



CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

## STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICIES: **GEORGIA**

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2015, a family of three in Georgia could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$28,160 (140 percent of poverty, 49 percent of state median income).
- **Waiting list:** Georgia had frozen intake for child care assistance in some counties as of February 2015.<sup>1</sup>
- **Parent copayments:** In 2015, a family of three with an income at 100 percent of poverty (\$20,090 a year) receiving child care assistance in Georgia paid \$143 per month, or 9 percent of its income, in copayments.<sup>2</sup>
- **Reimbursement rates:** In 2015, Georgia'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.
  - Georgia's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in Zone 1 was \$494,<sup>3</sup> which was \$290 (37 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.<sup>4</sup>
  - Georgia's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a one-year-old in Zone 1 was \$602,<sup>5</sup> which was \$307 (34 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered reimbursement rates:** In 2015, Georgia paid higher reimbursement rates for higher-quality care.
  - The reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in Zone 1 at the highest quality tier was 10 percent higher than the rate at the lowest quality tier.
  - The reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in Zone 1 at the highest quality tier was still below the 75th percentile of current market rates.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2015, Georgia allowed parents to continue receiving child care assistance for up to 8 weeks while searching for a job.<sup>6</sup> However, the state did not allow parents to qualify for child care assistance while searching for a job.

Source: Karen Schulman and Helen Blank, Building Blocks: State Child Care Assistance Policies 2015 (Washington, DC: National Women's Law Center, 2015). These data reflect policies as of February 2015, unless otherwise indicated.



- 1 As of February 1, 2015, certain counties froze intake for families who did not meet priority criteria. Children and families prioritized for services include families participating in TANF activities; families transitioning from a TANF activity to a work activity; children with medically documented special needs; grandparents raising grandchildren under age five; children under court-ordered supervision; critical child protective services cases; children in Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) custody; parents 20 years of age or under attending middle school, high school, or GED classes full time; families who are victims of natural disasters; and new children in an existing child care assistance case.
- 2 As of July 2015, in four areas of the state (covering Bibb, Brooks, Catoosa, Clarke, Colquitt, Cook, Echols, Gilmer, Gordon, Lowndes, Murray, and Whitfield counties), copayments were lowered for families using providers with quality ratings under the state's quality rating and improvement system, which has three star levels; the copayment was reduced to \$15 per week (\$65 per month) for families using one-star providers, \$10 per week (\$43 per month) for families using two-star providers, and \$5 per week (\$22 per month) for families using three-star providers, regardless of the family's income level.
- 3 The state has higher rates for higher-quality care; this is the base (lowest) rate, which is the most common rate level.
- 4 Zone 1 includes Camden, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Hall, Henry, Paulding, and Rockdale Counties.
- 5 This is the base (lowest) rate, which is the most common rate level.
- 6 Parents receiving child care assistance can continue to receive it for up to 8 weeks after each occurrence of job loss. Families must be able to document the reason for the job loss and that they are receiving unemployment benefits from the state.

