

CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICIES: *NEW JERSEY*

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2017, a family of three in New Jersey could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$40,320 (197 percent of poverty, 44 percent of state median income).¹
- **Waiting list:** New Jersey 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 New Jersey paid \$77 per month, or 4 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 \$106 per month, or 4 percent of its income, in copayments.²
- **Payment rates:** In 2017, New Jersey'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.
 - New Jersey's monthly payment rate for center care for a four-year-old was \$573,³ which was \$448 (44 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
 - New Jersey's monthly payment rate for center care for a one-year-old was \$695,⁴ which was \$505 (42 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered payment rates:** In 2017, New Jersey 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 5 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, New Jersey allowed parents already receiving child care assistance to continue receiving it for up to 3 months while searching for a job.⁵ 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 In February 2017, families already receiving assistance could continue doing so until their income reached \$50,400. As of March 2017, the income limit to qualify for assistance was increased to \$40,840 (200 percent of poverty), and the exit eligibility limit was increased to \$51,050 (250 percent of poverty), to adjust for the 2017 federal poverty level.
- 2 Foster children under the supervision of the child protective services agency and children who were formerly in foster placement and that have been adopted may have their copayment waived. 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 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 Families receiving child care assistance can continue to receive it for up to 3 calendar months, and can request to receive it for an additional 3 calendar months (for a total of 6 months), while searching for a job. Parents can continue to receive child care assistance while searching for a job until the end of this time period even if they reach the end of their eligibility period before the end of the time limit for job search.

