



CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICIES: **NEBRASKA**

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2018, a family of three in Nebraska could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$26,544 (128 percent of poverty, 39 percent of state median income).¹
- **Waiting list:** Nebraska 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 Nebraska paid \$61 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 \$90 per month, or 3 percent of its income, in copayments.²
- **Payment rates:** In 2018, Nebraska'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
 - Nebraska's monthly payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in urban counties⁴ was \$801,⁵ which was \$76 (9 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
 - Nebraska's monthly payment rate for center care for a one-year-old in urban counties was \$927,⁶ which was \$31 (3 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care
- **Tiered payment rates:** In 2018, Nebraska had higher payment rates for higher-quality care.⁷
 - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in urban counties at the highest quality tier was 28 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 2018, Nebraska 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 2 months.⁸

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 In February 2018, families already receiving assistance could continue doing so until their income reached \$37,776. In addition, the state disregards 10 percent of a family's income at redetermination if the family has been continuously eligible for assistance for 12 months. As of July 2018, the income limit to qualify for assistance was increased to \$27,012 (130 percent of poverty), and the exit eligibility limit was increased to \$38,448 (185 percent of poverty), to adjust for the 2018 federal poverty level. Also note that for families transitioning from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the income limit to qualify for child care assistance was \$37,776 in February 2018, and, as of July 2018, was adjusted to \$38,448.
- 2 Foster children and children who have subsidized adoption or guardianship agreements are exempt from copayments. In addition, families with incomes below 100 percent of the 2017 federal poverty level (\$20,420 a year for a family of three) were exempt from copayments in 2018.
- 3 This analysis reflects payment rates as of February 2018. The state increased base payment rates to at least the 60th percentile of 2017 market rates as of July 2018.
- 4 The urban counties include Dakota, Douglas, Lancaster, and Sarpy 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 Under the state's tiered rates system, non-accredited providers are paid at the base rate if they do not participate in the state's quality rating and improvement system (which has five levels) or are at step one or two of the system, 5 percent above the base rate once they reach step three, 5 percent above the rate for step three once they reach step four, and 5 percent above the rate for step four once they reach step five; accredited providers are paid at the accredited rate if they do not participate in the quality rating and improvement system or are at step one, two, or three, 5 percent above the accredited rate once they reach step four, and 5 percent above the accredited rate for step four once they reach step five.
- 8 Parents can receive child care assistance while searching for a job for up to 2 consecutive calendar months following each instance of the loss of employment. Parents can continue receiving child care assistance while searching for a job to cover the same number of hours of child care as prior to their job loss, and parents applying for child care assistance can receive assistance to cover up to 20 hours of care per week. The state planned to extend the amount of time parents can continue receiving child care assistance while searching for a job to 3 months, and to no longer allow parents to qualify for assistance while searching for a job but had not yet determined when these changes would go into effect.

