

Pivot point: State child care assistance policies 2013 ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Full report PDF ^[2]

Summary:

Child care helps children, families, and communities prosper. It gives children the opportunity to learn and develop skills they need to succeed in school and in life. It gives parents the support and peace of mind they need to be productive at work. And, by strengthening the current and future workforce, it helps our nation's economy. Yet many families, particularly low-income families, struggle to afford child care. The average fee for full-time care ranges from approximately \$3,900 to \$15,000 a year, depending on where the family lives, the type of care, and the age of the child. Child care assistance can help families with these high child care costs.

Despite the importance of child care assistance, families in twenty-four states were worse off—having more limited access to assistance and/or receiving more limited benefits from assistance—in February 2013 than in February 2012 under one or more child care assistance policies covered in this report. But families in twenty-seven states were better off under one or more of these policies in February 2013 than in February 2012. The policies covered are critical in determining families' ability to obtain child care assistance and the extent of help that assistance offers—income eligibility limits to qualify for child care assistance, waiting lists for child care assistance, copayments required of parents receiving child care assistance, reimbursement rates for child care providers serving families receiving child care assistance, and eligibility for child care assistance for parents searching for a job.

This year's trend—with the situation for families improved in slightly more states than in which it worsened—was more positive than in the previous two years, when the situation worsened for families in more states than it improved. In February 2012, families in twenty-seven states were worse off under one or more child care assistance policies covered in this report, and families in seventeen states were better off under one or more of these policies, than in February 2011. In February 2011, families in thirty-seven states were worse off under one or more of these policies, and families in eleven states were better off under one or more of these policies, than in February 2010.

Region: United States ^[3]

Tags: subsidy ^[4]

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