

Public Pre-K Policy Implementation and the Early Childhood Education Workforce

Bethany Wilinski, Ph.D.

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WHEN PRE-K COMES TO SCHOOL

*POLICY, PARTNERSHIPS, AND THE EARLY
CHILDHOOD EDUCATION WORKFORCE*

BETHANY WILINSKI

Foreword by Sharon Lynn Kagan



QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT HAS PROVEN BENEFITS

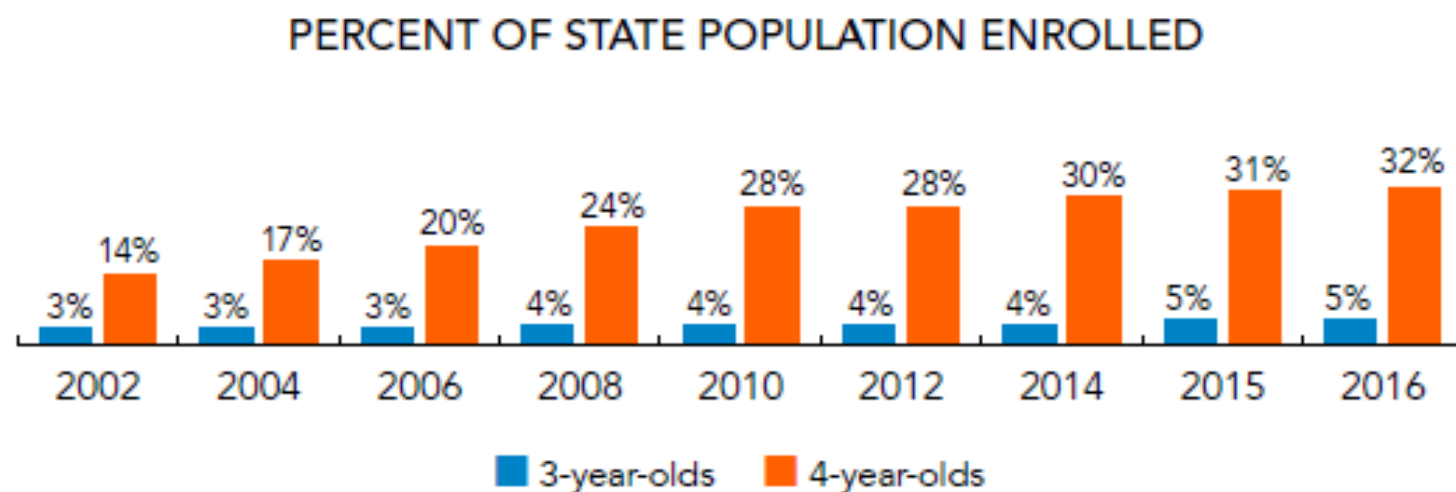
- ☑ Better cognitive development
- ☑ Higher earnings
- ☑ Reduced inequality

James Heckman and Paul Gertler et al.

*Labor Market Returns to an Early Childhood
Stimulation Intervention in Jamaica*

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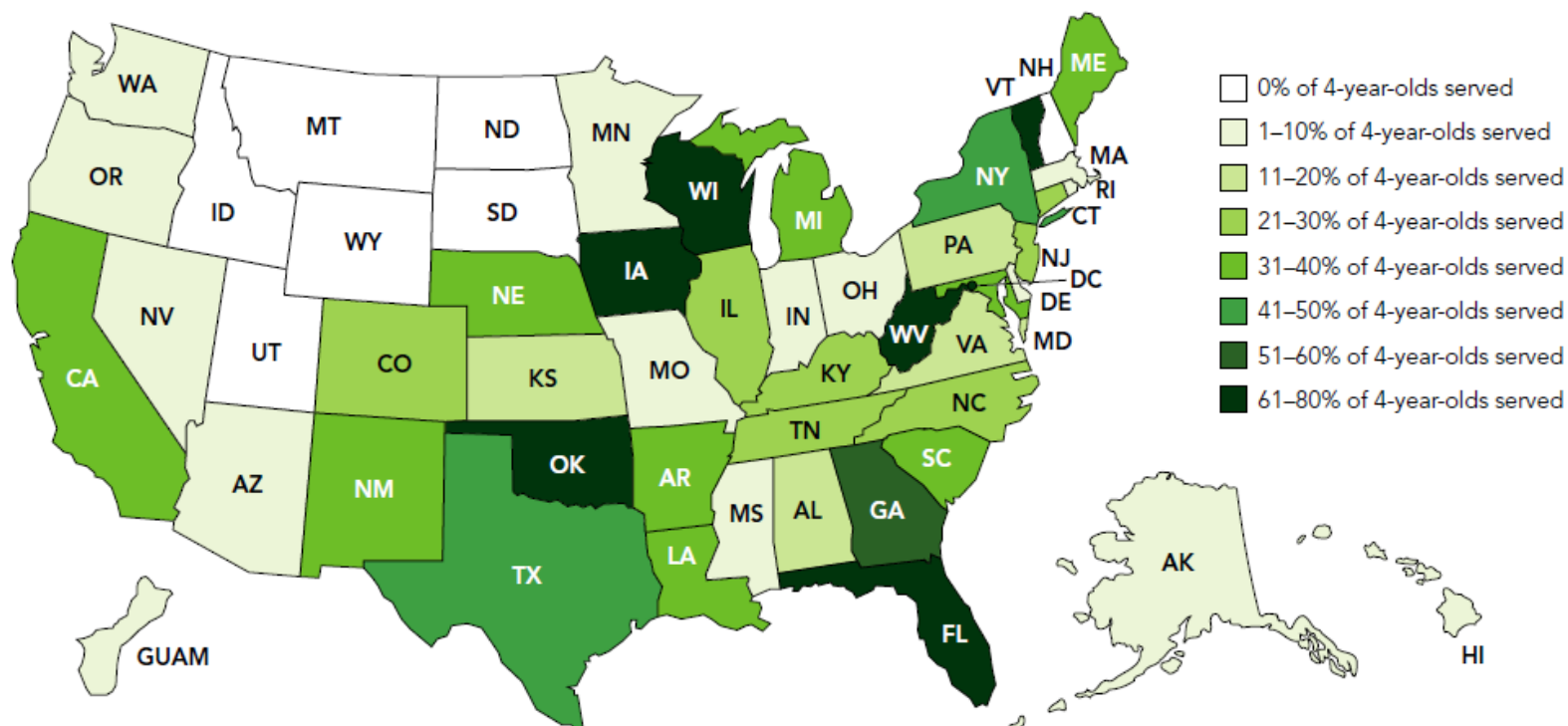
Expansion of public pre-K



Barnett, W. S., Friedman-Krauss, A. H., Weisenfeld, G. G., Kasmin, R., & Squires, J. H. (2017). *The State of Preschool 2016*. New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research.

Expansion of public pre-K

FIGURE 1: PERCENT OF 4-YEAR-OLDS SERVED IN STATE PRESCHOOL



Barnett, W. S., Friedman-Krauss, A. H., Weisenfeld, G. G., Kasmin, R., & Squires, J. H. (2017). *The State of Preschool 2016*. New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research.

Michigan - Great Start Readiness Program

- Serves 34% of four-year-olds in the state
- Targeted program based on income and other risk factors
- Meets 9 of 10 state preschool quality standards (National Institute for Early Education Research)
- Implemented in public school and community sites (30% of slots in each ISD must be provided in community sites)



Pre-K Partnerships

- Bring schools and community providers together to provide pre-K
- Benefits: leverage resources and expertise, expanded access, greater consistency and alignment

Partnerships: Challenges for Institutions

Pre-K exists in a fragile ECE ecosystem:

- Pre-K may make community providers vulnerable
 - Childcare centers offset the high cost of infant care by enrolling 4 year-olds
 - Regulations about which sites are qualified to provide pre-K may threaten some providers' viability
- State funds help childcare sites with an infusion of funds, but per-pupil reimbursements may not be enough

Partnerships: Challenges for Institutions

Resources for implementation are varied:

- Policy may assume that all implementing partners (public schools and community sites) have access to the same resources
- In reality, community providers may struggle to meet requirements due to lack of economic and human resources

Implications for the Pre-K Workforce

- Compensation differences across pre-K sites
 - Same work, dramatically different pay and benefits
 - Pushes teachers out of community sites, with implications for program quality
- Varied working conditions
 - Discrepancies: amount of time “with kids,” time for planning and professional development
- Upgrading credentials can be a challenge

What policy can do

- Account for and adapt to the economic impact of pre-K
- Provide additional support for community partners to meet policy requirements
- Address issues of compensation, benefits, and working conditions for all pre-K teachers



Bethany Wilinski
bethanyw@msu.edu