



CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICIES: MONTANA

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2018, a family of three in Montana could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$30,240 (146 percent of poverty, 49 percent of state median income).¹
- **Waiting list:** Montana 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 Montana paid \$69 per month, or 4 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 \$364 per month, or 14 percent of its income, in copayments.²
- **Payment rates:** In February 2018, Montana'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
 - Montana's monthly payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in Yellowstone County (Billings) was \$695,⁴ which was \$41 (6 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
 - Montana's monthly payment rate for center care for a one-year-old in Yellowstone County (Billings) was \$796,⁵ which was \$5 (1 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered payment rates:** In 2018, Montana had higher payment rates for higher-quality care.
 - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in Yellowstone County (Billings) at the highest quality tier was 20 percent higher than the rate at the lowest quality tier.
 - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in Yellowstone County (Billings) at the highest quality tier was above the 75th percentile of current market rates.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2018, Montana allowed parents already receiving child care assistance to continue receiving it for up to 3 months 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, *Overdue or 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 In February 2018, families already receiving assistance whose income exceeded the initial eligibility limit to qualify for assistance could continue receiving assistance, for up to an additional 12 months after their recertification, if their income did not exceed \$37,296. As of October 2018, the income limit to qualify for assistance was increased to \$31,176 (150 percent of poverty), and the exit eligibility limit for the graduated phase-out period was increased to \$38,448 (185 percent of poverty), to adjust for the 2018 federal poverty level.
- 2 Children receiving protective services are exempt from copayments.
- 3 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 October 2018.
- 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 3 months, or until the end of their eligibility period, whichever comes first.

