

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 18, 2018

NIEER Contact:
Michelle Ruess
848.932.4350

Media Contact:
Morgan Williams
202-836-9890

2017 State of Preschool Report Highlights Progress in Ohio

Ohio boosts pre-K funding by \$4 million, expands enrollment

New Brunswick, NJ—A new state-by-state report shows more young children enrolled in public pre-K programs nationwide, with Ohio increasing pre-K funding and enrollment, although access remains limited.

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.

Ohio boosted pre-K funding by more than \$4 million and expanded enrollment, serving 11% of 4-year-olds but less than 1% of 3-year-olds statewide after limiting eligibility to 4-year-olds. Enrollment of 3- and 4-year-olds in the state remains below the national average, however; and spending per child falls well below the national average.

"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. "Ohio made positive strides by increasing pre-k funding and enrollment. But additional resources and a stronger commitment to enhancing pre-K quality are needed."

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 OHIO 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

OHIO 2016-2017 Fast Facts

Met 5 of 10 new quality standards benchmarks

Enrolled 15,942 children, an increase of 1,177 from 2015-16

Total state funding = \$63,768,000, an increase of \$4,122,857 from 2015-16

State spending-per-child = \$4,000, compared to \$4,040 in 2015-16, adjusted for inflation

Ohio had no policies to support preschool DLLs

National rankings:

- 32 in access for 4-year-olds
- 29 in access for 3-year-olds
- 27 in state spending per child

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. 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