



FACT SHEET

The State of Early Childhood in Nevada

April 10, 2015

Nevada established the State Pre-Kindergarten Education Program, or PEP, for eligible 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds in 2001.¹ Although Nevada serves a small percentage of children, it successfully delivers a program that meets most quality standards. Enrollment eligibility is determined by a community needs assessment with priority given to children who are from low-income families, experiencing homelessness, English language learners, or receiving special education services. Funding has remained stagnant since the 2008-09 school year. Individual grant applications determine the funding amounts, causing programs to modify services or supplement the funds if grants are not secured.² Nevada is the recipient of a Preschool Development Grant from the U.S. Department of Education, which will provide funding to build on the state's current program.³ The program currently serves 3 percent of the age-eligible population in all settings, including community-based organizations and school districts.⁴

Nevada families need more investment to expand access and increase quality

One of the leading research intuitions on state preschool programs, the National Institute for Early Education Research, or NIEER, has established 10 benchmarks of quality. Nevada meets seven of them. The state has the opportunity to improve quality by ensuring that assistant teachers have a C.D.A. degree or equivalent, providing at least one meal per day, and offering screening and support services related to vision, hearing, and health.⁵ Nevada would be more likely to increase accessibility and improve quality by increasing the funding of the program.

- In 2013, Nevada ranked 33 out of 41 states in per-student funding.⁶
- Nevada currently spends \$2,397 per student, less than the spending rates in states with programs that meet almost all of the benchmarks, including Oklahoma and Georgia, and well below the national average of \$4,026.⁷

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Early childhood education can support Nevada's most vulnerable populations

Many Nevada children live in families feeling severe financial strain. Growing up in such an environment affects young children's ability to thrive, putting them behind their wealthier peers on a number of developmental, educational, and social measures. The stress that often comes with living in poverty can also adversely affect brain development in children's early years. High-quality early education has been proven to alleviate these risk factors and help close the school-readiness gap.⁸

- 52 percent of Nevada children under age 6 live in low-income families.⁹
- 14 percent of Nevada children live in areas of concentrated poverty, putting them at a greater risk of starting kindergarten behind.¹⁰

Child care is out of reach for many Nevada families

Nevada is one of 31 states where the cost of child care is higher than in-state tuition and fees at a public college.¹¹ In Nevada, where 64 percent of children under age 6 have all available parents in the workforce, child care is not a luxury—it is a necessity.¹²

- For a family with children in Nevada, the median income is \$52,300.¹³
- The average annual cost of a child care center in Nevada is \$10,095 for an infant and \$8,208 for a 4-year-old.¹⁴

Endnotes

- 1 W. Steven Barnett and others, "The State of Preschool 2013: State Preschool Yearbook" (New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research, 2013), available at <http://nieer.org/sites/nieer/files/yearbook2013.pdf>.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 U.S. Department of Education, "Programs: Preschool Development Grants," available at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/preschooldevelopmentgrants/index.html> (last accessed April 2015).
- 4 Barnett and others, "The State of Preschool 2013."
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Jack P. Shonkoff and others, "The Lifelong Effects of Early Childhood Adversity and Toxic Stress," *Pediatrics* 129 (1) (2012): e232–e246, available at <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/129/1/e232.short>.
- 9 National Center for Children in Poverty, "Nevada: Demographics of Young, Low-Income Children," available at http://www.nccp.org/profiles/NV_profile_8.html (last accessed March 2015).
- 10 Kids Count Data Center, "Children Living in Areas of Concentrated Poverty" (Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2013), available at <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/6795-children-living-in-areas-of-concentrated-poverty#detailed/2/2-52/false/1376,1201,1074,880,11/any/13891,13892>.
- 11 Child Care Aware of America, "Parents and the High Cost of Child Care" (2013), available at http://usa.childcareaware.org/sites/default/files/cost_of_care_2013_103113_0.pdf.
- 12 Kids Count Data Center, "Children Under Age 6 with All Parents in the Labor Force" (Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2013), available at <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/5057-children-under-age-6-with-all-available-parents-in-the-labor-force#detailed/2/2-52/false/36,868,867,133,38/any/11472,11473>.
- 13 Kids Count Data Center, "Median Family Income Among Households with Children" (Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2013), available at <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/65-median-family-income-among-households-with-children#detailed/2/2-52/false/36,868,867,133,38/any/365>.
- 14 Child Care Aware of America, "Parents and the High Cost of Child Care."
- 15 Authors' calculations based on Child Care Aware of America, "Parents and the High Cost of Child Care."

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For a typical Nevada family with an infant and a 4-year-old, the average cost of child care at a center amounts to

1/3

of annual income¹⁵