

State Child Care Assistance Policies: Iowa

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2011, a family of three in Iowa could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$26,556 (143 percent of poverty, 43 percent of state median income).¹
- **Waiting list:** Iowa had no waiting list for child care assistance as of February 2011.
- **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 \$9 per month, or 1 percent of its income, in copayments.
- **Reimbursement rates:** In 2011, Iowa'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.²
 - Iowa's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old was \$561, which was \$125 (18 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
 - Iowa's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a one-year-old was \$696, which was \$118 (15 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered reimbursement rates:** In 2011, Iowa did not pay higher reimbursement rates for higher-quality care.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2011, Iowa allowed parents to qualify for or continue receiving child care assistance for up to 30 days while searching for a job.³

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 For special needs care, the income limit was \$36,624 in February 2011. As of July 2011, the income limit for standard care was increased to \$26,880 (145 percent of poverty), and the income limit for special needs care was increased to \$37,080 (200 percent of poverty) to adjust for the 2011 federal poverty level. Also note that in some areas of the state a separate scholarship program funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in effect from July 2009 through June 2011 helped families with incomes between \$26,556 and \$33,874 pay for infant and toddler care offered by providers that were accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) or that had a rating of a level three or higher under the state's child care quality rating and improvement system.

2 The state calculates reimbursements based upon units of care. A unit is a 5-hour block of time. These rates are calculated assuming that if a family is using 9 hours of care, 5 days per week, 4.33 weeks per month, this would translate into 2 units of care per day for 22 days per month, or 44 units per month.

3 Parents could receive child care assistance while searching for a job for up to 30 consecutive days, once within a 12-month period.