



CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICIES: SOUTH CAROLINA

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2017, a family of three in South Carolina could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$30,240 (148 percent of poverty, 54 percent of state median income).¹
- **Waiting list:** South Carolina 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 South Carolina paid \$61 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 \$87 per month, or 3 percent of its income, in copayments.²
- **Payment rates:** In 2017, South Carolina'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—for some categories of care, although rates for some categories were equal to the recommended level.³
 - South Carolina's monthly payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in urban counties was \$628,⁴ which was equal to the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
 - South Carolina's monthly payment rate for center care for a one-year-old in urban counties was \$688,⁵ which was equal to the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered payment rates:** In 2017, South Carolina had higher payment rates for higher-quality care.
 - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in urban counties at the highest quality tier was 35 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, South Carolina allowed parents already receiving child care assistance to continue receiving it for up to 90 days while searching for a job.⁶ 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 \$47,511. As of October 2017, the income limit to qualify for assistance was increased to \$31,122 (55 percent of state median income); in addition, the exit eligibility limit was increased to \$48,098 (85 percent of state median income) to adjust for the updated state median income estimate.
- 2 Families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), foster children, and homeless families are exempt from copayments.
- 3 The state's quality rating and improvement system, which is mandatory for all providers serving families receiving child care assistance, has five levels—C (which receives the base rate), B, B+, A, and A+. In February 2017, for most age groups, rates for providers at level B (the most common level) were set at the 75th percentile of 2015 market rates, and rates for providers at higher quality levels were set above the 75th percentile of 2015 market rates.
- 4 The state has higher rates for higher-quality care; this is the most common rate level (the level representing the greatest number of providers).
- 5 This is the most common rate level.
- 6 Parents receiving child care assistance can continue to receive it while searching for a job for up to 90 days or until the end of their eligibility period, whichever comes first.

