



Press Release

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2016 STATE OF PRESCHOOL YEARBOOK SHOWS OREGON INCREASING FUNDING AND EXPANDING ENROLLMENT

Oregon spending per child ranks among top nationwide

New Brunswick, NJ — Oregon increased preschool funding five percent to nearly \$70 million as enrollment and per child spending also grew, 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.

The Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten program enrolled 7,840 children, nearly 10 percent of state 4-year-olds and seven percent of state 3-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 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 Oregon investing more resources but more work is needed to provide wider access to the high-quality pre-K that helps children get the best possible start in life.”

In Oregon:

- Total funding was nearly \$70 million in 2015-2016, a five percent increase of \$3.6 million from 2014-2015, adjusted for inflation
- The Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten program served 7,840 3- and 4-year-olds. Enrollment increased by 178 children from 2014-2015.
- Oregon ranks 31st out of 44 states in access for 4-year-olds and 13th in access for 3-year-olds among the 29 states that served 3-year-olds
- Funding per child was \$8,929, an inflation-adjusted increase of \$265 from 2014-2015, ranking 3rd nationwide.
- Oregon met nine of NIEER's 10 current quality standards benchmarks.
- In Fall 2016, Oregon became the Preschool Promise program, serving children up to 200% of the federal poverty level through a mixed-delivery system.

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.

Oregon met seven of the new benchmarks, including new requirements for early learning and development standards that are culturally sensitive, supported, and aligned with other state standards and child assessments; and continuous quality improvement and monitoring. However, current policies fell short of new requirements for supports for curriculum implementation and professional development, ongoing coaching, and 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.