

METHODOLOGY

The data in this report were collected primarily through surveys of state prekindergarten administrators and focus on the 2007-2008 program year. During July of 2008, links to a web-based survey were sent to administrators of the state-funded preschool initiatives covered in NIEER's 2007 *State Preschool Yearbook*. We also checked with other sources to determine whether any comparable new initiatives had been started since the 2006-2007 program year, or whether we had omitted any initiatives in our previous report. All initiatives included in the current report meet the criteria outlined in the survey, which defines state prekindergarten programs as initiatives that are funded and directed by the state to support group learning experiences for preschool-age children, usually ages 3 and 4. For more information about these criteria, please see "What Qualifies as a State Preschool Program" on page 21.

This report covers the same initiatives as our 2007 report, with five exceptions. During the 2007-2008 program year, new programs were launched in three states with existing programs, Iowa, Ohio and Pennsylvania. In all three states, the previous programs remain as distinct state preschool programs, and in this report the existing programs are profiled separately from the new initiatives. Iowa began the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SVPP), which aims to expand access to preschool education for all 4-year-olds in the state by providing a sustainable source of funding. Ohio's Early Learning Initiative (ELI) updated their eligibility policy so that children are ensured a full year of preschool education through ELI, even if changes occur in their parents' employment and/or economic status. This change means that the ELI program now fits NIEER's definition of a state-funded preschool education program. Pennsylvania launched a fourth preschool education initiative, the Pre-K Counts program, which provides access to prekindergarten programs through funds from the state DOE.



In addition, two state initiatives that were included in the 2007 report are not included in the 2008 report. New York's Targeted Prekindergarten (TPK) program was subsumed by the state's Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) program as a result of a 2006 recommendation by the New York State Board of Regents. This resulted in an almost 50 percent increase in UPK's funding for the 2007-2008 school year, which nearly doubled the number of districts offering the program. Beginning with the 2007-2008 program year, New Mexico's Child Development Program now focuses only on children from birth to age 3. The program no longer serves 4-year-olds and served less than 1 percent of the state's 3-year-olds. Four-year-olds are served by New Mexico's PreK initiative, which is now the only state-funded preschool education program profiled in this report for that state. The District of Columbia also funds a pre-K program but is not included in the 2008 report because the District did not respond to the survey despite repeated requests.

Our survey included yes or no questions, questions that asked state administrators to select which of several choices best described their program, and open-ended questions. Where data were already available in the 2007 *State Preschool Yearbook* we provided the answer from our previous report and asked the administrators to verify that the information was still accurate for the 2007-2008 program year.

In terms of topics, the survey included questions on access, child eligibility and retention, program standards, statewide early learning standards, personnel, resources, quality improvement and accountability, and important changes to the program since the last survey. Most of the questions addressed the same issues as last year's survey, although administrators were asked to report policies that were in place for the 2007-2008 program year. A few additional questions were added to provide more information on the initiatives. The wording of some questions—such as those on special education enrollment, quality improvement, and accountability—was revised to make them clearer and to gather more precise data. Due to formatting revisions to the survey, in some cases the data gathered this year are not completely comparable to data in last year's report, although largely similar information was collected.

After the surveys were completed, we followed up with state administrators to clarify any questions about their responses. Later, we contacted them again to provide them with an opportunity to verify the data we had gathered. At that time, we asked them to review a table with all of the data from their state survey, as well as a narrative about their program. Administrators' responses to our survey, including answers for items not covered in the state profiles, are shown in Appendix A. For the first time, Appendix A (as well as Appendices B, C, D, and E) is online only and can be accessed at <http://www.nieer.org/yearbook>.

Although most of the data in this report were collected through surveys, there are a few exceptions. Total federal, state and local expenditures on K–12 education in 2007–2008 were calculated by NIEER based on data from the National Education Association's report, "Rankings and Estimates: Rankings of the States 2007 and Estimates of School Statistics 2008." Total K–12 spending for each state includes current operating expenditures plus annual capital outlays and interest on school debt. This provides a more complete picture of the full cost of K–12 than including only current operating expenditures, which underestimate the full cost. Our estimate of K–12 expenditures is also more comparable to total prekindergarten spending per child because this funding generally must cover all costs, including facilities. Expenditure per child was calculated for each state by dividing total expenditures by fall 2007 enrollment. We estimated the breakdown of expenditure per child by source, based on reported revenue receipts for pre-K from federal, state and local sources in each state.

The Administration for Children and Families and the Head Start Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services were the sources of data on federal Head Start spending and enrollment. Additional Head Start data are provided in Appendix B.

Populations of 3- and 4-year-olds in each state were obtained from the Census Bureau's Population Estimates datasets and are shown in Appendix D. July estimates of populations at each single year of age are available from the Census Bureau's web site for each year from 2002–2007. Estimates for the July immediately preceding the program year (e.g., July 2007 for the 2007–2008 program year) were used to calculate percentages of 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in state preschool, federal Head Start, and special education.

The U.S. Office of Special Education Programs provided data on special education enrollment in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Preschool Grants program (IDEA Section 619 of Part B) in the 2007–2008 program year. These data are provided in Appendix E.



In the 2008 *Yearbook*, we attempt to provide a more accurate estimate of unduplicated enrollments, whether in state preschool, Head Start, special education, or other settings, through a series of calculations. Because many children who are counted in special education enrollments are also enrolled in state pre-K or Head Start programs, it is important to ensure that those children are not counted twice. Twenty-eight states reported including children in special education in their state pre-K enrollment figures. Only 21 of those states were able to provide the number of 3- and 4-year-olds in special education who were also counted in their enrollment. Those children were subtracted from the special education enrollment figure for the state but remain in the state pre-K enrollment figure in the enrollment pie charts and when calculating total enrollment across both programs. The seven remaining states were unable to report special education enrollment numbers and therefore may have duplicated counts of children in their total state pre-K and special education enrollment figures (See Table 4). It should be noted that Kentucky, Mississippi, Oklahoma and West Virginia served the majority of their 3- and/or 4-year-olds with disabilities in their state pre-K programs. Therefore, it appears that their total enrollment across both programs dropped dramatically compared to last year's report, when in fact it is because children in special education who attend pre-K are no longer double counted.

Where it was not possible to estimate the percentage of 3- or 4-year-old special education students enrolled in state programs, estimates were based on the percentage of children reported to be served in environments other than early childhood settings.¹ Three- and 4-year-olds enrolled in Head Start with an IEP or IFSP, as reported in the 2007-2008 PIR, were also removed from the special education enrollment total used in the enrollment pie charts. Since the PIR does not report a breakdown of special education students by age, estimates were based on total special education enrollment and the percentage of all Head Start enrollees who were 3 or 4 years old. Three-year-olds enrolled in Early Head Start were not included in this estimate.

States are given rankings in four areas: the percentage of 4-year-olds enrolled in state prekindergarten (Access Rankings–4s), the percentage of 3-year-olds enrolled (Access Rankings–3s), state spending per child enrolled (Resources Ranking–State Spending) and all reported spending per child enrolled (Resources Ranking–All Reported Spending). The measures of access for 3- and 4-year-olds were calculated, as described above, using state data on enrollment in the prekindergarten initiatives and Census population data. When a state did not report separate enrollment numbers for 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds, the age breakdown was estimated by other means, such as using the average proportion of children enrolled in state pre-K at each age in states that served both 3- and 4-year-olds and did provide data by age. State per-child spending was calculated by dividing state prekindergarten spending (including TANF spending directed toward the state preschool initiative) by enrollment. All reported spending per child was calculated by dividing the sum of reported state, federal and local spending (including TANF) by enrollment. All states that provided data were ranked, starting with "1" for the state with the greatest percentage of its children enrolled in the state preschool education program or the state initiative that spent the most per child. States that did not serve children at age 3 receive notations of "None Served" on the rankings of access for 3-year-olds. The 12 states that did not fund a preschool education initiative are omitted from all rankings and instead receive notations of "No Program" on their state profile pages.

Additionally, this is the second year we have looked at whether states were funding their state preschool education initiatives at adequate levels to meet the NIEER quality benchmarks. For this analysis, state estimates were constructed from a national estimate in the Institute for Women's Policy Research report, "Meaningful Investments in Pre-K: Estimating the Per-Child Costs of Quality Programs,"² and adjusted for state cost of education differences using the state cost index from the Institute of Education Sciences report, "A Comparable Wage Approach to Geographic Cost Adjustment."³ A state's per-child spending from all reported sources was compared to the per-child spending estimate for a full- or half-day program depending on the operating schedule of the state's program. If the program's operating schedule was determined locally, the half-day estimate was typically used. For states that were determined to be not adequately funding their preschool education initiative(s), we also provide an estimate of how much more money they would need to spend to do so. This estimate was calculated by taking the estimate of how much it would cost to adequately fund preschool education in that state and subtracting per-child spending from all reported sources.

¹ U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Office of Special Education Programs, *28th Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*, 2006, vol. 1, Washington, D.C., 2009.

² Gault, B., Mitchell, A.W., & Williams, E. (2008). *Meaningful Investments in Pre-K: Estimating the Per-Child Costs of Quality Programs*. Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research.

³ Taylor, L. & Fowler, W. (2006). *A Comparable Wage Approach to Geographic Cost Adjustment*. Washington, DC: IES, U.S. Department of Education.