



CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

## STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICIES: *DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA*

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2016, a family of three in the District of Columbia could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$45,775 (227 percent of poverty, 65 percent of state median income).<sup>1</sup>
- **Waiting list:** The District of Columbia had no waiting list for child care assistance as of February 2016.
- **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 the District of Columbia paid \$53 per month, or 3 percent of its income, in copayments. A family of three with an income at 150 percent of poverty (\$30,240 a year) receiving child care assistance paid \$118 per month, or 5 percent of its income, in copayments.<sup>2</sup>
- **Reimbursement rates:** In 2016, the District of Columbia'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.
  - The District of Columbia's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old was \$909,<sup>3</sup> which was \$500 (35 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
  - The District of Columbia's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a one-year-old was \$1,355,<sup>4</sup> which was \$474 (26 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered reimbursement rates:** In 2016, the District of Columbia paid higher reimbursement rates for higher-quality care.
  - The reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old at the highest quality tier was 44 percent higher than the rate at the lowest quality tier.
  - The reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old at the highest quality tier was still below the 75th percentile of current market rates.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2016, the District of Columbia allowed parents to continue receiving child care assistance while searching for a job until the end of their 12-month eligibility period. The District of Columbia allowed parents to qualify for child care assistance for up to 90 days while searching for a job.

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 In 2016, families already receiving assistance could continue doing so until their income reached \$51,101.
- 2 Foster families and children receiving protective services are exempt from copayments.
- 3 The District of Columbia has higher rates for higher-quality care; this is the most common rate level (the level representing the greatest number of providers).
- 4 This is the most common rate level.

