

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **2018 State of Preschool Report Shows a Decline in Connecticut *Connecticut spends \$8.4 million less on pre-K; Improves on quality standards***

*New Brunswick, NJ*— Connecticut spent less money on pre-K and saw a small decline in enrollment but improved on quality standards, according to 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.

Connecticut reduced state spending by 7%, and per-child spending also fell. Even with these reductions, the state is above the national average for state spending per child. Quality standards of the three pre-K programs remains low, meeting an average 5 of the quality standards benchmarks, despite an increase in one program this year.

“Nationally, we are disappointed by the lack of progress and concerned about the number of children missing the quality early learning experiences that can make a lifelong difference,” said NIEER Founder and Senior Co-Director Steven Barnett, Ph.D. “Connecticut is moving backwards by reducing real spending, thus limiting the state’s ability to increase access or improve quality.”

This year’s report includes a special section on policies affecting the preschool teacher workforce, focusing on salary and benefit parity. (*see box for Connecticut 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](http://www.nieer.org). The National Institute for Early Education Research 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

### **Connecticut 2017-18 Fast Facts**

Met 5 of 10 quality standards benchmarks

Enrolled 14,585 children, a decrease of 193 from 2016-17

Total state funding = \$111,027,561, a decrease of \$8,455,029 from 2016-17

State spending-per-child = \$7,612, compared to \$8,085 in 2016-17

No requirements for salary or benefit parity with K-3

National rankings:

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