



CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICIES: *ILLINOIS*

- **Income eligibility limit:** In February 2015, a family of three in Illinois could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$36,612 (182 percent of poverty, 53 percent of state median income).¹
- **Waiting list:** Illinois had no waiting list for child care assistance as of February 2015.
- **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 Illinois paid \$75 per month, or 4 percent of its income, in copayments. A family of three with an income at 150 percent of poverty (\$30,135 a year) receiving child care assistance paid \$191 per month, or 8 percent of its income, in copayments.
- **Reimbursement rates:** In 2015, Illinois's reimbursement rates for most 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
 - Illinois's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in the Metropolitan Region³ was \$708,⁴ which was \$461 (39 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
 - Illinois's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a one-year-old in the Metropolitan Region was \$1,007,⁵ which was \$280 (22 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered reimbursement rates:** In 2015, Illinois paid higher reimbursement rates for higher-quality care.
 - The reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in the Metropolitan Region at the highest quality tier was 15 percent higher than the rate at the lowest quality tier.
 - The reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in the Metropolitan Region at the highest quality tier was still below the 75th percentile of current market rates.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2015, Illinois allowed parents to continue receiving child care assistance for up to 90 days while searching for a job.⁶ 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 July 2015, the state froze intake for all families applying for assistance with incomes above \$10,056 a year (50 percent of poverty), unless the family was receiving TANF, had a child with special needs, or was a teen parent attending high school or a GED program full time; families already receiving assistance could continue doing so until their income reached \$37,176 (185 percent of poverty), which is equal to the previous initial income limit adjusted for the 2015 federal poverty level. In November 2015, the income limit to qualify for assistance was increased to \$32,546 (162 percent of poverty).
- 2 Reimbursement rates vary by age of child, type of care, and region of the state. Rates for centers range from the 17th to 62nd percentile of 2014 market rates and rates for family child care range from the 57th to 95th percentile.
- 3 The Metropolitan Region (referred to as Group 1A) includes Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, and McHenry Counties.
- 4 The state has higher rates for higher-quality care; this is the base (lowest) rate, which is the most common rate level.
- 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 while searching for a job for up to 90 consecutive days, beginning with the parent's last day of work or school, or up to 30 consecutive days during three separate times within a 12-month period.

