



Updates on Racial Equity Analyses in Wisconsin Shares and YoungStar

Introduction

This report adds 2020 data from the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF), which validates key findings from the previous [Baseline Report](#), and provides a snapshot of a part of Wisconsin's early care and education (ECE) systems during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have also expanded our analysis by incorporating stories from key informants to provide additional context for our findings. As a part of Kids Forward's larger initiative to explore authentic stories from Wisconsinites on various issues, we conducted interviews with several parents.

"It was important for a child care provider to get my child to school, to make sure my children were fed, and then there were times when the child care provider dropped the ball in areas like making sure my children got to school because of their own personal issues. My children missed school, and I felt like that shouldn't have happened. If I brought things for my children to eat, the child care provider ate it herself. Those were things that I dealt with, and it made me very apprehensive to utilize child care because I didn't feel trusting. ... They were approved by the state to be a child care, so for me, what does the state look at? When do they check to see, to make sure the providers are doing what they're supposed to? We are in a climate where people are single moms navigating a lot and needing assistance, so when we drop our children off at day care, we expect for them to provide quality child care whether it's how that child eats, how that child is nurtured, how that child takes naps. All of those things are important, but our hands feel tied as parents if some things are going on that we don't even know about. How do we know when we can trust the providers to give quality care?" - **Bridgett Wilder**



Key Findings

Despite the major impacts of the pandemic, results from these analyses are remarkably consistent with previous years. The Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy from the state continues to be underutilized among many potentially eligible families. Complex enrollment processes and strict income eligibility requirements are potential contributors to this low participation. Black children continue to experience lower rates of high quality child care (4 or 5 Star child care as rated by YoungStar's Quality Rating and Improvement System of 1-5 stars) in this program than other racial/ethnic groups. Ease of access to these 4 or 5 Star rated providers (due to their geographic location) and a lack of alignment between caregivers' criteria of high quality and the rating system of YoungStar may contribute to this gap. Small improvements are occurring each year, resulting in a slow trend toward equity for Black children participating in Wisconsin Shares and receiving child care from 4 or 5 Star providers.

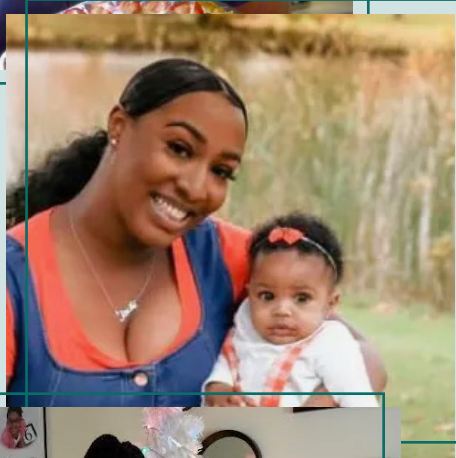
Data Resources and Analysis

The calculation methodology used in our previous reports was repeated for these analyses¹. To determine participation rates, Wisconsin Shares data on the number of children served in 2020 from each racial/ethnic group (from providers at each level of quality), were compared with data on the population estimated to be eligible for this program: children ages 0-8 in families with incomes at 185% or less of the federal poverty level².

Additionally, we conducted interviews with three key informants, with the intent of diversifying our data to include the voices and experiences of Wisconsin families. We explored their perspectives on Wisconsin Shares, experiences with child care, and considerations of child care quality. All interview participants are Black women familiar with the child care system who had received Wisconsin Shares to help care for their children (two from Milwaukee and one from Kenosha). Participants discussed barriers and challenges in the enrollment process for Wisconsin Shares, factors involved in choosing child care, defining features of a high quality child care provider, the alignment of YoungStar's ratings with their personal definition of high quality child care, perspectives on race related to their child care experiences, and recommendations for improving Wisconsin Shares and YoungStar. Highlights of these interviews are summarized throughout this report, as well as relevant quotes.



Bridgett Wilder (Milwaukee, WI) ~ A widow with nine kids, Bridgett faces unique challenges when it comes to caring for her children. Becoming a widow at 36 when her oldest child was 16 and her youngest was 4 months old, her refusal to give up is central to her story, while empowering other women to care for themselves holistically through her business [Perseverance Health and Wellness Coaching](#). Child care was an important part of Bridgett’s journey. As she was improving her education, she made sure that her children were in good care. Not only did she have to deal with unmet expectations when it came to quality child care, but she also had to lose Wisconsin Shares while searching for child care that met her needs.



Tia Sanders (Milwaukee, WI) ~ The struggle of young mothers is real, especially mothers of color. Tia wants to make sure that these mothers have the resources necessary to be the best mother possible. Through [A Mother First LLC](#), she works with pregnant women, mothers, and families. Key to Tia’s work is the belief that raising a healthy baby creates an important foundation, because children develop from zero to three more than any other part of life. However, she notes that the child care system has not fully understood the realities of working parents with limited income. In addition to her written story “[I Get to See the Growth in Her](#),” she further elaborates on the struggle of young mothers and families in navigating state benefits, including her own when caring for her young daughter Ricki.



Ashley Wells (Kenosha, WI) ~ As a single mom, Ashley strived to find various scenarios for her daughter Kennedy to have quality child care. She changed jobs and homes to afford child care. When she secured a better job to earn a little extra income, she was pressed with the reality that she would lose Wisconsin Shares. In her written story “[Make the Cost Make Sense](#),” she explains that the reality of affordable child care is complex. She wants more child care support directed to low-income families in Wisconsin. But she also wants to make sure that child care providers do not have to suffer as they try to navigate their own challenges assisting low-income families.

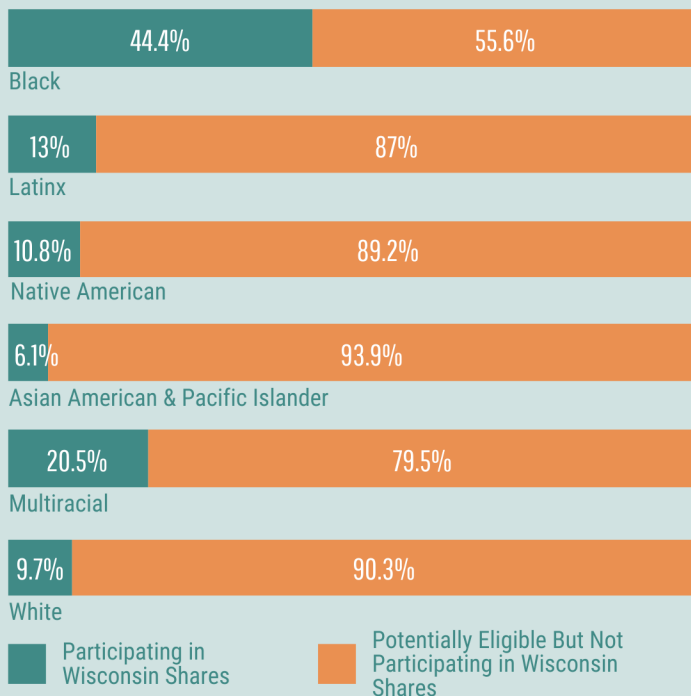


We explore the issues of affordability and quality in child care with Bridgett, Tia, and Ashley in our podcasts. Listen to their soon to be released stories at <https://kidsforward.org/multimedia/>.

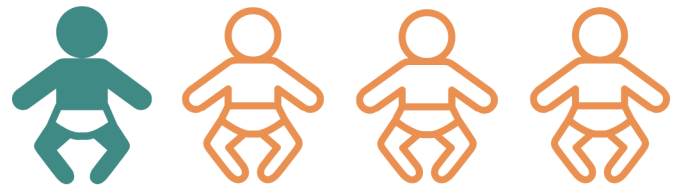


Wisconsin Shares Participation

Wisconsin Shares is a child care subsidy program that supports eligible families. Launched in 1997, this initiative supports low-income working families by subsidizing a portion of the cost of child care at providers that meet certain criteria. The program provides a subsidy amount tailored to the family's income level, location, ages of children, and child care provider. Wisconsin Shares is managed by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families and implemented locally by counties and tribes. The funding for the program comes from the federal government's Administration for Children & Families (ACF).



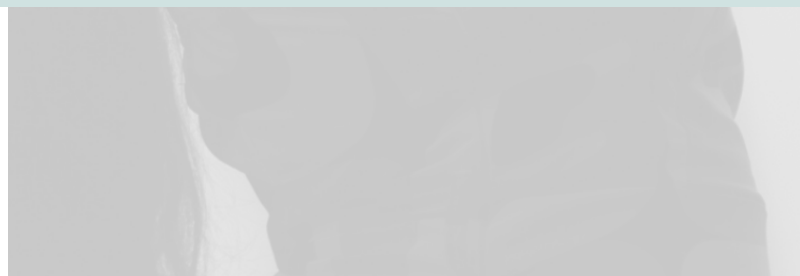
Source: Wisconsin Department of Children and Families



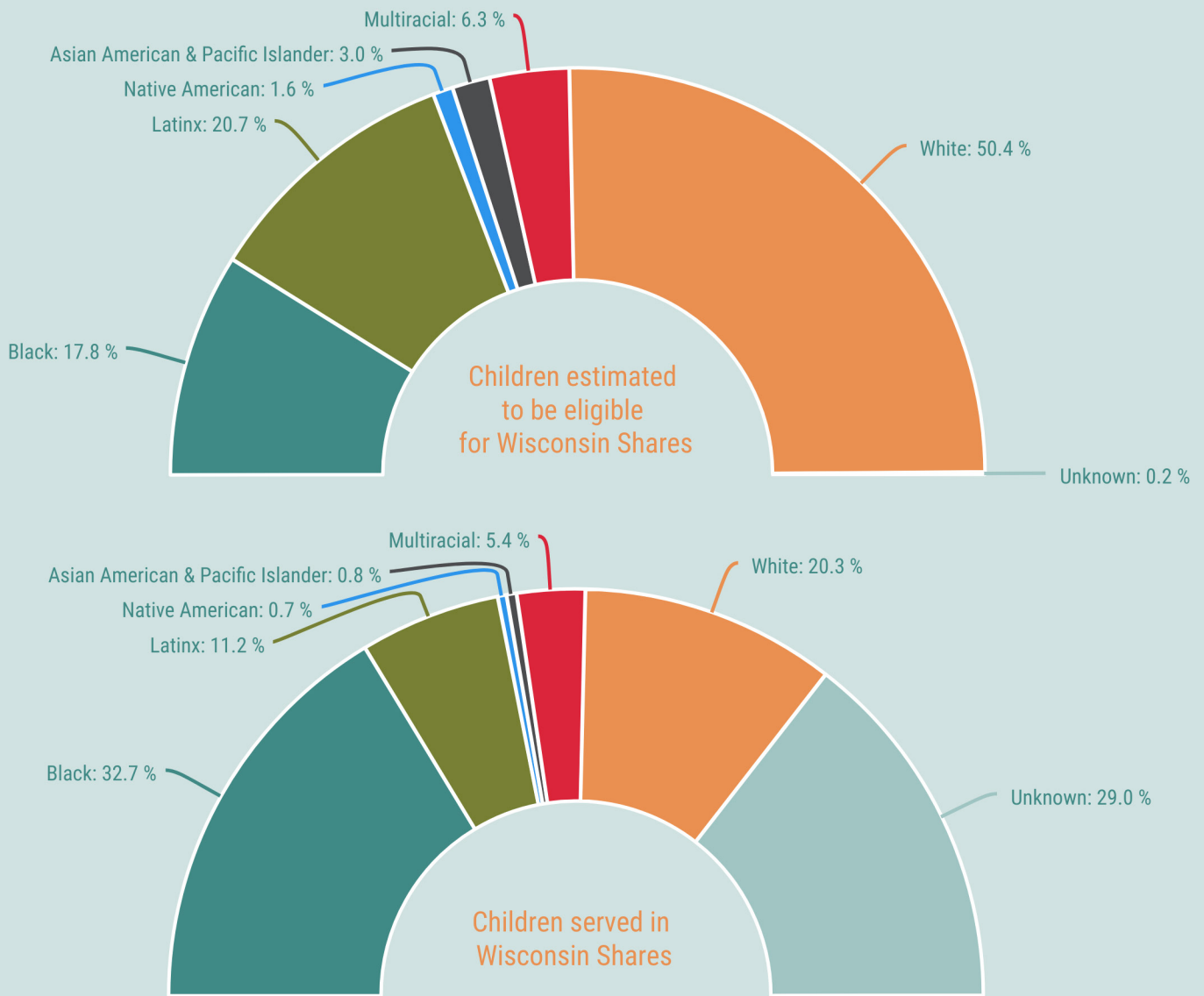
53,128 children across the state were served in Wisconsin Shares during all of 2020, representing about **1 out of 4 children estimated to be eligible.**

Wisconsin Shares participation was highest among Black children and lowest among Asian American and Pacific Islander children.

The overall rates of participation in Wisconsin Shares were fairly low among eligible children. Though the actual need for subsidized child care among each potentially eligible family is unknown, it is clear that far more families could benefit from participation in Wisconsin Shares.



Racial/Ethnic Equity in Wisconsin Shares

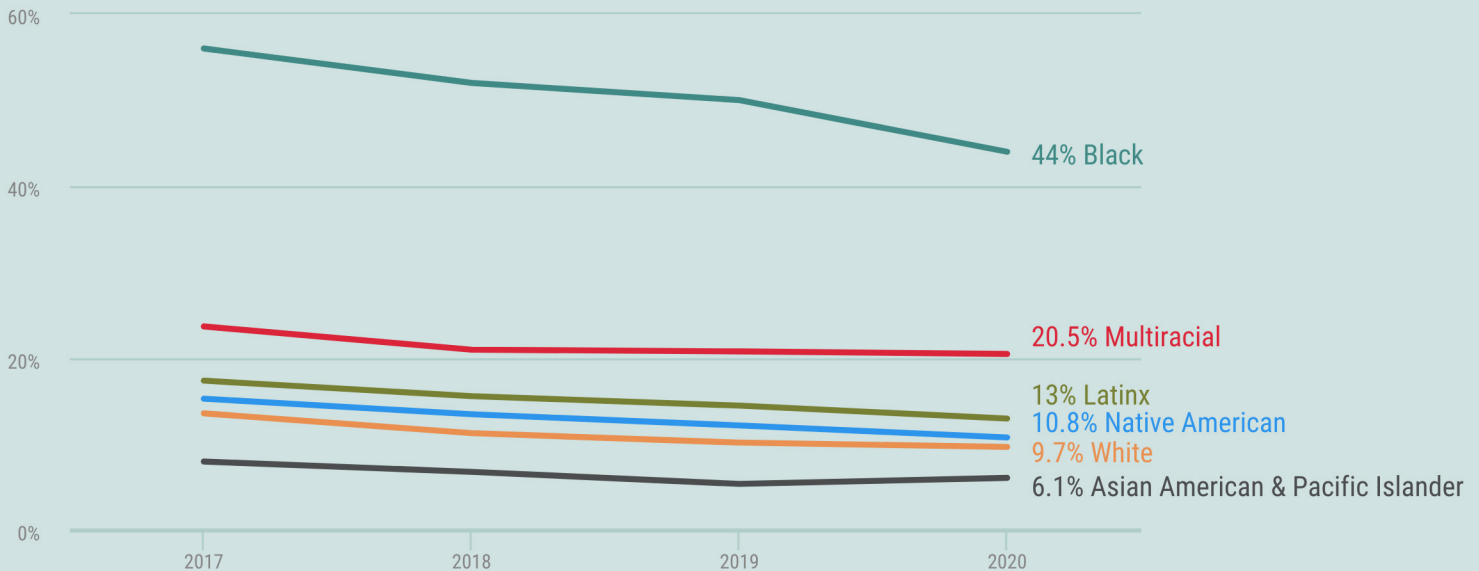


Source: Wisconsin Department of Children and Families

Families of Asian American and Pacific Islander children were served in Wisconsin Shares at lower rates than white children. Asian American and Pacific Islander, Latinx, Native American, and white children were also under-represented in this program compared to their potentially eligible populations. This means that the percentage (proportion) of each of these groups served in Wisconsin Shares in 2020 was disproportionately lower than their percentage (proportion) of the population estimated to be eligible for this program.

The percentage of eligible children participating in Wisconsin Shares continues to slowly decrease each year among all racial/ethnic groups³. Black children have consistently participated in this program at higher rates, and Asian American and Pacific Islander children at lower rates, compared to other racial/ethnic groups⁴.

Trends in Wisconsin Shares Participation



Source: Wisconsin Department of Children and Families

Enrolling in Wisconsin Shares

The complicated navigation involved in enrollment for state benefits described by our key informants may be contributing to low participation in Wisconsin Shares. The initial stages of becoming a parent can be difficult, especially when that parent has few resources. Combined with experiences of navigating postpartum, living in poverty, and maintaining multiple jobs, the time and complex process involved to get state child care subsidies can be overwhelming.

*"I would say utilizing state benefits requires you to jump through so many hoops and just being a new mother with a new child, an infant, and then having to experience all of these different requirements, just to get additional services. **It almost deters you from even wanting to get services, from even wanting to get help because you're required to go through so much**, especially with COVID and the pandemic occurring. You have to have internet access just to complete the application. All households, all families don't have internet access. Going in person to enroll could be a challenge for some families because they may not have transportation. They may not have the capability of getting transportation." - Tia Sanders*

Tia illustrates how having limited time, energy, and resources may prevent families from accessing state benefit programs designed to help them, including child care subsidies. Information about Wisconsin Shares was also described as not widely accessible, so families may not be aware that the program is available to help them. Requirements for enrollment were experienced as impractical and burdensome, in an atmosphere that felt belittling, further discouraging participation among eligible families.

“Enrolling your child in child care with state benefits, you have to go through an enrollment process, authorization process. ... After you submit your verification, you have to call them back so they can process the verification. If I’m submitting my verification, why won’t you guys just process it, versus me having to call and sometimes sit on hold for almost 90 minutes, 120 minutes, just to get through and speak with somebody?” - Tia Sanders

*“There have been times when I was utilizing state benefits where **I sat on the other side of the desk from somebody and was made to feel less than or little**, because I was utilizing those state resources, as if they were better than me, or just kind of came off as if I was a small person or doing something wrong by utilizing state services.” - Tia Sanders*

Maintaining Eligibility in Wisconsin Shares

Furthermore, trying to earn a little extra money to cover all the necessary family expenses can put eligibility for Wisconsin Shares child care subsidies in jeopardy, and families are not always aware that this will be the result of an increase in their income. Ashley and Bridgett explain how their financial situations led to their child care benefits being cut off, and offer insights into the difficulty of balancing income while ensuring expenses are met. Losing eligibility for Wisconsin Shares can be problematic, because a level of income that is too high for benefit eligibility may still be too low to meet the full costs of child care, along with other critical household expenses, leaving families in a severe financial pinch.

*“**I think my daughter was seven months when I lost it [Wisconsin Shares] because I received a better job.** Which I thought, in my mind, was good because it was beneficial to not only myself to help me make more money, but I figured, “Okay, this is going to make a better future for my daughter.” Little did I know once that happened, I was going to get completely cut off of my child care [subsidy].” - Ashley Wells*

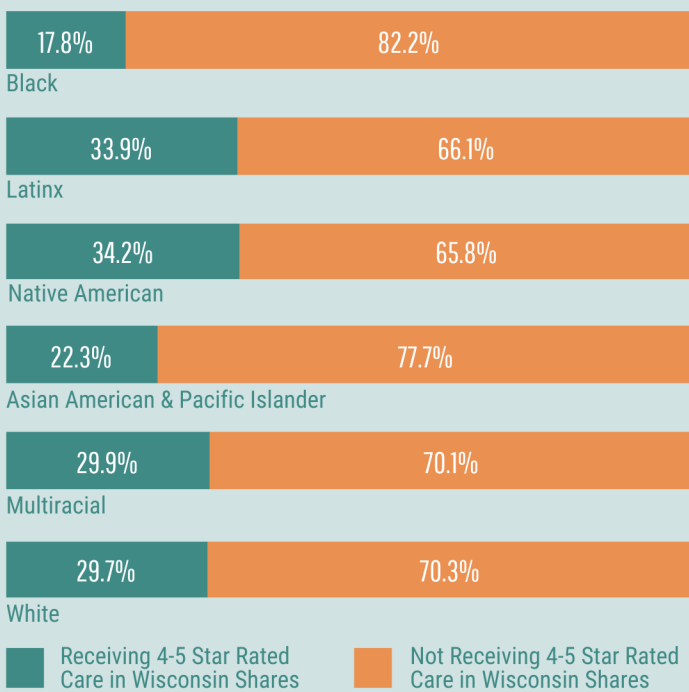
Extending education for self-empowerment can also risk the child care subsidy. Wisconsin Shares supports parents to pursue a post-secondary education for up to 24 months. However, Bridgett’s unique situation as a widow with nine children made her pursue a Bachelor’s degree to better support her family, which takes longer than 24 months.

*“What ended up happening was after that, for a minute, I didn’t have a daycare at all because we were trying to figure it out with the family. But then when I got accepted [for a Bachelor’s program], I had went from MATC [Milwaukee Area Technical College] which was when I had the funding [child care support] ... I ended up going to a four year university, and it wasn’t covered by state insurance because they didn’t cover [subsidies beyond 24 months of post-secondary education] for Bachelor’s degrees ... **I still wanted to finish school because I wanted to better myself. Mount Mary [University] had a daycare, but I had to pay for that.**” - Bridgett Wilder*

Participation in Quality Care

YoungStar is Wisconsin’s child care Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). Through objective assessment, YoungStar rates child care providers and awards 2-5 stars with 5 considered the best quality of care. YoungStar also provides tools and training to deliver consistent standards for high quality care. This is intended to help parents identify child care providers that will provide the best early childhood education for their children. However, families also make choices based on their location, schedule, budget, and special needs (among other factors).

The YoungStar rating system establishes the narrative of what defines high quality care (4 or 5 Star). The analysis of how and where Wisconsin Shares families choose to send their children to child care involves many factors. We would like to unpack this complex process more deeply. The potential disconnect between the YoungStar rating system and how that affects Wisconsin Shares recipients offers an opportunity to redefine quality care. We consider some of these issues in the section below by listening to the voices of parents who have all made various choices about where to send their children for child care.



Source: Wisconsin Department of Children and Families



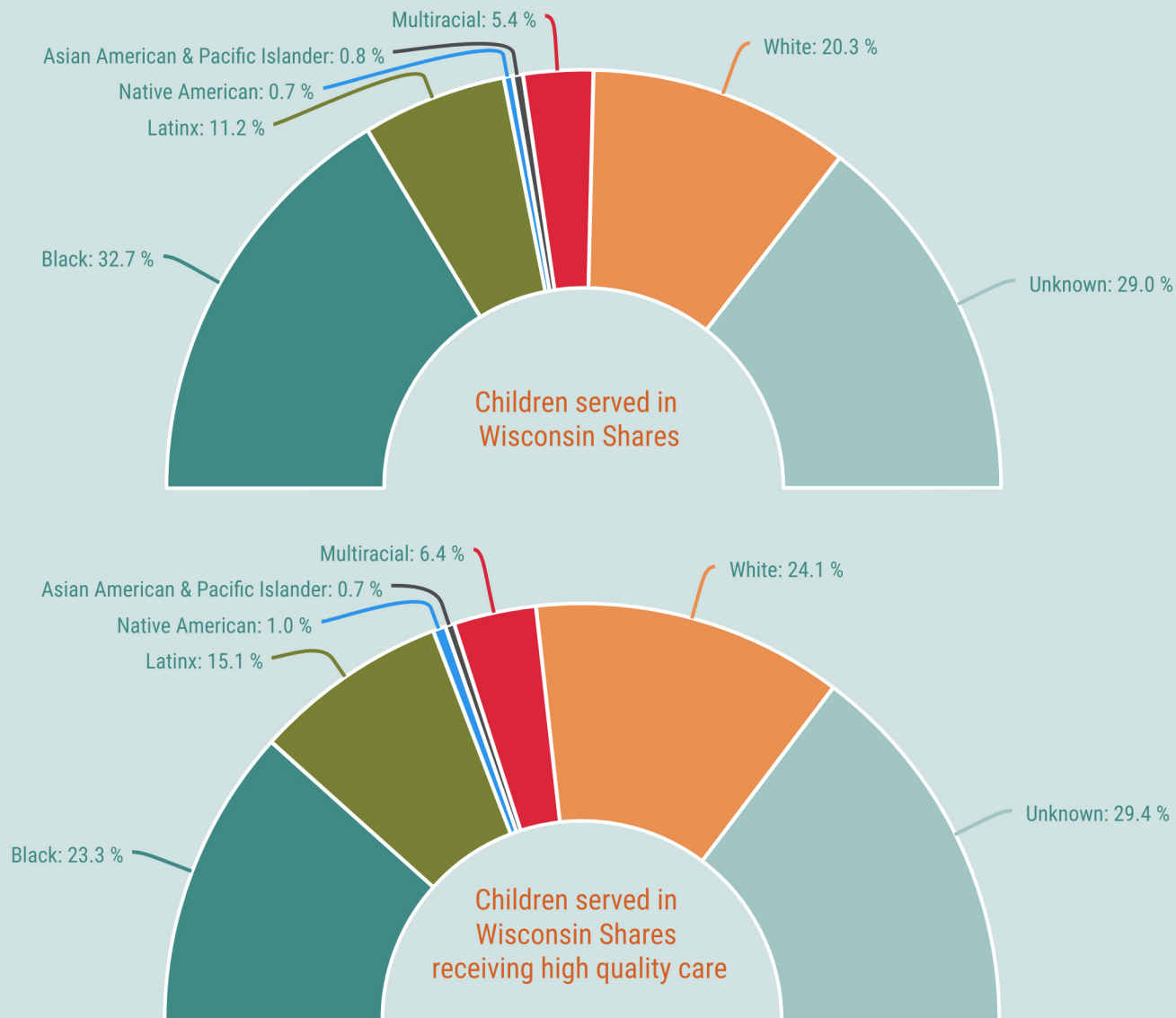
1 out of 4 children estimated to be eligible in Wisconsin Shares were served by child care providers rated as high quality by YoungStar (a 4 or 5 Star rating).



1 in 6 Black children served in Wisconsin Shares received high quality care, compared to about 1 in 3 Latinx, Native American, Multiracial, and white children.

The reasons why some racial/ethnic groups in Wisconsin Shares are receiving child care from 4 or 5 Star rated providers at lower rates may be related to the limited locations of these providers, the higher costs of these providers, the inability to get their child into these providers because available spots are rare, or a potential lack of alignment between features of child care that families consider indicators of high quality care for their child, and the YoungStar rating system.

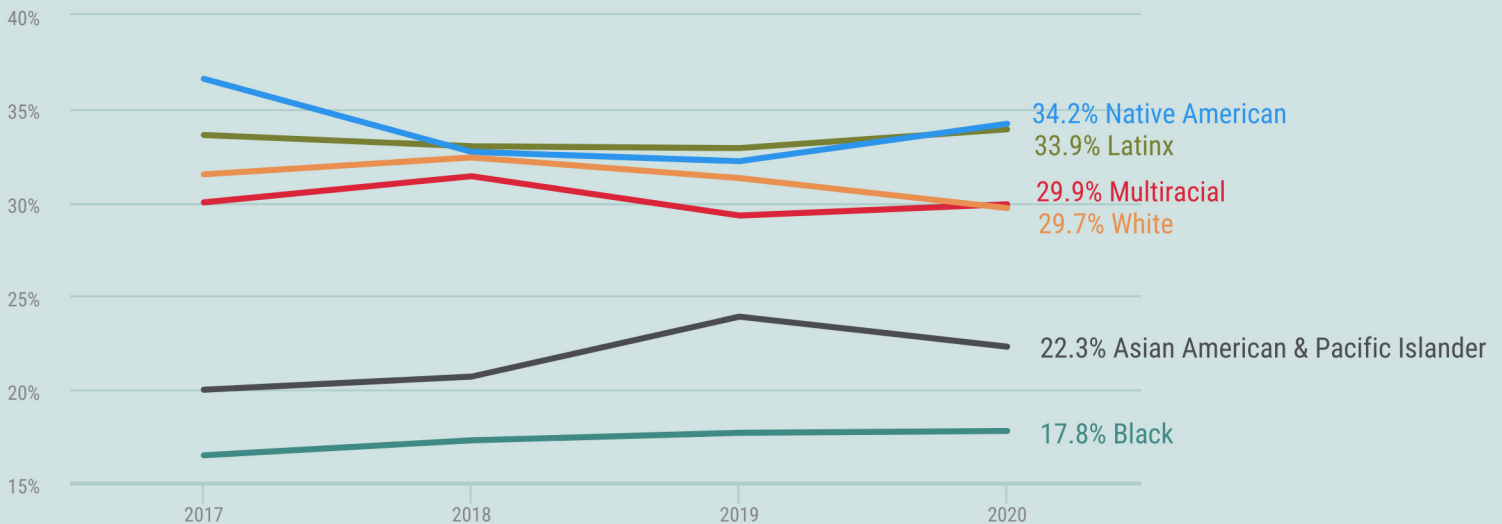
Racial/Ethnic Equity in Wisconsin Shares



Source: Wisconsin Department of Children and Families

Black children received 4 or 5 Star rated child care through Wisconsin Shares at only about half the rate of white children⁵. Black children were also under-represented among children receiving 4 or 5 Star rated child care through Wisconsin Shares: 32.7% of children served in Wisconsin Shares were Black, but only 23.3% of children in Wisconsin Shares receiving care from a provider with a 4 or 5 Star rating were Black⁶.

Trends in Quality Care Participation Among Wisconsin Shares Children



Source: Wisconsin Department of Children and Families

Only a quarter of all children served in Wisconsin Shares received 4 or 5 Star rated child care, a percentage that has remained consistent for four years⁷. The percentage of Black children receiving 4 or 5 Star rated child care through Wisconsin Shares has increased slightly, by 1.3%, over this period. The percentage of white children receiving 4 or 5 Star rated child care through Wisconsin Shares also decreased by less than 2% over four years, resulting in small reductions in the severity of racial disparity between Black and white children receiving 4 or 5 Star rated child care through Wisconsin Shares in 2020 compared to 2017. Measures of disproportionality, which are not influenced by any fluctuations in participation among white children, also eased slightly in 2020 compared to 2017.

Choosing Child Care

Parents with young children are constantly moving between places where they live, work, and leave their children for child care. Trying to be as efficient as possible when going to and from these places is an everyday battle, and access to transportation among low income families can be complicated. Child care programs with 4 or 5 Star ratings in YoungStar may also be hard to both find and access in some areas of the state.

*“We have the 4 and 5 Star locations on the outskirts. **People have to extend themselves way too much to utilize those 4 and 5 Star centers when they can just utilize a center right in their neighborhood.**” - Tia Sanders*

*“**There are really barely any high quality child care facilities in the inner city of Milwaukee.** And a lot of people aren’t really utilizing facilities anymore. They’re really utilizing home daycares, which are certified daycare. You can pull those up on YoungStar also, but they’re certified. They’re not licensed.” - Tia Sanders*

Families may also be looking for a smaller child care setting to ensure their child will receive adequate support, and rely on a reference from people they know to find the best match for their child.

"I did try to look at other providers within the in-home daycare setting, because I felt like they were smaller and maybe the attention would be more so on the kids. And it wouldn't be like 20 different kids running around." - Ashley Wells

*"Although YoungStar does provide a lot of information about the child care facilities, including demographics, **most people choose their child care facilities off word of mouth and location.**" - Tia Sanders*

Cost was also a limiting factor in choosing child care options, even when receiving Wisconsin Shares subsidies.

"Although a portion is paid, you still have a copay ... the copay for some of those daycares was very expensive. Very expensive." - Ashley Wells

Features of a Quality Child Care Provider

Families often look for specific things that help them feel confident that their child is getting the best possible care. These factors may or may not align with elements of the YoungStar Quality Improvement and Rating System. Building strong relationships and establishing trust was described as vital.

*"I guess quality for me is just **somebody that I can trust**, that I know is going to take care of my daughter the same way that I do." - Ashley Wells*

*"Trust is very important when it comes to utilizing child care services because the parent and the teacher or the daycare providers need to have a connection because we have to partner. **It's really them helping raise my child.**" - Bridgett Wilder*

The opportunity for a child to have peer relationships and interact with other children is an important part of early learning and development.

"I think it's important for these child care facilities to actually have other children present. Some daycares may only have one or two kids a shift... So, they're missing out on growth and development that they can be gaining just from having another child their age to interact with." - Tia Sanders

The education and experience level of staff was also a valuable factor that families are seeking.

“To ensure that the staff are well trained, well versed, well educated. They’re experienced when it comes to working with children.” - Tia Sanders

The Role of Race in Child Care Experiences

There are multiple perspectives on how race plays a role in child care selection. But race is not a stand-alone factor. It contributes to how parents view the overall early learning approach, affordability, workforce, as well as the families participating in a particular program. Being mindful about how race adds layers of consideration is helpful. Ashley and Bridgett share their experiences.

“I think that there’s things that she’s going to understand when it comes to providing for my child, that maybe someone of another race may not understand. She knows the struggles that maybe my child might go through.” - Ashley Wells

“I know child care providers who service African American children who are Black that are excellent, white people that service African American students that are absolutely amazing.” - Bridgett Wilder

“Other cultures’ negligence with their children ... their environment looks good, so people don’t question the red flags that exist in their communities. ... that’s not fair because we’re always on the radar of being accused of being bad parents and being negligent.” - Bridgett Wilder

Alignment of YoungStar’s Ratings with Personal Definition of Quality

Bridget, Ashley, and Tia describe experiences with child care providers participating in YoungStar child care that led them to question the relevancy and accuracy of the rating system.

*“I’ve been to some quote unquote ‘5-Star facilities’ and I’m like, wait, I don’t know if that’s a five-star. You have this teacher over here, that’s sitting on her cell phone or this teacher over here, that’s not paying attention to the kid that’s over there throwing blocks at another kid. I don’t know if it’s... And then there’s big classrooms. **I want to know how they come up with these ratings, because I don’t think they’re accurate.**” - Ashley Wells*

*“The bad child care still had a quality rating, but was not providing quality service. That caused me to say, Wow, why? **Why do you have a 5-Star quality rating and you’re not producing on a level of quality care?**” - Bridgett Wilder*

Caregivers may rely more on their own experiences and relationships with child care providers to determine their own understanding of high quality.

“Although my daycare may not have been that 5-Star that everybody thinks, in my opinion, she is five stars, you know? And I did actually recommend her to other people.” - Ashley Wells

Recommendations

Our key informants offered recommendations on areas of improvement for families seeking child care in Wisconsin, for Wisconsin Shares, and for YoungStar. Raising the amount of income families can earn before losing Wisconsin Shares benefits to stabilize participation would be first.

“Like you can almost make like 25K maybe 30K a year to qualify for state benefits. That’s way below the poverty line. That is no money. And the minute you attempt to make more than that, you are instantly cut off from Wisconsin Share benefits. You lose all your benefits but you’re still not making enough money to be able to pay for child care out of pocket. So now you’re practically even further in the hole because you want to make more money. Because you wanted to increase your income, now you significantly increased your child care bill when your income did not experience a significant increase. So, in my opinion, I feel like they need to increase that maximum amount, the income amount, that a parent can have within a year in order to qualify for Wisconsin Shares.” - Tia Sanders

In relation to quality care, families’ increased awareness of YoungStar ratings is valuable, including how families can contribute to these rating systems.

“In the process of enrolling your child in child care through the state, the state has to do the authorization for that child care provider. And I feel like during that time, the state should be notifying the parent, this child care provider, that you’re selecting has a 2 or 3 Star rating on YoungStar, because all parents aren’t aware, even what YoungStar is. It’s a public resource to the community, but everybody doesn’t know about it. I also feel like when people go to the child care facilities to complete applications or enroll their child, that parent should be provided with their most up to date YoungStar rating. Including any incidents that [have] occurred at that facility, because on your YoungStar, they also include any write-ups, any safety issues, hazards, any incidents, the parents should be notified of that also. All parents aren’t aware of what YoungStar [ratings] are and our parents don’t have access to the internet.” - Tia Sanders

Families need to connect with their children on experiences in child care, and ask questions, rather than rely on the YoungStar rating system alone.

*“I think some of the responsibility for the parents is this: **don’t just assume just because somebody has a quality care rating that it is that. You still have to pay attention to the signals. Just because the state pays for it, that alone is not enough.**” - Bridgett Wilder*

Urban areas can use more support to continue building a workforce of skilled early childhood educators of color.

*“They need to be providing some type of trainings, educational courses to improve the skills and the knowledge of the staff, right in the inner city. **Those things are easy for non-minority groups to utilize, but it’s a challenge for individuals in the inner city.**” - Tia Sanders*

Strategic onsite evaluations would also be helpful in order to capture the reality of the experiences children are having with a child care provider.

“I would say evaluation needs to be done. What is happening? Can you assess, are those children learning? Do you have a dietician that’s helping you, or someone in nutrition, to help you understand what to feed those children? What does their playtime look like, or are they napping all the time? I need to see a survey done with an outside source that doesn’t know the daycare to come in and do spot checks on days that they don’t even expect for them to come in, and literally assess them unaware.” - Bridgett Wilder

Our interviews provided helpful context for our findings on underutilization of Wisconsin Shares among potentially eligible families, and lower proportions of Black children in Wisconsin Shares receiving 4 or 5 Star rated child care compared to other racial/ethnic groups in Wisconsin Shares. Some of the barriers and challenges to enrollment described by our participants could be reasons why more families who could be using Wisconsin Shares have not taken advantage of this support. In addition, perspectives from Milwaukee, where a large number of our state’s Black families reside, show the scarcity of access to 4 or 5 Star rated providers within accessible locations and costs. Participants’ perspectives on YoungStar highlight the need for greater community awareness about the ratings YoungStar offers, and opens the question of a credibility gap in the current child care quality and improvement rating system.

This presents opportunities for those with the power to shape the system to:

1. Address the unmanageable financial gap between the income level at which child care subsidies are cut off and the income level that would actually allow a family to be able to fully pay out of pocket for child care
2. Reduce the application and enrollment burden to receive Wisconsin Shares assistance and better promote the option to apply via telephone
3. Provide more outreach about YoungStar, how the ratings are set, how they are evaluated, and what they are for a family's provider
4. Invest in greater education and training opportunities in urban areas with limited resources
5. Potentially engage in a process of adjusting the current system with input from communities who may not be experiencing an alignment in their experiences of quality care and the current 4 and 5 Star ratings

Additional Stories and Context

For some of these recommendations, action is already being taken. Subsidy amounts will be increasing for many families receiving Wisconsin Shares child care subsidies at the start of 2022.

Supported by the Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five, the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, in collaboration with the Department of Public Instruction and other partners, have already started the important work of engaging Wisconsin's ECE Stakeholders. They gathered the perspectives of over 600 racially and ethnically diverse caregivers, child care providers, and leaders across the state. The grant also supported interviews with 63 primary caregivers and ECE providers of five demographic populations currently underserved by Wisconsin ECE system (Hmong, Latinx, Black, Tribal, and rural white), in collaboration with the UW-Madison's Center for Community and Nonprofit Studies. Both reports on the [listening sessions](#) and the [in depth interviews](#) describe similar perspectives and experiences to those expressed by our key informants: a lack of access to regulated child care and 4 or 5 Star rated child care, as well as location, transportation, and cost barriers that are differentially impacting families of color.

Our podcast [Professionalization in Early Care and Education](#) offers further insights from family child care providers on the YoungStar rating system. YoungStar can be a positive reminder of the expected standards. However, providers are having some challenges in meeting them.



Professionalization in Early Care and Education

Why do child care providers strive to give quality care to our youngest children? Why is doing this work important for them? Listen to the stories from Nicki Cooper, Abby Abrisham, and Denise Mirkin.

Data Analysis Sources and Limitations

The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families provided Kids Forward with unduplicated annual statewide counts of the number of children served in Wisconsin Shares during 2020. Population data were 2015-2019 5-year estimates from [IPUMS](#) (the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series) which has custom estimates available based on U.S. Census data⁸. Estimates of children ages 0-8 in families with incomes at 185% or less of the federal poverty level were used as the population potentially eligible for Wisconsin Shares. Eligibility for Wisconsin Shares is complicated (a parent must be working, for example), and despite best efforts, not all factors can be matched for data on populations considered eligible for this program. These population estimates may be an overcount, with the implication that participation rates could be higher than reported here. This analysis was fairly conservative in its assignment of the highest child care quality rating available for each child. If a child was served by multiple providers in 2020, the highest rating among these was used in this analysis for that child. If the provider's rating changed during the year, the highest rating among these was used in this analysis for that child. The implication is that children's main experiences in child care may be lower in quality than described here.

The proportion of children with race and ethnicity data missing continues to increase (24.8% in 2017 to 29.0% in 2020). Wisconsin Shares does not require data on the race or ethnicity of children participating in this program. The implication of this missing data is that participation rates may actually be higher than calculated for this report for some racial/ethnic groups, and disproportionality results may be more moderate. However, when all children with missing race and ethnicity data were calculated as Black children, racial inequities reduced, but were not erased.

The number of interviews we conducted to add qualitative context to our quantitative findings was small, only three. While the three voices of our key informants cannot be interpreted as representing all families, their authentic stories provide valuable context on experiences with child care in our state, as well as with racial inequity in Wisconsin's ECE system.

Acknowledgements

Kids Forward would like to thank the [Wisconsin Department of Children and Families](#) for disaggregated data on children in Wisconsin Shares and YoungStar; Bridgett, Tia, and Ashley for their stories; and [Silver Lynx Consulting, LLC](#) for analysis and preparation of this report. This publication and our Early Care and Education research are supported by the [Alliance for Early Success](#).

Endnotes

1. See further details in the Appendix of the [Baseline report](#).
2. Initial eligibility guidelines for Wisconsin Shares require a family's gross monthly income to be 185% or less of the Federal Poverty Level for the size of their family (see <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wishares/apply>). Over 81% of the children served in Wisconsin Shares in 2018 were ages 0-8.
3. From 2017 to 2020, there was only one exception: participation rates among Asian American and Pacific Islander children rose from 5.4% in 2019 to 6.1% in 2020. However, the actual number of Asian American and Pacific Islander children in the program decreased, so this change may be due to less stable population estimates in the denominator that are based on small sample sizes.
4. This pattern has been consistent since 2014, the earliest data provided to Kids Forward for similar analyses.
5. Analyses showed a disparity rate of 0.6 between the percentage of Black and white children receiving 4 or 5 Star rated child care through Wisconsin Shares. In other words, the percentage of white children receiving 4 or 5 Star rated child care through Wisconsin Shares was 1.7 times greater than the percentage of Black children receiving 4 or 5 Star rated child care through Wisconsin Shares.
6. This represents a disproportionality ratio of 0.71. In other words, the proportion of children receiving 4 or 5 Star rated child care through Wisconsin Shares is about three quarters the proportion of all Black children in Wisconsin Shares. Exact equity would be a ratio of 1.0.
7. In 2014, 22.1% of all children in Wisconsin Shares were authorized for care at 4 or 5 Star rated child care providers. Counts of children authorized for care in Wisconsin Shares were provided to Kids Forward for the Baseline report, which can differ from counts of children served in Wisconsin Shares. Children authorized for care from a specific provider may or may not have actually been served by that provider.
8. Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Sophia Foster, Ronald Goeken, Jose Pacas, Megan Schouweiler and Matthew Sobek. IPUMS USA: Version 11.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V11.0>