

CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

## STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICIES: *DELAWARE*

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2017, a family of three in Delaware could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$40,320 (197 percent of poverty, 54 percent of state median income).<sup>1</sup>
- **Waiting list:** Delaware had no waiting list for child care assistance as of February 2017.
- **Parent copayments:** In 2017, a family of three with an income at 100 percent of poverty (\$20,420 a year) receiving child care assistance in Delaware paid \$120 per month, or 7 percent of its income, in copayments. A family of three with an income at 150 percent of poverty (\$30,630 a year) receiving child care assistance paid \$264 per month, or 10 percent of its income, in copayments.<sup>2</sup>
- **Payment rates:** In 2017, Delaware's payment 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.
  - Delaware's monthly payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in New Castle County was \$574,<sup>3</sup> which was \$325 (36 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
  - Delaware's monthly payment rate for center care for a one-year-old in New Castle County was \$622,<sup>4</sup> which was \$402 (39 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered payment rates:** In 2017, Delaware had higher payment rates for higher-quality care.
  - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in New Castle County at the highest quality tier was 54 percent higher than the rate at the lowest quality tier.
  - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in New Castle County at the highest quality tier was still below the 75th percentile of current market rates.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2017, Delaware allowed parents already receiving child care assistance to continue receiving it for up to 90 days while searching for a job.<sup>5</sup> However, the state did not allow parents to initially qualify for and begin receiving child care assistance while searching for a job.

Source: Karen Schulman and Helen Blank, *Persistent Gaps: State Child Care Assistance Policies 2017* (Washington, DC: National Women's Law Center, 2017). These data reflect policies as of February 2017, unless otherwise indicated.

- 1 As of January 2018, the income limit to qualify for assistance was expected to be reduced to \$37,777 (185 percent of poverty); the state planned to allow families already receiving assistance to continue doing so until their income reaches \$40,840 (200 percent of poverty).
- 2 The state determines copayments based on the cost of care; these copayments were calculated assuming that the family was purchasing care at the state's maximum base payment rate for center care for a four-year-old. Also note that families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), grandparents, foster parents, and families referred from the Division of Family Services are exempt from copayments.
- 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 Parents can continue receiving child care assistance while searching for a job for up to 90 days even if they reach the end of their eligibility period for child care assistance before the end of that 90-day period. Parents are authorized for assistance for the same number of hours of child care during their job search as they had while they were employed.

