

CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

## STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICIES: *MISSISSIPPI*

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2017, a family of three in Mississippi could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$42,999 (211 percent of poverty, 86 percent of state median income).
- **Waiting list:** Mississippi had 21,050 children on a waiting list for child care assistance as of February 2017.<sup>1</sup>
- **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 Mississippi paid \$88 per month, or 5 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 \$155 per month, or 6 percent of its income, in copayments.<sup>2</sup>
- **Payment rates:** In 2017, Mississippi'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.
  - Mississippi's monthly payment rate for center care for a four-year-old was \$339,<sup>3</sup> which was \$94 (22 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
  - Mississippi's monthly payment rate for center care for a one-year-old was \$375,<sup>4</sup> which was \$145 (28 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered payment rates:** In 2017, Mississippi had higher payment rates for higher-quality care.
  - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old at the highest quality tier was 9 percent higher than the rate at the lowest quality tier.
  - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old at the highest quality tier was still below the 75th percentile of current market rates.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2017, Mississippi allowed parents already receiving child care assistance to continue receiving it while searching for a job until the end of their 12-month eligibility period. 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 This waiting list total represents the number of applications received; the state does not determine families' eligibility for child care assistance at the time they are added to the waiting list. Also note that families receiving or transitioning from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), homeless children, foster children, children served by the home visiting program, children with special needs, and families with very low incomes are served without being placed on the waiting list.
- 2 Families receiving or transitioning from TANF, foster children, children receiving protective services, and children receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits have a copayment of \$10 per month.
- 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.

