



**NATIONAL  
WOMEN'S  
LAW CENTER**

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FEBRUARY 2020 | FACT SHEET

**CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING**

## State Child Care Assistance Policies: Illinois

- **Income eligibility limit:** In February 2019, a family of three in Illinois could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$38,448 (180 percent of poverty, 51 percent of state median income).<sup>1</sup>
- **Waiting list:** Illinois 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 Illinois paid \$89 per month, or 5 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 \$228 per month, or 9 percent of its income, in copayments.<sup>2</sup>
- **Payment rates:** In 2019, Illinois'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.
  - Illinois's monthly payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in the Metropolitan Region<sup>3</sup> was \$738,<sup>4</sup> which was \$418 (36 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
  - Illinois's monthly payment rate for center care for a one-year-old in the Metropolitan Region was \$1,049,<sup>5</sup> which was \$310 (23 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered payment rates:** In 2019, Illinois had higher payment rates for higher-quality care.
  - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in the Metropolitan Region at the highest quality tier was 15 percent higher than the rate at the lowest quality tier.
  - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in the Metropolitan Region at the highest quality tier was still below the 75th percentile of current market rates.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2019, Illinois allowed parents already receiving child care assistance to continue receiving it for up to 90 days while searching for a job.<sup>6</sup> However, the state did not allow parents to initially qualify for and begin receiving child care assistance while searching for a job.<sup>7</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 July 2019, the income limit to qualify for assistance was increased to \$39,468 (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. As of October 2019, the income limit to qualify for assistance was increased to \$42,660, and the exit eligibility limit was increased to \$48,000 (225 percent of poverty).
  - 2 Representative payees of children receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or general assistance benefits, who are not parents or stepparents, and who work outside the home are exempt from copayments. In addition, households in which a single parent is called to active duty or both parents are called to active duty at the same time are exempt from copayments during deployment; active duty does not include routine, one-weekend-per-month reserve duty. Families experiencing homelessness can receive two 90-day periods of child care assistance with a copayment of \$1 per month under a policy that went into effect as of January 2018. Families transitioning from the Department of Children and Family Services’ Intact Family program can receive 6 months of child care assistance with a copayment of \$1 per month under a policy that went into effect as of June 2019.
  - 3 The Metropolitan Region (referred to as Group 1A) includes Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, and McHenry Counties.
  - 4 The state has higher rates for higher-quality care; this is the base (lowest) rate, which is the most common rate level.
  - 5 This is the base (lowest) rate, which is the most common rate level.
  - 6 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.
  - 7 Parents can only qualify for child care assistance while searching for a job if they are receiving TANF and searching for a job is approved as part of their TANF Responsibility and Service plan.