



CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICIES: COLORADO

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2015, counties in Colorado could set the income limit for a family of three to qualify for child care assistance between \$25,727 per year (128 percent of poverty, 36 percent of state median income) and \$60,288 per year (300 percent of poverty, 84 percent of state median income).¹
- **Waiting list:** Colorado had 45 children on county waiting lists for child care assistance as of February 2015.²
- **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 Colorado paid \$33 per month, or 2 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 \$276 per month, or 11 percent of its income, in copayments.
- **Reimbursement rates:** In 2015, reimbursement rates in Colorado 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.³
 - The monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in El Paso was \$578,⁴ which was \$340 (37 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
 - The monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a one-year-old in El Paso was \$738,⁵ which was \$275 (27 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered reimbursement rates:** In 2015, some counties in Colorado, including El Paso, paid higher reimbursement rates for higher-quality care.⁶
 - The reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in El Paso 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 El Paso at the highest quality tier was still below the 75th percentile of current market rates.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2015, Colorado allowed parents to qualify for or continue receiving child care assistance for up to 60 days while searching for a job.⁷

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 Counties set their income limits within state guidelines. Also note that counties may allow families already receiving assistance to continue doing so after their income exceeds the county's initial income limit for up to six months, if their income remains below 85 percent of state median income. As of October 2015, the maximum level at which counties are allowed to set their income limit was expected to increase to \$61,344 (85 percent of state median income) to adjust for the updated state median income estimate.
- 2 Waiting lists are kept at the county level, rather than at the state level. This waiting list total is the total of reported county waiting lists.
- 3 Counties determine their reimbursement rates and when to update them. The reimbursement rates shown here reflect that El Paso increased its rates in February 2015.
- 4 El Paso 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 Each county determines whether to offer higher rates for higher-quality care. While only a few counties (including El Paso) had higher rates for higher-quality care in 2014, all counties will be required to have such tiered rates by July 2016.
- 7 The state increased the amount of time parents could receive child care assistance while searching for a job from 30 days to 60 days as of December 2014. Parents can receive child care assistance for up to 60 days in a 12-month period from when the job search began.

