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2017 State of Preschool Report Highlights Progress in Iowa ***Iowa boosts pre-K funding, enrollment; policies support Dual Language Learners***

New Brunswick, NJ—A new state-by-state report shows more young children enrolled in public pre-K programs nationwide, with Iowa among the leaders in pre-K access for 4-year-olds.

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.

Iowa pre-K programs enrolled almost 63% of the 4-year-olds, and 3% of 3-year-olds in the state. Funding increased slightly yet spending per child remained well below the national average. Iowa has implemented policies to support young Dual Language Learners and the state's two pre-K programs met a combined 7.9 of NIEER's 10 quality standards benchmarks.

"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. "Iowa has expanded pre-K enrollment rapidly, going from just 17% to 63% of 4-year-olds in 10 years. Yet low spending per child raises concerns about program quality."

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

IOWA 2016-2017 Fast Facts

Met 7.9 of 10 new quality standards benchmarks

Enrolled 26,310 children, an increase of 177 from 2015-16

Total state funding = \$83,791,732, an increase of \$2,006,746 from 2015-16

State spending-per-child = \$3,335, compared to \$3,278 in 2015-16

Iowa has policies to support preschool DLLs; SWVPP collects data on preschoolers' home language

National rankings:

- 7 in access for 4-year-olds
- 20 in access for 3-year-olds
- 36 in state spending per child

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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. 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