

## State Child Care Assistance Policies: Maine

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2011, a family of three in Maine could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$45,775 (247 percent of poverty, 79 percent of state median income).<sup>1</sup>
- **Waiting list:** Maine 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 \$123 per month, or 8 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 \$231 per month, or 10 percent of its income, in copayments.
- **Reimbursement rates:** In 2011, Maine'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.
  - Maine's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in Cumberland County was \$805,<sup>2</sup> which was \$63 (7 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
  - Maine's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a one-year-old in Cumberland County was \$996,<sup>3</sup> which was \$54 (5 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered reimbursement rates:** In 2011, Maine paid higher reimbursement rates for higher-quality care. However, as of July 2011, Maine reduced the amount of the differential between the higher rates paid to higher-quality providers and the base (lowest) rate.<sup>4</sup>
  - The reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in Cumberland County at the highest quality tier was 25 percent higher than the rate at the lowest quality tier as of February 2011. This differential was reduced to 10 percent as of July 30, 2011.
  - The reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in Cumberland County at the highest quality tier was above the 75th percentile of current market rates as of July 30, 2011.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2011, Maine allowed parents to continue receiving child care assistance while searching for a job for up to 8 weeks within a 6-month period. However, Maine 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.

1 As of April 2011, the income limit was increased to \$46,325 (250 percent of poverty) to adjust for the 2011 federal poverty level.

2 The state has higher rates for higher-quality care; this is the base (lowest) rate, which is the most common rate level.

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4 A temporary increase in differential rates went into effect as of July 2010—from 2 percent to 5 percent above the base rate for Step 2, from 5 percent to 10 percent above the base rate for Step 3, and from 10 percent to 25 percent above the base rate for Step 4. The tiered rates reverted to their previous, lower levels as of July 30, 2011.