

Expanding Access to Child Care Assistance Program

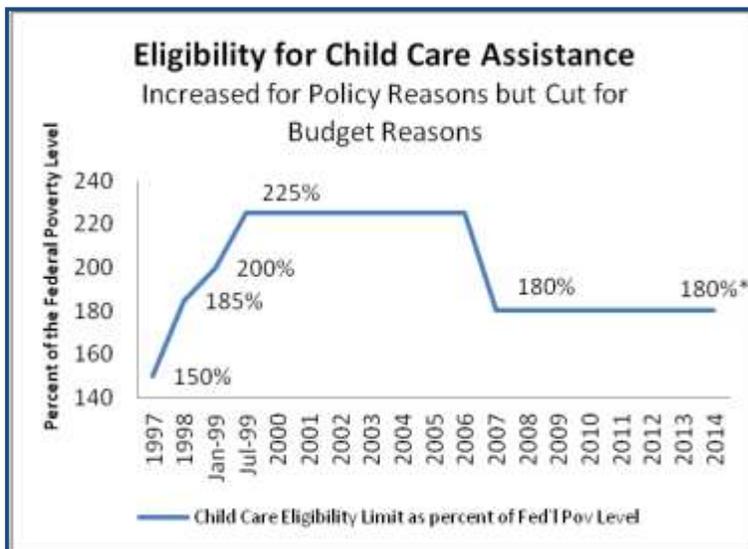
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The Child Care Assistance Program (“CCAP”) provides subsidies to parents to help pay for early learning programs for their young children and for safe after-school care. To qualify, the parent must be working at least 20 hours per week and have income less than 180% FPL (\$36,162 for a family of 3). This is the lowest Child Care Assistance Eligibility Limit in New England.

Child care is often the largest expense in the household budget for parents with young children. CCAP helps lower-income working families enroll their children in a licensed child care program. Families contribute a monthly copayment based on their income. Approximately 8,600 children currently benefit from the program.

Child Care Assistance Eligibility in New England	
NH	\$50,225
ME	\$54,589
MA	\$44,593 (Exit Limit \$75,808)
CT	\$44,601
VT	\$39,576
RI	\$36,162 (Exit Limit \$45,203)

Legislation introduced by Senator Goldin (**S2130**) and Representative Blazewski (**H7115**) would allow working families with income less than 200% of the federal poverty level (\$40,180 for a family of 3) to qualify for the Child Care Assistance Program, with a copayment based on a percentage of income.



A family with earnings of twice the poverty level, just over \$40,000 for a family of 3, is not eligible for CCAP. The monthly cost of licensed care for a toddler and after-school program for a first-grader is \$1,373/month – 41% of the family’s income. Allowing this family to participate in CCAP would mean the parent would pay 10% of her income or \$335/month to enroll her toddler in a quality early learning program and her first-grader in a safe and supportive after-school program.

Rhode Island had gradually increased the eligibility for child care assistance after

passage of the StartingRIte program in 1997, a comprehensive approach to increase access to child care for all working families with an emphasis on providing access to quality care for children in lower-income working families. Eligibility was rolled back ten years later as a budget-savings measure. The current 180% income limit is lower than the 185% limit in effect when StartingRIte began.

*A pilot program enacted in 2012 allows families already receiving CCAP assistance to remain eligible as earnings increase to a maximum level of 225% FPL.