



CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICIES: *TENNESSEE*

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2015, a family of three in Tennessee could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$32,256 (161 percent of poverty, 60 percent of state median income).
- **Waiting list:** Tennessee did not serve any children or families other than families receiving or transitioning from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), teen parents, children in foster care, children receiving protective services, and child-only caretakers 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 Tennessee paid \$113 per month, or 7 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 \$178 per month, or 7 percent of its income, in copayments.
- **Reimbursement rates:** In 2015, Tennessee'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.
 - Tennessee's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in the Top Tier Counties¹ was \$515,² which was \$110 (18 percent) below the 70th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.³
 - Tennessee's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a one-year-old in the Top Tier Counties was \$598,⁴ which was \$160 (21 percent) below the 70th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered reimbursement rates:** In 2015, Tennessee paid higher reimbursement rates for higher-quality care.
 - The reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in the Top Tier Counties at the highest quality tier was 20 percent higher than the rate at the lowest quality tier.
 - The reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in the Top Tier Counties at the highest quality tier was still below the 75th percentile of current market rates.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2015, Tennessee allowed parents to continue receiving child care assistance for up to 30 days while searching for a job. 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 Top Tier Counties are those with the 20 highest average populations in 2007 and/or 20 highest per capita incomes in 2005-2007. These counties include: Anderson, Blount, Bradley, Cheatham, Coffee, Davidson, Fayette, Greene, Hamilton, Knox, Loudon, Madison, Maury, Montgomery, Putnam, Roane, Robertson, Rutherford, Sevier, Shelby, Sullivan, Sumner, Washington, and Williamson.
- 2 The state has higher rates for higher-quality care; this is the most common rate level (the level representing the greatest number of providers).
- 3 Data on the 75th percentile rate of 2014 market rates are not available, so the 70th percentile of market rates is used for the comparison here instead.
- 4 This is the most common rate level.

