



CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

## STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICIES: OKLAHOMA

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2016, a family of three in Oklahoma could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$35,100 (174 percent of poverty, 64 percent of state median income).<sup>1</sup>
- **Waiting list:** Oklahoma had no waiting list for child care assistance as of February 2016.<sup>2</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 Oklahoma paid \$139 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 \$226 per month, or 9 percent of its income, in copayments.<sup>3</sup>
- **Reimbursement rates:** In 2016, Oklahoma'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.
  - Oklahoma's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in Enhanced Area Counties<sup>4</sup> was \$461,<sup>5</sup> which was \$141 (23 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
  - Oklahoma's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a one-year-old in Enhanced Area Counties was \$624,<sup>6</sup> which was \$90 (13 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered reimbursement rates:** In 2016, Oklahoma paid higher reimbursement rates for higher-quality care.
  - The reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in Enhanced Area Counties at the highest quality tier was 74 percent higher than the rate at the lowest quality tier.
  - The reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in Enhanced Area Counties at the highest quality tier was still below the 75th percentile of current market rates.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2016, Oklahoma allowed parents to continue receiving child care assistance for up to 90 days 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 The income limit depends on how many children are in child care. The income limit shown here assumes that the family was receiving assistance for two children in care. The income limit for a family of three receiving assistance for only one child in care was \$29,100 in 2016.
- 2 The state temporarily froze intake from June 1, 2016 to July 31, 2016. During this time, children receiving child welfare services, children adopted through the Department of Human Services who met certain criteria, children in trial reunification, and families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and participating in approved work activities were served and not subject to the freeze.
- 3 The copayment amount for a family with an income at 150 percent of poverty assumes the family had two children in care; if the family had one child in care, it would not have been eligible for child care assistance with an income at 150 percent of poverty. Also note that families receiving TANF and children participating in Early Head Start/Child Care Partnerships are exempt from copayments, and children receiving protective services may be exempted from copayments on a case-by-case basis.
- 4 Enhanced Area rates apply to 19 out of 77 counties in the state (Caddo, Canadian, Cherokee, Cleveland, Comanche, Creek, Garfield, Kay, Logan, McCurtain, Oklahoma, Ottawa, Payne, Pittsburg, Pottawatomie, Tulsa, Wagoner, Washington, and Woods). Standard Area rates apply to the remaining counties.
- 5 The state has higher rates for higher-quality care; this is the most common rate level (the level representing the greatest number of providers).
- 6 This is the most common rate level.
- 7 In February 2016, parents receiving child care assistance could continue to receive it while searching for a job for up to 90 calendar days, starting with the day of the job loss or completion of an education or training program. The parent had to have been receiving child care assistance for at least 30 days prior to losing a job or completing an education program. In addition, parents could be approved to receive child care assistance while searching for a job no more than twice per calendar year, and had to be employed or going to school for at least 90 calendar days between approval periods. The state began allowing parents receiving child care assistance to continue to receive it until the end of their 12-month eligibility period, regardless of a change in job status, as of October 2016.

