



CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

## STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICIES: *WISCONSIN*

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2016, a family of three in Wisconsin could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$37,164 (184 percent of poverty, 54 percent of state median income).<sup>1</sup>
- **Waiting list:** Wisconsin 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 Wisconsin paid \$113 per month, or 7 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 \$247 per month, or 10 percent of its income, in copayments.<sup>2</sup>
- **Reimbursement rates:** In 2016, Wisconsin'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.
  - Wisconsin's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in Milwaukee County was \$827,<sup>3</sup> which was \$268 (25 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
  - Wisconsin's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a one-year-old in Milwaukee County was \$1,065,<sup>4</sup> which was \$355 (25 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered reimbursement rates:** In 2016, Wisconsin paid higher reimbursement rates for higher-quality care.
  - The reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in Milwaukee County at the highest quality tier was 32 percent higher than the rate at the lowest quality tier.
  - The reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in Milwaukee County at the highest quality tier was still below the 75th percentile of current market rates.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2016, Wisconsin allowed parents to continue receiving child care assistance while searching for a job only until the end of the month in which they lost their previous job. 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 \$40,176. As of March 2016, the income limit to qualify for assistance was increased to \$37,296 (185 percent of poverty), and the exit eligibility limit was increased to \$40,320 (200 percent of poverty), to adjust for the 2016 federal poverty level.
- 2 Families with court-ordered kinship or guardianship care, foster families, and teen parents participating in Learnfare are exempt from copayments.
- 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.

