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April 17, 2019

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2018 State of Preschool Report Shows Lack of Progress in Oregon State Ranks High on Spending per Child, Pre-K Access Remains Low

New Brunswick, NJ—Oregon reduced preschool funding overall, and access was below national average for 4-year-olds yet was slightly above average for 3-year-olds, 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.

Oregon supports two preschool programs, which vary in quality benchmarks met and spending per-child. Oregon enrolled 8% of the state's 3-year-olds and 12% of 4-year-olds, and ranks fourth nationally in state pre-K spending per-child.

“Nationally, we are disappointed by the lack of progress,” said NIEER Founder and Senior Co-Director Steven Barnett, Ph.D. “Oregon was moving in the right direction with the beginning of their Preschool Promise program—but recently stalled. They should improve quality standards and expand access without reducing spending per child.”

This year's report includes a special section on policies affecting the preschool teacher workforce, focusing on salary and benefit parity. (*see box for Oregon 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, such as Oregon's Head Start Prekindergarten program, 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

Oregon 2017-18 Fast Facts

Met 7.5 of 10 quality standards benchmarks

Enrolled 9,477 children, an increase of 21 from 2016-17

Total state funding = \$91,524,958, a decrease of \$1,717,995 from 2016-17

State spending-per-child = \$9,658, compared to \$9,861 in 2016-17

Only Preschool Promise has salary parity with K-3 for lead teachers

National rankings:

- 32 in access for 4-year-olds
- 13 in access for 3-year-olds
- 4 in state spending per child