



For Immediate Release:

April 22, 2026

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Michigan Races Toward Pre-K for All as Preschool Enrollment Increases by Almost 7,000 Four-Year-Olds

Michigan is poised to join Georgia in setting an example for the nation in both pre-K quality and access

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. A new national [report](#) released today highlights Michigan as one of only six states in the country to meet 10 of 10 research-based quality benchmarks for preschool programs—an achievement that underscores the state’s commitment to effective early childhood education. Michigan served 43% of four-year-olds and ranks 17th in the nation for preschool access for four-year-olds, an improvement from 19th last year. Michigan ranked 6th in spending per child, up from 7th last year.

The [National Institute for Early Education Research’s 2025 State of Preschool Yearbook](#) presents a critical snapshot of preschool education in America. Currently, 44 states and DC fund preschool programs. Most state pre-K programs continue to primarily or only serve four-year-olds. Nationally, enrollment reached 37% of four-year-olds but only 9% of three-year-olds.

Additional Michigan findings for the 2024-2025 school year:

- Michigan’s Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) enrolled 47,981 children, an increase of 6,861 from the prior year.
- State spending totaled \$652,720,000, up \$118,264,216 (22%), adjusted for inflation, since last year.
- State spending per child equaled \$13,604 in 2024-2025, up \$606 from 2023-2024, adjusted for inflation.
- Michigan met 10 of 10 quality standards benchmarks.

“Michigan’s progress towards Pre-K for All should be applauded. The state had one of the largest enrollment increases out of all the states this year while maintaining its commitment to providing a quality program and providing full school-day programs to most children in GSRP, **said NIEER director Steve Barnett**. “We look forward to seeing Michigan’s continued progress toward universal quality pre-K and hope to see similar opportunities for three-year-olds soon.”

Nationally, state support for preschool education hit record highs in enrollment and funding in 2024-2025. The pace of growth slowed, however, compared to the prior year, and many states continue to lag behind pre-pandemic enrollment levels.

Only five additional states join Michigan in meeting all 10 of NIEER’s research-based benchmarks for quality – Alabama, Georgia, Hawaii, Mississippi, and Rhode Island—in this year’s report. Georgia made history this year by becoming the largest state-funded preschool program in the nation to reach all 10 quality benchmarks, and the first universally accessible program to do so. NIEER’s benchmarks measure essential preschool quality indicators, including teacher qualifications, class sizes, early learning standards, and curriculum supports.

“Michigan enrolled 55,000 children in GSRP in the 2025-2026 school year. The state will soon join Georgia serving

MICHIGAN: 2025 NATIONAL RANKINGS

- Enrollment at age 4: 17th (43%)
- Enrollment at age 3: None Served
- State spending per child: 6th (\$13,604)
- All reported spending per child: 9th (\$13,604)
- Total benchmarks met: 10*

more than half of four-year-olds and meeting all 10 of NIEER's benchmarks," **said Allison Friedman-Krauss, the report's lead author.** "The state is on its way toward achieving its Pre-K for All goal by 2027."

States spent nearly \$14.4 billion on preschool in 2024-2025. Twenty-eight states increased their investments in preschool from the prior year, for a total increase of \$434 million, or 3%, adjusted for inflation. Including federal and local dollars, total spending was almost \$17.7 billion. Three states each spent more than \$1 billion last year: California (\$4.1 billion), New Jersey (\$1.2 billion), and New York (\$1 billion). Together, these three states account for 45% of all state preschool spending. Texas adds almost another \$1 billion.

Additional information about the *2025 State of Preschool Yearbook*, including individual state profiles and maps, graphs, and state rankings, can be found at www.nieer.org.

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The 2025 State of Preschool Yearbook was supported with funding from the Heising-Simons Foundation and the Gates Foundation.

The National Institute for Early Education Research at the Rutgers Graduate School of Education, New Brunswick, NJ, supports early childhood education policy and practice through independent, objective research and the translation of research to policy and practice.