

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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NIEER Contact:  
[Michelle Ruess](#)  
609-658-6873 Cell  
848-932-4350 Office

## **2018 State of Preschool Report Shows Continued Progress in D.C. *D.C. Leads the US in Pre-K Access but Falls Short on Quality Standards***

*New Brunswick, NJ*—The District of Columbia increased funding for public preschool, ranking again as national leader for pre-K access with 85% of 4-year-olds and 73% of 3-year-olds enrolled, and in spending per child, but falling short on meeting minimum quality standards, according to new research by the National Institute for Early Education Research.

*The State of Preschool 2018* annual report, based on 2017-18 academic year data, finds just a third of 4-year-olds and 5.5 percent of 3-year-olds enrolled in public preschool programs nationwide—virtually no change in years. State funding is failing to keep pace with even the slow increases in enrollment and state spending per child has *decreased*, when adjusted for inflation. Inadequate funding undermines classroom quality, and most states fail to pay pre-K teachers comparably to K-3 teachers.

D.C. increasing pre-K spending; however, D.C. met just 3 of NIEER's 10 minimum quality standards benchmarks—in large part because Public Charter schools create their own policies.

“Nationally, we are disappointed by the lack of progress,” said NIEER Founder and Senior Co-Director Steven Barnett, Ph.D. “D.C. leads the nation in many ways but its charter school policy contributes to uncertainty about provisions for quality since Public Charter Schools are not held to uniform district-wide standards.”

This year's report includes a special section on policies affecting the preschool teacher workforce, focusing on salary and benefit parity. (*see box for D.C. specifics*)

Enrollment has more than doubled since 2002—with almost 1.6 million children enrolled nationwide—but expansion has slowed in recent years. In some states, slow growth is due to a shift from part-day to full-day programs, which can better support child development as well as family work schedules, but nevertheless leaves many children unserved.

The *State of Preschool 2018 yearbook* was supported with funding provided by the Heising-Simons Foundation. For more information and detailed state-by-state profiles on quality, access, and funding, please visit [www.nieer.org](http://www.nieer.org).

The National Institute for Early Education Research ([www.nieer.org](http://www.nieer.org)) at the Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, supports early childhood education policy and practice through independent, objective research. For more information, contact: Michelle Ruess [mruess@nieer.org](mailto:mruess@nieer.org) 848-932-4350

### **D.C. 2017-18 Fast Facts**

Met 3 of 10 quality standards benchmarks

Enrolled 13,492 children, an increase of 415 from 2016-17

Total state funding = \$236,712,885, an increase of \$6,821,142 from 2016-17

State spending-per-child = \$17,545, compared to \$17,580 in 2016-17

Requires a BA and salary parity with K-3 only for pre-K teachers in DCPS and nonpublic programs

National rankings:

- 1 in access for 4-year-olds
- 1 in access for 3-year-olds
- 1 in state spending per child