



CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICIES: **FLORIDA**

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2016, a family of three in Florida could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$30,240 (150 percent of poverty, 55 percent of state median income).¹
- **Waiting list:** Florida had 25,774 children on a 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 Florida paid as much as \$130 per month, or 8 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 as much as \$217 per month, or 9 percent of its income, in copayments.²
- **Reimbursement rates:** In 2016, reimbursement rates in Florida 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 Miami-Dade County was \$419,⁴ which was \$144 (26 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.⁵
 - The monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a one-year-old in Miami-Dade County was \$464,⁶ which was \$164 (26 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered reimbursement rates:** In 2016, Florida allowed local coalitions to pay higher reimbursement rates for higher-quality care.⁷
 - The reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in Miami-Dade County 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 Miami-Dade County at the highest quality tier was still below the 75th percentile of current market rates.⁸
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2016, Florida allowed parents to continue receiving child care assistance for up to 60 days while searching for a job.⁹ However, the state did not allow parents to qualify for child care assistance 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 \$40,320 (200 percent of poverty).
- 2 Local early learning coalitions, which administer Florida's child care assistance program, set their copayments, subject to state approval; copayments shown here reflect the maximum copayment levels allowed under state policy and used by a local coalition. Also note that a coalition may, on a case-by-case basis, waive the copayment for an at-risk child or temporarily waive the copayment for a family whose income is at or below the federal poverty level and who experiences a natural disaster or an event that limits the parent's ability to pay.
- 3 Local coalitions set their own reimbursement rates.
- 4 Miami-Dade County has higher rates for higher-quality care; this is the base (lowest) rate, which is the most common rate level.
- 5 The state's market rate survey differentiates between quality levels and the 75th percentile of market rates is obtained for providers at the base level and at the Gold Seal level. The base rate is compared here to the 75th percentile for providers at that same quality level.
- 6 This is the base (lowest) rate, which is the most common rate level.
- 7 Local coalitions may pay rates that are up to 20 percent higher than the base rate for Gold Seal providers, a designation indicating higher-quality care and tied to accreditation.
- 8 The rate at the highest quality level (Gold Seal level) is compared here to the 75th percentile for providers at that same quality level.
- 9 The state extended the amount of time parents receiving child care assistance can continue to receive it while searching for a job to 90 days as of July 2016.

