

CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

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

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2017, a family of three in Nebraska could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$26,208 (128 percent of poverty, 40 percent of state median income).<sup>1</sup>
- **Waiting list:** Nebraska 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 Nebraska paid \$58 per month, or 3 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 \$88 per month, or 3 percent of its income, in copayments.<sup>2</sup>
- **Payment rates:** In 2017, Nebraska'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>
  - Nebraska's monthly payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in urban counties<sup>4</sup> was \$779,<sup>5</sup> which was \$22 (3 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
  - Nebraska's monthly payment rate for center care for a one-year-old in urban counties was \$927,<sup>6</sup> which was \$26 (3 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered payment rates:** In 2017, Nebraska had higher payment rates for higher-quality care.<sup>7</sup>
  - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in urban counties at the highest quality tier was 31 percent higher than the rate at the lowest quality tier.
  - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in urban counties at the highest quality tier was above the 75th percentile of current market rates.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2017, Nebraska allowed parents to initially qualify for and begin receiving child care assistance while searching for a job, and allowed parents already receiving child care assistance to continue receiving it while searching for a job, for up to 2 months.<sup>8</sup>

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 February 2017, families already receiving assistance could continue doing so until their income reached \$37,296. In addition, the state disregards 10 percent of a family's income at redetermination if the family has been continuously eligible for assistance for 12 months. As of September 2017, the income limit to qualify for assistance was increased to \$26,544 (130 percent of poverty), and the exit eligibility limit was increased to \$37,776 (185 percent of poverty), to adjust for the 2017 federal poverty level. Also note that for families transitioning from TANF, the income limit to qualify for child care assistance was \$37,296 in February 2017 and adjusted to \$37,776 as of September 2017.
- 2 Foster children and children who have subsidized adoption or guardianship agreements are exempt from copayments. In addition, families with incomes below 100 percent of the 2016 federal poverty level (\$20,160 a year for a family of three) were exempt from copayments in 2017.
- 3 This analysis reflects payment rates as of February 2017. The state increased base payment rates from the 60th percentile of 2015 market rates to the 50th percentile of 2017 market rates (unless existing rates were higher, in which case they were not changed) as of July 2017.
- 4 The urban counties include Dakota, Douglas, Lancaster, and Sarpy Counties.
- 5 The state has higher rates for higher-quality care; this is the base (lowest) rate, which is the most common rate level.
- 6 This is the base (lowest) rate, which is the most common rate level.
- 7 This analysis reflects payment rates as of February 2017. The state increased base payment rates to the 50th percentile of 2017 market rates (unless existing rates were higher, in which case they were not changed), and increased rates for accredited care in some categories, as of July 2017.
- 8 Parents can receive child care assistance while searching for a job for up to 2 consecutive calendar months following each instance of the loss of employment. Also note that the state now allows parents with school-age children and parents in two-parent households to receive child care assistance while searching for a job; previously, these parents could not receive assistance while searching for a job.

