

CHILD CARE

In the Margins: State Child Care Assistance Policies on Provider Reimbursement

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Introduction

Several key child care assistance policies—income eligibility limits, waiting lists, parent copayments, reimbursement rates, and eligibility for parents searching for a job—have a significant impact on families' access to help paying for child care, the level of help they receive, and the quality of care.¹ State policies in these essential areas are examined in an annual report by the National Women's Law Center. However, parents' access to affordable, high-quality care is also affected by a number of other state policy decisions. This brief explores some of the policies that determine when states will reimburse for care, including whether they reimburse for care beyond parents' work hours such as during a parent's commute or study time, and whether they reimburse for child care on days when a child is absent from care.

These reimbursement policies indicate how flexible states are in accommodating the varied needs of families, particularly families with challenges such as nonstandard or variable work schedules, long commutes, or children vulnerable to illnesses. Such challenges are common among the low-income families that child care assistance programs are intended to serve. For example, among workers with very low wages, 28 percent work most of their hours outside of the time period from 6 am and 6 pm or on weekends.² In addition, nearly half of low-wage hourly workers report little control over their work hours.³

States' decisions on reimbursement policies ultimately can determine whether child care assistance responds to families' circumstances in a way that gives them greater security and support, or contributes to further instability in families' lives. While this issue brief—which is based on information collected from state child care administrators—does not provide comprehensive data, it presents information that illustrates the range of approaches states take on these critical aspects of their child care assistance programs.

Calculating Hours of Care Eligible for Reimbursement

States generally determine the amount of time and the time periods for which they will provide reimbursement for child care based on parents' work (or school or training) schedules. These decisions can greatly affect the large number of parents whose work hours fluctuate from day to day or week to week, and who have little or no control over their schedules. If a state requires a parent's work schedule to precisely match his or her child care schedule, it can be difficult for the family to hold a slot in a child care program and for the child to have the security of a stable child care arrangement. In addition, it may create a burden for parents with variable work schedules if they are required to report to the child care agency each time their work hours change, particularly since these parents may receive little advance notice of what their work hours will be. It can be especially challenging for parents, and

their providers, if a state reimburses on an hourly basis, only paying for the exact hours that parents are at work and children are in child care, rather than paying by the week or month, as is typically required of private-paying parents. If the total reimbursement does not equal the usual weekly or monthly fee charged to private-paying parents, the provider may ask parents to pay the difference, or may be reluctant to serve families receiving child care assistance. States can allow families greater flexibility—and ensure providers a more constant stream of income—by averaging parents’ work hours over a month or a longer time period in determining their child care needs, or by allowing parents to qualify for full-time care as long as they meet a threshold number of hours of work, education and/or training activities.

States take a range of approaches in determining reimbursable hours for child care. They vary in whether they reimburse by the hour, day, or week. States that reimburse at a full-time rate if a parent participates in eligible activities for a certain number of hours per day or days per month also vary widely in the number of hours or days required to meet that threshold. For example:

- **Alaska** authorizes a full-time month of care if a family needs 17 or more full-time days per month and a part-time month of care if a family needs 17 or more part-time days per month. A full-time day is defined as over five hours up to and including 10 hours and a part-time day is defined as over two hours up to and including five hours. The state authorizes care on an hourly basis if a family needs care up to and including two hours per day.
- **Arizona** authorizes parents for full-time care (23 full days a month) if they are participating in an eligible activity for at least 20 hours per week, based on the average number of hours worked in the last 30 days for ongoing employment or by the employer’s statement of anticipated hours that will be worked for new employment.
- **Connecticut** reimburses at the full-time-plus rate if a parent participates in work or eligible activities for 51 to 65 hours per week, at the full-time rate for 35 to 50 hours per week, at the part-time rate for 16 to 34 hours per week, and at the quarter-time rate for one to 15 hours per week. Cases are reviewed every eight months.
- **Indiana** provides full-time reimbursement if a parent needs at least 25 hours of care per week. The hours are averaged over the course of a month.
- **Massachusetts** reimburses for full-time care if a parent works 30 or more hours per week and reimburses for part-time care if a parent works between 20 and 29 hours per week. For parents with flexible or rotating schedules, the state averages their hours over a four- to six-week period.
- **Missouri** authorizes child care as full time if it is needed five to 10 hours per day, half time if it is needed three hours to four hours 59 minutes per day, and part time if it is needed for 30 minutes to two hours 59 minutes per day, based on the parent’s verified work and/or training schedule. Care provided between 6 am and 7 pm Monday through Friday is reimbursed at the daytime level and care provided between 7:01 pm and 5:59 am Monday through Friday or any time Saturday or Sunday is reimbursed at the evening/weekend level. The reimbursement level is authorized based on the parent’s average need over the course of the relevant time period—for example, a school semester for a parent in an education program.
- **North Carolina** reimburses at the full-time rate if it is determined (based on the parent’s work schedule and other factors) that a family needs child care for an average of 32 to 55 hours per week, at 75 percent of the full-time rate if a family needs child care for an average of 18 to 31 hours per week, and at 50 percent of the full-time rate if a family needs child care for an average of one to 17 hours per week.
- **North Dakota** only covers the hours during which a parent works or participates in education or training activities. The state reimburses based on the number of hours a child is in care on a particular day while the parent works or participates in education or training activities.⁴

- **Pennsylvania** provides full-time reimbursement if five or more hours of care per day are used and part-time reimbursement if less than five hours of care per day are used. In some cases where parents' schedules constantly change, their hours may be averaged for the month.
- **South Dakota** reimburses by the hour and covers the time a parent is working or in an approved educational or training program. The state calculates the number of work hours as an average over the previous two pay periods, the length of which will vary depending on the parent's pay schedule. The state reimburses for a maximum of 210 hours per child per month.
- **Utah** reimburses for full-time care if a parent participates in employment or a combination of employment and training for 32 to 40 hours per week. The state issues the child care payment prospectively, with the payment determined by anticipating the parent's hours of need from past employment/training verification and any declared future changes.
- **Vermont** reimburses for extended-time care if a parent participates in work and/or education for 51 or more hours per week, full-time care if a parent participates for 26 to 50 hours per week, and part-time care if a parent participates for one to 25 hours per week. Hours are based on a weekly average determined by two current consecutive pay stubs or training/education schedules plus study time.
- **Washington** provides full-time reimbursement when a parent works over 110 hours per month. The state provides full-time/full-day reimbursement when care is needed five hours through 10 hours per day and half-time/half-day reimbursement when care is needed less than five hours per day. The state provides an additional half-day reimbursement when care is needed for more than 10 hours per day up to 15 hours per day.

Reimbursing for Child Care Beyond Work Hours

Many families need child care for time beyond their work or school hours. For example, parents typically need child care assistance to cover commute time between their child care arrangement and their work. It is important that policies allow for sufficient commute time, especially since many low-income families do not own a car and have to rely on public transportation to get to work or child care, which may involve inconvenient schedules, multiple transfers, and time-consuming travel. Parents in school may need child care not only during their class time, but also during time for study, so they can focus on their school work in order to obtain the education credentials they need gain better-paying, more stable employment. Parents who work overnight may need child care not only while they are at work but also during the day while they sleep. State child care assistance programs vary in which of these activities outside of work/school hours they will cover, with nearly all states reimbursing for at least some commute time, but states less likely to cover study time and/or sleep time.

Among states that have an allowance for commute time between work (or education/training) and child care, the amount of time permitted varies. A number of states allow one hour a day for commute time, but a few states allow more time, a few allow less, and a few do not set specific time limits. For example:

- **Maryland, Nevada and Wyoming** reimburse for up to one hour per day of commute time.
- **Connecticut** reimburses for up to one hour per day of commute time, but will allow additional time if a parent verifies it is needed.
- **Alaska** reimburses for up to one half hour of commute time before and after a parent's activity. The state will also reimburse for up to one hour of commute time before and after an eligible activity if a parent travels more than 30 miles from the provider or uses public transportation.
- **South Carolina** reimburses for up to 1.5 hours per day for commute time.
- **Wisconsin** reimburses for up to two hours per day for commute time.

- **Vermont** reimburses for up to one hour of commute time each way.
- **Idaho** reimburses for up to three hours per week of commute time per adult.
- **Massachusetts** reimburses for up to five hours per week of commute time.
- **Oregon** reimburses for commute time equal to 25 percent of a parent's work hours.
- **New Hampshire** reimburses for actual commute time.
- **Utah** reimburses for commute time when it is necessary to enable a parent to complete his or her approved activities. The parent must have a commute of at least one hour in each direction for the time to be reimbursed.⁵
- Several states, including **Connecticut, Florida, Kansas, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania,** and **Washington**, allow reimbursement for a "reasonable" amount of travel time, without specifying any limit.

About half of the states reported that they reimburse for child care during sleep time for parents who work overnight and sleep during the day. Some states allow broad flexibility in reimbursing for sleep time, while others set limits such as reimbursing for sleep time only if parents work during a certain time period, or if they do not receive assistance for child care while they are working overnight, or if they meet other criteria.

- **Alaska** reimburses for child care during sleep time for up to eight hours before or after a night shift. The night shift is defined as working at least six hours between the hours of 8 pm and 6 am.
- **Colorado** gives counties the option to reimburse for child care for sleep time based on the county's written policy.
- **Florida** reimburses for child care for sleep time if a parent works a night shift and his or her child is younger than school age.
- **Indiana** reimburses for child care for sleep time for parents whose work hours cross over midnight.
- **Iowa** reimburses for child care during sleep time if a parent works at least six hours between 8 pm and 6 am and needs to sleep during daytime hours.
- **Michigan** reimburses for child care during sleep periods of up to eight hours per day if a parent works during his or her child's normal sleep time, sleeps when the child is awake, and is the only parent available to provide care during the time period for which child care assistance is being requested.
- **Nebraska** reimburses for child care for sleep time of up to eight non-work hours per day when a parent works through the night.
- **New Mexico** reimburses for child care for up to eight hours per day of sleep time if a parent works at least six hours between 6 pm and 8 am.
- **New York** allows local social services districts, which administer the child care assistance program, to reimburse for up to eight hours per day of child care during sleep time if a parent works the second or third shift.
- **North Carolina**, which reimburses for child care based on the family plan of care for the number of hours needed per week, will allow a family to have two plans of care if the parent works third shift and needs child care while sleeping during the day as well as while working.
- **Oregon** reimburses for up to five hours of child care during sleep time for single parents who work overnight shifts.

- **Pennsylvania** reimburses for child care during sleep time if a parent's work shift ends between the hours of 12 am and 9 am.
- **Vermont** reimburses for child care during up to eight hours of sleep time per day if a parent works from 3 pm to 11 pm or 11 pm to 7 am.
- **Washington** reimburses for child care during up to eight hours of sleep time before a night shift begins or after a night shift ends. A night shift is defined as employment for a minimum of six hours between the hours of 8 pm and 8 am.
- A few states, including **Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Oklahoma,** and **Utah,** will reimburse for child care during sleep time, but specified that they will not reimburse for child care both while a parent is sleeping and while he or she is working. **Virginia** allows child care assistance to be authorized when a parent works non-traditional hours and must sleep for some of the hours while his or her child is awake, but the total number of hours covered cannot exceed that which would have been needed for work only.

About one-third of all states reported that they cover child care to give parents in school time to study.⁶ States that allow reimbursement for child care while a parent studies typically limit it to one hour per week per credit hour, although some states adopt different parameters. For example:

- **Alaska** reimburses for up to one hour of child care per week during study time per credit hour. A maximum of one additional hour of child care per week may be authorized per class upon verification of the study time needed from the instructor.
- **Illinois** reimburses for up to one hour per week of child care during study time for each hour of course credit. The state encourages study periods to be arranged around regularly scheduled classes in order to provide a consistent and uninterrupted routine for the children in care.
- **Michigan** reimburses for up to one hour of child care during study time for each hour of class time and required lab time, if requested.
- **New Hampshire** reimburses for up to one hour of child care during study time for each class hour per week, if used during that same week.
- **Vermont** reimburses for up to one hour of child care per week during study time per school credit.
- **Washington** reimburses for up to 10 hours of child care per week during study time for approved classes.
- **New Mexico** allows child care to be reimbursed at the discretion of the caseworker for a reasonable amount of study time based on the classes being taken. Study time may not be given for certain electives that do not require study time. Study time is not permitted if the child is in school full-time and during time the parent is not in class. The caseworker must include a detailed justification of study time.
- **North Carolina** allows reimbursement for child care during "adequate" study time, as defined by the family's caseworker, with the goal of using a reasonable approach that supports the family's efforts to be self-sufficient.
- A few states, including **Arizona, Oklahoma,** and **South Dakota,** do not reimburse for child care during study time, but do allow reimbursement for time in between classes, which may allow the parent time to study.

A few states reported covering care during other categories of non-work hours in order to respond to families' diverse needs. For example:

- **Oregon** reimburses for child care between shifts for parents who works split shifts if picking up their child from child care in between shift times would be difficult for the parent or disruptive for the child.

- **Connecticut** reimburses for child care during up to six weeks of maternity leave. The child must attend the child care setting during the maternity leave and the parent must intend on returning to work within four months.

Reimbursing for Absent Days

It is important for states to reimburse providers for days when children are absent so that families receiving assistance are able to hold onto their child care arrangements. Reimbursing for absent days mirrors the practice for private-paying parents, who are typically charged their regular fee even when their children do not attend child care, since child care providers still have to pay for staff and other fixed costs. Generous absent day policies are essential because children in low-income families—the families targeted by child care assistance programs—may have a greater tendency to get sick. Allowances for absences are especially critical for children with special health needs as well as infants, who are particularly vulnerable to illnesses. If a state does not reimburse for absent days, or reimburses for only a limited number of absent days, a provider might ask the parent to pay for those days. And if the parent is unable to pay, the family could lose its child care slot just because the child is out sick for a few days, and without child care the parent might not be able to hold onto his or her job. Alternatively, parents might feel pressure to bring their children to child care even when they are ill, despite the risk the illness could spread to other children. When a state has a restrictive absent day policy, some providers might refuse to even accept children receiving child care assistance due to the potential loss of income, thus limiting families' child care options.

Most states allow for reimbursement for at least some days while a child is absent, but many put strict limits on the number of absent days for which they will provide reimbursement or the circumstances under which they will allow absent days to be reimbursed. States vary in their approaches to absent days in other ways. For example, some limit the number of absent days they will reimburse over the course of a year, some limit the number of absent days they will reimburse each month, and some set both an annual and a monthly limit. A number of states set a limit on the number of absent days reimbursed, but allow for exceptions in special circumstances. Several states indicated that they reimburse for absent days only for licensed care and not for care that is legally exempt from licensing. For example:

- **Alabama** allows reimbursement for up to five absent days (whether consecutive or non-consecutive) per month. Reimbursement is allowed for an additional five days per month if the parent provides documentation of the child's illness from a licensed physician, psychiatrist, or psychologist.
- **Alaska** reimburses for the entire month of care as long as the child attends at least one day in the month, if the family is authorized for part-time or full-time monthly enrollment. However, if the family has an attendance authorization, the state only provides reimbursement when the child attends child care, with the exception that five absent days may be reimbursed if the child did not attend due to illness.
- **Arizona** reimburses for up to two absent days per month.
- **Arkansas** reimburses for up to 12 absent days from July to October, with no more than six days in a given month; for up to 16 absent days from November to February, with no more than eight days in a given month; and for up to 12 absent days from March to June, with no more than six days in a given month. The state will only reimburse for absent days when the child care program is open or when it is closed for an observed holiday or inclement weather. The state will also only reimburse for absent days if the child had been scheduled to attend and there is a reasonable expectation the child will return to the program. The state does not limit the number of absent days reimbursed for children in foster care or protective services.
- **Florida** reimburses for up to three absent days per month without documentation, and will reimburse for up to an additional seven absent days with documentation of extraordinary circumstances.
- **Georgia** reimburses the full weekly amount as long as the child attends at least one day of the week.

- **Illinois** reimburses licensed center-based and family child care providers the full amount if the child attends child care for at least 80 percent of days eligible for reimbursement. However, license-exempt family child care providers are reimbursed only for days children are in attendance.
- **Indiana** reimburses for up to 20 absent days per year for children in full-time care. These days may be used at the parent's discretion for days when the provider was open for business, and the child was scheduled to attend, but did not attend any part of the day.
- **Iowa** reimburses for up to four absent days per calendar month.
- **Kentucky** reimburses licensed child care centers for up to five absent days per month, and will reimburse for additional absent days in extraordinary circumstances, including a death in the family, an illness of the child or parent, or a disaster verified by a utility provider or the local, state, or federal government. The state reimburses certified family child care providers for up to five absent days a month. The state does not reimburse registered providers for absent days.
- **Louisiana** reimburses for absent days totaling up to 10 percent of the days authorized for a child in full-time care; for a child authorized for 22 days per month, the state would reimburse for up to two full absent days. Days when the provider is closed or unable to provide care or when the state's time and attendance process is not used to check the child in and out of care are counted as absent days.
- **Maryland** reimburses for up to 60 absent days per calendar year. The state reimburses for additional days if the parent produces proof that the child was absent due to a medical reason.
- **Massachusetts** reimburses for up to 30 absent days in a six-month period.
- **Michigan** reimburses for up to 208 hours per year for absences. Previously, the reimbursement was only provided if the child was absent due to illness or holidays, but effective July 1, 2013, reimbursement is also provided for any absences during periods when the child would have usually been in attendance, including when there is a snow day or the child care program is closed for other reasons, or when the child and/or parent is on vacation. Licensed and registered providers must have a written policy to charge all families for absences in order to be reimbursed by the child care assistance program for such absences.
- **Minnesota** reimburses for up to 25 absent days per calendar year, and up to 10 consecutive absent days.⁷ Children with documented medical conditions may be exempt from the absent day limits.⁸ The state also exempts families from the absent day limits if at least one parent is under age 21 and does not have a high school diploma or general equivalency diploma, and is a student in a school district or another similar program that provides or arranges child care, parenting support, social services support, career and employment supports, and academic support to help parents graduate from high school.
- **Mississippi** reimburses for up to 15 absences and 11 holidays in a program year (October to September) if the child is in a licensed child care program. The state does not reimburse for absent days if the child is in a license-exempt program.
- **Missouri** reimburses for up to five absent days and holidays per month if the child is authorized for 20 or more days of care per month. The state reimburses for up to three absent days and holidays per month if the child is authorized for three to 19 days of care per month.
- **Montana** reimburses for up to 70 hours of absences per state fiscal year (July 1 to June 30) if the child is in licensed or registered child care. The state does not reimburse for absences if the child is in legally certified care.
- **Nevada** reimburses for up to 15 absent days per calendar year. These absent days can be used for any reason.
- **New Jersey** reimburses the full amount if the child attends at least 80 percent of his or her scheduled time in a

two-week period (for example, eight out of 10 days). The state also reimburses for up to five sick days in a two-week period.

- **New York** allows local social services districts to reimburse for up to 12 absent days in any three-month period or 24 absent days in any six-month period, in routine circumstances. When there are extenuating circumstances, reimbursement is permitted for up to 15 absent days in any one calendar month, 20 absent days in any three-month period, or 40 absent days in any six-month period. To be eligible for reimbursement for absent days, the provider must be licensed, registered, or enrolled legally exempt; legally exempt family and in-home child care providers are not eligible. In addition, the provider must be open and available to provide care on the day the child is absent. The state also allows local social services districts to reimburse for up to five days while a program is closed due to holidays, natural disasters, severe weather, or other emergency situations (provided it is not due to a cited regulatory violation).
- **North Carolina** reimburses for up to 10 absent days (consecutive or non-consecutive) per month. Reimbursement for additional absent days may be allowed for families with hardships, but not to exceed 30 consecutive days without prior approval from the state. In addition, local agencies may establish limits on the number of days per year that a provider can be reimbursed while closed. A provider can be reimbursed if closed due to emergencies such as severe weather, broken heating or cooling systems, illness, or accident.
- **North Dakota** reimburses for up to 16 hours per calendar month if a child is absent due to an illness or medical appointment.
- **Ohio** reimburses for up to 10 absent days during each six-month period of January through June and July through December of each state fiscal year.
- **Oklahoma** reimburses for up to seven absent days per month if a child attends at least 16 full-time days in a 31-day month and 15 full-time days in a 30-day month.
- **Oregon** reimburses for up to five absent days per month. The state reimburses for no more than five consecutive absent days, including when an absence spans from one month to the next.
- **Pennsylvania** reimburses for up to 25 absent days in a fiscal year. The state only reimburses for five consecutive days of absence; on the sixth consecutive absent day, child care assistance is suspended and the parent is sent a notice that the child must return to care within 13 days for the family to remain eligible for assistance.
- **South Carolina** reimburses for up to 31 absent days during a one-year eligibility period.
- **South Dakota** reimburses for up to 36 hours of absences per month.
- **Tennessee** reimburses for up to 10 absent days per monthly pay period, or up to five days per biweekly or semi-monthly pay period.
- **Vermont** reimburses for up to 10 days per fiscal year when the child or family is on vacation, up to 15 days per fiscal year when the child care program or provider is closed, and an unlimited number of days when the child is absent due to sicknesses, as long as the family informs the provider that the child is sick and, if the child is absent for an extended period, provides the state with an explanation upon request.
- **Virginia** reimburses for up to 24 absent days per fiscal year for licensed child care providers.
- **Washington** reimburses for all absent days for licensed child care centers and licensed family child care providers, if the child is scheduled to attend and payment is authorized for care for those days and if the child attends care as scheduled at least one day during the month.
- **West Virginia** reimburses at the full monthly rate if the child attends at least 13 days during the month.

- **Wisconsin** reimburses for up to two weeks of absences, if the child is in a licensed child care center or group facility and has an enrollment-based authorization. If approved by the authorizing agency, the state will also reimburse centers and group facilities for up to an additional six weeks while a child or family member is ill, four weeks when a parent is laid off from a job, two weeks during a family vacation, and one week during a provider's vacation. The state does not reimburse for absences if the child is in licensed family child care, unless the child has special needs, or in certified family child care.
- Two states—**Colorado** and **Texas**—allow localities to determine the number of absent days for which they will provide reimbursement and the circumstances in which they will provide reimbursement for absent days.
- Several states, including **California**,⁹ **Hawaii**, **Idaho**, **Kansas**, **Maine**,¹⁰ **New Mexico**,¹¹ and **Utah**,¹² do not limit the number of absent days for which they will provide reimbursement.
- At the other end of the spectrum, a few states, including **Nebraska**,¹³ **New Hampshire**,¹⁴ and **Wyoming**, do not reimburse for any absent days.

Conclusion

States' policies on reimbursement for providers serving families receiving child care assistance—including how states determine the number of hours for which they will provide reimbursement and the activities during which they will reimburse for child care—can have a profound effect on families' ability hold onto their child care arrangement, which can affect whether parents can hold onto their jobs. In designing their policies, states should recognize families' diverse and often complicated situations—for example, parents may have nonstandard or variable work schedules, they may be trying to complete an education program, or their children may have recurring illnesses. If state policies do not reflect these realities, parents will have great difficulty keeping their child care and their job. If, on the other hand, states adopt flexible policies that accommodate families' needs, parents will be more likely to have the secure employment that enables them improve their financial situation, and children will be more likely to have the stable child care that helps them learn and grow.

- 1 Karen Schulman and Helen Blank, *Pivot Point: State Child Care Assistance Policies 2013* (Washington, DC: National Women's Law Center, 2013), 7, *available at* http://www.nwlc.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/final_nwlc_2013statechildcareassistancereport.pdf.
- 2 María E. Enchautegui, *Nonstandard Work Schedules and the Well-Being of Low-Income Families* (Low-Income Working Families, Paper 26) (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2013), 6, *available at* <http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/412877-nonstandard-work-schedules.pdf>.
- 3 Liz Watson and Jennifer E. Swanberg, *Flexible Workplace Solutions for Low-Wage Hourly Workers* (Workplace Flexibility 2010 and Institute for Workplace Innovation, 2011), 19, *available at* <http://workplaceflexibility2010.org/images/uploads/whatsnew/Flexible%20Workplace%20Solutions%20for%20Low-Wage%20Hourly%20Workers.pdf>.
- 4 North Dakota's application for child care assistance requires parents to report their schedule of work or education/training activities and when they drop off and pick up their children from child care.
- 5 Utah reimburses for commute time for parents receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) without requiring them to have a hardship or a commute time of at least an hour each way.
- 6 All but a few states allow families to receive child care assistance for a parent to attend high school or post-secondary school. However, many states set time limits or other restrictions on child care assistance to participate in an education program. Sarah Minton, Christin Durham, Erika Huber, and Linda Giannarelli, *The CCDF Policies Database Book of Tables: Key Cross-State Variations in CCDF Policies as of October 1, 2012* (OPRE Report 2013-22) (Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2013), *available at* <http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/412977-the-ccdf-policies-database.pdf>.
- 7 This policy went into effect on February 1, 2014. Previously, Minnesota reimbursed for a maximum of 10 absent days per year, whether consecutive or non-consecutive.
- 8 Minnesota had removed this exemption for documented medical exemptions as of January 1, 2013, but restored the exemption as of February 1, 2014.
- 9 California does not limit absences when they are excused due to illness or quarantine of the child or parent, family emergency, requirement by a court of law for the child to spend time with a parent or other relative, or the best interest of the child. Excused absences in the best interest of the child are limited to 10 days during the contract period, except for children who are recipients of protective services or at risk of abuse or neglect. Local contractors are required to adopt a policy governing unexcused absences, which may include reasonable limitations.
- 10 Maine does not limit absences for reasonable causes, which include federal and state holidays, parental vacation days, inclement weather defined by a snow day when local schools are closed, illness of the child or other immediate family member, transportation problems that affect the parent's ability to transport the child to care, and family emergencies, including but not limited to surgery and catastrophic events such as fires, storms, or accidents. However, the state limits absences without reasonable cause to two days per month.
- 11 While New Mexico does not limit the number of absent days, child care providers must notify the child care agency within three business days after the fifth day of non-attendance if the child is disenrolled or absent for five consecutive scheduled days. Absences totaling five or more consecutive scheduled days must be approved by the family's caseworker.
- 12 Utah reimburses for the full month of care, regardless of the number of absent days, since the state issues payments prospectively, but the child must attend the child care program on the first day of the month.
- 13 While Nebraska does not reimburse for absent days, if a child leaves the child care program without notice, the state will reimburse the provider for three days following the child's departure.
- 14 While New Hampshire does not reimburse for absent days, the state will provide full reimbursement as long as a child meets the threshold number of hours for the service level—for example, 31 hours per week to qualify for the full-time rate—even if the child attended fewer hours than expected.