

State Child Care Assistance Policies: Florida

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2011, a family of three in Florida could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$27,468 (148 percent of poverty, 47 percent of state median income).¹
- **Waiting list:** Florida had 67,988 children on a waiting list for child care assistance as of February 2011, and expected the waiting list to increase.
- **Parent copayments:** In 2011, a family of three with an income at 100 percent of poverty (\$18,530 a year) receiving child care assistance paid \$106 per month, or 7 percent of its income, in copayments. A family of three with an income at 150 percent of poverty (\$27,795 a year) receiving child care assistance paid \$173 per month, or 7 percent of its income, in copayments.²
- **Reimbursement rates:** In 2011, Florida's reimbursement rates for child care providers serving families receiving child care assistance were below the federally recommended level—the 75th percentile of current market rates, which is the level designed to give families access to 75 percent of the providers in their community.³
 - Florida's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in Miami-Dade County was \$403,⁴ which was \$139 (26 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
 - Florida's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a one-year-old in Miami-Dade County was \$442,⁵ which was \$143 (24 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered reimbursement rates:** In 2011, Florida allowed local coalitions to pay higher reimbursement rates for higher-quality care.⁶
 - The reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in Miami-Dade County at the highest quality tier was 20 percent higher than the rate at the lowest quality tier.
 - The reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in Miami-Dade County at the highest quality tier was still below the 75th percentile of current market rates.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2011, Florida allowed parents to continue receiving child care assistance for up to 30 days while searching for a job. However, Florida did not allow parents to qualify for child care assistance while searching for a job.⁷

Source: Karen Schulman and Helen Blank, *State Child Care Assistance Policies 2011: Reduced Support for Families in Challenging Times* (Washington, DC: National Women's Law Center, 2011). These data reflect policies as of February 2011, unless otherwise indicated.

1 In February 2011, families already receiving assistance could continue doing so until their income reached \$36,620. As of July 2011, the income limit to qualify for assistance was increased to \$27,795 (150 percent of poverty), and the exit eligibility limit was increased to \$37,060 (200 percent of poverty) to adjust for the 2011 federal poverty level.

2 Local coalitions have flexibility in setting copayments; these copayment amounts reflect the maximum copayment levels allowed under state policy and used by a local coalition.

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- 3 Reimbursement rates vary by local coalition.
- 4 Miami-Dade County has higher rates for higher-quality care; this is the base (lowest) rate, which is the most common rate level.
- 5 This is the base (lowest) rate, which is the most common rate level.
- 6 Local coalitions may pay rates that are up to 20 percent higher than the basic rate for Gold Seal providers, a designation authorized by the legislature indicating higher-quality care and tied to accreditation.
- 7 Local early learning coalitions, which administer the child care assistance program, may seek a waiver to the 30-day time limit and allow parents to continue to receive child care assistance while searching for a job for up to 60 or 90 days. Parents who qualified for unemployment compensation could receive child care assistance for up to 6 months until the expiration of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds.