



**NATIONAL  
WOMEN'S  
LAW CENTER**

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FEBRUARY 2020 | FACT SHEET

**CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING**

## State Child Care Assistance Policies: Delaware

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2019, a family of three in Delaware could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$38,448 (180 percent of poverty, 50 percent of state median income).<sup>1</sup>
- **Waiting list:** Delaware had no waiting list for child care assistance as of February 2019.
- **Parent copayments:** In 2019, a family of three with an income at 100 percent of poverty (\$21,330 a year) receiving child care assistance in Delaware paid \$72 per month, or 4 percent of its income, in copayments. A family of three with an income at 150 percent of poverty (\$31,995 a year) receiving child care assistance paid \$240 per month, or 9 percent of its income, in copayments.<sup>2</sup>
- **Payment rates:** In 2019, Delaware'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.<sup>3</sup>
  - Delaware's monthly payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in New Castle County was \$883,<sup>4</sup> which was \$120 (12 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
  - Delaware's monthly payment rate for center care for a one-year-old in New Castle County was \$958,<sup>5</sup> which was \$341 (26 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered payment rates:** In 2019, Delaware had higher payment rates for higher-quality care.<sup>6</sup>
  - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in New Castle County at the highest quality tier was 54 percent higher than the rate at the lowest quality tier.
  - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in New Castle County at the highest quality tier was still below the 75th percentile of current market rates.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2019, Delaware allowed parents already receiving child care assistance to continue receiving it for up to 90 days while searching for a job.<sup>7</sup> However, the state did not allow parents to initially qualify for and begin receiving child care assistance while searching for a job.<sup>8</sup>

Source: Karen Schulman, Early Progress: State Child Care Assistance Policies 2019 (Washington, DC: National Women's Law Center, 2019). These data reflect policies as of February 2019, unless otherwise indicated.

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- 1** In February 2019, families already receiving assistance could continue doing so until their income reached \$41,568. As of September 2019, the income limit to qualify for assistance was increased to \$39,461 (185 percent of poverty), and the exit eligibility limit was increased to \$42,660 (200 percent of poverty), to adjust for the 2019 federal poverty level.
  - 2** The state determines copayments based on the cost of care; these copayments were calculated assuming that the family was purchasing care at the state's base payment rate for center care for a four-year-old. Also note that families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), grandparents who are caretakers, foster parents, and families referred from the Division of Family Services are exempt from copayments. In addition, in 2019, families with incomes below 70 percent of the 2018 federal poverty level (\$14,548 a year for a family of three) were exempt from copayments.
  - 3** This analysis is based on payment rates as of February 2019. The state increased base and tiered payment rates in May 2019 and again in July 2019; base rates were raised to the 65th percentile of 2018 market rates.
  - 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** This analysis is based on payment rates as of February 2019. The state increased tiered payment rates in May 2019 and again in July 2019.
  - 7** Parents can continue receiving child care assistance while searching for a job for up to 90 days even if they reach the end of their eligibility period for child care assistance before the end of that 90-day period. Parents are authorized for assistance for the same number of hours of child care during their job search as they had while they were employed.
  - 8** Parents can only qualify for child care assistance while searching for a job if they are participating with a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or TANF Employment and Training Vendor.