



**NATIONAL  
WOMEN'S  
LAW CENTER**

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FEBRUARY 2020 | FACT SHEET

**CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING**

## State Child Care Assistance Policies: South Carolina

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2019, a family of three in South Carolina could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$32,450 (152 percent of poverty, 55 percent of state median income).<sup>1</sup>
- **Waiting list:** South Carolina 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 South Carolina paid \$26 per month, or 1 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 \$48 per month, or 2 percent of its income, in copayments.<sup>2</sup>
- **Payment rates:** In 2019, South Carolina's payment rates for child care providers serving families receiving child care assistance were at or above 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.<sup>3</sup>
  - South Carolina's monthly payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in urban areas was \$723,<sup>4</sup> which was \$24 (3 percent) above the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
  - South Carolina's monthly payment rate for center care for a one-year-old in urban areas was \$823,<sup>5</sup> which was \$22 (3 percent) above the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered payment rates:** In 2019, South Carolina had higher payment rates for higher-quality care.
  - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in urban areas at the highest quality tier was 12 percent higher than the rate at the lowest quality tier.
  - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old in urban areas at the highest quality tier was above the 75th percentile of current market rates.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2019, South Carolina allowed parents already receiving child care assistance to continue receiving it for up to 3 months 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 \$50,150 (85 percent of state median income).
- 2 Families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), foster children, homeless families, and dual language learners are exempt from copayments.
- 3 The state’s quality rating and improvement system, which is mandatory for all providers serving families receiving child care assistance, has five levels—C (which receives the base payment rate), B, B+, A, and A+. Payment rates range from the 75th percentile of 2017 market rates for providers at Level C to the 90th percentile of 2017 market rates for providers at Level A+.
- 4 The state has higher rates for higher-quality care; this is the most common rate level (the level representing the greatest number of providers).
- 5 This is the most common rate level.
- 6 Parents can continue receiving child care assistance while searching for a job for up to 3 months or until the end of their eligibility period, whichever comes first.
- 7 Parents can only qualify for child care assistance while searching for a job if they are experiencing homelessness, dual language learners, or receiving assistance through TANF-related funding sources.