

State Child Care Assistance Policies: Massachusetts

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2011, a family of three in Massachusetts could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$41,396 (223 percent of poverty, 50 percent of state median income).¹
- **Waiting list:** Massachusetts had 19,451 children on a 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 \$141 per month, or 9 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 \$195 per month, or 8 percent of its income, in copayments.
- **Reimbursement rates:** In 2011, Massachusetts'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.
 - Massachusetts's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in the Metro Boston Region was \$795, which was \$504 (39 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
 - Massachusetts's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a one-year-old in the Metro Boston Region was \$1,181, which was \$529 (31 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered reimbursement rates:** In 2011, Massachusetts did not pay higher reimbursement rates for higher-quality care.
 - The reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in Region W at the highest quality tier was 26 percent higher than the rate at the lowest quality tier.
 - The reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in Region W at the highest quality tier was still below the 75th percentile of current market rates.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2011, Massachusetts allowed parents to qualify for or continue receiving child care assistance for up to 8 weeks while searching for a job.²

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 \$70,372. Also note that, for special needs care, the income limit to qualify for assistance was \$70,372 in February 2011, and the exit eligibility limit was \$82,791. As of July 2011, for standard care, the income limit to qualify for assistance was increased to \$42,025 (50 percent of state median income), and the exit eligibility limit was increased to \$71,441 (85 percent of state median income) to adjust for the updated state median income estimate.

2 Parents receiving child care assistance could continue to receive it while searching for a job for an additional 4 weeks (on top of the initial 8 weeks allowed) within a 52-week period if they were laid off or there were other extraordinary circumstances.