

CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICIES: *RHODE ISLAND*

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2017, a family of three in Rhode Island could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$36,288 (178 percent of poverty, 47 percent of state median income).¹
- **Waiting list:** Rhode Island 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 Rhode Island paid \$34 per month, or 2 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 \$204 per month, or 8 percent of its income, in copayments.²
- **Payment rates:** In 2017, Rhode Island'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.
 - Rhode Island's monthly payment rate for center care for a four-year-old was \$700, which was \$231 (25 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
 - Rhode Island's monthly payment rate for center care for a one-year-old was \$838, which was \$199 (19 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered payment rates:** In 2017, Rhode Island did not have higher payment rates for higher-quality care.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2017, Rhode Island allowed parents already receiving child care assistance to continue receiving it for up to 21 days while searching for a job.³ 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 \$45,360, under a pilot program begun in October 2013. As of May 2017, the income limit to qualify for assistance was increased to \$36,756 (180 percent of poverty), and the exit eligibility limit was increased to \$45,945 (225 percent of poverty), to adjust for the 2017 federal poverty level.
- 2 Foster families 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 Parents receiving child care assistance can continue to receive it for up to 21 consecutive days from the beginning of a period of unemployment. Parents must report the change in employment within 10 days. Parents are not eligible for continued assistance if they quit without good cause.

