



NJDOE News

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NATIONAL SURVEY RANKS NJ FIRST IN COMMITMENT TO PRESCHOOL ***State's Abbott Programs Hailed as National Leader in Preschool Program Quality Standards***

Governor James E. McGreevey and Commissioner of Education William L. Librera today proudly welcomed findings released by a national research institute ranking the state first in the nation for preschool resources, as well as naming New Jersey a national leader in quality standards in the Abbott district preschool programs.

"The quality of New Jersey's Abbott district preschool program sets the example for other states to follow," Dr. Librera said. "Children gain important social, emotional and learning skills in preschool that help them become better students and more responsible citizens. It creates the strong foundation on which to build later successes in their lives."

According to the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), New Jersey ranked high in access to preschool programs for both three and four-year-olds - ninth and second, respectively. New Jersey was additionally one of only three states to reach the highest score for its quality standards in the Abbott District program.

The NIEER report, the [*State of Preschool*](#), is based on the 2001-02 school year and ranks New Jersey first on spending per child, second on percentage of 3-year-olds served and ninth on the percentage of 4-year-olds served. It is one of three states to have programs that meet nine of 10 benchmarks for adequate quality standards. No state program met all 10.

"This is a proud day for this Administration," said Governor McGreevey. "From the beginning we have remained committed to providing every child in New Jersey with an education that prepares him or her to compete in the 21st century. We have made significant investments to ensure that commitment begins by providing a quality education at the earliest age. This announcement demonstrates that our investments in education are delivering proven results and making a difference in our children's lives."

To highlight the findings, Commissioner Librera will be joined by other officials today at 10:30 a.m. at the Washington School in Trenton to discuss the *State of Preschool* report. More information about the visit is available through the Department of Education Public Information Office.

Today's reports underscores the accomplishments in preschool education achieved since Governor McGreevey took office. Since 2002, capacity to serve preschoolers in the Abbott program has increased by over 40%; program quality has improved significantly, especially in the area of early language and literacy; and children are entering kindergarten with significantly better oral language and reading readiness abilities.

"While we are pleased about today's announcement, we can say that New Jersey's standing has substantially improved in the last two years as well," said Dr. Ellen Frede, Assistant to the Commissioner for Early Childhood Education, of the NJ Department of Education. "New Jersey currently provides preschool programs to 38,000 children in the 'Abbott Districts' and to another 8,600 children in 102 additional districts under the Non-Abbott Early Childhood Program Aid (ECPA) program. There is still work to be done."

"New Jersey can be proud of what we have accomplished in the area of ensuring our most disadvantaged children have access to high-quality preschool programs," Dr. Librera said. "We are proud of the good work accomplished so far and we look forward to a continued emphasis on developing and maintaining the best preschool programs available."

A copy of the report is available by contacting NIEER at

(732) 932-4350. For more information, please contact the Department of Education Public Information Office at (609) 292-1126.

