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April 18, 2018

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## **2017 State of Preschool Report Shows Little Progress in South Carolina** ***South Carolina above national average on enrollment, low on spending per child***

*New Brunswick, NJ*—A new state-by-state report shows more young children enrolled in public pre-K programs nationwide, with South Carolina enrolling more children, but spending well below national average per child enrolled.

*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.

South Carolina enrollment increased to include 41% of 4-year-olds statewide. State spending per child was low, ranking the state near the bottom nationally. South Carolina programs met 7 of NIEER's 10 minimum quality standards benchmarks and the state has implemented policies supporting young Dual Language Learners.

"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. "South Carolina is enrolling more children but spending per child is making it challenging to implement policies that support high-quality early learning opportunities."

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 SOUTH CAROLINA 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."

### **South Carolina 2016-2017 Fast Facts**

Met 7 of 10 new quality standards benchmarks

Enrolled 24,079 children, an increase of 543 from 2015-16

Total state funding = \$71,513,051

State spending-per-child = \$2,970

South Carolina collects data on preschooler's home language; policies to support preschool DLLs

National rankings:

- 11 in access for 4-year-olds
- 38 in state spending per child

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. 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*