



CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICIES: *SOUTH CAROLINA*

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2016, a family of three in South Carolina could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$30,135 (149 percent of poverty, 56 percent of state median income).¹
- **Waiting list:** South Carolina 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 South Carolina paid \$61 per month, or 4 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 \$87 per month, or 3 percent of its income, in copayments.²
- **Reimbursement rates:** In 2016, South Carolina'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 equal to the recommended level.³
 - South Carolina's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in urban counties was \$628,⁴ which was equal to the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
 - South Carolina's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a one-year-old in urban counties was \$688,⁵ which was equal to the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered reimbursement rates:** In 2016, South Carolina paid higher reimbursement rates for higher-quality care.
 - The reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in urban counties at the highest quality tier was 35 percent higher than the rate at the lowest quality tier.
 - The reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in urban counties at the highest quality tier was above the 75th percentile of current market rates.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In February 2016, South Carolina allowed parents to continue receiving child care assistance for up to 30 days while searching for a job.⁶ 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 In February 2016, families already receiving assistance could continue doing so until their income reached \$35,158 (175 percent of the 2015 federal poverty level). As of May 2016, the exit eligibility limit was increased to \$45,492. As of October 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, and the exit eligibility limit was increased to \$47,511 (85 percent of state median income) to adjust for the updated state median income estimate.
- 2 Foster children and families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) are exempt from copayments.
- 3 The state's quality rating and improvement system, which is mandatory for all providers serving families receiving child care assistance, has five levels—C (which receives the base rate), B, B+, A, and A+. In February 2016, for most age groups, rates for providers at level B (the most common level) were set at the 75th percentile of 2015 market rates, and rates for providers at higher quality levels were set above the 75th percentile of 2015 market rates.
- 4 The state has higher rates for higher-quality care; this is the most common rate level (the level representing the greatest number of providers).
- 5 This is the most common rate level.
- 6 In February 2016, parents receiving child care assistance could continue to receive it while searching for a job for up to 30 days from the date of the employment loss. The state extended the amount of time parents receiving child care assistance can continue to receive it while searching for a job to 90 days as of March 2016.

