

Child Care & Early Education **RESEARCH CONNECTIONS**

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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.

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

Alabama

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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.

Alabama. Department of Early Childhood Education. (2016). *Preschool Development Grants: 2015 annual performance report: Alabama*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

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Alabama. Department of Early Childhood Education. (2018). *Special education needs: Differences between First Class Pre-K students and non-First Class Pre-K students and potential cost savings*. (First Class Pre-K Issue Brief 5a). Montgomery, AL: Alabama, Department of Early Childhood Education.

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University of Alabama at Birmingham. School of Public Health. (2017). *First Class Pre-K Parent Survey report*. Birmingham: University of Alabama at Birmingham, School of Public Health.

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Alaska

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Arizona

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Arizona. Department of Education. (2017). *Preschool development grants: 2016 annual performance report: Arizona*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

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Arkansas

Argue, S., & Holland, G. (n.d.). *Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) shrinks gap in kindergarten readiness for economically disadvantaged students*. Conway: Arkansas Research Center.

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Hawaii

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Idaho (no program)

Illinois

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