



CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

## STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICIES: CALIFORNIA

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2016, a family of three in California could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$42,216 (209 percent of poverty, 65 percent of state median income).<sup>1</sup>
- **Waiting list:** In California, there were waiting lists for child care assistance at the local level as of February 2016.<sup>2</sup>
- **Parent copayments:** In 2016, a family of three with an income at 100 percent of poverty (\$20,160 a year) receiving child care assistance in California had no copayment. A family of three with an income at 150 percent of poverty (\$30,240 a year) receiving child care assistance paid \$128 per month, or 5 percent of its income, in copayments.<sup>3</sup>
- **Reimbursement rates:** In 2016, California'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.
  - California's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in Los Angeles County was \$889, which was \$150 (14 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
  - California's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a one-year-old in Los Angeles County was \$1,293, which was \$173 (12 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered reimbursement rates:** In 2016, California did not pay higher reimbursement rates for higher-quality care.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2016, California allowed parents to qualify for or continue receiving child care assistance for up to 60 days while searching for a job.<sup>4</sup>

Source: Karen Schulman and Helen Blank, *Red Light Green Light: State Child Care Assistance Policies 2016* (Washington, DC: National Women's Law Center, 2016). These data reflect policies as of February 2016, unless otherwise indicated.

- 1 Two pilot counties (San Mateo and San Francisco) allowed families already receiving assistance to continue to receive it up to an income of \$56,904 in 2016.
- 2 The state no longer has a centralized waiting list, so a statewide total for the number of children on waiting lists is not available. Most local contractors and some counties maintain waiting lists.
- 3 Families whose children are receiving protective services or participating in the state prekindergarten program, federal migrant program, or program for those with severe disabilities are exempt from copayments.
- 4 Parents can receive child care assistance while searching for a job for up to 60 consecutive working days per fiscal year, for no more than 5 days per week and less than 30 hours per week.

