



CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICIES: *MONTANA*

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2016, a family of three in Montana could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$30,132 (149 percent of poverty, 52 percent of state median income).¹
- **Waiting list:** Montana 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 Montana paid \$67 per month, or 4 percent of its income, in copayments.²
- **Reimbursement rates:** In 2016, Montana'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—for some categories of care, although rates for some categories were above the recommended level.³
 - Montana's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in the Billings region was \$662,⁴ which was \$12 (2 percent) above the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
 - Montana's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a one-year-old in the Billings region was \$758,⁵ which was \$44 (6 percent) above the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered reimbursement rates:** In 2016, Montana paid higher reimbursement rates for higher-quality care.
 - The reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in the Billings region 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 the Billings region at the highest quality tier was above the 75th percentile of current market rates.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2016, Montana allowed parents to continue receiving child care assistance for up to 90 days while searching for a job. 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 July 2016, the income limit to qualify for assistance was increased to \$30,240 (150 percent of poverty) to adjust for the 2016 federal poverty level. In addition, as of July 2016, a separate exit eligibility limit was established to allow families already receiving assistance to continue doing so until their income reached \$37,296 (185 percent of poverty).
- 2 Children receiving protective services are exempt from copayments.
- 3 While some of the state's reimbursement rates in 2016 were at or above the 75th percentile of 2013 market rates, some rates for other age groups, regions, and types of care were below the 75th percentile.
- 4 The state has higher rates for higher-quality care; this is the base (lowest) rate, which is the most common rate level.
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