State Child Care Assistance Policies: Illinois

December 2013

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2013, a family of three in Illinois could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to $35,328 (181 percent of poverty, 52 percent of state median income).

- **Waiting list:** Illinois had no waiting list for child care assistance as of February 2013.

- **Parent copayments:** In 2013, a family of three with an income at 100 percent of poverty ($19,530 a year) receiving child care assistance in Illinois paid $82 per month, or 5 percent of its income, in copayments. A family of three with an income at 150 percent of poverty ($29,295 a year) receiving child care assistance paid $210 per month, or 9 percent of its income, in copayments.

- **Reimbursement rates:** In 2013, 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.

- **Illinois's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in the Metropolitan Region (Group 1A):** was $708, which was $266 (27 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 (Group 1A):** was $1,007, which was $292 (23 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.

- **Tiered reimbursement rates:** In 2013, Illinois paid higher reimbursement rates for higher-quality care.

- **The reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in the Metropolitan Region (Group 1A) 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 Metropolitan Region (Group 1A) at the highest quality tier was still below the 75th percentile of current market rates.**

- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2013, Illinois 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.

1 As of July 2013, the income limit was increased to $36,132 (185 percent of poverty) to adjust for the 2013 federal poverty level.
2 Reimbursement rates vary by age of child, type of care, and region of the state. Rates generally range from below the 25th percentile to above the 50th percentile of market rates, and in some areas of the state, exceed the 100th 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 30 consecutive days, beginning with the parent’s last day of work or school. Parents can receive child care assistance while searching for a job for up to three 30-day periods in a 12-month period. Parents are eligible for assistance for the same number of days or hours of child care per month while searching for a job as was originally approved.