

CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

State Child Care Assistance Policies: Rhode Island

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2019, a family of three in Rhode Island could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$37,404 (175 percent of poverty, 46 percent of state median income).¹
- **Waiting list:** Rhode Island 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 Rhode Island paid \$36 per month, or 2 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 \$213 per month, or 8 percent of its income, in copayments.²
- **Payment rates:** In 2019, Rhode Island'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.
 - Rhode Island's monthly payment rate for center care for a four-year-old was \$718,³ which was \$278 (28 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
 - Rhode Island's monthly payment rate for center care for a one-year-old was \$859,⁴ which was \$282 (25 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered payment rates:** In 2019, Rhode Island had higher payment rates for higher-quality care.
 - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in the state at the highest quality tier was 18 percent higher than the rate at the lowest quality tier.
 - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in the state at the highest quality tier was still below the 75th percentile of current market rates.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2019, Rhode Island allowed parents already receiving child care assistance to continue receiving it until the end of their 12-month eligibility period.⁵ 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 \$46,755. As of April 2019, the income limit to qualify for assistance was increased to \$38,394 (180 percent of poverty), and the exit eligibility limit was increased to \$47,993 (225 percent of poverty), to adjust for the 2019 federal poverty level.
- 2** Foster children, homeless families, and families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) who have child care assistance as a supportive service 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.
- 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 can continue receiving child care assistance until the end of their eligibility period, unless the parent loses a job near the end of the eligibility period, in which case the family can continue receiving child care assistance for a 3-month period that would extend beyond the end of the eligibility period.
- 6** Parents can only qualify for child care assistance while searching for a job if they are entering an approved education or training program or if they are receiving TANF.