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2018 State of Preschool Report Shows Progress in California *California spends over \$313 million more on pre-K, serves more children*

New Brunswick, NJ—California increased state preschool funding and enrollment compared to last year, but fell below the national average for meeting minimum quality standards, according to new research from the National Institute for Early Education Research.

The State of Preschool 2018 annual report, based on 2017-18 academic year data, finds just a third of 4-year-olds and 5.5 percent of 3-year-olds enrolled in public preschool programs nationwide—virtually no change in years. State funding is failing to keep pace with even the slow increases in enrollment and state spending per child has *decreased*, when adjusted for inflation. Inadequate funding undermines classroom quality, and most states fail to pay pre-K teachers comparably to K-3 teachers.

In California, only the TK program requires pre-K teachers to have a BA and provides salary and benefit parity with K-3 teachers. State spending increased 20% but SPP meets only 6 of 10 minimum quality standard benchmarks, with TK meeting just 2 of 10.

“Nationally, we are disappointed by the lack of progress,” said NIEER Founder and Senior Co-Director Steven Barnett, Ph.D. “California is moving in the right direction, expanding pre-k enrollment and increasing funding. But more progress is needed on meeting quality standards as well as expanded access.”

This year’s report includes a special section on policies affecting the preschool teacher workforce, focusing on salary and benefit parity. *(see box for California specifics)*

Enrollment has more than doubled since 2002—with almost 1.6 million children enrolled nationwide—but expansion has slowed in recent years. In some states, slow growth is due to a shift from part-day to full-day programs, which can better support child development as well as family work schedules, but nevertheless leaves many children unserved.

The State of Preschool 2018 *yearbook* was supported with funding provided by the Heising-Simons Foundation. 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

California 2017-18 Fast Facts

Met 6 of 10 quality standards for SPP and 2 of 10 for TK

Enrolled 242,297 children, an increase of 6,646 from 2016-17

Total state funding = \$1,854,832,577 an increase of \$313,106,275 from 2016-17

State spending-per-child = \$7,655, compared to \$6,542 in 2016-17

Only TK requires a BA with K-3 salary and benefit parity for lead teachers

National rankings:

- 14 in access for 4-year-olds
- 8 in access for 3-year-olds
- 8 in state spending per child