

CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

## STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICIES: **GEORGIA**

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2016, a family of three in Georgia could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$28,160 (140 percent of poverty, 49 percent of state median income).<sup>1</sup>
- **Waiting list:** Georgia 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 Georgia paid \$143 per month, or 9 percent of its income, in copayments.<sup>2</sup>
- **Reimbursement rates:** In 2016, Georgia'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.
  - Georgia's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in Zone 1 was \$504,<sup>3</sup> which was \$280 (36 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.<sup>4</sup>
  - Georgia's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a one-year-old in Zone 1 was \$570,<sup>5</sup> which was \$296 (34 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered reimbursement rates:** In 2016, Georgia paid higher reimbursement rates for higher-quality care.<sup>6</sup>
  - The reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in Zone 1 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 Zone 1 at the highest quality tier was still below the 75th percentile of current market rates.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2016, Georgia allowed parents to continue receiving child care assistance for up to 8 weeks while searching for a job.<sup>7</sup> 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 As of October 2016, the income limit to qualify for assistance was increased to \$28,748 (50 percent of state median income).
- 2 In four areas of the state (covering Bibb, Brooks, Catoosa, Clarke, Colquitt, Cook, Echols, Gilmer, Gordon, Lowndes, Murray, and Whitfield counties), families using providers with quality ratings under the state's quality rating and improvement system (which has three star levels) have lower copayments than families using providers that are not rated; the copayment is \$15 per week (\$65 per month) for families using one-star providers, \$10 per week (\$43 per month) for families using two-star providers, and \$5 per week (\$22 per month) for families using three-star providers, regardless of the family's income level. Also note that foster children and parents under age 18 are exempt from copayments.
- 3 The state has higher rates for higher-quality care; this is the most common rate level (the level representing the greatest number of providers).
- 4 Zone 1 includes Camden, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Hall, Henry, Paulding, and Rockdale Counties.
- 5 This is the most common rate level.
- 6 This analysis is based on rates in effect as of February 2016. The state increased rates for providers with ratings of one star or higher in the state's quality rating and improvement system as of October 2016. Tiered rates were increased from 2 percent to 5 percent above the base rate for one-star providers, from 5 percent to 10 percent above the base rate for two-star providers, and from 10 percent to 25 percent above the base rate for three-star providers.
- 7 In February 2016, parents receiving child care assistance could continue to receive it for up to 8 weeks after each occurrence of job loss. The state extended the amount of time parents receiving child care assistance can continue to receive it while searching for a job to 12 weeks as of October 2016.

