

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **2018 State of Preschool Report Shows Some Progress in Missouri *Increase in state preschool spending, but decrease in enrollment***

*New Brunswick, NJ*—Missouri increased funding for preschool but enrollment continues to drop, with 2% of 4-year-olds and 1% of 3-year-olds in the statement attending, according to new research by 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. Nationally, state funding failed to keep pace, as spending per child *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 Missouri, a combination of shrinking enrollment and funding increases has resulted in a 20% increase in spending-per-child. The state does require lead pre-K teachers to hold a BA and provides starting salary parity with K-3 teachers for all preschool teachers but salary schedule parity for only those in public schools.

“Nationally, we are disappointed by the lack of progress,” said NIEER Founder and Senior Co-Director Steven Barnett, Ph.D. “Missouri has boosted funding and recognized the important role of teachers, but must do more to expand access for more children.”

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

### **Missouri 2017-18 Fast Facts**

Met 8 of 10 quality standards benchmarks

Enrolled 2,378 children, a decrease of 268 from 2016-17

Total state funding = \$10,832,676 an increase of \$795,572 from 2016-17

State spending-per-child = \$4,555, compared to \$3,793 in 2016-17

Requires a BA, and starting salary parity with K-3 for all lead teachers

National rankings:

- 43 in access for 4-year-olds
- 25 in access for 3-year-olds
- 25 in state spending per child