

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **2018 State of Preschool Report Shows Progress in South Carolina Pre-K Access Exceeds National Average but State Funding Fails to Keep Pace**

*New Brunswick, NJ*—South Carolina has expanded access to state pre-k beyond -- reaching 46% of 4-years-olds, above the national average—yet state funding has failed to keep pace, 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. Nationally, state funding failed to keep pace, as spending per child *decreased*, when adjusted for inflation. Inadequate funding undermines classroom quality, and most states fail to pay pre-K teachers comparably to K-3 teachers.

Over the past five years, South Carolina has steadily expanded pre-k access; however, state spending-per-child has *decreased* by 5% this year--and falls well below the national average. Teachers in public schools only are required to have a BA and salary parity with K-3 teachers.

“Nationally, we are disappointed by the lack of progress,” said NIEER Founder and Senior Co-Director Steven Barnett, Ph.D. “South Carolina is moving in the right direction by serving more children. Now the state should expand investment to improve quality standards and provide salary parity for all pre-K teachers, regardless of setting.”

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

### **South Carolina 2017-18 Fast Facts**

Met 7 of 10 quality standards benchmarks

Enrolled 27,519 children, an increase in 3,440 from 2016-17

Total state funding = \$77,572,655 an increase of \$3,603,184 from 2016-17

State spending-per-child = \$2,819, compared to \$3,072 in 2016-17

South Carolina requires a BA and K-3 salary parity only for pre-K teachers in public schools

National rankings:

- 11 in access for 4-year-olds
- 29 in access for 3-year-olds
- 37 in state spending per child

*The National Institute for Early Education Research (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*