



CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICIES: MASSACHUSETTS

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2016, a family of three in Massachusetts could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$44,593 (221 percent of poverty, 50 percent of state median income).¹
- **Waiting list:** Massachusetts had 24,243 children on a waiting list for child care assistance as of February 2016.²
- **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 Massachusetts paid \$162 per month, or 10 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 \$325 per month, or 13 percent of its income, in copayments.³
- **Reimbursement rates:** In 2016, Massachusetts'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.
 - Massachusetts's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in Boston was \$839, which was \$460 (35 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
 - Massachusetts's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a one-year-old in Boston was \$1,247,⁴ which was \$390 (24 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered reimbursement rates:** In 2016, Massachusetts paid higher reimbursement rates for higher-quality care for infants and toddlers.⁵
 - The reimbursement rate for center care for a one-year-old in Boston at the highest quality tier was 3 percent higher than the rate at the lowest quality tier.
 - The reimbursement rate for center care for a one-year-old in Boston at the highest quality tier was still below the 75th percentile of current market rates.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2016, Massachusetts allowed parents to qualify for or continue receiving child care assistance for up to 8 weeks while searching for a job.⁶

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 February 2016, families already receiving assistance could continue doing so until their income reached \$75,808. For special needs care, the income limit to qualify for assistance was \$75,808, and the exit eligibility limit was \$89,185 in 2016. As of October 2016, for standard care, the income limit to qualify for assistance was increased to \$45,771 (50 percent of state median income), and the exit eligibility limit was increased to \$77,810 (85 percent of state median income), to adjust for the updated state median income estimate.
- 2 This waiting list total represents the number of applications received; the state does not determine families' eligibility for child care assistance at the time they are added to the waiting list.
- 3 Families receiving or transitioning from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), foster parents, guardians, caretakers, and families receiving protective services are exempt from copayments.
- 4 The state has higher rates for higher-quality care for infants and toddlers; this is the base (lowest) rate, which is the most common rate level.
- 5 The state pays higher rates for higher-quality center care and family child care for children up to 2.9 years old.
- 6 Parents receiving child care assistance may be allowed to continue to receive it while searching for a job for an additional 4 weeks (on top of the initial 8 weeks allowed within a 52-week period) if there are extraordinary circumstances.

