

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 17, 2019

NIEER Contact:

[Michelle Ruess](#)

609-658-6873 Cell

848-932-4350 Office

2018 State of Preschool Report Shows Progress Stalled in Virginia State Reduces Pre-K Funding, Meets 6 of 10 Minimum Quality Standards

New Brunswick, NJ—Virginia decreased funding for state preschool, and stalled on access at 18% of 4-year-olds—below the national average, 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.

Virginia met just six of 10 minimum quality standards. The state does require state pre-K teachers in public schools to hold a BA degree and provides salary parity with K-3 teachers for those teaching in public school pre-k classrooms.

“Nationally, we are disappointed by the lack of progress,” said NIEER Founder and Senior Co-Director Steven Barnett, Ph.D. “Virginia is stalled and needs to commit resources for pre-K to reach more children and meet quality benchmarks.”

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

Virginia 2017-18 Fast Facts

Met 6 of 10 quality standards benchmarks

Enrolled 17,959 children, a decrease of 64 from 2016-17

Total state funding = \$69,097,643, a decrease of \$2,579,233 from 2016-17

State spending-per-child = \$3,848, compared to \$3,977 in 2016-17

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

National rankings:

- 30 in access for 4-year-olds
- 33 in state spending per child