



Expanding Access to Child Care Assistance Program

April 2017

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 (\$36,288 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 9,600 children currently benefit from the program.

CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE ELIGIBILITY LIMITS	
NH	\$50,400
ME	\$54,589
CT	\$44,601
MA	\$45,771 <i>(Exit limit \$77,810)</i>
VT	\$39,576
RI	\$36,288 <i>(Exit limit \$45,360)</i>

Based on 2016 income

Legislation introduced by Representative Blazejewski (**H-5085**) and Senator Goldin (**S-141**) 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 co-payment based on a percentage of income.

THE CCAP ENTRY LIMIT IS NOT HIGH ENOUGH TO HELP MANY WORKING FAMILIES

Emma, a single mom with two children and earnings of \$36,288 (180% FPL)



CHART 4

A family with earnings of twice the poverty level, just over \$36,288 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 \$1,487/month – 49% of the family’s income. Allowing this family to participate in CCAP would mean the parent would pay 10% of her income or \$304/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.