
DETERMINING NEED

Determine the valid need hours for each parent/substitute parent (P/SP) at application, redetermination, and when a change in work or activity hours is reported that results in a positive change. Bridges will determine the authorization based on the actual need hours entered.

Calculate the actual need hours considering:

- Time spent in the activity. See BEM 703 to determine if an activity may be approved and the required verifications.
 - For the employment need reason, use the **highest** verified hours that are included in the 30-day income period.
 - If employment is paid weekly use the highest weekly hours multiplied by two.

Note: If the highest verified hours are not accurate, confirm with the P/SP which verification is the most accurate and use it. Document this information on the case record.

- Meal periods during the work or school day.
- Study, tutoring and required lab time.
- Travel time from the child care provider to and from the activity.
 - Add 10 hours of travel time per pay period for each need reason.
 - P/SPs requiring more than 10 hours of travel time per pay period, per need reason, must provide documentation supporting the need. The local office can approve the additional hours, if reasonable.

Round the biweekly total up to the next whole hour if it includes a fraction and enter the calculated figure into Bridges. Bridges will adjust and authorize to the correct:

- 20 hours.
- 40 hours.
- 60 hours.
- 80 hours.
- 90 hours.

Note: Hours of need are based on the P/SP's schedule, not the child's schedule.

Example: Sally works 8.5 hours per day (8 work hours + 30 minute lunch) Wednesday through Friday each week, resulting in 25.5 hours weekly. Calculate bi-weekly hours: 25.5 weekly hours x 2 weeks = 51 hours + 10 hours travel time = 61 hours. Enter into Bridges the actual biweekly need hours of 61. Bridges will convert to the appropriate tier, which would be 80.

Need in Two-Parent Household

If there are two parents/substitute parents for the child and both have valid need reasons, Bridges will authorize hours based on the parent with highest need hours.

Note: For dates prior to 11/3/2024, Bridges will authorize hours based on the parent with the fewest need hours.

Example: Sandy and Jeff are part of a two-parent household. Sandy's valid need hours are 72 hours every two weeks + 10 hours travel time = 82 hours. Jeff's valid need hours are 37.5 hours every two weeks + 10 hours travel time = 47.5 hours, rounded to 48 hours (the next whole number). Enter into Bridges each parent's actual bi-weekly need hours of 82 and 48. Bridges will authorize hours based on Sandy's higher need hours of 82. Bridges will convert to the appropriate tier, which would be 90.

Shared/Joint Custody

If a child's parents do not live together but have shared/joint custody of the child, authorize care only for the time periods when the parent who is applying has physical custody of the child.

The parent's statement of shared/joint custody is acceptable.

Documenting the Need Determination

Document each need determination in the case record. This documentation must include:

- Calculations used to arrive at the need determination.

- The source of the information used in the need determination.

Note: The case comments section in Bridges can be used to document the need.

LEGAL BASE

The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act (42 USC § 9858 et seq.), as amended by the CCDBG Act of 2014 (Pub. L. 113-186).
45 CFR Parts 98 and 99.
Social Security Act, as amended 2016.