



CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

## STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICIES: *MISSISSIPPI*

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2016, a family of three in Mississippi could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$34,999 (174 percent of poverty, 73 percent of state median income).
- **Waiting list:** Mississippi had 9,444 children on a waiting list for child care assistance as of July 2016.<sup>1</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 Mississippi paid \$97 per month, or 6 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 \$180 per month, or 7 percent of its income, in copayments.<sup>2</sup>
- **Reimbursement rates:** In 2016, Mississippi'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.
  - Mississippi's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old was \$339,<sup>3</sup> which was \$94 (22 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
  - Mississippi's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a one-year-old was \$375,<sup>4</sup> which was \$145 (28 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered reimbursement rates:** In 2016, Mississippi 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 36 percent higher than the rate at the lowest quality tier.<sup>5</sup>
  - 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, Mississippi allowed parents to qualify for or continue receiving child care assistance for up to 60 days while searching for a job.<sup>6</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 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.
- 2 Families receiving or transitioning from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), foster children, children receiving protective services, and children receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits have a copayment of \$10 per month.
- 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 This is the most common rate level.
- 5 The state has two separate tiers for providers: tier two for those meeting basic licensing/regulatory requirements and tier one for those that are accredited or have a director who meets certain educational and/or experience criteria; tier one providers receive a higher rate. In addition, the state has a five-star quality rating and improvement system that provides bonuses to providers with two or more stars. The rate for the highest quality tier was calculated assuming that the provider qualifies for the tier one rate level and five-star bonus.
- 6 Parents can receive child care assistance while searching for a job for up to 60 days from the last date of employment, per instance of job loss.

