



## Press Release

73 Easton Avenue • New Brunswick, NJ 08901 • Phone 848.932.4350 • Fax 732.932.4360 • [www.nieer.org](http://www.nieer.org)

**For Immediate Release: Wednesday May 24, 2017**

Contact:

Justin Greenberg

[justin.greenberg@berlinrosen.com](mailto:justin.greenberg@berlinrosen.com)

202-800-7410

Michelle Ruess

[mruess@nieer.org](mailto:mruess@nieer.org)

848-932-4350

### **2016 STATE OF PRESCHOOL YEARBOOK SHOWS MICHIGAN EXPANDING FUNDING AND ENROLLMENT**

*Michigan a leader in quality standards, ranks 15th for access*

New Brunswick, NJ — Michigan increased funding for public preschool and expanded enrollment by more than 1,600 children, 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.

Michigan's Great Start Readiness program enrolled 38,771 4-year-olds, about 34 percent of the state's 4-year-olds. 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 five percent 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 Michigan making progress on quality standards, enrollment and funding. We encourage them to keep up the good work and expand access to provide the high-quality pre-K that can help children get the best possible start in life.”

In Michigan:

- Total state funding was \$243.9 million in 2015-2016, a two percent increase of almost \$4.2 million from 2014-2015, adjusted for inflation.
- Michigan's Great Start Readiness program served 38,771 children, an increase of 1,659 children from 2014-2015.
- Michigan ranked 15<sup>th</sup> in access for 4-year-olds out of 44 states, serving nearly 34% of 4-year-olds.
- State funding per child was \$6,291, an inflation-adjusted decrease of \$168 from 2014-2015, ranking 15<sup>th</sup> nationwide
- Michigan earned nine of NIEER's 10 current quality standards benchmarks

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.

Michigan met nine 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 met the new requirement for supports for curriculum implementation and continuous quality improvement system benchmarks. However, current policies fell short of requiring individualized professional development plans for both lead and assistant teachers.

“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](http://www.nieer.org).*