

CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

## STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICIES: *PENNSYLVANIA*

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2017, a family of three in Pennsylvania could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$40,320 (197 percent of poverty, 56 percent of state median income).<sup>1</sup>
- **Waiting list:** Pennsylvania had 12,520 children on a waiting list for child care assistance as of February 2017.<sup>2</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 Pennsylvania paid \$134 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 \$229 per month, or 9 percent of its income, in copayments.<sup>3</sup>
- **Payment rates:** In 2017, Pennsylvania'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.
  - Pennsylvania's monthly payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in Philadelphia was \$707,<sup>4</sup> which was \$159 (18 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
  - Pennsylvania's monthly payment rate for center care for a one-year-old in Philadelphia was \$902,<sup>5</sup> which was \$137 (13 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered payment rates:** In 2017, Pennsylvania had higher payment rates for higher-quality care.<sup>6</sup>
  - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in Philadelphia at the highest quality tier was 23 percent higher than the rate at the lowest quality tier.
  - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in Philadelphia at the highest quality tier was slightly above the 75th percentile of current market rates.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2017, Pennsylvania allowed parents already receiving child care assistance to continue receiving it for up to 92 consecutive calendar days while searching for a job.<sup>7</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 In February 2017, families already receiving assistance could continue doing so until their income reached \$47,376. As of May 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 \$47,987 (235 percent of poverty), to adjust for the 2017 federal poverty level.
- 2 Families receiving or transitioning from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) are served without being placed on the waiting list.
- 3 Families receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or TANF benefits and with parents who are not working, but who are participating in employment and training programs, 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 This is the base (lowest) rate, which is the most common rate level.
- 6 This analysis is based on payment rates as of February 2017. The state increased rates for providers with a three- or four-star rating in the state's quality rating and improvement system (which has four star levels), and stopped paying higher rates to one-star providers (who will now receive the base rate), as of August 2017.
- 7 Parents can continue receiving child care assistance while searching for a job for up to 92 days even if they reach the end of their eligibility period for child care assistance before the end of that 92-day period.

