State Child Care Assistance Policies: Florida

December 2013

- **Income eligibility limit**: In 2013, a family of three in Florida could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to $28,635 (147 percent of poverty, 52 percent of state median income).

- **Waiting list**: Florida had 60,259 children on a waiting list for child care assistance as of January 2013.

- **Parent copayments**: In 2013, a family of three with an income at 100 percent of poverty ($19,530 a year) receiving child care assistance in Florida paid as much as $130 per month, or 8 percent of its income, in copayments. A family of three with an income at 150 percent of poverty ($29,295 a year) receiving child care assistance paid as much as $217 per month, or 9 percent of its income, in copayments.

- **Reimbursement rates**: In 2013, Florida's reimbursement 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.

  - The monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in Miami-Dade County was $403, which was $139 (26 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.

  - The monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a one-year-old in Miami-Dade County was $442, which was $165 (27 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.

- **Tiered reimbursement rates**: In 2013, Florida allowed local coalitions to pay higher reimbursement rates for higher-quality care.

  - The reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in Miami-Dade County at the highest quality tier was 20 percent higher than the rate at the lowest quality tier.

  - The reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in Miami-Dade County at the highest quality tier was still below the 75th percentile of current market rates.

- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job**: In 2013, Florida allowed parents to continue receiving child care assistance for up to 30 days while searching for a job. However, the state did not allow parents to qualify for child care assistance while searching for a job.

1 In 2013, families already receiving assistance could continue doing so until their income reached $38,180.
2 Local early learning coalitions, which administer Florida’s child care assistance program, set their copayments within state guidelines; these copayments reflect the maximum copayment levels allowed under state policy and used by a local coalition.
3 Local coalitions set their reimbursement rates.
4 Miami-Dade County 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 Local coalitions may pay rates that are up to 20 percent higher than the basic rate for Gold Seal providers, a designation indicating higher-quality care and tied to accreditation.
7 Local coalitions may seek a waiver to the 30-day time limit and allow parents to continue to receive child care assistance while searching for a job for up to 60 or 90 days.