

New Pre-K Research: Poverty and Pre-K Access in Mississippi'

JACKSON, MS--Mississippi First releases a third 2021 pre-K research brief demonstrating the benefits of pre-K for children living in poverty.

Background

Since our founding, Mississippi First has known access to high-quality, no- and low-cost pre-K in Mississippi would be a game-changer for our youngest learners. In our first pre-K publication, 2012's *Leaving Last in Line*, we recommended creating state-funded pre-K in Mississippi through a collaborative approach. In 2013, the Early Learning Collaborative Act made this recommendation a reality. Since then, we have tracked the availability of quality pre-K statewide through our *State of Pre-K* series. Our first report in the series, published in 2015, detailed programmatic and contextual data about public school pre-K programs and the communities they served in 2011-2012. In the 2017 version of the report, Mississippi First provided data and analysis about private and public pre-K providers, including childcare, Head Start, public schools, and Early Learning Collaboratives. This year, Mississippi First is launching an online data platform through Tableau alongside mini briefs that outline our newest findings. The data is from the 2017-2018 school year.

The 2021 State of Pre-K Briefs (Using 2017-2018 School Year Data)

The 2021 *State of Pre-K* briefs are focused on assessing pre-K access and quality across the state. Today, we are releasing the third 2021 brief. In conjunction with the briefs, Mississippi First will publish an online data dashboard that will provide pre-K data from the 2017-2018 school year. Each pre-K brief shows strong evidence that access to pre-K is benefiting children across the state.

Brief #3: Poverty and Pre-K Access in Mississippi, 2017-2018

Research consistently shows that children living in poverty receive the greatest benefit from pre-K. Due to the strength of public pre-K programs, access to pre-K is greater in areas with higher concentrations of children in poverty. Public pre-K programs include Head Start, blended Head Start, school district programs, Early Learning Collaboratives, and childcare centers participating in Early Learning Collaboratives. However, multiple areas with many children in poverty still struggle with pre-K access.

"With the \$16M commitment by the legislature for state-funded collaborative programs this year, access to high-quality no- or low-cost pre-K will continue to grow, increasing access for the kids that need it most," said Rachel Canter, Executive Director.

To learn more information about pre-K in Mississippi, visit <http://www.mississippifirst.org/education-policy/pre-kindergarten/>. For more information about Mississippi First pre-K research, contact Rachel Canter at rachel@mississippifirst.org.

###

Driven to change the fact that Mississippi has historically been last, our founders set a bold vision: a Mississippi first in education nationally. Mississippi First champions transformative policy solutions ensuring educational excellence for every Mississippi child. We are a leading voice for state-funded pre-K, high-quality public charter schools, access to highly effective teachers, and rigorous state learning standards and materials.