



## Press Release

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### **2016 State of Preschool Yearbook Shows New Mexico Investing More to Reach More Children**

*New Mexico PreK Recognized for Increased Funding and a Focus on Quality*

**[SANTA FE, NM]** – New Mexico boosted PreK funding by almost 30 percent and expanded enrollment, according to the 2016 State of Preschool Yearbook released today by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER). Despite the increase, New Mexico is currently ranked 16<sup>th</sup> in access for 4-year-olds out of 44 states and 22<sup>nd</sup> for access for 3-year-olds among the 29 states that served 3-year-olds.

The State of Preschool Yearbook is the only national report on state-funded preschool programs with detailed information on enrollment, funding, teacher qualifications, and other policies related to quality. State-funded PreK programs are ranked along ten benchmarks of quality. Decades of research shows that early childhood education can prepare children for greater success in elementary school and beyond, with benefits largest for the most disadvantaged-- but only if quality is high.

New Mexico enrolled 9,757 children in PreK, including one-third of state 4-year-olds and almost 2 percent of 3-year-olds. Nationwide, state-funded preschool program enrollment reached an all-time high, serving nearly 1.5 million children, 32 percent of 4-year-olds and five percent of 3-year-olds. Five states met all 10 current quality standards benchmarks. Nine states had programs that met fewer than half; and seven states do not fund preschool at all.

“Early childhood education is one of the best ways we can invest in our children, families and local economy,” said New Mexico Early Childhood Development Partnership (NMECDP) Vice President for Policy and Stakeholder Engagement, Claire Dudley Chavez. “While we are excited to announce NIEER’s findings and the expansion of high-quality NM PreK, we must continue to

work toward providing high-quality pre-K for every New Mexican child, ensuring they get the best possible start in life.”

NM PreK by the numbers in 2016:

- Total state funding was \$51 million in 2015-2016, a 29 percent increase of \$11.3 million from 2014-2015.
- New Mexico’s PreK program served 9,757 children, including 9,254 4-year-olds and 503 3-year-olds. Enrollment increased by 1,360 children from 2014-2015.
- New Mexico ranked 16<sup>th</sup> in access for 4-year-olds out of 44 states and 22<sup>nd</sup> for access for 3-year-olds among the 29 states that served 3-year-olds.
- State funding per child was \$5,233, an increase of \$502 from 2014-2015, ranking 20<sup>th</sup> nationwide.
- New Mexico met eight of NIEER’s 10 current quality standards benchmarks.

Current benchmarks were designed to help states build programs, focusing on resources and policies related to the structural aspects of public pre-K—elements needed for a high-quality program but not fully defining one. This year, NIEER is introducing major revisions to the policy benchmarks for the first time since the Yearbook was launched in 2003. The new benchmarks raise the bar by focusing on policies that more directly support continuous improvement of classroom quality. State profiles in the 2016 Yearbook include both current and new benchmark scores.

New Mexico met 8 of the new benchmarks, meeting new requirements for early learning and development standards that are culturally sensitive, supported, and aligned with other state standards and child assessments. They also met the new requirements for supports for curriculum implementation; professional development, ongoing-coaching, and individualized professional development plans for both lead and assistant teachers; and have a continuous quality improvement system.

“NMECDP is committed to advancing access to NM PreK. We look forward to working with state policy leaders to prioritize funding in order to ensure every child has access to high-quality PreK,” Danila Crespin Zidovsky, Policy Analyst.

The New Mexico Early Childhood Development Partnership will launch the 2017 Expand NM PreK Tour in September. NMECDP will visit the following communities: Roswell, Las Vegas, Silver City, Gallup, Santa Fe, Albuquerque. For more information, please visit [www.nmecdp.org](http://www.nmecdp.org).

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*solely those of the authors. For more information and detailed state-by-state profiles on quality access, and funding, please visit [www.nieer.org](http://www.nieer.org).*