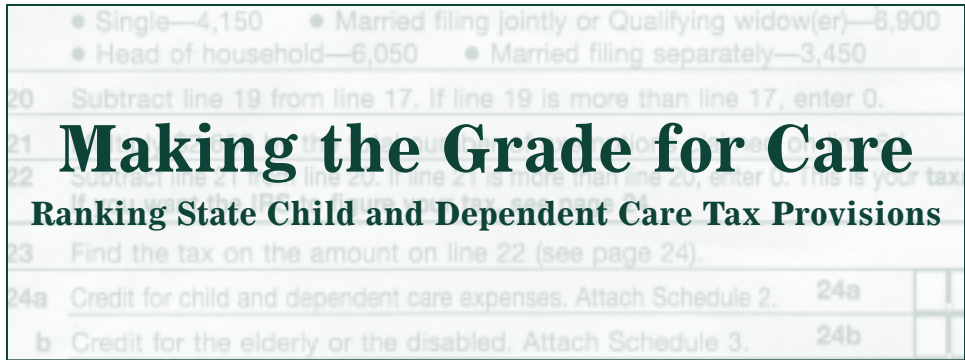


Making the Grade for Care

Ranking State Child and Dependent Care Tax Provisions

22	Enter your standard deduction (see left margin).	2
23	Subtract line 22 from line 20. If line 22 is more than line 20, enter -0-.	2
24	Multiply \$2,900 by the total number of exemptions claimed on line 6d.	2
25	Subtract line 24 from line 23. If line 24 is more than line 23, enter -0-. This is your taxable income .	2
26	Tax , including any alternative minimum tax (see page 35).	2
27	Credit for child and dependent care expenses. Attach Schedule 2.	27
28	Credit for the elderly or the disabled. Attach Schedule 3.	28
29	Education credits. Attach Form 8863.	29
30	Rate reduction credit. See the worksheet on page 36.	30
31	Child tax credit (see page 36).	31
32	Adoption credit. Attach Form 8839.	32
33	Add lines 27 through 32. These are your total credits .	3
34	Subtract line 33 from line 26. If line 33 is more than line 26, enter -0-.	3

April 2006



Making the Grade for Care

Ranking State Child and Dependent Care Tax Provisions

This report card grades thirty-one provisions in effect in twenty-seven states for tax year 2005 according to a point system based on the criteria identified in the National Women's Law Center's companion report, *Making Care Less Taxing: Improving State Child and Dependent Care Tax Provisions*. *Making Care Less Taxing* provides an overview of state child and dependent care (CADC) tax provisions and describes the best policies for states to adopt when designing such provisions. CADC provisions are important because they help families recoup through the tax system some of their employment-related child and dependent care expenses.

The higher the grade, the closer a state CADC tax provision is to meeting the best policies. The adequacy of the tax benefit — the amount of tax relief or refund that a family could receive under the provision — is the most important factor in assessing a state CADC tax provision, but it is not the only one, as illustrated by the chart on the next two pages. Consequently, one state provision that ranks higher than another state provision may not always produce a larger maximum benefit.

Report Card

<i>A-</i>	New York, Oregon (WFCC)
<i>B+</i>	California, Hawaii, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska
<i>B</i>	Ohio, Vermont (LICADC)
<i>B-</i>	Colorado, Louisiana (child care), Louisiana (household expense), Maine, Oregon (CADC)
<i>C+</i>	Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland (credit), New Mexico, North Carolina
<i>C</i>	Kansas, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Vermont (CADC)
<i>C-</i>	Idaho, Virginia
<i>D</i>	Maryland (deduction)
<i>D-</i>	Montana
<i>F</i>	Alabama, Arizona, Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, Utah, West Virginia, Wisconsin

The National Women's Law Center is a non-profit organization that has been working since 1972 to advance and protect women's legal rights. The Center focuses on major policy areas of importance to women and their families, including employment, education, reproductive rights and health, and family economic security — with special attention given to the needs of low-income women.

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The fourteen states with the lowest grade are states with personal income taxes that do not include a child and dependent care tax provision. Georgia enacted a new CADC provision in April, 2006, too late to be included in this report; the provision takes effect in tax year 2006.

The nine states that have no personal income tax, or tax only certain non-wage personal income, are not graded: Alaska, Florida, Nevada, New Hampshire, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, and Wyoming.

Grades

State	Adequacy	Credit or Deduction	Refundability	Low-Income Targeting	Income Limit	Expense Limits	Dependents Covered	Quality	Indexing	Forms	Treatment of Married Couples	Residency	Total
Maximum Points	30	8	14	14	5	9	6	4	3	4	0	3	100
AR	4	8	7	2	5	5	6	2	0	3	0	3	45
CA	14	8	14	12	4	5	6	0	-1	3	0	2	67
CO	15	8	14	6	3	6	3	0	-1	4	0	0	58
DE	14	8	0	3	5	6	6	0	0	1	-1	0	42
DC	10	8	0	7	5	6	6	0	0	4	0	3	49
HI	18	8	14	10	5	4	6	0	-1	4	0	0	68
ID	6	0	0	0	5	6	6	0	0	1	0	3	27
IA	20	8	14	6	2	6	6	0	-1	2	0	3	66
KS	6	8	0	2	5	6	6	0	0	4	0	0	37
KY	4	8	0	6	5	6	6	0	0	4	0	0	39
LA (Child Care)	14	8	9	8	5	6	3	0	-1	3	0	0	55
LA (Household Expense)	26	8	2	5	5	6	3	0	0	0	0	3	58
ME	13	8	7	4	5	6	6	3	0	1	0	3	56
MD (Credit)	10	8	0	11	3	6	6	0	-1	-1	0	3	45
MD (Deduction)	3	0	0	0	5	6	6	0	0	2	0	3	25
MA	6	0	0	0	5	8	6	0	-1	4	0	3	31
MN	19	8	14	7	1	6	6	0	2	4	0	3	70
MT	2	0	0	3	0	4	6	0	-1	-1	0	3	16
NE	26	8	7	10	5	6	6	0	-1	4	0	0	71
NM	17	8	14	0	0	4	4	0	-1	1	0	0	47
NY	28	8	13	12	5	6	6	0	-1	4	-1	3	83
NC	8	8	0	10	5	4	6	0	-1	1	0	3	44
OH	26	8	0	10	2	6	6	0	-1	2	0	3	62
OK	4	8	0	2	5	6	5	0	0	3	0	1	34
OR (CADDC)	22	8	2	6	2	6	6	0	-1	4	0	3	58
OR (WFCC)	29	8	14	6	2	9	4	0	2	4	0	3	81
RI	6	8	0	4	5	6	6	0	0	2	0	3	40
SC	4	8	0	0	5	6	6	0	0	4	0	2	35
VT (CADDC)	6	8	0	2	5	6	6	0	0	1	0	3	37
VT (LICADC)	14	8	14	7	2	5	6	4	-1	4	0	0	63
VA	3	0	0	0	5	6	6	0	0	4	0	3	27

The Grading System

The following criteria determined each provision's score. For a fuller discussion of these criteria, see *Making Care Less Taxing: Improving State Child and Dependent Care Tax Provisions*.

Adequacy: The maximum dollar value of state provisions varies considerably. The greater the dollar value of the provision, based on the maximum amount provided for families with care expenses for two children or dependents, the more points it receives. Maximum Points: 30

Credit or Deduction: Because, in general, tax credits are more advantageous to lower-income families and deductions are more advantageous to higher-income families, provisions that are credits do a better job of targeting assistance to families that need it most. Provisions that are credits receive higher points. Maximum Points: 8

Refundability: When a credit is refundable, a family gets a check back from the state if the family's credit exceeds the tax owed. This is especially important to lower-income families who often do not have enough tax liability to take full advantage of the credit for which they are eligible. Provisions that are fully refundable receive higher points. Maximum Points: 14

Low-Income Targeting: Families with lower incomes need more assistance in meeting their child and dependent care expenses than families with higher incomes. Provisions receive points for incorporating well-designed sliding scales that provide maximum assistance to the lowest-income families and by ensuring that, if the provision is calculated based on the federal child and dependent care credit, the federal amount used is not limited by federal tax liability. Maximum Points: 14

Income Limit: Some provisions eliminate any benefit for families above a particular income level. This reduces the provision's ability to apportion taxes according to family resources and, if the maximum is set too low, denies assistance to many families who need help with employment-related care expenses. The more stringent the limit, the fewer points the provision receives. Maximum Points: 5

Expense Limits: Most provisions limit the dollar amount of expenses eligible for assistance. Limits that are lower than the average cost of care leave families with a large amount of expenses for which they receive no assistance, which reduces their ability to ensure that children and adults receive good care. Provisions with more restricted expense limits receive fewer points. Maximum Points: 9

Dependents Covered: Families need help with care for children and adult dependents who cannot care for themselves. Provisions that do not cover adult dependents or provide less coverage for them receive fewer points. Maximum Points: 6

Quality of Care: Higher-quality care is often more expensive, but beneficial to children and adult dependents. Provisions receive points if they encourage use of higher-quality care, earning more points if they are stronger and cover both children and adults. Maximum Points: 4

Indexing: Numerical values in state provisions erode with inflation, reducing the value of the provision to families. Provisions that include numerical values and automatically adjust these numbers for inflation receive points; states that do not adjust these values lose points. Maximum Points: 3

Forms: Some states highlight the tax provision on their tax forms. Some states have short-form tax returns that lower-income families are more likely to use than higher-income families. Failure to include the provision on the short form means that some eligible families may not receive the credit or deduction. States that highlight the provision on their forms gain points and states with forms and instructions that do not mention the provision or are otherwise misleading, or with short forms that do not include the provision, lose points. Maximum Points: 4

Treatment of Married Couples: Some state provisions require that married couples filing separately take the credit or deduction in a way that minimizes its value to the family. These provisions lose points. Maximum Points: 0

Residency: Some state provisions limit their provision to residents, while others allow non-residents to claim the provision. States that allow non-residents to claim the provision gain points, while states that deny the provision to non-residents lose points. Maximum Points: 3

