

# School Age Parents Frequently Asked Questions

## *Special Education State Categorical Aid*

*Updated August 1, 2024*

### **1. Who qualifies as a school age parent?**

Wisconsin law defines a school age parent as any individual, inclusive of all genders, under the age of 21 who is not a high school graduate and is a parent, an expectant parent, or a person who has been pregnant within the immediately preceding 120 (calendar) days. [Wis. Stat. § 115.91](#).

### **2. What are school districts required to do for school age parents?**

Wisconsin law requires public schools to make program modifications and services available to any resident school age parent that will enable the student to continue his or her education until the student graduates or turns 21. [Wis. Stat. § 115.915](#). Any school district that is receiving state categorical aid to support its classroom and/or homebound instruction to school age parents must meet all requirements within [Wis. Admin. Code § PI 19](#), Education for School Age Parents (SAP).

Upon request, school districts must re-enroll parents under the age of 21 who are not enrolled and have not completed high school. Such students are entitled to the same instruction and services provided to any other school age parent. Wisconsin law states, “No person may be denied admission to any public school or be denied participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be discriminated against, in any curricular, extracurricular, pupil services, recreational, or other program or activity because of the person’s ... pregnancy, marital or parental status...” [Wis. Stat. § 118.13\(1\)](#). [Wis. Admin. Code § PI 19.03\(2\)](#) requires school boards with school age parent programs to ensure the program and written plan follow this statute.

### **3. What types of program modifications may be made for school age parents?**

Program modifications may be made to accommodate a school age parent’s pregnancy, childcare requirements, or part-time employment necessary to support his or her child. Examples of program modifications that have been provided by school districts include but are not limited to:

- a modified or shortened class schedule,
- preferential enrollment in classes addressing the school age parents’ identified needs, e.g., family and consumer education class on parenting,
- an extended school year,
- an additional school year, i.e., fifth year senior, and/or
- granting academic credit for correspondence or community-based classes, e.g., physical education credit for a birth preparation class.

### **4. Who may request program modifications in school age parent programs?**

Parents, students, and other interested parties, e.g., the student’s physician, may request school districts provide specific programs or curricular modifications. [Wis. Admin. Code § PI 19.04\(1\)](#).

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The school district is responsible for determining what program modifications and services are needed. Question 3 discusses placement alternatives.

### **5. What kind of placements should be available for school-age parents?**

Placement options may include any of the following:

- continuation in the regular school environment with supportive services provided by pupil services staff,
- attendance in an educational program designed specifically to meet the needs of the school age parent,
- homebound instruction,
- hospital instruction, and
- other programs and services which may be available to students identified as at risk under [Wis. Stat. § 118.153](#).

[Wis. Admin. Code § PI 19.04\(3\)\(a\)-\(e\)](#).

### **6. If the student is eligible to enroll, is participation in the program mandatory?**

No. Participation is voluntary, and the educational and service program plan must have the written consent of the student and the student's parent/guardian, if the student is under the age of 18 years. [Wis. Admin. Code § PI 19.04\(5\)](#).

### **7. What kind of instruction and services should be provided for school-age parents?**

The services provided must include:

- instruction in basic skills for academic subjects,
- provision of social services to facilitate accessibility to needed resources,
- information on counseling services available in the school district and the community,
- provision of vocational guidance, career development, and school to work activities,
- information on related maternal and child health support systems and resources; and
- instruction in the following areas:
  - prenatal and neonatal care,
  - child development,
  - infant and childcare,
  - nutrition,
  - family planning including natural family planning,
  - information on the options available and the procedures followed in independent and agency adoptions,
  - the impact of adoption on birth parents and children who have been adopted,
  - and an explanation that the adoption process may be initiated even after a child has been born and has left the hospital. [Wis. Admin. Code § PI 19.03\(6\)\(a\)-\(f\)](#); [Wis. Stat. § 115.92\(1\)](#).

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Information to assist in adoption instruction can be obtained from the Wisconsin Adoption Information Center in Milwaukee at (800)762-8063, (414) 475-1246, [info@coalitionforcyf.org](mailto:info@coalitionforcyf.org), or <http://wiadopt.org/>.

### **8. Must all the instruction and services listed in Question 7 be provided through special school-based programs?**

No. Any school district receiving categorical aid for classroom and/or homebound instruction must ensure that all school age parents enrolled in the program receive the services and instruction listed in the response to Question 7 through any of the following means:

- specialized instruction and services designed specifically for school age parents,
- existing classes and services available to students other than just school age parents,
- and referral to community-based classes and services.

All services and instruction necessary to fulfill the requirements of [Wis. Admin. Code § PI 19.03\(6\)](#) should be documented in the student's written educational and service program plan, including the individuals and organizations who will provide these services and instruction. School districts that claim categorical aid for homebound instruction to school age mothers (but not for classroom instruction to school age parents) typically make extensive use of the second two areas to comply with [Wis. Admin. Code § PI 19.03\(6\)](#).

### **9. What process should school districts follow to determine what services and instruction school age parents will receive?**

[Wis. Admin. Code § PI 19.04](#) outlines the process a school district should follow to determine what services and instruction school age parents will receive. At least one school staff member should be designated as the coordinator for school age parents and to receive referrals. Professional employees of the school district are required to refer any student if they have reasonable cause to believe the student is a school age parent. Permission for the referral must be obtained from the student, or a minor student's parent/guardian.

A meeting including the following people must be convened to determine the student's educational and service program plan: the school age parent program coordinator, the student, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) if the student is under age 18, the student's teachers, and pupil services staff. These individuals are expected to have the expertise to discuss the student's current educational program and what program modifications, if any, are needed to accomplish the services and instruction outlined in Question 7 and to accommodate the pupil's pregnancy, childcare, and/or part-time employment necessary to support the child. The educational and service program plan must have the written consent of the student and the student's parents if the student is under 18 years or is not otherwise emancipated, e.g., married. Plans should be developed for both school-age mothers and fathers.

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**10. Some school age parents are adults and/or married. Under these circumstances, who is responsible for giving approval for the student's educational and service program plan?**

Married minors in Wisconsin are emancipated from their parents. [Wis. Stat. § 54.46\(6\)](#). If the student is 18 years or older or is married, only his/her written approval is needed for the educational and service program plan, i.e., approval of the parent and/or spouse is not needed. [Wis. Admin. Code § PI 19.04\(5\)](#).

**11. What if the student and/or parents disagree with the proposed services and instruction for school age parents?**

There are no specific processes outlined in statute or administrative rule for resolving disagreements between schools and school age parents and their parents/guardians regarding the student's educational and service program plan, either on a local or state level. All attempts should be made to reconcile differences by examining additional alternatives that may be acceptable to all parties. *The school district is responsible for determining what program modifications and services are needed and appropriate.*

**12. What costs related to school age parents can be claimed for state categorical aid?**

State categorical aid is available to offset the staff and transportation costs of specialized instruction to school age parents. [Wis. Stat. § 115.93](#). Specialized instruction includes classes designed specifically for school age parents and homebound instruction (with a physician's recommendation) for school-age mothers during the period when they may be unable to attend school-based classes. Aidable staff include teachers, instructional aides, and pupil services staff providing specialized instruction within their respective areas of expertise. Aidable staff does not include aides for home study programs. [Wis. Admin. Code § PI 19.06\(1\)](#). Special transportation costs, i.e., mileage for homebound teachers or special costs involved in transporting a school age parent to a program in another school district, may also be claimed. [Wis. Admin. Code § PI 19.05](#).

Tuition paid to another school district for attendance of a school age parent in a specialized program is not aidable for the district paying the tuition. However, the district providing the instruction to the school age parent can claim these associated costs and should pass any resulting savings to the school age parent's home school district through reduced tuition. Materials, equipment, rental, childcare, and staff time devoted to non-instructional activities are not eligible for reimbursement. See [Tuition/Purchased Services and Aid Transits](#) for additional information and examples.

**13. How much of our school age parent instructional costs can a school district recover through state categorical aid?**

The level of reimbursement varies slightly from year to year, depending upon the total claims received. [Wis. Stat. § 115.93](#); [Wis. Admin. Code § PI 19.05](#). Most recently, reimbursement levels have been 25-35%.

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### **14. How does a school district apply for categorical aid?**

School district auditors' review claimed expenditures as part of the Special Education and School Age Parent program fiscal audit. Eligible costs for properly licensed staff and transportation are reported in [WISEdata Finance](#).

Information about timelines and due dates is outlined on the [DPI webpage at Calendar and Due Dates](#).

Please subscribe to the [School Finance Bulletin](#) for important updates and notifications.

### **15. Are there any special certifications required for staff to provide specialized instruction to school-age parents?**

There is no separate certification through the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) for school age parent teachers. However, for a school district to claim categorical aid for specialized instruction to school age parents, professional staff, both teachers and pupil services staff alike, must have at least nine (9) credits in one or more of the following areas:

- infant and childcare
- nutrition
- fetal development
- early childhood
- child or adolescent development
- maternal health and childcare
- adolescent psychology
- family relationships.

[Wis. Admin. Code § PI 19.03\(4\)\(a\)\(h\)](#).

Instructional aides need not be certified nor have credits in the areas listed above. *Only certified teachers may provide homebound instruction.* Homebound teachers need not hold the additional credits noted above if they are providing instruction in basic subject areas only, e.g., social studies, English, math, science. [Wis. Admin. Code 19.03\(4\)](#).

### **16. Is a school district expected to keep any reports or records on file regarding its school age parent program?**

Yes. In addition to maintaining the same records a school district would keep for any students, staff or fiscal claims to DPI, school districts with school age parent programs are required to maintain a written plan which includes a description of the program's goals and objectives, staffing, implementation procedures, and local means of evaluating the program. [Wis. Admin. Code § PI 19.03\(2\)](#).

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Additionally, school districts are required to annually evaluate their school age parent program for the purposes of determining the effectiveness of the program and the need for modifications to the program. The evaluation must examine the extent to which:

- the stated goals and objectives of the program were met,
- students in the program demonstrated satisfactory progress in basic skills acquisition and progress toward high school graduation; and
- students in the program demonstrated a basic knowledge of maternal health practices, the acquisition of childcare techniques, and family planning.

School age parents' educational and service program plans should be treated as behavioral records as defined in [Wis. Stat. § 118.125](#). The School Financial Services Consultant may verify these resources annually to ensure compliance.

### ***17. How long can a school age mother receive homebound instruction?***

Homebound instruction may be provided at any time during the pregnancy and in the 120 (calendar) days immediately following the pregnancy. [Wis. Admin. Code § PI 19.04\(3\)\(c\)](#). There is no minimum number of days. The school district should obtain a physician's statement documenting the need for homebound instruction and the anticipated period it is necessary for the student to be homebound. School districts should avoid providing a standard period, as this may be inconsistent with the student's individual needs.

### ***18. Does a school district have to provide homebound instruction if it has a clear and substantial reason to believe the student can attend school?***

No. School districts are not required to provide homebound instruction despite a physician's recommendation to do so if it has sufficient cause to believe the student can attend school. For instance, if a pregnant student has a job and is working evenings, it is reasonable to assume the student has the physical capacity to attend school even if the school has received a written statement from a physician to the contrary. When the school has a clear and substantial reason to believe that physician-recommended homebound instruction is not justified, it is suggested the school contact the student, her family, and her physician to explain the school's position.

An opportunity for the physician to provide additional documentation as to why homebound instruction is necessary can be requested. Written permission to contact the physician must be obtained from the student's parent/guardian (if the student is a minor) or the student (if the student is 18 years old or is otherwise emancipated).

### ***19. Can a school age mother receive part-time instruction through homebound and part-time through her regular in-school classes?***

Yes. It is not unusual for a pregnant student or one who has recently delivered a baby to have the physical capacity to attend school part-time but not full-time for a period in the pregnancy or during the birth recovery, respectively. The student's plan can be written to respond fluidly to

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the student's changing physical condition, allowing her to transition from in-school instruction to homebound and back to in-school instruction, as needed. Some classes are harder than others to continue and replicate through homebound instruction. This should be considered when the educational and service program plan is developed. The school age parent's written educational and service plan should outline what program modifications are necessary. [Wis. Admin. Code § PI 19.04\(5\)](#).

**20. What if a student is having difficulty finding childcare after birth? May homebound instruction continue to be provided, even though the mother is physically able to return to school?**

Yes, however, the school district would not be eligible to claim categorical aid for the costs of the homebound instruction if it has been more than 120 (calendar) days since the student gave birth. [Wis. Admin. Code § PI 19.04\(3\)\(c\)](#). It is recommended the school-age mother, her family and the school take proactive steps to arrange childcare well before it is time for the student to return to school to help ensure a smooth transition back into school-based instruction. See response to Question 22 for additional information.

**21. Must a school-age parent be excused from school if she or he cannot arrange for childcare?**

No. [Wis. Stat. § 118.15\(1\)\(a\)](#) requires school attendance of any school-age individuals up until age 18 years, inclusive of school age parents. [Wis. Stat. § 118.15\(1\)\(d\)](#) allows parents to request program or curricular modifications for their children but does not require the school district to grant the request.

However, as cited in the response to Question 2, school districts must make program modifications available to any school age parents that will allow the student to continue his or her education. [Wis. Stat. § 115.915](#). School districts, school age parents and their families should try to make childcare arrangements as soon as possible and well before a school age mother's scheduled return to school after the child's birth. The school's program modifications to accommodate the childcare arrangements can be documented within the school age parent's written educational and service program plan.

**22. Are there resources to help school age parents find and afford childcare?**

Yes. Resources for assisting a family with finding childcare are available through the [Wisconsin Department of Children and Families](#).

This link provides information about [Wisconsin Shares](#), a program that supports low-income working families by subsidizing a portion of the cost of quality childcare while the parents or caregivers are working or participating in another approved activity like school.

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[YoungStar](#), Wisconsin's childcare quality rating and improvement system is a helpful tool that assists families in finding licensed quality childcare in their area.

School age parents may also wish to work with a supportive parenting program like Nurse-Family Partnership or Early Head Start that provide intensive comprehensive child development and family support services to infants and toddlers and their families, and to pregnant women and their families.

### ***23. What kinds of programs or services are available in the greater community for school age parents?***

A variety of services are available within communities to support pregnant and parenting teens. Schools are encouraged to contact local organizations to create their own list of available services, contact names and numbers, etc. Some communities have a wider range of offerings than others, often through private, nonprofit organizations or hospitals and clinics. Some communities have a United Way 2-1-1 telephone and online referral service that may be able to share their existing list of service providers for pregnant and parenting teens.

The county public health department, private clinics, physician's offices, and hospitals can be contacted about services that may be available through a public health nurse, prenatal care, immunizations for infants and children, birth preparation classes, and local adoption agencies. Additional information is available on the [DPI website](#).

### ***24. What guidelines exist for mandated reporting of child abuse and neglect of sexually active adolescents?***

Any school professional, who through the course of her/his professional duties, has reason to believe that a student under the age of 18 years has had sexual contact or sexual intercourse with another person and has reason to doubt the student's participation in the sexual contact is voluntary, should immediately contact the county CPS agency or local law enforcement agency.

State statutes regarding the mandatory reporting of sexually active adolescents are complex with different directions dependent upon the nature of the sexual contact, age of the adolescent, and access to health care services.

The publication "[Reporting Requirements for Sexually Active Adolescents](#)" provides additional guidance and was developed by the 10 Instructions and Services for School-Aged Parents by Department of Public Instruction (DPI) in cooperation with the Department of Health Services (DHS) and the Department of Justice (DOJ).

### ***25. How can I get more information if I have additional questions about services and instruction for school age parents?***

Additional information and resources can be found on the DPI web pages for [School Age Parents](#)

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Questions can be directed to Julie Incitti, Consultant, School Social Work Services, at (608) 266-0963 or [julie.incitti@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:julie.incitti@dpi.wi.gov).

### **WISEstaff Fall Staff Report**

The WISEstaff Fall Staff Report (formerly PI 1202) is due annually each November with information for the current school year. School district auditors' review claimed expenditures as part of the Special Education and School Age Parent program fiscal audit.

The report uses a two-digit position code followed by a four-digit assignment code. Any staff assigned to school age parent instruction, either part- or full-time at the time the Fall Staff Report is generated, should be reflected in the report.

Applicable codes for school staff that can be used for instruction to school age parents are:

53-0932 teacher—school age parent program

97-0932 program aide—school age parent program

64-0027 program coordinator—school age parent program

### **Special Education Fiscal Reports**

Eligible costs for properly licensed staff and transportation are reported in [WISEdata Finance](#).

Utilize Function 174 100 for school age parent classroom and Function 174 200 for school age parent homebound.

For More Information Contact:

Student Services Prevention and Wellness

608-266-8960

email

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction does not discriminate based on sex, race, color, religion, creed, age, national origin, ancestry, pregnancy, marital status or parental status, sexual orientation, or disability.

Any anticipated aidable costs on the budget report will prompt a question asking how many school age parents the school district anticipates serving that year. Likewise, any claimed aidable costs on the claim report will prompt a question asking how many school age parents the school district served the previous year.

### **Relevant Laws and Policies**

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Department of Public Instruction [Chapter PI 19](#) - Education for School Age Parents:

### **Wisconsin Statutes**

[115.91 Definition](#)

[115.915 Availability of program services and modifications](#)

[115.92 Establishment of programs; rules](#)

[115.93 State aid](#)

[118.125 Pupil records](#)

[118.13 Pupil discrimination prohibited](#)

[118.15 Compulsory school attendance](#)

[118.153 Children at risk of not graduating from high school](#)

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