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NIEER Contact:  
Michelle Ruess  
848.932.4350

Media Contact:  
Morgan Williams  
202-836-9890

## **2017 State of Preschool Report Highlights Progress in California** ***CA pre-K supports young DLLs but overall quality standards remain low***

*New Brunswick, NJ*—A new state-by-state report shows more young children enrolled in public pre-K programs nationwide, with California emerging as a leader in supporting young Dual Language Learners, even as overall pre-k quality standards remained low.

*The State of Preschool 2017* annual report finds states heeding the demand for pre-K and expanding access to publicly funded programs in a variety of settings. But instead of supporting quality early learning with adequate resources, most state programs invest too little to help children catch up with their more advantaged peers by kindergarten.

California pre-K programs served nearly 37% of the state's 4-year-olds and 11% of 3-year-olds. State spending increased as well, with the California State Preschool program meeting six of NIEER's 10 quality standards benchmarks and Transitional Kindergarten meeting two. California's Transitional Kindergarten is one of just 3 programs requiring lead teachers to hold bilingual certification to work with non-English speaking preschoolers.

"Our report highlights which states invest best in their young children and which leave too many children behind," said NIEER Senior Co-Director Steven Barnett. "California has strong policies to support their dual language learners; but overall quality standards remain low and many decisions are left to local control, so classroom experiences can vary dramatically."

This year's report includes a special section on policies affecting Dual Language Learners, and also highlights changes since 2002, when NIEER began tracking state pre-K. (*see box for CALIFORNIA specifics*)

Enrollment in state-funded preschool programs has more than doubled since 2002, according to the report. Nationally, 43 states, D.C. and Guam now provide publicly funded preschool to more than 1.5 million children. However, funding has failed to keep pace, with spending-per-child *decreasing* when adjusted for inflation.

"Fifteen years ago, only three states and the District of Columbia enrolled more than one-third of their 4-year-olds in publicly funded pre-K," said Dr. Allison Friedman-Krauss, report co-author. "Today, that is the national average. But progress is patchy – 19 states still enroll less than 10% of their 4-year-olds."

### **CALIFORNIA 2016-2017 Fast Facts**

Met 4.3 of 10 new quality standards benchmarks (Preschool 6, TK 2)

Enrolled 235,651 children, an increase of 11,730 from 2015-16

Total state funding was over \$1.49 billion, an increase of \$41,304,245 from 2015-16

State spending-per-child = \$6,325 compared to \$6,472 in 2015-16

Bilingual instructional is allowed, and TK teachers are required to have bilingual certification to work with DLLs

National rankings:

- 14 in access for 4-year-olds
- 8 in access for 3-year-olds
- 13 in state spending per child

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*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*