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2018 State of Preschool Report Shows Rising Quality in Vermont *State Remains a National Leader in Access for both 3- and 4-year-olds*

New Brunswick, NJ—Vermont remained a national leader in state preschool access, enrolling 76% of 4-year-olds and 62% of 3-year-olds statewide and increasing investments, 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.

Enrollment in Vermont pre-k dropped, but spending and spending per child increased. Vermont requires state pre-K teachers to hold a BA as well as salary parity with K-3 teachers—if the pre-K teacher is in a public school classroom.

“Nationally, we are disappointed by the lack of progress,” said NIEER Founder and Senior Co-Director Steven Barnett, Ph.D. “Vermont stands out as a leader, maintaining widespread access for both 3- and 4-year-olds.”

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

Vermont 2017-18 Fast Facts

Met 7 of 10 quality standards benchmarks

Enrolled 8,815 children, a decrease of 128 from 2016-17

Total state funding = \$58,370,955, an increase of \$1,601,891 from 2016-17

State spending-per-child = \$6,622, compared to \$6,348 in 2016-17

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

National rankings:

- 3 in access for 4-year-olds
- 2 in access for 3-year-olds
- 12 in state spending per child