



Press Release

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2016 STATE OF PRESCHOOL YEARBOOK SHOWS NEW YORK STATE MOVING TOWARD GREATER ACCESS

NYC makes strides with PreK for All, while enrollment lags elsewhere

New Brunswick, NJ — New York invested more than \$781 million in public preschool programs yet just one program—New York City’ PreK for All—accounted for more than half of all 4-year-olds enrolled statewide, according to the 2016 State of Preschool Yearbook released today by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER).

The State of Preschool Yearbook is the only national report on state-funded preschool programs with detailed information on enrollment, funding, teacher qualifications, and other policies related to quality. Decades of research shows that early childhood education can prepare children for greater success in elementary school and beyond, with benefits largest for the most disadvantaged — but only if quality is high.

New York enrolled 120,069 children in preschool in 2015-2016, an increase of almost 8,000 children from 2014-2015; and began serving 3-year-olds in a few districts. Nationwide, state-funded preschool program enrollment reached an all-time high, serving nearly 1.5 million children, 32 percent of 4-year-olds and five percent of 3-year-olds. State funding for preschool rose eight percent to about \$7.4 billion, a \$550 million increase. State funding per child increased to \$4,967, exceeding pre-recession levels for the first time. Five states met all 10 current quality standards benchmarks. Nine states had programs that met fewer than half; and seven states do not fund preschool at all.

“Early childhood education is a great investment,” said NIEER Director W. Steven Barnett, Ph.D. “We see New York emerging as a leader in expanding access to preschool after Governor Cuomo’s commitment to achieving universal access within five years and New York City Mayor DeBlasio’s

commitment to universal high-quality pre-K for 4-year-olds in New York City and recently announced plans to expand access to the city's 3-year-olds.”

In New York:

- State funding exceeded \$781 million, a five percent increase from 2014-2015 in real dollars
- Enrollment totaled 120,069 children, about 50 percent of the state's 4-year-olds, ranking 9th in access for the second year in a row, out of 44 states. The state served less than one percent of 3-year-olds, ranking 28th in access for 3-year-olds out of the 29 states serving 3-year-olds.
- State funding per child was \$6,507, a decrease of \$121 from 2014-2015, adjusted for inflation, ranking 12th in state resources per child
- New York met seven of NIEER's 10 current quality standards benchmarks
- Programs in New York City are required to be full-day and meet additional quality standards
- New York received a competitive federal Preschool Development Grant in 2015-2016 which enhanced quality and expanded enrollment for 2,401 children

Current benchmarks were designed to help states build programs, focusing on resources and policies related to the structural aspects of public pre-K— elements needed for a high-quality program but not fully defining one. This year, NIEER is introducing major revisions to the policy benchmarks for the first time since the Yearbook was launched in 2003. The new benchmarks raise the bar by focusing on policies that more directly support continuous improvement of classroom quality. State profiles in the 2016 Yearbook include both current and new benchmark scores.

New York met seven of the new benchmarks, meeting new requirements for early learning and development standards that are culturally sensitive, supported, and aligned with other state standards and child assessments. They also meet the new supports for curriculum implementation benchmark. However, current policies fell short of benchmarks requiring professional development, ongoing-coaching, and individualized professional development plans for both lead and assistant teachers *and* a continuous quality improvement system.

“States meeting current benchmarks should be proud of their accomplishments,” Dr. Barnett concluded. “But simply meeting the benchmarks does not guarantee children are receiving a high-quality classroom experience. Research indicates most states need to do more to ensure high quality for every child.”

The State of Preschool Yearbook was supported with funding provided by the Heising-Simons Foundation while the survey data on which it relies was funded by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The findings, interpretations, and conclusions in this report are solely those of the authors. For more information and detailed state-by-state profiles on quality access, and funding, please visit www.nieer.org.