



CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

## STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICIES: **MAINE**

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2017, a family of three in Maine could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$54,589 (267 percent of poverty, 83 percent of state median income).<sup>1</sup>
- **Waiting list:** Maine 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 Maine paid \$102 per month, or 6 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 \$230 per month, or 9 percent of its income, in copayments.<sup>2</sup>
- **Payment rates:** In 2017, Maine'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.<sup>3</sup>
  - Maine's monthly payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in Cumberland County was \$909,<sup>4</sup> which was \$109 (11 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
  - Maine's monthly payment rate for center care for a one-year-old in Cumberland County was \$1,057,<sup>5</sup> which was \$128 (11 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered payment rates:** In 2017, Maine had higher payment rates for higher-quality care.
  - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in Cumberland County at the highest quality tier was 10 percent higher than the rate at the lowest quality tier.
  - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in Cumberland 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, Maine allowed parents already receiving child care assistance to continue receiving it for up to 12 weeks while searching for a job.<sup>6</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 May 2017, the income limit was increased to \$56,227 (85 percent of state median income) to adjust for the updated state median income estimate.
- 2 Foster children and children living with a legal guardian are exempt from copayments.
- 3 This analysis reflects rates in effects as of February 2017. The state increased base rates for center care for school-age children and for licensed family child care (for all age groups) from the 50th to the 75th percentile of 2015 market rates as of June 2017.
- 4 The state has higher rates for higher-quality care; this is the base (lowest) rate, which is the most common rate level.
- 5 This is the base (lowest) rate, which is the most common rate level.
- 6 Parents can continue receiving child care assistance while searching for a job for up to 12 weeks even if they reach the end of their eligibility period for child care assistance before the end of that 12-week period.

