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## **2017 State of Preschool Report Shows Progress Stalled in Kentucky** ***Kentucky preschool enrollment grows but investment shrinks***

*New Brunswick, NJ*--New state-by-state report shows more young children enrolled in public pre-K programs nationwide, with Kentucky enrolling more young children in pre-k yet cutting state funding by nearly \$2 million.

*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.

Kentucky pre-K enrolled slightly more children, for a total of 26% of the state's 4-year-olds and 10% of 3-year-olds. State investment fell 2% but was supplemented with local and federal funding. Kentucky's Preschool Program met 7 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. "Kentucky can do more to expand access to more children and provide resources required for a high-quality preschool program."

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 KENTUCKY 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."

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### **KENTUCKY 2016-2017 Fast Facts**

Met 7 of 10 new quality standards benchmarks

Enrolled 19,435 children, an increase of 253 from 2015-16

Total state funding = \$91,637,785, a decrease of \$1,958,339 from 2015-16

State spending-per-child = \$4,715, compared to \$4,879 in 2015-16

Kentucky collects data on preschoolers' home language

National rankings:

- 23 in access for 4-year-olds
- 9 in access for 3-year-olds
- 21 in state spending per child

*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](http://www.nieer.org).*

*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*