



CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICIES: *MISSISSIPPI*

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2018, a family of three in Mississippi could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$42,999 (207 percent of poverty, 85 percent of state median income).¹
- **Waiting list:** Mississippi had 16,103 families on a waiting list for child care assistance as of February 2018.²
- **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 Mississippi 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 \$160 per month, or 6 percent of its income, in copayments.³
- **Payment rates:** In February 2018, Mississippi'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.⁴
 - Mississippi's monthly payment rate for center care for a four-year-old was \$339,⁵ which was \$101 (23 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
 - Mississippi's monthly payment rate for center care for a one-year-old was \$375,⁶ which was \$105 (22 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered payment rates:** In 2018, Mississippi had higher payment rates for higher-quality care.⁷
 - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old at the highest quality tier was 9 percent higher than the rate at the lowest quality tier.
 - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old at the highest quality tier was still below the 75th percentile of current market rates.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2018, Mississippi allowed parents already receiving child care assistance to continue receiving it while searching for a job for up to 90 days. 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 October 2018, the income limit was increased to \$43,680 (85 percent of state median income) to adjust for the updated state median income estimate.
- 2 Families receiving or transitioning from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), homeless children, foster children, children served by the home visiting program, children with special needs, and families with very low incomes are served without being placed on the waiting list when the state has a list in effect. The state was serving all eligible families who had been on the waiting list and was no longer placing families on a waiting list as of October 2018.
- 3 Families receiving TANF and homeless families with no countable income are exempt from copayments. Children receiving protective services, children participating in the home visitation program, children with special needs, and parents with a disability who are receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits have a copayment of \$10 per month.
- 4 This analysis reflects payment rates as of February 2018. The state increased its base rates to the 75th percentile of 2016 market rates as of June 2018.
- 5 The state has higher rates for higher-quality care; this is the most common rate level (the level representing the greatest number of providers).
- 6 This is the most common rate level.
- 7 This analysis reflects tiered payment rates as of February 2018, when the state had two separate tiers for providers: tier two for those meeting basic licensing/regulatory requirements and tier one for those that were accredited or had a director who met certain educational and/or experience criteria; tier one providers received a higher rate. The state now designates centers as either “standard” (if they meet basic requirements) or “comprehensive” (if they also meet certain additional quality criteria). The tiered rates for comprehensive centers that went into effect as of June 2018 are higher than the tiered rates previously paid to tier one centers.

