



**NATIONAL
WOMEN'S
LAW CENTER**

Justice for Her. Justice for All.

FEBRUARY 2020 | FACT SHEET

CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

State Child Care Assistance Policies: Montana

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2019, a family of three in Montana could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$31,176 (146 percent of poverty, 48 percent of state median income).¹
- **Waiting list:** Montana 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 Montana paid \$71 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 \$373 per month, or 14 percent of its income, in copayments.²
- **Payment rates:** In 2019, Montana's payment rates for child care providers serving families receiving child care assistance were at the 75th percentile (the level designed to give families access to 75 percent of the providers in their community) of 2016 market rates.
 - Montana's monthly payment rate for center care for a four-year-old was \$758.³
 - Montana's monthly payment rate for center care for a one-year-old was \$866.⁴
- **Tiered payment rates:** In 2019, Montana 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 20 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 above the 75th percentile of 2016 market rates.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2019, Montana allowed parents already receiving child care assistance to continue receiving it for up to 3 months while searching for a job.⁵ However, the state did not allow parents to initially qualify for and begin receiving child care assistance while searching for a job.

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 \$38,448. As of August 2019, the income limit to qualify for assistance was increased to \$31,992 (150 percent of poverty), and the exit eligibility limit was increased to \$39,456 (185 percent of poverty), to adjust for the 2019 federal poverty level.
 - 2** Children receiving protective services are exempt from copayments.
 - 3** The state has higher rates for higher-quality care; this is the base (lowest) rate, which is the most common rate level.
 - 4** This is the base (lowest) rate, which is the most common rate level.
 - 5** Parents receiving child care assistance can continue to receive it while searching for a job for up to 3 months, or until the end of their eligibility period, whichever comes first.