



**NATIONAL
WOMEN'S
LAW CENTER**

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FEBRUARY 2020 | FACT SHEET

CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

State Child Care Assistance Policies: Georgia

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2019, a family of three in Georgia could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$30,745 (144 percent of poverty, 50 percent of state median income).¹
- **Waiting list:** Georgia had frozen intake for child care assistance (turned away eligible families without placing them on a waiting list) as of February 2019.²
- **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 Georgia paid \$121 per month, or 7 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 \$186 per month, or 7 percent of its income, in copayments.³
- **Payment rates:** In 2019, Georgia'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.⁴
 - Georgia's monthly payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in Zone 1 was \$494,⁵ which was \$390 (44 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.⁶
 - Georgia's monthly payment rate for center care for a one-year-old in Zone 1 was \$624,⁷ which was \$372 (37 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered payment rates:** In 2019, Georgia had higher payment rates for higher-quality care.
 - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in Zone 1 at the highest quality tier was 40 percent higher than the rate at the lowest quality tier.⁸
 - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in Zone 1 at the highest quality tier was still below the 75th percentile of current market rates.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2019, Georgia allowed parents already receiving child care assistance to continue receiving it for up to 13 weeks while searching for a job.⁹ However, the state did not allow parents to initially qualify for and begin receiving child care assistance while searching for a job.¹⁰

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 \$52,266. As of October 2019, the income limit to qualify for assistance was increased to \$32,007 (50 percent of state median income), and the exit eligibility limit was increased to \$54,412 (85 percent of state median income), to adjust for the updated state median income estimate.
 - 2** In February 2019, the state no longer referred to its policy as frozen intake, but it only served families who met the priority criteria. Children and families that received priority for child care assistance as of February 2019 included families participating in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), children with disabilities, grandparents raising grandchildren, children with court-ordered supervision, children receiving protective services, foster children, parents ages 20 or younger, families who lacked regular and adequate housing, families experiencing domestic violence, families with children participating in the state-funded prekindergarten program, families experiencing state- or federally declared natural disasters, and families with very low incomes (defined as families with incomes below 100 percent of poverty in February 2019, and as families with incomes below 50 percent of poverty as of July 2019).
 - 3** The state discounts copayments by 15 percent for families across the state using providers with ratings of one star or higher in the state’s quality rating and improvement system, which has three star levels. Also note that families applying for or receiving TANF, children in foster care, and parents under age 18 are exempt from copayments. In addition, families with incomes below 10 percent of the 2018 federal poverty level (\$2,078 per year for a family of three) were exempt from copayments in 2019.
 - 4** This analysis reflects payment rates as of February 2019. The state increased base payment rates for care for preschool- and school-age children to the 25th percentile of 2017 market rates as of September 2019.
 - 5** The state has higher rates for higher-quality care; this is the base (lowest) rate, which is the most common rate level.
 - 6** Zone 1 includes Camden, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Hall, Henry, Paulding, and Rockdale Counties.
 - 7** This is the base (lowest) rate, which is the most common rate level.
 - 8** In addition to Georgia’s tiered rates for one-, two- and three-star providers, the state also pays 50 percent above the base rate to providers awarded Quality Rated Subsidy Grants, which fund a specific number of slots for children receiving child care assistance at the provider’s site.
 - 9** Parents can continue receiving child care assistance while searching for a job for up to 13 consecutive weeks even if they reach the end of their eligibility period for child care assistance before the end of that 13-week period.
 - 10** Parents can only qualify for child care assistance while searching for a job if they are experiencing homelessness, domestic violence, or a natural disaster or have a qualifying child protective services case.