

CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICIES: OKLAHOMA

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2018, a family of three in Oklahoma could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$35,100 (169 percent of poverty, 63 percent of state median income).¹
- **Waiting list:** Oklahoma 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 Oklahoma paid \$146 per month, or 8 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 \$237 per month, or 9 percent of its income, in copayments.²
- **Payment rates:** In 2018, Oklahoma'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
 - Oklahoma's monthly payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in Enhanced Area Counties⁴ was \$461, which was \$145 (24 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.⁵
 - Oklahoma's monthly payment rate for center care for a one-year-old in Enhanced Area Counties was \$624, which was \$177 (22 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.⁶
- **Tiered payment rates:** In 2018, Oklahoma had higher payment rates for higher-quality care.⁷
 - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in Enhanced Area Counties at the highest quality tier was 74 percent higher than the rate at the lowest quality tier.
 - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in Enhanced Area Counties at the highest quality tier was still below the 75th percentile of current market rates.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2018, Oklahoma allowed parents already receiving child care assistance to continue receiving it while searching for a job until the end of their 12-month eligibility period. However, the state did not allow parents to initially qualify for and begin receiving child care assistance while searching for a job.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 The income limit depends on how many children are in child care. The income limit shown here assumes that the family was receiving assistance for two children in care. The income limit for a family receiving assistance for only one child in care was \$29,100 in 2018. In 2018, families already receiving assistance could continue doing so until their income reached \$47,712 (85 percent of state median income).
- 2 Families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), foster children, children under age six adopted through the foster care system, families headed by a caretaker who is not legally or financially responsible for the children, children receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and children participating in the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership program are exempt from copayments. Children receiving protective services may be exempted from copayments on a case-by-case basis. In addition, families with incomes at or below \$850 per month (\$10,200 a year), regardless of family size, were exempt from copayments in 2018.
- 3 This analysis reflects payment rates as of February 2018. The state increased certain payment rates as of August 2018.
- 4 Prior to August 2018, Enhanced Area rates applied to 19 out of 77 counties in the state (Caddo, Canadian, Cherokee, Cleveland, Comanche, Creek, Garfield, Kay, Logan, McCurtain, Oklahoma, Ottawa, Payne, Pittsburg, Pottawatomie, Tulsa, Wagoner, Washington, and Woods); Standard Area rates applied to the remaining counties.
- 5 The state's market rate survey differentiates between quality levels and the 75th percentile of market rates is obtained for providers at each quality level. The payment rate for the most common rate level (the level representing the greatest number of providers) is compared here to the 75th percentile for that same quality level.
- 6 The payment rate for the most common rate level is compared here to the 75th percentile for that same quality level.
- 7 This analysis reflects tiered payment rates as of February 2018. The state's quality rating and improvement system has four levels: one-star (which is the basic licensing level and the base payment rate level), one-star plus, two-star, and three-star. As of August 2018, the state increased payment rates for two- and three-star care for children birth through age three to the 65th percentile of 2017 market rates for Enhanced Areas; increased Enhanced Area payment rates for all other categories of care, except for one-star centers, by 7 percent; and began applying the new Enhanced Area rates to all counties (so that there is now a set of unified statewide rates, and no longer a separate set of rates for Standard Areas). Payment rates for one-star centers remained the same.
- 8 Parents can only qualify for child care assistance while searching for a job if they are receiving TANF and job search is an approved activity.

