



CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICIES: *ILLINOIS*

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2018, a family of three in Illinois could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$37,788 (182 percent of poverty, 52 percent of state median income).¹
- **Waiting list:** Illinois had no waiting list for child care assistance as of February 2018.
- **Parent copayments:** In 2018, a family of three with an income at 100 percent of poverty (\$20,780 a year) receiving child care assistance in Illinois paid \$88 per month, or 5 percent of its income, in copayments. A family of three with an income at 150 percent of poverty (\$31,170 a year) receiving child care assistance paid \$224 per month, or 9 percent of its income, in copayments.²
- **Payment rates:** In 2018, Illinois'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
 - Illinois's monthly payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in the Metropolitan Region⁴ was \$708,⁵ which was \$352 (33 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
 - Illinois's monthly payment rate for center care for a one-year-old in the Metropolitan Region was \$1,007,⁶ which was \$340 (25 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered payment rates:** In 2018, Illinois had higher payment rates for higher-quality care.
 - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in the Metropolitan Region at the highest quality tier was 15 percent higher than the rate at the lowest quality tier.
 - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in the Metropolitan Region at the highest quality tier was still below the 75th percentile of current market rates.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2018, Illinois allowed parents already receiving child care assistance to continue receiving it for up to 3 months while searching for a job.⁷ 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, *Overdue for Investment: State Child Care Assistance Policies 2018* (Washington, DC: National Women's Law Center, 2018). These data reflect policies as of February 2018, unless otherwise indicated.



- 1 As of July 2018, the income limit to qualify for assistance was increased to \$38,448 (185 percent of poverty) to adjust for the 2018 federal poverty level.
- 2 Representative payees of children receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or general assistance benefits, who are not parents or stepparents, and who work outside the home are exempt from copayments. In addition, households in which a single parent is called to active duty or both parents are called to active duty at the same time are exempt from copayments during deployment.
- 3 This analysis reflects payment rates as of February 2018. The state increased rates for child care centers by 4.26 percent as of July 2018.
- 4 The Metropolitan Region (referred to as Group 1A) includes Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, and McHenry Counties.
- 5 The state has higher rates for higher-quality care; this is the base (lowest) rate, which is the most common rate level.
- 6 This is the base (lowest) rate, which is the most common rate level.
- 7 Parents receiving child care assistance can continue to receive it while searching for a job for up to 1 month, up to three times within a 12-month period. Parents have 30 days to report a job loss.

