State Preschool Program Evaluations and Research: Research-to-Policy Resources

Numerous research syntheses in the *Research Connections* collection, including two published in early 2016 by the University of Chicago (Elango, Garcia, Heckman, & Hojman, 2015) and the RAND Corporation (Karoly & Auger, 2016), document the value of publicly-funded preschool programs in promoting young children’s school readiness. In recognition of the important role that state-funded preschool programs play in the development and learning of young children, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Education created the Preschool Development Grants program, which awarded more than $500 million to states to either create or expand high-quality preschool programs. Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grantees have used funds to bring state-funded preschool programs into tiered quality rating and improvement systems and to increase enrollment of children with special needs in state-funded preschool programs.

Every year since 2003, the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) has published an annual state preschool yearbook that examines access to, quality standards in, and resources devoted to state-funded preschool programs. Based on a survey of state preschool administrators, the yearbook contains profiles for each state, the District of Columbia, and the United States territories. It defines state preschool programs, often also referred to as state prekindergarten programs, as those that: are funded, controlled, and directed by the state; serve at least one percent of a state’s three- and four-year-olds; focus on early childhood education; are distinct from the subsidized child care system; offer services at least two days a week; are not primarily intended to serve children with disabilities; and can also include the use of state funding to supplement Head Start if it substantially expands the number of children served, and if the state assumes some administrative responsibility for the program. The 2015 yearbook identifies state-funded preschool programs in 43 states serving nearly 1.4 million children (Barnett et al., 2016).
Many states with preschool programs, as well as other interested organizations and individuals, have undertaken research and evaluation efforts to improve their understanding of state preschool program implementation, results, and impacts. A 2004 review by Gilliam and Zigler examined state efforts to evaluate preschool programs from 1997 to 2003 (Gilliam & Zigler, 2004). Their definition of an evaluation required that it “focus on a state-funded prekindergarten system...[and] provide data by which program impacts on child outcomes can be reasonably estimated (even if the methods are weak), and evaluate a statewide sample” (p. 6).

This Research-to-Policy Resource List provides a comprehensive list of evaluations and research in the Research Connections collection on state preschool programs identified in the 2015 NIEER state preschool yearbook (Barnett et al., 2016). The criteria used to compile this list are broader than those used by Gilliam and Zigler; this list also includes publications that examine program quality, workforce and provider characteristics, estimates of program economic returns, and features of program service delivery. Additionally, for a publication to be included, its findings must identify which state the program is in.

If you know of state preschool program evaluation and research publications not included in this list, please let us know at contact@researchconnections.org.

Alabama  Hawaii  Michigan  New York  Tennessee
Alaska  Idaho  Minnesota  North Carolina  Texas
Arizona  Illinois  Mississippi  North Dakota  Utah
Arkansas  Indiana  Missouri  Ohio  Vermont
California  Iowa  Montana  Oklahoma  Virginia
Colorado  Kansas  Nebraska  Oregon  Washington
Connecticut  Kentucky  Nevada  Pennsylvania  West Virginia
Delaware  Louisiana  New Hampshire  Rhode Island  Wisconsin
District of Columbia  Maine  New Jersey  South Carolina  Wyoming
Florida  Maryland  New Mexico  South Dakota  Multistate
Georgia  Massachusetts
Alabama


Alabama. Department of Early Childhood Education. (2016). *Chronic absenteeism: Differences between First Class Pre-K students and non-First Class Pre-K students*. (First Class Pre-K Issue Brief 1). Montgomery, AL: Alabama, Department of Early Childhood Education.


**Alaska**


**Arizona**


**Arkansas**


**California**


Colorado


Connecticut


**Delaware**


District of Columbia


Florida


program: An overview of the largest state pre-school program in the nation. Charlottesville: University of Virginia, EdPolicyWorks.


Georgia


Cascio, E., & Schanzenbach, D. (2013). The impacts of expanding access to high-quality


Early, D., Maxwell, K., Burchinal, M., Alva, S., Bender, R. H., Bryant, D. M., Cai, K., & et al. (2007). Teachers' education, classroom quality, and young children's academic skills: Results from seven studies of preschool programs. Child Development, 78(2), 558-580.


experiences in Georgia’s Pre-K Program: Findings from the 2011-2012 evaluation study. Chapel Hill, NC: FPG Child Development Institute.


Hawaii


Idaho (no program)

Illinois


Institute.


**Indiana**


one update. Indianapolis, IN: Indiana, Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning.

Iowa


**Kansas (no publications)**

**Kentucky (no publications)**

**Louisiana**


University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Cecil J. Picard Center for Child Development and Lifelong


Maine


Maryland


student achievement: Effective public prekindergarten programs in Maryland and Louisiana. In R.C. Pianta & C. Howes (Eds.), The promise of pre-k (pp. 79-105). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.


Massachusetts


and Care.


**Michigan**


**Minnesota**


**Mississippi**


Department of Education.

Mississippi. Department of Education. (2016). *Pre-kindergarten assessment results for Early Learning Collaboratives and other four-year-old classrooms*. Jackson, MS: Mississippi, Department of Education.


Missouri


Elementary and Secondary Education..


**Montana**


**Nebraska**


**Nevada**


and Secondary Education, and School Improvement Programs.


New Hampshire (no program)

New Jersey


Rice, C., & Tarr, J. E. (2001). *Expanding our horizons: Early childhood program implementation in*
New Jersey’s ECPA districts. Newark, NJ: Association for Children of New Jersey.


New Mexico


**New York**


North Carolina


Early, D., Maxwell, K., Burchinal, M., Alva, S., Bender, R. H., Bryant, D. M., Cai, K., & et al. (2007). Teachers' education, classroom quality, and young children's academic skills: Results from seven studies of preschool programs. *Child Development*, 78(2), 558-580.


Institute.


North Dakota (no program)

Ohio


**Oklahoma**


University, Center for Research on Children in the United States.


Lawrimore, T., & Gormley, Jr., W. T. (2017). *Tulsa pre-K alumni are more likely to complete Algebra I early*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University, Center for Research on Children in the United States.


Oregon


Pennsylvania


**Rhode Island**


South Carolina


South Carolina Education Oversight Committee. (2007). *Update to the interim report on the first year implementation of the Child Development Education Pilot Program (CDEPP)*. Columbia:


South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness (Program). (2004). *South Carolina First Steps:


South Dakota (no program)
Tennessee


Texas


Sanborn, R., McConnell, K., Kimball, M., Canales, A., Davila, J., Everitt, S., O'Quinn, K., & et al. (n.d.). *Pre-k in Texas: A critical component for academic success.* Houston, TX: Children At Risk Institute.


Texas Comprehensive Center. (n.d.). *The 2016-17 High-Quality Prekindergarten Grant: The road to quality in 10 Texas districts and charter schools.* Austin, TX: Texas Comprehensive Center.


**Utah (no program)**

**Vermont**


**Virginia**


**Washington**


Washington (State). Department of Early Learning.  (n.d.). *Year one report: ECEAP Family*
West Virginia


**Wisconsin**


**Wyoming (no program)**

**Multistate**


Early, D., Maxwell, K., Burchinal, M., Alva, S., Bender, R. H., Bryant, D. M., Cai, K., & et al. (2007). Teachers' education, classroom quality, and young children's academic skills: Results from seven studies of preschool programs. *Child Development*, 78(2), 558-580.


References


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