

## METHODOLOGY

The data in this report were collected primarily through surveys of state preschool administrators and focus on the 2009-2010 school year. During July of 2010, links to a web-based survey were sent to administrators of the state-funded prekindergarten initiatives covered in NIEER's 2009 *State Preschool Yearbook*. We also checked with other sources to determine whether any comparable new initiatives had been started since the 2008-2009 school year, or whether we had omitted any initiatives in our previous report. All initiatives included in the current report meet the criteria outlined by NIEER, which defines state preschool education 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 19.

This report covers the same initiatives as our 2009 report, with a few noted exceptions. During the 2009-2010 program year, pilot programs were launched in Alaska and Rhode Island. Both states have started programs that meet NIEER's criteria for state preschool education programs and are included in the report. Alaska's Pilot Prekindergarten Program serves 4-year-olds through a competitive grant process in six districts. Rhode Island's Prekindergarten Demonstration Project also serves 4-year-olds and was available in four urban locations across the state for the 2009-2010 school year. In addition, the DC Public Charter Schools are included in the report, but are profiled separately from the DC Pre-kindergarten Enhancement and Expansion Amendment Act program because their standards differ.

During the 2009-2010 school year, California merged a number of their existing child care programs into one large prekindergarten program called the State Preschool Program. Through this consolidation into one program, the child care programs changed their requirements and now meet NIEER's definition of state preschool. Therefore, while the overall enrollment and spending in California's early childhood programs did not change much, the inclusion of these programs now greatly increases their enrollment and spending numbers in this year's report. Lastly, Ohio's Early Learning Initiative was eliminated for the 2009-2010 program year due to state budget cuts and therefore is not profiled in this report.

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 2009 *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 2009-2010 program year.

In terms of topics, the survey included questions on access, operating schedule, 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 2009-2010 program year. A few additional questions were added to provide more information on the initiatives, specifically related to the evaluation processes that states use to monitor their programs. Questions were asked about the purpose of the evaluation, as well as the frequency and type of data collection used to evaluate the program. The wording of some questions—such as those on health screenings and referrals and the types of meals being served—was revised to make them clearer and to gather more precise data. Several other questions for which many states could not provide data or that were not as relevant to the focus of the report were removed. Due to formatting revisions to the survey, in some cases the data gathered this year are not exactly 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 the narrative about their program. Administrators' responses to our survey, including answers for items not covered in the state profiles, are shown in Appendix A. All of the *Yearbook* Appendices are available online only and can be accessed at <http://www.nieer.org/yearbook>.

Although most of the data in this report were collected through the above-mentioned surveys, there are a few exceptions. Total federal, state, and local expenditures on K–12 education in 2009–2010 were calculated by NIEER based on data from the National Education Association's report, *Rankings and Estimates: Rankings of the States 2010 and Estimates of School Statistics 2011*. 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 education than including only current operating expenditures, which underestimate the full cost. Our estimate of K–12 expenditures is also more comparable to total preschool 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 2009 enrollment. We estimated the breakdown of expenditure per child by source, based on percentages of revenue receipts from federal, state, and local sources in each state.

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) 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. In addition, some data were obtained through surveys administered to the directors of Head Start State Collaboration Offices and through the Head Start Program Information Reports (PIR) for 2009–2010. Head Start data are provided in Appendix B.

The 2010 *State of Preschool Yearbook* also supplies some data on child care programs, which can be found in Appendix C. State-by-state data on income eligibility for child care assistance were obtained from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services report, *Child Care and Development Fund Report of State and Territory Plans FY 2010–2011*. Estimated funding for child care through the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) was acquired from the federal Child Care Bureau and the Administration for Children and Families, respectively. Information on state licensing requirements for child care was provided by *The 2008 Child Care Licensing Study*, a report prepared by the National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center (NCCIC) and the National Association for Regulatory Administration. Average child care worker salaries in each state were attained from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

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 2000 to 2009. Estimates for the July immediately preceding the program year (e.g., July 2009 for the 2009–2010 program year) were used to calculate percentages of 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in state preschool programs, 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 2009–2010 program year. These data are provided in Appendix E.

In the 2010 *Yearbook*, we again 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. Thirty-three states reported including children in special education in their state preschool enrollment figures, while seven do not include these children in their enrollment count. Only 22 of the 33 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 preschool enrollment figure in the enrollment pie charts and when calculating total enrollment across both programs. The 11 remaining states were unable to report special education enrollment numbers and therefore estimations were used based on the average percent of special education students in state pre-K and enrollment numbers for each program (See Table 4). It should be noted that Kentucky, Oklahoma, and West Virginia served all of their 3- and/or 4-year-olds with disabilities in their state preschool education programs.

Three- and 4-year-olds enrolled in Head Start with an IEP or IFSP, as reported in the 2009-2010 PIR, were also removed from the special education enrollment total used in the enrollment pie charts. As 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 programs were not included in this estimate.

States are given rankings in four areas: the percentage of 4-year-olds enrolled in state preschool (Access Ranking – 4-year-olds), the percentage of 3-year-olds enrolled in state preschool (Access Ranking – 3-year-olds), 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 preschool 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 preschool at each age in states that served both 3- and 4-year-olds and provided data by age. State per-child spending was calculated by dividing state preschool spending (including TANF and ARRA spending directed toward the state preschool initiative) by enrollment. All reported spending per child was calculated by dividing the sum of reported local, state, and federal (including TANF) spending by enrollment. All states that provided data were ranked, starting with “1” for the state with the highest 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 10 states that did not fund a prekindergarten initiative are omitted from all rankings and instead receive notations of “No Program” on their state profile pages.

Lastly, this is the fourth year we have looked at whether states were funding their prekindergarten 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*,<sup>1</sup> 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*.<sup>2</sup> A state’s per-child spending from all reported sources was compared to the per-child spending estimate for a half- or full-day program depending on the operating schedule of the state’s program. If a state’s program(s) served children in both half- and full-day programs, a weighted estimate was used based on the percent of children served in each type of operating schedule. 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. This data can be found in Table 7 on page 17.



<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> Taylor, L., & Fowler, W. (2006). *A comparable wage approach to geographic cost adjustment*. Washington, DC: Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.