

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 17, 2019

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## **2018 State of Preschool Report Shows Some Progress in Maine *Maine a leader in access to high-quality preschool, but state funding stalls***

New Brunswick, NJ—Maine enrolled 42 percent of the state’s 4-year-olds in pre-K in 2017-18, ranking 12<sup>th</sup> nationally, 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% 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.

Maine requires state pre-K teachers to have a BA but only requires salary parity with K-3 teachers for those in public school classrooms.

“Nationally, we are disappointed by the lack of progress,” said NIEER Founder and Senior Co-Director Steven Barnett, Ph.D. “Maine is poised to become a national leader in access to high-quality pre-K.”

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

### **Maine 2017-18 Fast Facts**

Met 9 of 10 quality standards benchmarks

Enrolled 5,648 children, an increase of 208 from 2016-17

Total state funding = \$19,316,515 an inflation-adjusted decrease of \$104,126 from 2016-17

State spending-per-child = \$3,420, compared to \$3,570 in 2016-17

Requires a BA and K-3 salary parity only for pre-K teachers in public schools

National rankings:

- 12 in access for 4-year-olds
- 36 in state spending per child

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