to 14 consecutive calendar days if the closure was due to a COVID-19 exposure.

**Current Policy:**

The following sections of the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Policy and Process Handbook describe circumstances in which subsidy funds may be required to be returned to the Department when a child care provider has a temporary closure:

- Section [4.5.1](#) states that funds may be removed from a parent's MyWICChildCare EBT card in situations when a provider has a temporary closure.
- Section [4.8.4](#) states that if a provider refuses to care for a child during the child's authorized hours due to planned or unplanned closures, the provider may be subject to overpayment.

- Section [4.9.2](#) states that a referral should be submitted to the Child Care Fraud mailbox in situations of unexpected provider temporary closure.
- Section [4.11.1.2.2](#) states that a provider may be responsible for an overpayment for receiving and retaining payment for care not provided in circumstances of temporary closure.

**Licensed Child Care Provider Reporting Requirements:****Group Child Care**

[Wis. Admin. Code DCF s. 251.04\(3\)](#) REPORTS. The licensee shall report to the department all of the following.

[\(m\)](#) Any confirmed case of a communicable disease reportable under ch. [DHS 145](#) in a child enrolled at the center or a person in contact with children at the center, within 24 hours after the center is notified of the diagnosis. The licensee shall also notify the local health department within 24 hours after the center is notified of the diagnosis.

**Family Child Care**

[Wis. Admin. Code DCF s. 250.04\(3\)](#) REPORTS. The licensee shall report to the department all of the following.

[\(m\)](#) Any confirmed case of a communicable disease reportable under ch. [DHS 145](#) in a child enrolled at the center or a person in contact with children at the center, within 24 hours after the center is notified of the diagnosis. The licensee shall also notify the local health department within 24 hours after the center is notified of the diagnosis.

**Day Camp**

[Wis. Admin. Code DCF s. 252.41\(2\)](#) Reports. The licensee shall report all of the following to the department

[\(m\)](#) Any confirmed case of a communicable disease reportable under ch. [DHS 145](#) in a child enrolled at the center or a person in contact with children at the center, within 24 hours after the center is notified of the diagnosis. The licensee shall also notify the local health department within 24 hours after the center is notified of the diagnosis.

**Certified Child Care Provider Reporting Requirements:**

[Wis. Admin. Code DCF s. 202.08\(4\)\(k\)](#) If a child care operator or a child care provider is aware that a child attending certified child care or a child care operator's own child has a reportable communicable disease under ch. [DHS 145](#) that is transmitted through normal contact, the operator or provider shall comply with all of the following requirements:

1. The child care operator or child care provider shall notify the local public health officer and parents of all the enrolled children within 48 hours of being notified of the diagnosis.
2. A child who has or had a reportable communicable disease under ch. [DHS 145](#) may not be admitted to certified child care unless the child's parents provide a statement from a physician that the child's condition is no longer contagious or the child has been absent for a period of time equal to the longest usual incubation period for the disease as specified by the department of health services.

**New Policy:**

A child care provider will not be required to return subsidy funds to the Department for a temporary closure lasting up to 14 consecutive calendar days if the closure was due to a COVID-

19 exposure. Any closures beyond 14 consecutive calendar days would require an explanation of circumstances by the provider for review and the provider is expected to adhere to the reporting requirements of Licensing and Certification. This policy is not limited to a single 14 consecutive calendar day COVID-19 closure.

**Procedure:**

If a child care provider contacts their local agency to report a closure due to a COVID-19 exposure, the local agency should instruct the provider to contact their licensur or certifier to report the reason and timeframe for the closure.

If a child care provider previously returned funds to the Department through a Voluntary Repayment Agreement (VPA) for a closure due to a COVID-19 exposure, the provider may contact their local agency to request the funds be returned. The local agency should send this request to the Program Integrity Unit Technical Assistance Mailbox at: [DCFBPITArequest@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DCFBPITArequest@wisconsin.gov) or the [Technical Assistance Request Page](#) on the DCF Website.

Child care providers who choose to voluntarily return funds may complete the [Voluntary Repayment Agreement form \(DCF-F-5178-E\)](#) and return the form to the local agency.

**COMMUNICATION:** Child care providers are being informed of policy changes through weekly emails from the Division of Early Care and Education Division Administrator.

**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](mailto: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](mailto:childcare@wisconsin.gov) or (608) 422-7200.

For investigation, overpayment, and program integrity internal procedure development questions; written resource and subject matter expert requests; and VPAs and Retractions, please contact the Program Integrity Unit at: [DCFBPITArequest@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DCFBPITArequest@wisconsin.gov) or the [Technical Assistance Request Page](#) on the DCF Website.

For Wisconsin Shares Child Care Chapter 3 and 4 policy questions outside of Milwaukee County contact the Bureau of Regional Operations (BRO) Child Care Policy Help Desk at [BROCCPolicyHelpDesk@wisconsin.gov](mailto:BROCCPolicyHelpDesk@wisconsin.gov).

For referrals regarding alleged client or provider child care fraud or other program integrity concerns, please submit a referral to the Child Care Fraud Mailbox at [DCFMBCHILDCAREFRAUD@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DCFMBCHILDCAREFRAUD@wisconsin.gov).