



**NATIONAL
WOMEN'S
LAW CENTER**

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FEBRUARY 2020 | FACT SHEET

CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

State Child Care Assistance Policies: Nebraska

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2019, a family of three in Nebraska could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$27,012 (127 percent of poverty, 39 percent of state median income).¹
- **Waiting list:** Nebraska 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 Nebraska paid \$124 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 \$187 per month, or 7 percent of its income, in copayments.²
- **Payment rates:** In 2019, Nebraska'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.³
 - Nebraska's monthly payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in urban counties⁴ was \$812, which was \$65 (7 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.⁵
 - Nebraska's monthly payment rate for center care for a one-year-old in urban counties was \$931,⁶ which was \$27 (3 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered payment rates:** In 2019, Nebraska had higher payment rates for higher-quality care.⁷
 - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in urban counties 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 in urban counties at the highest quality tier was above the 75th percentile of current market rates.⁸
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In February 2019, Nebraska allowed parents to initially qualify for and begin receiving child care assistance while searching for a job, and allowed parents already receiving child care assistance to continue receiving it while searching for a job, for up to 2 months.⁹

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.

- 1** In February 2019, families already receiving assistance whose income exceeded the initial eligibility limit to qualify for assistance could continue receiving assistance, for up to an additional 24 months after their recertification, if their income did not exceed \$38,448. As of May 2019, families can continue receiving assistance up to the exit eligibility limit with no time limit. As of July 2019, the income limit to qualify for assistance was increased to \$27,732 (130 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. Also note that the state disregards 10 percent of a family's income at redetermination if the family had been continuously eligible for assistance for 12 months.
- 2** Foster children and children who have subsidized adoption or guardianship agreements are exempt from copayments. In addition, families with incomes below 100 percent of the 2018 federal poverty level (\$20,780 a year for a family of three) were exempt from copayments in 2019. Also note that after a family has had one year of continuous eligibility, 10 percent is deducted from the family's gross income in calculating the copayment.
- 3** This analysis reflects payment rates as of February 2019. The state increased payment rates as of July 2019.
- 4** The urban counties include Dakota, Douglas, Lancaster, and Sarpy Counties.
- 5** The state's market rate survey differentiates between quality levels and the 75th percentile of market rates is obtained for accredited and non-accredited providers. The base (lowest) rate, which is the most common rate level, is compared here to the 75th percentile for non-accredited providers.
- 6** The base (lowest) rate, which is the most common rate level, is compared here to the 75th percentile of market rates for non-accredited providers.
- 7** Under the state's tiered rates system, non-accredited providers are paid at the base rate if they do not participate in the state's quality rating and improvement system (which has five levels) or are at step one or two of the system, 5 percent above the base rate once they reach step three, 5 percent above the rate for step three once they reach step four, and 5 percent above the rate for step four once they reach step five; accredited providers are paid at the accredited rate if they do not participate in the quality rating and improvement system or are at step one, two, or three, 5 percent above the accredited rate once they reach step four, and 5 percent above the accredited rate for step four once they reach step five.
- 8** The rate for the highest quality level is compared here to the 75th percentile of market rates for accredited care.
- 9** The state extended the amount of time parents can continue receiving child care assistance while searching for a job to 3 months, and stopped allowing parents to qualify for assistance while searching for a job, as of October 2019. Prior to that date, parents could receive child care assistance while searching for a job for up to 2 consecutive calendar months following each instance of the loss of employment; parents already receiving child care assistance could continue to receive it while searching for a job to cover the same number of hours of child care as before their job loss, and parents applying for child care assistance could receive assistance to cover up to 20 hours of care per week.