

TALKING POINTS
State of Preschool Yearbook 2009

**Recession Hits State Preschool Programs; More Cuts Expected
Annual Survey Shows Drop in Spending Per Child**

This year' Yearbook finds great disparities among the states and the recession will exacerbate those disparities even further.

- **Eleven states have proposed budget cuts to state pre-K for FY '11. More may be coming as state legislators cope with budget shortfalls. (AZ, CA, FL, IL, KS, KY, LA, NY, PA, CO, WI)**
- **The effects of the recession are hitting preschool-age children, with the rapid rates of increase that we saw in recent years shrinking.**
- **The immediate future of pre-K seems much more perilous than past trends might suggest.**
- **Total enrollment and spending increased – but the average amount states spent per child, when adjusted for inflation, declined, from \$4179 in 2008 to \$4143 in 2009, ending an upward trend.**
- **Real spending per child declined in 24 out of 38 states with programs.**
- **Total funding for State Pre-K rose to more than \$5 billion. The increase in state funding was \$446 million, about half the increase of the previous year.**
- **Enrollment increased by more than 81,000 children bringing the total of children at state pre-K to more than 1.2 million, with more than 1 million being 4-year-olds.**
- **Yet, enrollment went down in nine states – Arizona, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri and Oklahoma.**

- **Twelve states continued to have no state pre-K programs in the reporting year of the 2009 Yearbook, the 08-09 school year – Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Mississippi, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming.**
- **Two of those twelve, Alaska and Rhode Island began a pilot pre-K program in the current 09-10 school year.**
- **Oklahoma remained the only state where almost every child had the opportunity to attend a quality preschool education program at age 4. Oklahoma was rated as the leader of the top 10 states in the country. The others were Arkansas, West Virginia, New Jersey, Maryland, Georgia, North Carolina, Illinois, Louisiana and Tennessee.**
- **Twenty-three of 38 states with state-funded preschool failed to fully meet NIEER benchmarks for teacher qualifications and 26 failed to meet the benchmark for assistant teacher qualifications. Seven states had programs that met fewer than half of the benchmarks for quality standards. States failing to meet most benchmarks included three of the four states with the largest number of children —California, Texas, and Florida.**
- **Texas sets no maximum class sizes or limits on staff-child ratios. California and Maine had limits on staff-child ratios but no class size limit. Most other states limited classes to 20 or fewer children with a teacher and an assistant.**
- **The federal government needs to place a greater emphasis on providing incentives to states for educationally effective pre-K programs.**
- **As pure economic stimulus it's hard to beat pre-K programs. Pre-K is a high-return investment in our children's future that will help pay for the deficits we run now.**
- **The alternative of cheap child care with low standards may reach more families, but it is bad policy, doing little to improve child development or the quality of our future workforce.**