

# Parents are quitting jobs, passing on raises – to qualify for child care <sup>[1]</sup>

About 10 percent of families who are eligible actually get child care assistance

**Author:** Mader, Jackie

**Source:** The Hechinger Report

**Format:** Article

**Publication Date:** 16 Dec 2024

## AVAILABILITY

Access online <sup>[2]</sup>

## Excerpt

...

“The woman said, ‘I know you don’t make a lot of money,’” Funes recalled. “But you make too much money to get a child care subsidy.” The only way she could get a voucher, she was told, was if her income dropped even lower or if she went on public assistance.

Disheartened and confused, Funes felt indirectly pressured to quit her job. “I had no other choice,” she said. “I had to leave my job to get on public assistance so I could get this child care subsidy.” She hoped it would only be a temporary setback. But for years after, the quest for a voucher would interfere with her quest for economic stability.

Funes’ experience speaks to a broken, underfunded system – in New York and nationwide – that too often traps families, and especially women, in poverty, advocates say. Each state has its own child care subsidy program for lower-income families, funded in large part by federal money. The federal government requires that subsidies go to families that make no more than 85 percent of their state’s median income. But states have considerable leeway in setting up rules for doling out subsidies. Most states, including New York at the time that Funes applied, have eligibility limits that are more strict than the federal income recommendation, meaning only the poorest of families tend to benefit.

Partly as a result, only a fraction of families – about 10 percent – who are eligible under the federal recommendation actually get subsidies, according to the Center for Law and Social Policy. The variance in state policies means a family may qualify for child care assistance in one state, but not in another. In Ohio in 2023, for example, a family of three had to make less than \$36,048 to get a voucher, while in Arkansas the cutoff that year was set about \$17,000 higher – at \$53,161.

...

**Related link:** [How the U.S. almost had universal child care \(twice\)](#) <sup>[3]</sup>

**Region:** [United States](#) <sup>[4]</sup>

**Tags:** [affordability](#) <sup>[5]</sup>

[low-income](#) <sup>[6]</sup>

[poverty reduction](#) <sup>[7]</sup>

**Source URL (modified on 15 Jan 2025):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/25/01/parents-are-quitting-jobs-passing-raises-%E2%80%94-qualify-child-care>

## Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/25/01/parents-are-quitting-jobs-passing-raises-%E2%80%94-qualify-child-care> <sup>[2]</sup>

<https://hechingerreport.org/parents-are-quitting-jobs-passing-on-raises-to-qualify-for-child-care/> <sup>[3]</sup> <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/16/01/how-us-almost-had-universal-child-care-twice> <sup>[4]</sup> <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7865> <sup>[5]</sup>

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/affordability> <sup>[6]</sup> <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/low-income> <sup>[7]</sup>

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/poverty-reduction>