

## State Child Care Assistance Policies: New Mexico

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2011, a family of three in New Mexico could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$36,620 (198 percent of poverty, 79 percent of state median income).<sup>1</sup>
- **Waiting list:** New Mexico had 5,092 children on a waiting list for child care assistance as of March 2011.<sup>2</sup>
- **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 \$68 per month, or 4 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 \$159 per month, or 7 percent of its income, in copayments.
- **Reimbursement rates:** In 2011, New Mexico's reimbursement rates for most child care providers serving families receiving child care assistance were below the federally recommended level—the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of current market rates, which is the level designed to give families access to 75 percent of the providers in their community.<sup>3</sup>
  - New Mexico's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in metropolitan counties was \$422, which was \$184 (30 percent) below the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of current market rates for this type of care.<sup>4</sup>
  - New Mexico's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a one-year-old in metropolitan counties was \$501, which was \$194 (28 percent) below the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of current market rates for this type of care.<sup>5</sup>
- **Tiered reimbursement rates:** In 2011, New Mexico paid higher reimbursement rates for higher-quality care.
  - The reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in metropolitan counties at the highest quality tier was 33 percent higher than the rate at the lowest quality tier.
  - The reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in metropolitan counties at the highest quality tier was still below the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of current market rates.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2011, New Mexico allowed parents to continue receiving child care assistance for up to 30 days while searching for a job.<sup>6</sup> However, New Mexico 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 \$37,060 (200 percent of poverty) to adjust for the 2011 federal poverty level.

2 Families with incomes at or below 100 percent of poverty are not placed on the waiting list.

3 Reimbursement rates range from 25 percent below the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of market rates (for five-star school-age centers in metropolitan counties) to 11 percent above the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile (for five-star school-age group child care homes in rural counties).

4 The state's market rate survey differentiates between quality levels and the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of market rates is obtained for providers at each quality level; the reimbursement rate for the most common rate level (the level representing the greatest number of providers) is compared here to the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile for that same quality level.

5 The reimbursement rate at the most common level is compared here to the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile for that same quality level.

6 Parents receiving child care assistance could continue to receive it while searching for a job for up to 30 calendar days immediately following the loss of employment, or graduation from high school or undergraduate school.