



**NATIONAL
WOMEN'S
LAW CENTER**

Justice for Her. Justice for All.

FEBRUARY 2020 | FACT SHEET

CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

State Child Care Assistance Policies: District of Columbia

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2019, a family of three in the District of Columbia could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$51,050 (239 percent of poverty, 61 percent of state median income).¹
- **Waiting list:** The District of Columbia 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 the District of Columbia paid \$22 per month, or 1 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 \$59 per month, or 2 percent of its income, in copayments.²
- **Payment rates:** In 2019, the District of Columbia'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.
 - The District of Columbia's monthly payment rate for center care for a four-year-old was \$1,235,³ which was \$174 (12 percent) below the 75th percentile of market rates for this type of care.
 - The District of Columbia's monthly payment rate for center care for a one-year-old was \$1,662,⁴ which was \$167 (9 percent) below the 75th percentile of market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered payment rates:** In 2019, the District of Columbia had higher payment rates for higher-quality care.
 - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old at the highest quality tier was 26 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 2019, the District of Columbia 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 District of Columbia did not allow parents to initially qualify for and begin receiving child care assistance while searching for a job unless it was a structured job search through an approved agency.

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 2019, families already receiving assistance could continue doing so until their income reached \$70,754 (85 percent of state median income).
 - 2 Families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) with recipients or payees participating in countable activities or with parents/guardians who have physical or mental disabilities, children receiving protective services, foster children, parents in junior or senior high school, and homeless children are exempt from copayments. In addition, in 2019, families with incomes at or below 100 percent of the 2017 federal poverty level (\$20,420 a year for a family of three) were exempt from copayments.
 - 3 The District of Columbia has higher rates for higher-quality care; this is the most common rate level (the level representing the greatest number of providers).
 - 4 This is the most common rate level.