

# D.C. scores well on preschool amid cuts in some states <sup>[1]</sup>

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## EXCERPTS

A new national survey gives the District of Columbia high marks for enrollment and spending on preschool education programs at a time when some states have cut back because of tight budgets.

The State of Preschool 2010, being released Tuesday by the National Institute for Early Education Research at Rutgers University, shows that:

Five states - Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, and Ohio - now enroll fewer children in state preschool programs than they did 10 years ago.

Nine states, including Maryland, cut enrollment of 3-year-olds by 10 percent or more. The other states were Connecticut, Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, Ohio, South Carolina and Washington.

Twenty-three of 40 states failed to fully meet the institute's benchmarks for teacher qualifications. Twenty-six did not meet the benchmark for assistant teacher qualifications.

Overall state spending was almost \$700 per child below its 2001-2002 level.

But there was good news in Washington, D.C., it says, where 80 percent of the city's 4-year-olds and 49 percent of the district's 3-year-olds were enrolled in programs in 2009-2010. The city spent an average of \$11,457 per child in its pre-K programs, well above the national average, \$4,028 per child. And rated against a series of benchmarks for quality, city programs earned 6.8 out of a possible 10.

The top 10 states ranked by percentage of 4-year-olds enrolled are Oklahoma, Florida, West Virginia, Georgia, Vermont, Wisconsin, Texas, New York, Arkansas and Iowa. (The District is not officially ranked with the other states but data is collected in the same way.)

The annual study is conducted by Steven Barnett, co-director of the institute, who warned that failure to properly fund pre-K programs will negatively affect the school readiness of youngsters.

Scores of research over years has shown that children who attend high-quality preschool are more likely to graduate from high school and attend college, less likely to be held back in school, become parents as teenagers or commit crimes.

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