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## ***Majority of States Lack ‘Essential Elements’ for Preschool Success***

*NIEER analysis provides road map for new policymakers focused on pre-K*

New Brunswick, NJ— *New Brunswick, NJ* – A new analysis of public preschool policy by the National Institute for Early Education Research provides a road map for state policymakers—especially those new [governors](#), legislators and state education leaders seeking to enhance early education.

Research has shown high-quality preschool programs can enhance children’s development, reduce achievement gaps at kindergarten entry, and support a child’s later success in school and life. However, pre-k can only provide these benefits if a child’s classroom experience is high-quality.

[Implementing 15 Essential Elements for High-Quality Pre-K: An Updated Scan of State Policies](#) evaluates how well 59 state-funded preschool programs satisfy a list of “[essential elements](#)” characterizing high-quality programs—and finds widespread change is needed to provide the high-quality early learning opportunities children need to succeed.

[NIEER](#) evaluated the extent to which preschool programs across 44 states plus the District of Columbia. For each element, NIEER determined whether criteria were fully met, partially met, or not met based primarily on the 2017-18 academic year.

Overall, state programs met an average of 6 out of 15 essential elements. Find your state-by-state analysis [here](#).

Most states have early learning standards in place to guide quality pre-k programs, and most meet the goal of having two adults in each pre-K classroom. Political will for high-quality pre-K appears to be growing, along with more states providing pre-K teachers pay parity with K-12 public school teachers.

The most challenging element for programs to meet was length of day --almost 60 percent of pre-k programs offer only a part-day program. Few states could report on classroom quality and even fewer have strategies in place to support young dual language learners.

“If our goal is to enhance children’s learning and development in ways that increase later success in school and life, then substantial change is required,” said [GG Weisenfeld](#), report lead author. “This report identifies what states are doing now, and what barriers have to be overcome to provide children what they need to succeed.”

### **2018 Essential Elements Highlights**

Alabama’s First Class program fully met the most elements: 14 out of 15

AL, GA, LA, MI, NJ Abbott, RI, WA and WV fully met at least 10 of 15 Essential Elements.

AK, AZ, CA, CT, FL, IN, KSPP, MA, OH, OR, PA, TX, and WI fully met fewer than 5 of 15 Essential Elements

Nearly 60% of state pre-K programs fail to offer any full school-day programs.

About 75% of state pre-K programs lack a well-developed strategy for educating young dual language learners.

All but two states--AL and NC--could not report pre-K classroom quality. Either the state did not collect the data, or it was not available to the public.

(See "[Essentials of Quality Public Preschool](#)" blog) For each state (or program within a state) the report presents an overview, a table listing conclusions regarding each element, and evidence for the score. This report follows up a similar [report](#) published in 2016.

Analysis is based on [Jim Minervino's "15 essential elements" framework](#). This report complements NIEER's annual [State of Preschool yearbooks](#). While NIEER [yearbooks](#) examine the *policies* that support state-funded pre-k, the *Essential Elements* reviews *how* and *the degree to which these policies are implemented*, and it examines the enabling environment needed for strong policies to develop and be well implemented.

*Implementing 15 Essential Elements for High-Quality Pre-K: An Updated Scan of State Policies* was supported with funding provided by The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Findings, interpretations, and conclusions in this report are solely those of the authors.

*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*