FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 18, 2018

2017 State of Preschool Report Highlights Progress in Guam
New policies to support pre-K quality in Guam

New Brunswick, NJ—A new state-by-state report shows more young children enrolled in public pre-K programs nationwide, with Guam’s fledgling program making strides in quality standards.

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, based on 2016-17 data. 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.

In its second year, Guam pre-k enrolled 71 children—more than 2% of the territory’s 4-year-old population. Guam implemented new policies supporting preschool quality, earning an additional quality standards benchmark for a total of 6 out of 10. Guam also tracks home languages for its young Dual Language Learners, and half of its lead teachers are fluent in a language other than English.

“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. “Guam remains the only U.S. territory to fund pre-K. Maintaining a focus on quality standards will be key as Guam moves forward.”

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 GUAM 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.”

The State of Preschool 2017 yearbook was supported with funding provided by the Heising-Simons Foundation. Data used in the report come from a general survey funded by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The supplemental survey of state policies related to dual language learners and report was supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
Foundation. 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.

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 848-932-4350