

State Child Care Assistance Policies: Illinois

- **Income eligibility limit:** As of February 2011, a family of three in Illinois could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$36,624 (198 percent of poverty, 54 percent of state median income). As of April 2011, the income limit for a family of three was reduced to \$33,876 (183 percent of poverty, 50 percent of state median income).¹
- **Waiting list:** Illinois had no waiting list for child care assistance as of February 2011.
- **Parent copayments:** As of February 2011, a family of three with an income at 100 percent of poverty (\$18,530 a year) receiving child care assistance paid \$34 per month, or 2 percent of its income, in copayments; the copayment for a family at this income level increased to \$59 per month as of April 2011. As of February 2011, a family of three with an income at 150 percent of poverty (\$27,795 a year) receiving child care assistance paid \$85 per month, or 4 percent of its income, in copayments; the copayment for a family at this income level increased to \$147 per month as of April 2011.²
- **Reimbursement rates:** In 2011, Illinois's reimbursement rates for most 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.
 - Illinois's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in the Metropolitan Region (Group 1A)³ was \$768,⁴ which was \$196 (20 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
 - Illinois's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a one-year-old in the Metropolitan Region (Group 1A) was \$1,091,⁵ which was \$154 (12 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered reimbursement rates:** In 2011, Illinois paid higher reimbursement rates for higher-quality care.
 - The reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in the Metropolitan Region (Group 1A) 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 the Metropolitan Region (Group 1A) at the highest quality tier was still below the 75th percentile of current market rates.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2011, Illinois allowed parents to continue receiving child care assistance for up to 90 days while searching for a job.⁶ However, Illinois did not allow parents to qualify for child care assistance while searching for a job.

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.

ILLINOIS STATE CHILD CARE FACT SHEET

- 1 The previous income limit, \$36,624, was equal to 200 percent of the 2010 federal poverty level. The income limit as of April 2011, \$33,876, was equal to 185 percent of the 2010 federal poverty level. As of July 2011, the income limit was increased to \$34,284 (185 percent of the 2011 federal poverty level) to adjust for the 2011 federal poverty level.
- 2 The monthly copayment for a family of three with an annual income of \$18,530 was revised to \$46 and the monthly copayment for a family of three with an annual income of \$27,795 was revised to \$126 when Illinois adjusted its income eligibility limit and copayment schedule for the 2011 federal poverty level as of July 2011.
- 3 The Metropolitan Region (referred to as Group 1A) includes Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, and McHenry Counties.
- 4 The state has higher rates for higher-quality care; this is the most common rate level (the level representing the greatest number of providers).
- 5 This is the most common rate level.
- 6 The state used American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds to increase the amount of time parents could continue to receive child care assistance while searching for a job from 30 days to 90 days, as of November 1, 2009. The state planned to revert to its previous policy of limiting the time parents could continue to receive child care assistance while searching for a job to 30 consecutive days, with a maximum of three job searches allowed in a 12-month period, as of October 2011.