



CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICIES: *WASHINGTON*

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2016, a family of three in Washington could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$40,200 (199 percent of poverty, 56 percent of state median income).¹
- **Waiting list:** Washington 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 Washington paid \$65 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 \$174 per month, or 7 percent of its income, in copayments.
- **Reimbursement rates:** In 2016, Washington'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.²
 - Washington's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in King County (Region 4) was \$743,³ which was \$537 (42 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
 - Washington's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a one-year-old in King County (Region 4) was \$885,⁴ which was \$609 (41 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered reimbursement rates:** In 2016, Washington paid higher reimbursement rates for higher-quality care.
 - The reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in King County (Region 4) at the highest quality tier was 15 percent higher than the rate at the lowest quality tier.
 - The reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in King County (Region 4) at the highest quality tier was still below the 75th percentile of current market rates.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2016, Washington allowed parents to continue receiving child care assistance for up to 56 days while searching for a job.⁵ 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 April 2016, the income limit was increased to \$40,320 (200 percent of poverty) to adjust for the 2016 federal poverty level.
- 2 This analysis reflects rates in effect as of February 2016. The state increased base rates for centers and license-exempt family child care by 2 percent as of July 2016.
- 3 The state has higher rates for higher-quality care; this is the base (lowest) rate, which is the most common rate level.
- 4 This is the base (lowest) rate, which is the most common rate level.
- 5 In February 2016, parents receiving child care assistance could continue to receive it while searching for a job for up to 28 days twice per calendar year or up to 56 days once per calendar year. The state began allowing parents receiving child care assistance to continue to receive it, regardless of any changes in their employment status, until the end of their 12-month eligibility period as of July 2016.

