

Recent state policy changes affecting child care ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Available in print for order (see SOURCE) and online for download.

- Full report in pdf ^[2]

Excerpted from report: The Congress provided states with more child care funding and with flexibility to allocate child care monies among three groups at risk: (1) TANF families participating in work-related activities (2) families that recently transitioned off TANF (transitioning families) and (3) other low-income working families. A vast majority of states have made all three groups of families eligible for child care assistance. In half of the states, however, not all eligible families who apply for assistance receive it. States often give TANF and transitioning families higher priority than other low-income working families when program resources are insufficient to cover all who apply. Our survey results show that a significant number of states have changed their child care policies in ways that tend to decrease availability. At the same time, it is noteworthy that one-third of the states did not make key changes and several took steps to increase availability. Even so, the net effect would appear to be that states have decreased the availability of child care assistance overall compared with 2001 - that is, these findings indicate less possible for families, particularly for families not associated with the welfare system. To provide a more definitive assessment of changes in the availability of child care subsidies, additional data are needed, including more recent data on the number of children receiving subsidies, the welfare status of families receiving subsidies, and trends in spending levels. As a result, we consider these results suggestive rather than definitive until more is known about actual outcomes of changes in states' child care assistance programs.

Region: United States ^[3]

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