

CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICIES: ALASKA

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2017, a family of three in Alaska could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$54,288 (266 percent of poverty, 67 percent of state median income).¹
- **Waiting list:** Alaska 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 Alaska paid \$51 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 \$152 per month, or 6 percent of its income, in copayments.²
- **Payment rates:** In 2017, Alaska'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.³
 - Alaska's monthly payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in Anchorage was \$650, which was \$230 (26 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
 - Alaska's monthly payment rate for center care for a one-year-old in Anchorage was \$850, which was \$170 (17 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered reimbursement rates:** In 2017, Alaska did not have higher payment rates for higher-quality care.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In February 2017, Alaska 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 80 hours per year.⁴

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 The Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD) payment, which the majority of families in the state receive, is not counted when determining eligibility.
- 2 Families applying for or receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and children in foster care are exempt from copayments.
- 3 This analysis reflects payment rates in effect as of February 2017. The state increased payment rates from the 75th percentile of 2009 market rates for infant and toddler care and the 50th percentile of 2009 market rates for all other categories of care to the 15th percentile of 2015 market rates for all categories of care as of October 2017.
- 4 The state planned to extend the amount of time parents receiving child care assistance can continue to receive it while searching for a job to 3 months as of October 2017. Parents will be able to receive assistance while searching for a job multiple times during their eligibility period if they have an activity (work, job training, or educational) between job searches. In addition, parents will be able to continue receiving child care assistance while searching for a job for up to 3 months, even if they reach the end of their eligibility period for child care assistance before the end of that 3-month period. The state also planned to no longer allow parents to initially qualify for and begin receiving child care assistance while searching for a job as of October 2017.

