

Report: N.C. pre-K program among nation's best

Triangle Business Journal - 11:57 AM EDT Wednesday, March 14, 2007

North Carolina is one of two states in the nation with pre-kindergarten programs that meet all 10 quality standards set forth by the National Institute for Early Education, according to a report released Wednesday.

The North Carolina program, called More at Four, attempts to prepare at-risk 4-year-olds to succeed in the classroom.

Rutgers University-based NIEFR published its annual rankings of pre-K programs in a report titled "The State of Preschool 2006: State Preschool Yearbook," which was published by NIEFR on Wednesday.

Both North Carolina and Alabama met all 10 NIEFR benchmarks for state standards. NIEFR ranks the states' preschool programs on early learning standards, teacher degrees, teacher specialized training, assistant teacher degrees, continuing professional development requirements, maximum class size, staff-child ratios, screening, referral and support services, meals and monitoring procedures.

The report cited enrollment increases in the More at Four over the past several years, from 1,240 children in 2001-2002 to 15,277 children in 2005-2006. Easley's 2007-2009 budget proposal recommends expanding the program by 10,000 more students, increasing state funding from about \$85 million now to about \$198 million in 2009.

© 2007 American City Business Journals, Inc. and its licensors. All rights reserved. The material on this site may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, cached or otherwise used, except with the prior written permission of bizjournals.

<http://triangle.bizjournals.com/triangle/stories/2007/03/12/daily21.html>