



# Early Learning

## Finance

Education Commission of the States

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## State Pre-K Funding: 2014-15 fiscal year

By Bruce Atchison and Emily Workman

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For the third year in a row both Republican and Democratic policymakers are making significant investments in state-funded pre-K programs. An analysis of 2014-15 appropriations by the 50 states and the District of Columbia shows the following key findings:

### National overview

- Nationwide, state funding for pre-K increased by \$479 million, to a total of \$6.3 billion. This is a 8.3 percent increase in state investment in pre-K programs over fiscal year 2013-14. This year's increase builds on a 6.9 percent funding increase from the prior year.
- Only six states provided no state funding for pre-K: Idaho, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming.

### State-by-state

- Of the 44 states plus the District of Columbia funding pre-K programs serving primarily 4-year-olds, 28 states and the District of Columbia increased their total investment in pre-K, with 10 of those states increasing funding by more than 20 percent.
- Thirty-seven individual programs received an increase in funding.
- Five states decreased funding.
- Funding remained flat in 11 states.
- Of the 44 states, 25 had Republican governors and 19 had Democratic governors.

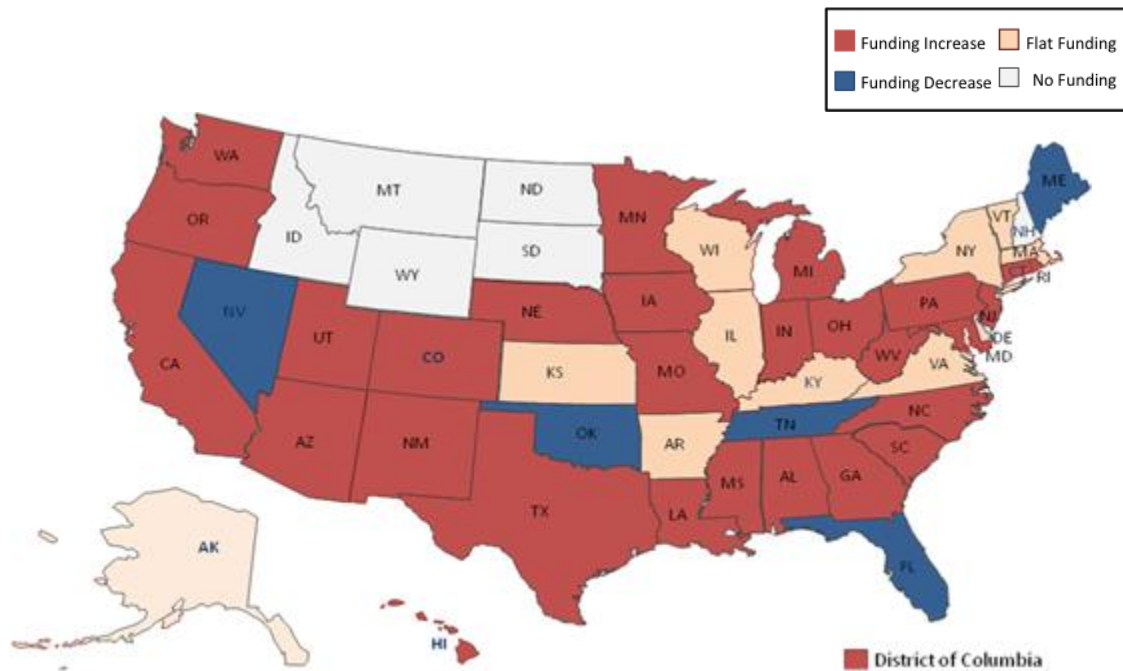
### State examples

- South Carolina increased its funding by more than half.
- Both Hawaii and Utah made first-time investments in pre-K of \$3 million each. In Utah through the "Utah School Readiness Initiative," and in Hawaii through the "Executive Office of Early Learning Pre-kindergarten Program."

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## Changes in state appropriations for pre-K programs serving 4-year-olds: FY 2013-14 – FY 2014-15



Source: Emily Workman, Education Commission of the States

### The Largest Funding Increases

The following states either increased their funding for 4-year-old pre-K programs by at least 20 percent, or their threshold hit \$10 million:

State	Increased Funding (in dollars)
California	\$204,600,000
Michigan	\$65,000,000
Texas	\$58,375,246
South Carolina	\$26,920,701
Alabama	\$16,245,000
Washington	\$16,245,000
Ohio	\$12,000,000
Pennsylvania	\$10,000,000

State	Increased Funding (in percentages)
South Carolina	51.3%
Michigan	37.3%
Rhode Island	36.4%
Ohio	36.1%
Alabama	36.0%
New Mexico	32.3%
California	29.3%
Washington	27.0%
Missouri	26.2%
Nebraska	22.7%

Note: Hawaii, Indiana and Utah are not included because they created new programs and thus had 100 percent increases.

Source: Emily Workman, Education Commission of the States

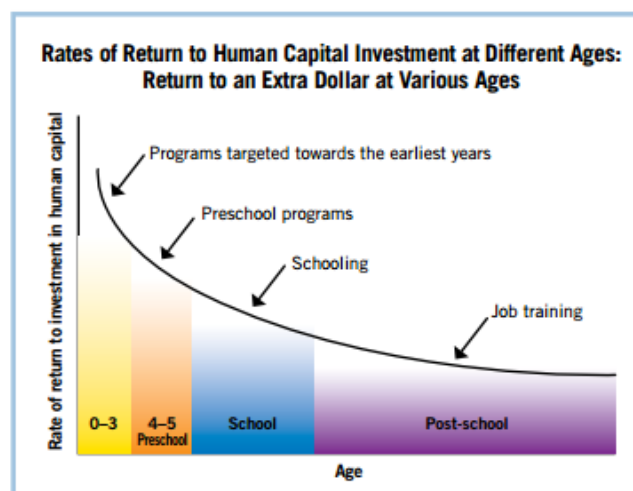
## Why Pre-K Matters

Once considered a strategy to support working parents with child care needs, the majority of states now view access to high-quality preschool programs as a critical long-term economic investment in the future workforce.

The age at which students enter pre-K is a critical period for cognitive, social and behavioral development and lays the foundation for future success in school and life. It is in the pre-K classroom where students develop the soft skills needed for future success, such as the management of emotions and the ability to establish positive and rewarding relationships with others. These essential skills support early reading and math aptitude, predict later academic achievement and help children learn what is necessary to be kindergarten-ready.

An alarming 66 percent of fourth-graders in public schools are not reading proficiently, which contributes to the nation's abysmal dropout rates.<sup>1</sup> By offering children a high-quality learning environment in a pre-K classroom, a new path may be charted for them.

Children from low-income families can especially benefit from a quality pre-K experience. A Stanford University study found that by 18 months, toddlers from low-income families already were several months behind their more advantaged peers in language development.<sup>2</sup> And this gap continues to widen before school entry at age 5, leaving disadvantaged students up to two years behind.



Source: James Heckman, [Presenting the Heckman Equation](#)

A recent analysis integrating evaluations of 84 preschool programs concluded that, on average, children gain about one-third of a year of additional learning across language, reading and math skills when attending quality preschool programs.<sup>3</sup>

Students coming from high-quality pre-K programs are more academically prepared for K-12 learning compared to similar students not enrolled in such programs. Pre-K has been increasingly recognized by policymakers as a vital component in ensuring preparedness for the high expectations set in K-3 classrooms of the 21st century. This is evidenced by the number of states that have increased funding and access in the 2014-15 year. Still, less than half (46 percent) of 3- and 4-year-olds currently attend publicly funded preschools in the U.S.<sup>4</sup>

Simply investing in additional pre-K slots, however, does not guarantee high individual and economic payouts. To make a difference, programs need to meet high standards and demonstrate practices proven to positively affect children's development and school success. Ensuring the quality of current programs is a necessary and required step. Therefore, as policymakers continue to invest in and expand access to their state's pre-K programs, they should ensure that high-quality standards are in place for state-funded preschools to follow.

## *2014 State Highlights*

### **California significantly expands pre-K slots**

California's significant investment in pre-K brings the total number of state preschool slots to almost 150,000. The budget agreement calls for 11,500 new, full-day and full-year preschool slots for 4-year-olds from low-income families in the coming fiscal year, as well as the creation of 31,500 new slots for low-income 4-year-olds in future years.<sup>5</sup>

### **Maryland offers pre-K expansion grants to providers**

Maryland authorized \$4.3 million in Prekindergarten Expansion Grants to providers throughout the state. Under the expansion, the state is partnering with local providers and schools systems to expand high-quality full- and half-day pre-K to another 1,563 children.<sup>6</sup>

### **Hawaii creates its first state-funded pre-K program**

Twenty-one new pre-K classrooms will open in Hawaii, providing 420 students access to state-funded pre-K. Many of the classrooms will be located on neighbor islands and in rural areas.

### **Indiana makes investment in pre-K for first time**

Indiana has created a pre-K pilot program in five counties that will award grants to 4-year-olds from low-income families so that they will have access to a high-quality pre-K program the year before they begin kindergarten. The state's Office of Early Learning and Out-of-School Time has also awarded Early Education Matching Grants to 30 different early learning programs in 15 counties across the state. These grant funds are now supporting the cost of high quality pre-K services for more than 414 low-income 4-year-old children.

## *A Need for an Ongoing Bipartisan Effort*

Whether it is efforts to increase investments in pre-K or creating new investments, states have indicated for the third year in a row that investing in pre-K is a priority. And this issue is clearly a bipartisan one with Democrats and Republicans alike showing their support. Findings indicate that a total of 28 states plus the District of Columbia increased their investments in pre-K, and state investment in pre-K rose by 12 percent nationally.

These findings paint a promising picture for preschoolers across the country, but states cannot become complacent — there is still a long road ahead. With just 46 percent of age-eligible children attending pre-K across the country<sup>7</sup> and just 4 percent of 3-year-olds and 28 percent of 4-year-olds attending state-funded programs,<sup>8</sup> policymakers should continue to prioritize the expansion of high-quality, state-funded pre-K in their states.

Setting children on a path to academic success early in life is a proven and effective way to prevent high school dropouts, increase third-grade reading proficiency and secure the economic stability of the country and future workforce. The future of any society depends on its ability to foster the well-being of the next generation. Today's children will become tomorrow's parents and leaders.

## Total state pre-K funding

State	FY 2013-14	FY 2014-15	Change (In Dollars)	Change (In Percentage)
Alabama	\$28,462,050	\$38,624,146	\$16,245,000	57.1%
Alaska	\$11,186,600	\$11,185,100	-\$1,500	0.0%
Arizona	\$15,994,407	\$17,220,685	\$1,226,278	7.7%
Arkansas	\$103,500,000	\$103,500,000	\$0	0.0%
California	\$698,900,000	\$903,500,000	\$204,600,000	29.3%
Colorado	\$80,051,582	\$82,618,185	\$2,566,603	3.2%
Connecticut	\$86,580,685	\$96,358,572	\$9,777,887	11.3%
Delaware	\$6,149,300	\$6,149,300	\$0	0.0%
District of Columbia	\$158,483,132	\$164,539,332	\$6,056,200	3.8%
Florida	\$404,927,801	\$396,065,224	-\$8,862,577	-2.2%
Georgia	\$312,173,630	\$314,300,032	\$2,126,402	0.7%
Hawaii	\$0	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	100.0%
Idaho				
Illinois	\$300,192,400	\$300,192,400	\$0	0.0%
Indiana	\$1,500,000	\$12,000,000	\$10,500,000	700.0%
Iowa	\$73,816,218	\$78,721,479	\$4,905,261	6.6%
Kansas	\$41,208,296	\$41,288,990	\$80,694	0.2%
Kentucky	\$71,315,300	\$71,315,300	\$0	0.0%
Louisiana	\$90,167,028	\$90,281,071	\$114,043	0.1%
Maine	\$16,402,890	\$16,383,452	-\$19,438	-0.1%
Maryland	\$101,199,495	\$110,164,245	\$8,964,750	8.9%
Massachusetts	\$16,600,000	\$16,600,000	\$0	0.0%
Michigan	\$174,275,000	\$239,275,000	\$65,000,000	37.3%
Minnesota	\$53,195,000	\$59,920,000	\$6,725,000	12.6%
Mississippi	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$0	0.0%
Missouri	\$15,254,429	\$19,258,100	\$4,003,671	26.2%
Montana				
Nebraska	\$25,513,695	\$31,298,523	\$5,784,828	22.7%
Nevada	\$3,338,875	\$3,247,375	-\$91,500	-2.7%
New Hampshire				
New Jersey	\$648,070,242	\$652,843,000	\$4,772,758	0.7%
New Mexico	\$29,935,900	\$39,600,000	\$9,664,100	32.3%
New York	\$410,034,734	\$410,034,734	\$0	0.0%
North Carolina	\$140,546,411	\$144,927,934	\$4,381,523	3.1%
North Dakota				
Ohio	\$33,268,341	\$45,268,341	\$12,000,000	36.1%
Oklahoma	\$169,218,892	\$142,985,254	-\$26,233,638	-15.5%

State	FY 2013-14	FY 2014-15	Change (In Dollars)	Change (In Percentage)
Oregon	\$61,069,890	\$66,354,262	\$5,284,372	8.7%
Pennsylvania	\$126,462,000	\$136,462,000	\$10,000,000	7.9%
Rhode Island	\$2,750,000	\$3,750,000	\$1,000,000	36.4%
South Carolina	\$52,513,846	\$79,434,547	\$26,920,701	51.3%
South Dakota				
Tennessee	\$87,687,500	\$86,366,000	-\$1,321,500	-1.5%
Texas	\$750,124,754	808,500,000	\$58,375,246	7.8%
Utah	\$0	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	100.0%
Vermont	\$17,931,751	\$17,931,751	\$0	0.0%
Virginia	\$68,569,714	\$68,569,714	\$0	0.0%
Washington	\$60,229,000	\$76,474,000	\$16,245,000	27.0%
West Virginia	\$90,000,000	\$92,612,807	\$2,612,807	2.9%
Wisconsin	\$170,224,100	\$170,224,100	\$0	0.0%
Wyoming				
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$5,796,030,481</b>	<b>\$6,275,344,955</b>	<b>\$479,234,474</b>	<b>8.3%</b>

### State pre-K funding: By program

State	Program	FY 2013-14	FY 2014-15	Change (In Dollars)	Change (Percentage)
Alabama	First Class Pre-K	\$28,462,050	\$38,624,146	\$10,162,096	35.7%
Alaska	Alaska Pre-K Program	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$0	0.0%
	Head Start	\$9,186,600	9,185,100	-\$1,500	0.0%
Arizona	Quality First Scholarships	\$15,994,407	\$17,220,685	\$1,226,278	7.7%
Arkansas	Arkansas Better Chance	\$103,500,000	\$103,500,000	\$0	0.0%
California	State Preschool	\$698,900,000	\$903,500,000	\$204,600,000	29.3%
Colorado	Colorado Preschool Program	\$80,051,582	\$82,618,185	\$2,566,603	3.2%
Connecticut	Priority School Readiness	\$74,636,579	\$80,853,135	\$6,216,556	8.3%
	Competitive School Readiness	\$6,509,638	\$9,761,344	\$3,251,706	50.0%
	Head Start	\$5,434,468	\$5,744,093	\$309,625	5.7%
Delaware	Early Childhood Assistance Program	\$6,149,300	\$6,149,300	\$0	0.0%
District of Columbia	Pre-K	\$158,483,132	\$164,539,332	\$6,056,200	3.8%

State	Program	FY 2013-14	FY 2014-15	Change (In Dollars)	Change (Percentage)
Florida	Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK)	\$404,927,801	\$396,065,224	-\$8,862,577	-2.2%
Georgia	Georgia Pre-K Program	\$312,173,630	\$314,300,032	\$2,126,402	0.7%
Hawaii	Executive Office of Early Learning Pre-K Program	\$0	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	100.0%
Idaho					
Illinois	Early Childhood Block Grant	\$300,192,400	\$300,192,400	\$0	0.0%
Indiana	On My Way Pre-K	\$0	\$10,000,000	\$10,000,000	100.0%
	Early Education Matching Program Grant	\$1,500,000	\$2,000,000	\$500,000	33.3%
Iowa	Statewide Voluntary Preschool for 4-Year-Olds	\$66,099,739	\$71,000,000	\$4,900,261	7.4%
	Shared Vision At-Risk Preschool Program	\$7,716,479	\$7,721,479	\$5,000	0.1%
Kansas	State Pre-Kindergarten Program	\$18,279,000	\$18,360,000	\$81,000	0.4%
	Kansas Preschool Program	\$4,799,812	\$4,799,812	\$0	0.0%
	Early Childhood Block Grant	\$18,129,484	\$18,129,178	-\$306	0.0%
Kentucky	Kentucky Preschool Program	\$71,315,300	\$71,315,300	\$0	0.0%
Louisiana	LA 4	\$74,576,140	\$74,576,369	\$229	0.0%
	Nonpublic School Early Childhood Development Program	\$7,184,800	\$7,181,440	-\$3,360	0.0%
	Student Enhancement Block Grant (8g)	\$8,406,088	\$8,523,262	\$117,174	1.4%
Maine	Public Preschool Program	\$13,328,853	\$13,870,722	\$541,869	4.1%
	Head Start	\$3,074,037	\$2,512,730	-\$561,307	-18.3%
Maryland	Maryland Pre-Kindergarten Program	\$98,395,141	\$106,564,245	\$8,169,104	8.3%
	Head Start	\$1,004,354	\$1,800,000	\$795,646	79.2%
	Preschool for All	\$1,800,000	\$1,800,000	\$0	0.0%

State	Program	FY 2013-14	FY 2014-15	Change (In Dollars)	Change (Percentage)
<b>Massachusetts</b>	Universal Pre-Kindergarten Program	\$7,500,000	\$7,500,000	\$0	0.0%
	Head Start Supplemental	\$9,100,000	\$9,100,000	\$0	0.0%
<b>Michigan</b>	Great Start Readiness Program	\$174,275,000	\$239,275,000	\$65,000,000	37.3%
<b>Minnesota</b>	School Readiness Program	\$10,095,000	\$12,170,000	\$2,075,000	20.6%
	Head Start Supplemental	\$20,100,000	\$20,100,000	\$0	0.0%
	Early Learning Scholarships	\$23,000,000	\$27,650,000	\$4,650,000	20.2%
<b>Mississippi</b>	Early Learning Collaborative	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$0	0.0%
<b>Missouri</b>	Missouri Preschool Project	\$11,754,429	\$15,758,100	\$4,003,671	34.1%
	Child Development Missouri Early Head Start	\$3,500,000	\$3,500,000	\$0	0.0%
<b>Montana</b>					
<b>Nebraska</b>	School Funding Formula	\$21,897,733	\$24,213,359	\$2,315,626	10.6%
	Early Childhood Education Grant Program	\$3,615,962	\$7,085,164	\$3,469,202	95.9%
<b>Nevada</b>	Early Childhood Education	\$3,338,875	\$3,247,375	-\$91,500	-2.7%
<b>New Hampshire</b>					
<b>New Jersey</b>	Preschool Education Aid	\$648,070,242	\$652,843,000	\$4,772,758	0.7%
<b>New Mexico</b>	Pre-K Program	\$29,935,900	\$39,600,000.00	\$9,664,100	32.3%
<b>New York</b>	Universal PreKindergarten	\$385,034,734	\$385,034,734	\$0	0.0%
	Priority PreKindergarten	\$25,000,000	\$25,000,000	\$0	0.0%
<b>North Carolina</b>	NC Pre-K Program	\$140,546,411	\$144,927,934	\$4,381,523	3.1%
<b>North Dakota</b>					
<b>Ohio</b>	Early Childhood Education	\$33,268,341	\$45,268,341	\$12,000,000	36.1%



State	Program	FY 2013-14	FY 2014-15	Change (In Dollars)	Change (Percentage)
Oklahoma	Early Childhood 4-Year-Old Program	\$169,218,892	\$142,985,254	-\$26,233,638	-15.5%
Oregon	Head Start Pre-Kindergarten	\$61,069,890	\$66,354,262	\$5,284,372	8.7%
Pennsylvania	Pre-K Counts	\$87,284,000	\$97,284,000	\$10,000,000	11.5%
	Head Start Supplemental Assistance	\$39,178,000	\$39,178,000	\$0	0.0%
Rhode Island	Pre-K	\$1,950,000	\$2,950,000	\$1,000,000	51.3%
	Head Start	\$800,000	\$800,000	\$0	0.0%
South Carolina	Child Development Education Pilot Program: Full-Day 4K	\$37,000,000	\$63,920,701	\$26,920,701	72.8%
	EIA Half-Day Child Development Program	\$15,513,846	\$15,513,846	\$0	0.0%
	First Steps Expansion <sup>9</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
South Dakota					
Tennessee	Voluntary Pre-K Program	\$87,687,500	\$86,366,000	-\$1,321,500	-1.5%
Texas	Pre-Kindergarten Program	\$731,624,754	790,000,000	\$58,375,246	8.0%
	Supplemental Funding for Pre-K	\$15,000,000	\$15,000,000	\$0	0.0%
	Texas School Ready!	\$3,500,000	\$3,500,000	\$0	0.0%
Utah	Utah School Readiness Initiative	\$0	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	100.0%
Vermont	ACT 62	\$16,800,000	\$16,800,000	\$0	0.0%
	Early Education Initiative	\$1,131,751	\$1,131,751	\$0	0.0%
Virginia	Preschool Initiative	\$68,569,714	\$68,569,714	\$0	0.0%
Washington	Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program	\$60,229,000	\$76,474,000	\$16,245,000	27.0%
West Virginia	Early Childhood Education Program	\$90,000,000	\$92,612,807	\$2,612,807	2.9%

State	Program	FY 2013-14	FY 2014-15	Change (In Dollars)	Change (Percentage)
Wisconsin	4-Year-Old Kindergarten	\$162,610,000	\$162,610,000	\$0	0.0%
	4-Year-Old Kindergarten: Start-up grants	\$1,350,000	\$1,350,000	\$0	0.0%
	Head Start Supplement	\$6,264,100	\$6,264,100	\$0	0.0%
Wyoming					
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>\$5,796,030,481</b>	<b>\$6,275,344,955</b>	<b>\$479,234,474</b>	<b>8.3%</b>

## Authors

*This report was created by Emily Workman, policy analyst and manager of the Information Clearinghouse, and Bruce Atchison, director of ECS' Early Learning Institute and executive director of Policy and Operations.*

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> The Annie E. Casey Foundation. 2014 Kids Count Data Book: State Trends in Child Well-Being. P.28

<http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-2014kidscountdatabook-2014.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> A. Fernald, V.A. Marchman, and A. Weisleder (2013). *SES differences in language processing skill and vocabulary are evident at 18 months*. *Developmental Science*, 16(2), pp.234–248.

<sup>3</sup> Investing in Our Future: The Evidence Base on Preschool Education. October 2013. <http://fed.us.org/resources/evidence-base-preschool>

<sup>4</sup> The Annie E. Casey Foundation. 2013 Kids Count Data Book: State Trends in Child Well-Being.

<http://www.aecf.org/~media/Pubs/Initiatives/KIDS%20COUNT/123/2013KIDSCOUNTDataBook/2013KIDSCOUNTDataBookr.pdf> [Accessed 24 November 2013].

<sup>5</sup> Early Edge California, *California budget agreement is biggest expansion to early education in a decade*, 2014.

<http://www.earlyedgecalifornia.org/news-media/media-coverage/2014/california-budget-agreement.html>

<sup>6</sup> Press Release: Lt. Governor Brown, MSDE Announce \$4.3 Million In Grants To Fund Maryland's Prekindergarten Expansion: State partnering with local providers and school systems to expand high quality pre-K to an additional 1,563 children. [http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/press/07\\_28\\_2014\\_a.html](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/press/07_28_2014_a.html)

<sup>7</sup> Annie E. Casey Foundation, *2014 Kids Count Data Book: State Trends in Child Well-Being*.

<http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-2014kidscountdatabook-2014.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> The National Institute of Early Education Research, *The State of Preschool 2013*.

<http://nieer.org/sites/nieer/files/yearbook2013.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Data not provided.

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