



CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICIES: **GEORGIA**

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2017, a family of three in Georgia could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$29,456 (144 percent of poverty, 50 percent of state median income).¹
- **Waiting list:** Georgia had frozen intake for child care assistance (turned away eligible families without placing them on a waiting list) as of February 2017.²
- **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 Georgia paid \$143 per month, or 8 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 \$208 per month, or 8 percent of its income, in copayments.³
- **Payment rates:** In 2017, Georgia'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.
 - Georgia's monthly payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in Zone 1 was \$494,⁴ which was \$390 (44 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.⁵
 - Georgia's monthly payment rate for center care for a one-year-old in Zone 1 was \$559,⁶ which was \$437 (44 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered payment rates:** In 2017, Georgia had higher payment rates for higher-quality care.
 - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in Zone 1 at the highest quality tier was 25 percent higher than the rate at the lowest quality tier.
 - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in Zone 1 at the highest quality tier was still below the 75th percentile of current market rates.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2017, Georgia allowed parents already receiving child care assistance to continue receiving it for up to 13 weeks while searching for a job. However, the state did not allow parents to initially qualify for and begin receiving child care assistance while searching for a job.⁷

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 In 2017, families already receiving assistance could continue doing so until their income reached \$50,070 (85 percent of state median income).
- 2 Families are exempt from the freeze if they meet certain priority criteria. Children and families that receive priority for child care assistance include families applying for, receiving, or transitioning from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), children with special needs, grandparents raising grandchildren, children with court-ordered supervision, children receiving protective services, children in Division of Family and Children Services custody, parents under age 18, homeless families, victims of domestic violence, families with children participating in the state-funded prekindergarten program, victims of state- or federally declared natural disasters, and families with incomes below 50 percent of poverty.
- 3 In four areas of the state (covering Bibb, Brooks, Catoosa, Clarke, Colquitt, Cook, Echols, Gilmer, Gordon, Lowndes, Murray, and Whitfield counties), families using providers with ratings of one star or higher under the state's quality rating and improvement system (which has three star levels) have lower copayments than families using providers that are not rated; the copayment is \$15 per week (\$65 per month) for families using one-star providers, \$10 per week (\$43 per month) for families using two-star providers, and \$5 per week (\$22 per month) for families using three-star providers, regardless of the family's income level. Also note that families applying for or receiving TANF, children in Division of Family and Children Services custody, and parents under age 18 are exempt from copayments.
- 4 The state has higher rates for higher-quality care; this is the base (lowest) rate, which is the most common rate level.
- 5 Zone 1 includes Camden, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Hall, Henry, Paulding, and Rockdale Counties.
- 6 This is the base (lowest) rate, which is the most common rate level.
- 7 Parents can only qualify for child care assistance while searching for a job if they are completing TANF job search requirements, are homeless, or are victims of domestic violence.

