

# The state of preschool 2010 <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

Main NIEER Yearbook website <sup>[2]</sup>

Excerpts from the introduction:

In the 2009-2010 school year the effects of the recession became fully apparent despite federal government aid to the states for education. Total enrollment barely increased over the prior year. Total spending by the states decreased, and per child spending declined in inflation-adjusted dollars. Without the aid from federal economic stimulus, funding per child would have been even lower, approaching its lowest level since 2002 when NIEER began tracking spending. The depth of the decline varies considerably by state. A few states made modest progress. Many held steady. Others faced cutbacks that were sometimes severe. Overall, state cuts to pre-K transformed the recession into a depression for many young children in the 2009-2010 school year.

All the news was not bad. Alaska and Rhode Island created new pre-K programs in the 2009-2010 school year. These are the first new states to provide pre-K in many years, though both efforts are modest pilot programs. Nationally, pre-K enrollment was just over 26 percent at age 4 as the total across all states increased by nearly 27,000 children. Yet the bad news outweighed the good. The decline in spending per child comes on top of the previous year's decline. Many states already failed to provide enough funding to ensure programs could meet minimum quality standards, so this is a serious problem. Rather than raising quality, states are struggling not to lose what they have.

**Region:** United States <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** funding <sup>[4]</sup>

spaces <sup>[5]</sup>

pre-school <sup>[6]</sup>

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