

Child Care Assistance Eligibility Policies and Continuity of Care

Eligibility policies that support continuity of care are the best policies for children, working families, and child care providers.

The Early Care and Education Consortium recommends tiered eligibility for child care assistance - that is, establish a higher exit eligibility level that rewards work and job success by allowing families to continue to benefit from child care assistance as their incomes grow beyond the state's lower initial eligibility cut-off.

Several states already have this policy in place, helping to ensure that working parents are able to accept modest increases in wages without fear of immediately losing child care assistance.

For more information on action to improve child care policy, regulation and funding, please visit www.ececonsortium.org

States with Tiered Eligibility to Support Continuity of Care		
State	Entry Eligibility	Exit Eligibility
Connecticut	50% SMI	75% SMI
District of Columbia	250% FPL	300% FPL
Florida	150% FPL	200% FPL
Indiana	127% FPL	170%FPL
Kentucky	52% SMI	57% SMI/165% FPL
Massachusetts*	50% SMI	85% SMI
Minnesota	47% SMI	67% SMI
Missouri	127% FPL	139% FPL
Nebraska	37% SMI	58% SMI/185% FPL
New Jersey	200% FPL	250% FPL
Ohio	125% FPL	200% FPL
Pennsylvania	200% FPL	235% FPL
South Carolina	150% FPL	175% FPL
Utah	56% SMI	70% SMI
West Virginia	150% FPL	185% FPL

All information obtained from CCDF State Plan 2012-13 unless otherwise indicated.

*CCDF State Plan 2010-11

In Florida, a mom working full time with two children, earning \$13.00/hour meets the income eligibility threshold (family of three, \$27,465/year). If she does well on the job and gets a \$0.25/hour raise – or even a \$1.00/hour raise - she can continue to receive help paying for child care. That's because the state has a policy for a higher exit threshold - \$36,620/year or about \$17.60/hour for a full-time worker.

In North Carolina, it would be different for a similar mom. According to the State Plan, income eligibility is higher than in Florida. So a single parent with two children might be making \$18.00/hour and be eligible. But a raise of just \$0.25/hour would force the parent to choose between success in the workplace and keeping their child in care. The extra \$500 in wages a year would scarcely buy a month's care in most child care programs.

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