



**NATIONAL
WOMEN'S
LAW CENTER**

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FEBRUARY 2020 | FACT SHEET

CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

State Child Care Assistance Policies: Pennsylvania

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2019, a family of three in Pennsylvania could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$41,560 (195 percent of poverty, 56 percent of state median income).¹
- **Waiting list:** Pennsylvania had 3,886 children on a waiting list for child care assistance 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 Pennsylvania paid \$134 per month, or 8 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 \$230 per month, or 9 percent of its income, in copayments.³
- **Payment rates:** In 2019, Pennsylvania'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.
 - Pennsylvania's monthly payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in Philadelphia was \$725,⁴ which was \$119 (14 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
 - Pennsylvania's monthly payment rate for center care for a one-year-old in Philadelphia was \$902,⁵ which was \$94 (9 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered payment rates:** In 2019, Pennsylvania had higher payment rates for higher-quality care.
 - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in Philadelphia at the highest quality tier was 27 percent higher than the rate at the lowest quality tier.
 - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in Philadelphia at the highest quality tier was above the 75th percentile of current market rates.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2019, Pennsylvania allowed parents already receiving child care assistance to continue receiving it until the end of their 12-month eligibility period. However, the state did not allow parents to initially qualify for and begin receiving child care assistance while searching for a job.⁶

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 could continue doing so until their income reached \$48,883. As of May 2019, the income limit to qualify for assistance was increased to \$42,660 (200 percent of poverty), and the exit eligibility limit was increased to \$50,126 (235 percent of poverty), to adjust for the 2019 federal poverty level.
- 2 Families receiving or transitioning from child care assistance through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) are exempt from the waiting list. In addition, the state prioritizes certain children and families for services, including foster children, children enrolled in the state prekindergarten program, Head Start, or Early Head Start who need wrap-around child care, newborn siblings of children who are already enrolled, homeless children, teen parents who are attending high school or participating in a GED program on a full-time basis, and parents ages 18 through 22 who are attending high school on a full-time basis.
- 3 Families receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or TANF benefits and with parents who are not working, but who are participating in employment and training programs, are exempt from copayments.
- 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 only qualify for child care assistance while searching for a job if they are homeless; families experiencing homelessness can qualify for child care assistance for up to 92 days while searching for a job. Parents already receiving child care assistance can be eligible at redetermination for presumptive eligibility, for 92 days, if they are not working because they are on approved leave (disability, maternity, or a temporary break) and have a verified job to go back to within 92 days.