

A dark blue silhouette of the state of Delaware is positioned on the left side of the image, extending from the top to the bottom.

# Universal Pre-K In Delaware

# Agenda

Welcome & Introductions

Why Pre-K Matters

State of Pre-K in Delaware

What We're Advocating For

Suggestions, Considerations & Questions

Action & Advocacy Opportunities

# What is First State Pre-K?



A non-partisan issue campaign to ensure every child in Delaware has access to a high-quality pre-kindergarten program and families can more easily afford these services for their children.

# Who Is First State Pre-K?



To join, submit your logo to [FirstStatePreK@gmail.com](mailto:FirstStatePreK@gmail.com)

# Pre-K Matters For...

*“Decades of solid and substantial evidence show **profound, broad and lasting impacts of early experiences** on mobility, employment, health, and crime. They can alter individuals’ life course.”*

Dr. Steve Barnett, Founder and Senior Co-Director of the National Institute for Early Education Research at Rutgers University



## Families

- Ability to work
- Financial stability
- Connections to services



## Children

- School readiness
- Social emotional development
- Early identification of special needs



## Communities

- Health
- Crime prevention
- Employment and mobility



## Employers

- Skilled workforce
- Child Care for workforce
- Business attraction



## Providers/Teachers

- Fair wages and benefits
- Higher educational attainment
- Decreased turnover
- Cover cost of child care

# State of Pre-K In Delaware



## Children

**50% of 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds are **NOT** enrolled** nursery school, preschool, or kindergarten

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**Delaware invests 4-10X more in school age (5-18) children than early learners (0-5)**

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**Approximately 1/2 of 5-year-olds are **NOT** entering kindergarten with skills needed for success\*\***

# State of Pre-K In Delaware



**52% of Delaware parents say child care is a financial hardship—and have had to make sacrifices of **not buying a home, finding employment, or going back to school** because of it\*\***

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**86% of likely voters support universal Pre-K\***

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**Delaware full-time, full-year minimum wage earners pay 43% of their earnings on childcare**

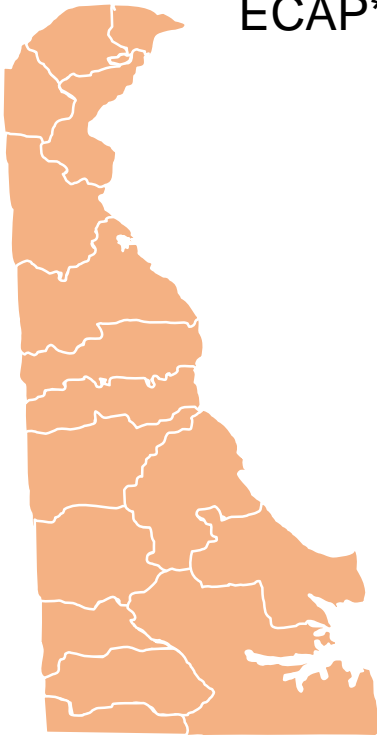
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**Delaware child care workers make a median hourly wage of \$10.21, significantly less than Kindergarten teachers (\$31.73/hr)**

# ECAP In Delaware

Only 2% of Delaware three-year-olds and 5% of Delaware's four-year olds are enrolled in state funded pre-K (Early Childhood Assistance Program or ECAP\*) and there are waiting lists at all locations.



- ☐ ECAP only covers children for a half day.
- ☐ ECAP is only available to low-income families.
- ☐ Despite a study showing the long-term positive impact of ECAP on student success, the program has not been expanded since implemented in 1999.
- ☐ If all Kindergarteners had access to ECAP when they were four-year-old, more than 9,600 children would participate. Instead, only about 845 children participated.



**Does this resonate  
with your  
community?**

**What else would you  
add to the current  
state and the need?**

# What We're Advocating For

# Expand Universal Pre-K

We call on policymakers to enact universal pre-K that is

- ✓ High-quality
- ✓ Voluntary
- ✓ Universal and at no cost to families
- ✓ In mixed delivery settings including community-based providers, center-based programs, Head Start, and public schools
- ✓ Available statewide by 2024



# Why Universal?

- ✓ Reach a significantly greater percentage of poor children
  - no qualification paperwork/burden
  - changes in family income no longer qualifying factor
  - public awareness that pre-K is for everyone
- ✓ Research demonstrates greater gains for disadvantaged children
- ✓ Support middle income families who do not qualify for ECAP but cannot afford quality child care
- ✓ Earlier identification of special needs to address issues and save special education costs
- ✓ Fund inclusive classrooms for special education children

# What Would It Look Like?

High-Quality Programs	Universal Access	Mixed Delivery System
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Full day, school year, state-funded program</li> <li>✓ Certified teacher with a bachelor's degree in early childhood and an assistant teacher in every classroom</li> <li>✓ Developmentally appropriate curriculum</li> <li>✓ Small class size and student supports</li> <li>✓ Wrap around care available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Guaranteed without qualifying characteristics. Starting with 4-year-olds, then 3 year-olds</li> <li>✓ Voluntary enrollment</li> <li>✓ At no cost to families</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Community-based programs</li> <li>✓ Center Based programs</li> <li>✓ Head Start</li> <li>✓ Public Schools</li> <li>✓ Family Child Care</li> <li>✓ Leverage existing programs, facilities, services, and expertise</li> </ul>

# How Would It Impact Child Care Providers?

## Similar to ECAP today

- ✓ Required to meet state standards
- ✓ Contracted for slots
- ✓ Plus contracts for wrap-around Purchase of Care payments for before, after, and summer care
- ✓ Head Start, community-based organizations, family child care and public school settings
- ✓ Paid for a number of slots each school year, with a differential (increased) rate that would include facilities costs
- ✓ Centers would gain funding through a per-child allotment (~\$15K similar to K-12 funding) for the school day—in addition to funding for before/after/summer care as they do today

# How Would It Impact The Workforce?

- ✓ A certified teacher with a bachelor's degree in early childhood and an assistant teacher in every classroom within five years
- ✓ Supported by scholarships and on-going training and professional development
- ✓ Increased salary and benefits for workforce

Delaware is 40th in delivery of state-funded Pre-K, special education, and Head Start

**Can anyone share Pre-K expansion experiences from other states?**



# Suggestions, Considerations & Questions

Write your thoughts on the post-it notes and put them on the poster paper

## Suggestions

- What's missing from the proposal?
- What strengths should we build on?

## Considerations

- Who's missing? (stakeholders to involve)
- Recommended methods of outreach to advocates and policymakers
- Messaging to add or prioritize

## Questions

# Get Involved With First State Pre-K

## Join First State Pre-K's Campaign

- Sign the **First State Pre-K** petition
- Follow us on **Facebook** and **Twitter**
- **Subscribe to our email list** to receive updates on action alerts and progress
- **Submit your organization's logo and send a representative** to our planning calls

## Support Universal Pre-K in Delaware

- **Ask lawmakers** to adopt high-quality, mixed delivery universal pre-K
- **Ask the Governor to prioritize pre-K** in Governor's Recommended Budget:  
<http://bit.ly/UPKDE>



**FirstStatePreK.com/join-us**

# Thank you

Contact information: [FirstStatePreK@gmail.com](mailto:FirstStatePreK@gmail.com)



# APPENDIX

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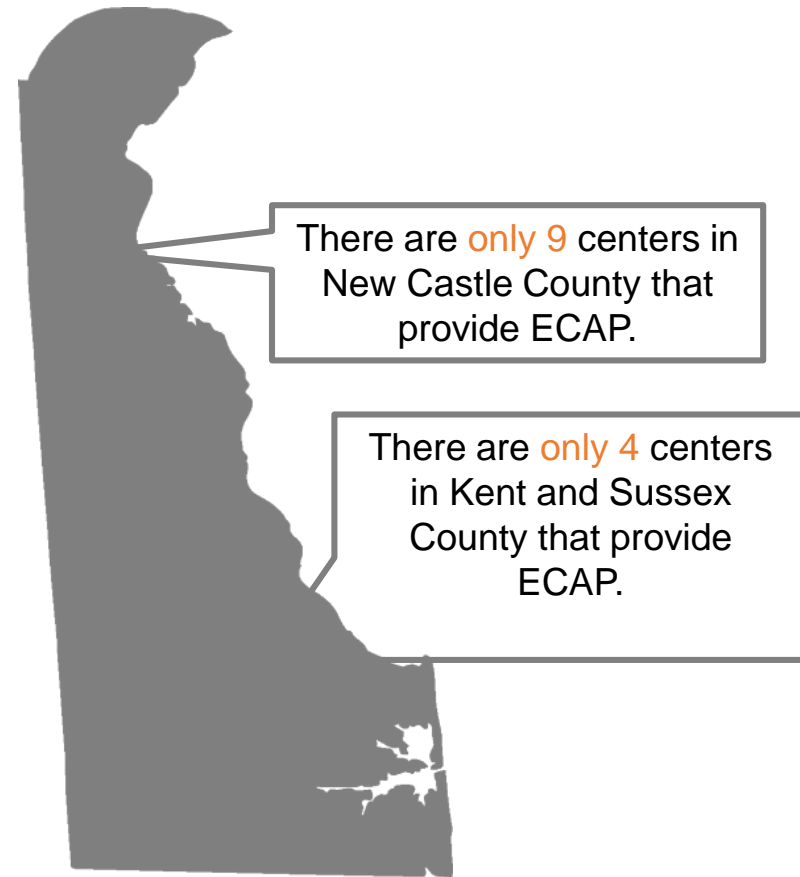
# LANDSCAPE OVERVIEW



Keep in mind: What is compelling? Surprising?

# Current State Of Pre-K In Delaware

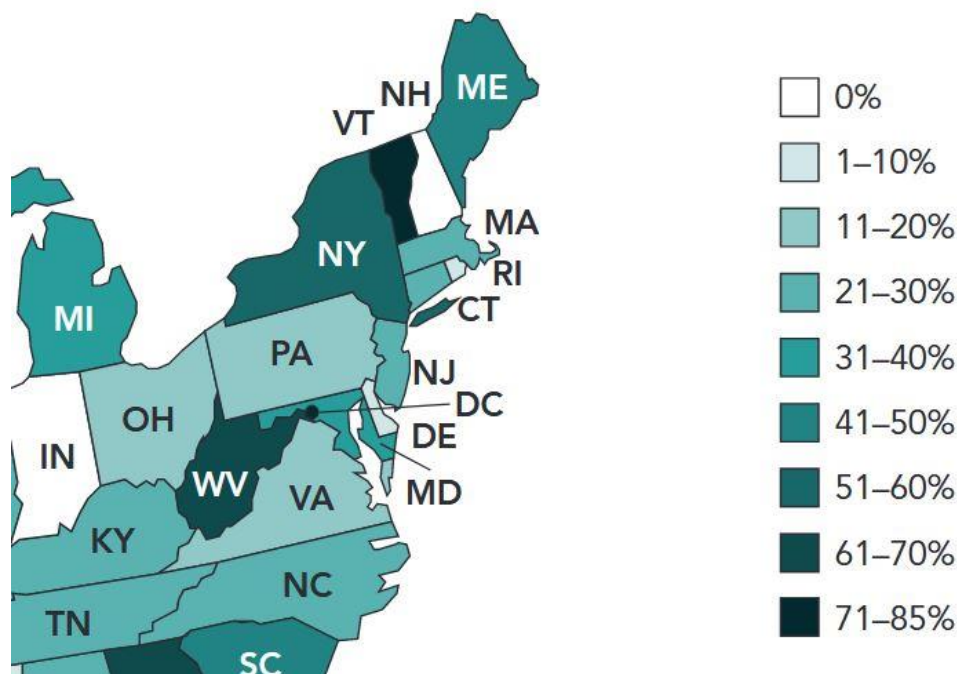
- The Early Childhood Assistance Program (ECAP) is a state-funded, comprehensive child development program for income-eligible families with preschool age children (age four). ECAP is offered in both district and community settings.
- **Only 5%** of Delaware four-year-olds are enrolled in state-sponsored Pre-K.
- Currently, there are **only 845 ECAP spots available for the whole state** of Delaware.
- The total number of spots **has not increased since ECAP was created 25 years ago.**



# Current State Of Pre-K In Delaware

Delaware is **falling behind all surrounding Mid-Atlantic states** in pre-K enrollment.

State	Ranking
D.C.	1
New York	9
Maryland	13
New Jersey	24
Pennsylvania	31
<b>Delaware</b>	<b>38</b>



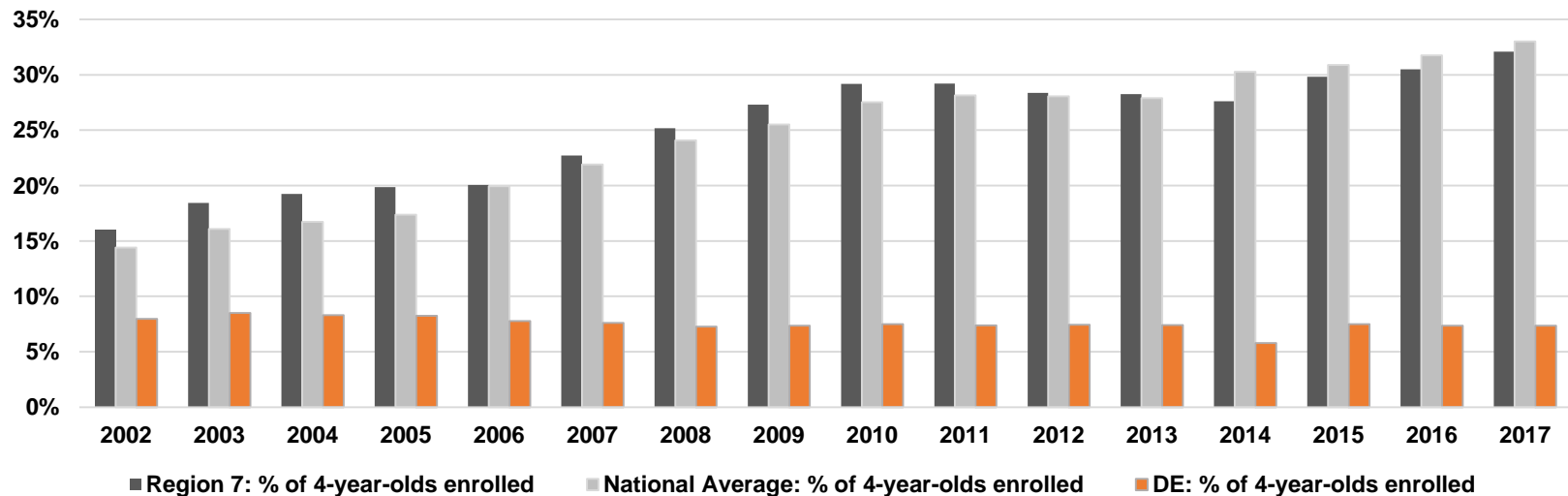
# Current State Of Pre-K In Delaware

*“The rest of the country and the region have moved forward, expanding pre-K for three- and four-year-olds, **while Delaware has stood still for the last 20 years...Delaware is like the land that time forgot.**”*

**Dr. Steve Barnett**

Founder and Senior Co-Director of the National Institute for Early Education Research at Rutgers University

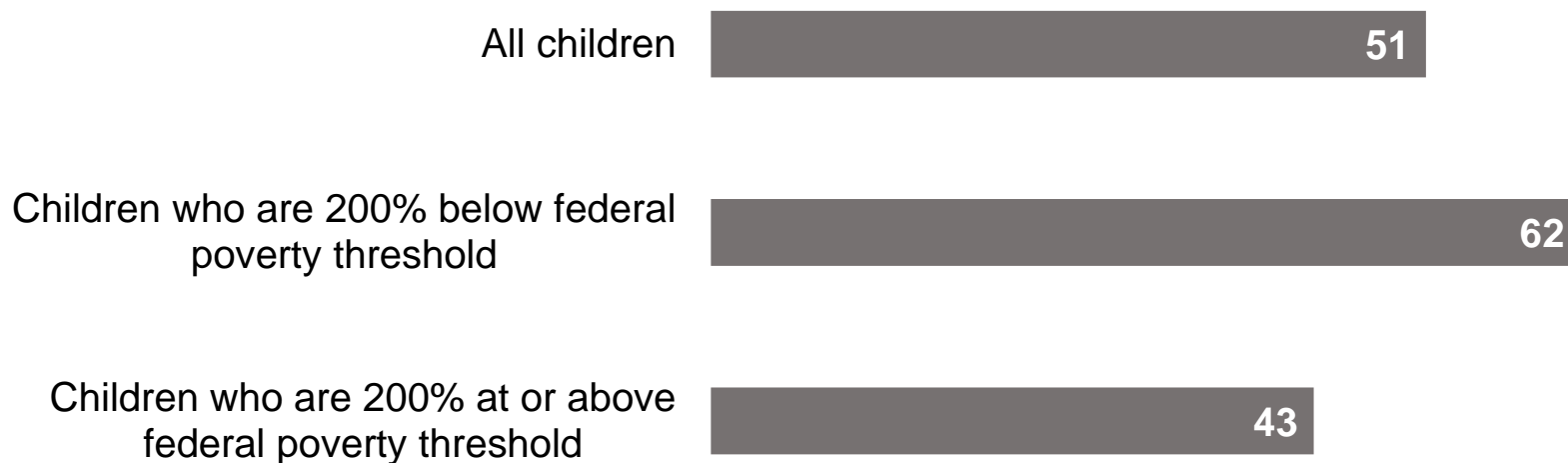
**4-Year-Old State Pre-K Enrollment Over Time:  
Delaware, the Region, and National Average**





# Current State Of Early Learners In Delaware

Percentage of children ages three to four **NOT** enrolled in school, including nursery school, preschool, or kindergarten.



Note: Nursery school" and "preschool" include any group or class of institution providing educational experiences for children during the years preceding kindergarten. Places where instruction is an integral part of the program are included, but private homes that primarily provide custodial care are not included. Children enrolled in programs sponsored by federal, state or local agencies to provide preschool education to young children--including Head Start programs--are considered as enrolled in nursery school or preschool.

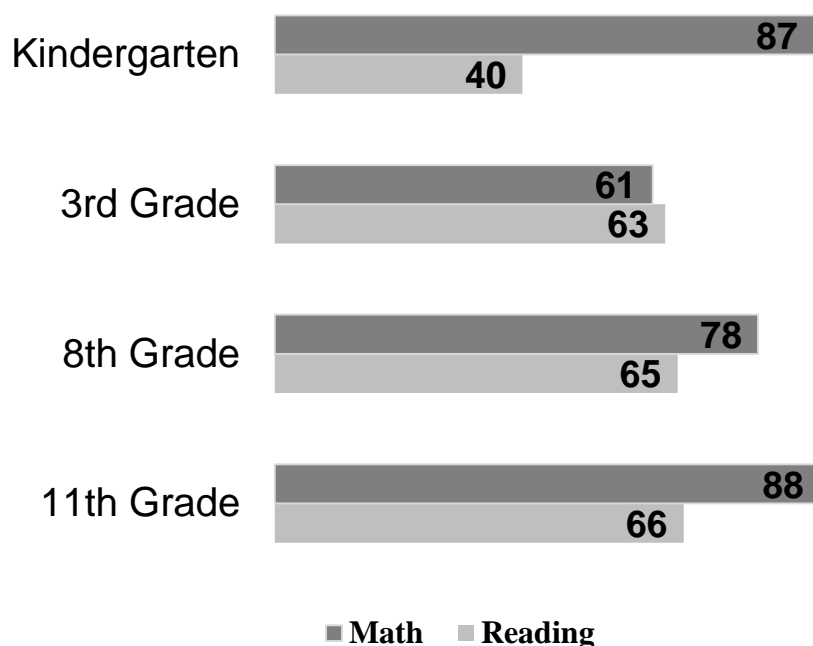
# Delaware's Early Learners Need More Support

Approximately one third to two thirds of students are **NOT** entering kindergarten with skills needed for success, **according to the Delaware Early Learner Survey**.

Domain	5-year-olds NOT "accomplished"	Low-income 5-year-olds NOT "accomplished"
Cognitive	46%	54%
Language	38%	56%
Literacy	31%	42%
Math	56%	66%
Physical	36%	41%
Social Emotional	45%	46%

# Low-Income Children Start Behind And Don't Catch Up

*Percent of Low-Income Students Who Are Not Performing At Grade Level*

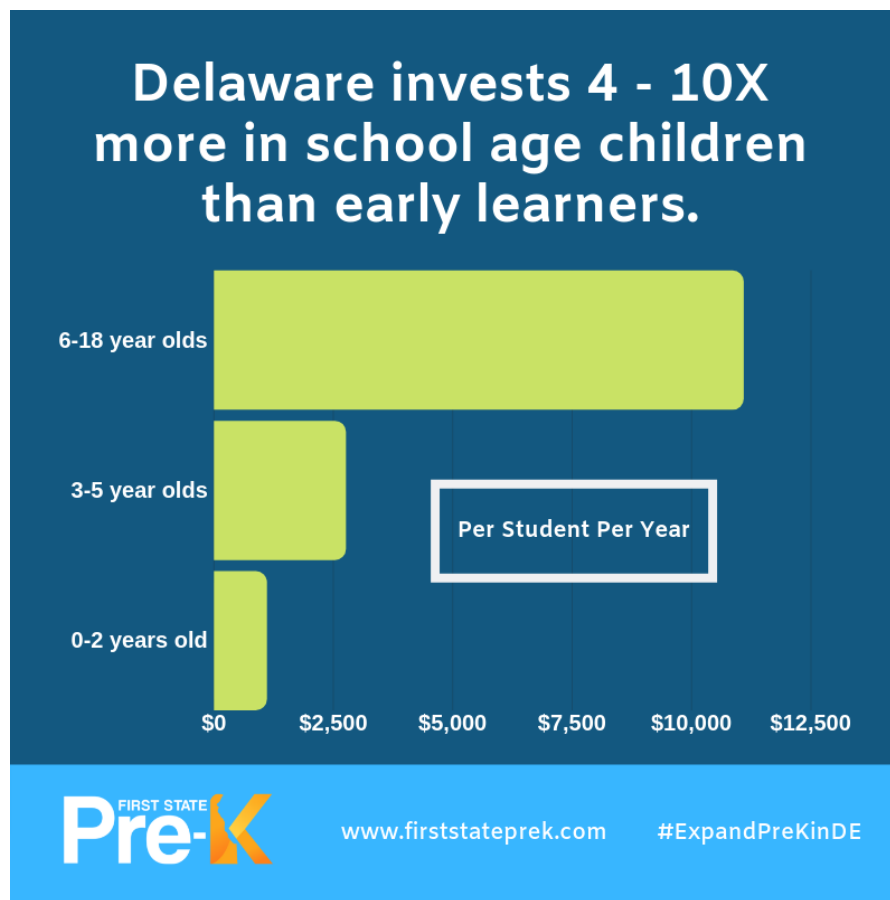


***“Children who start behind stay behind—they are rarely able to make up the lost ground. Greater investments in pre-K programs can narrow the gaps between students at the start of school.”***

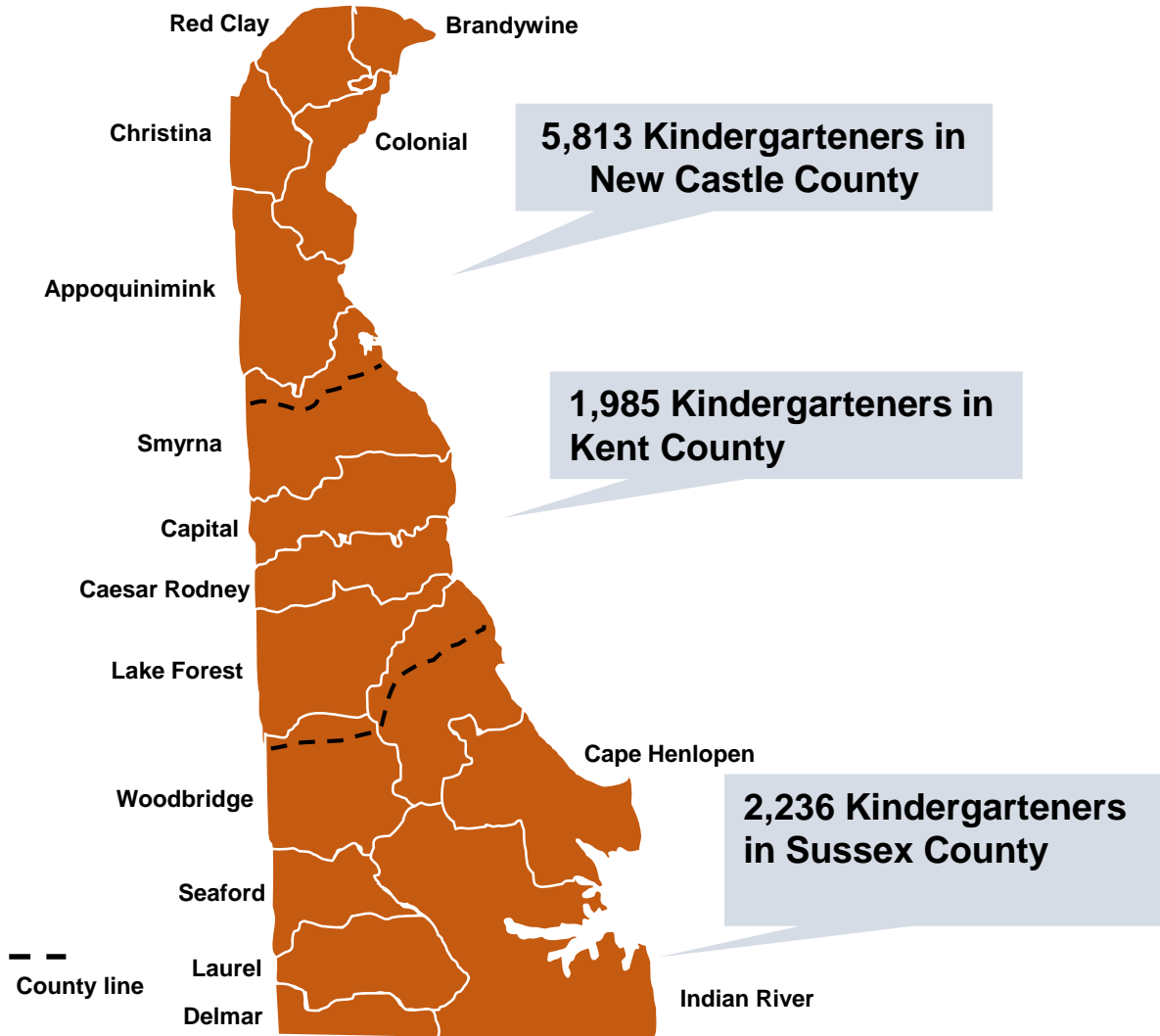
**Emma García and Elaine Weis**

The School Starting Gate  
Economic Policy Institute

# Delaware's Current Investment In Pre-K



# 10,000 Kindergarteners could benefit from Universal Pre-K



If Delaware had universal pre-K, 10,000 Kindergarteners from charters and districts could participate.

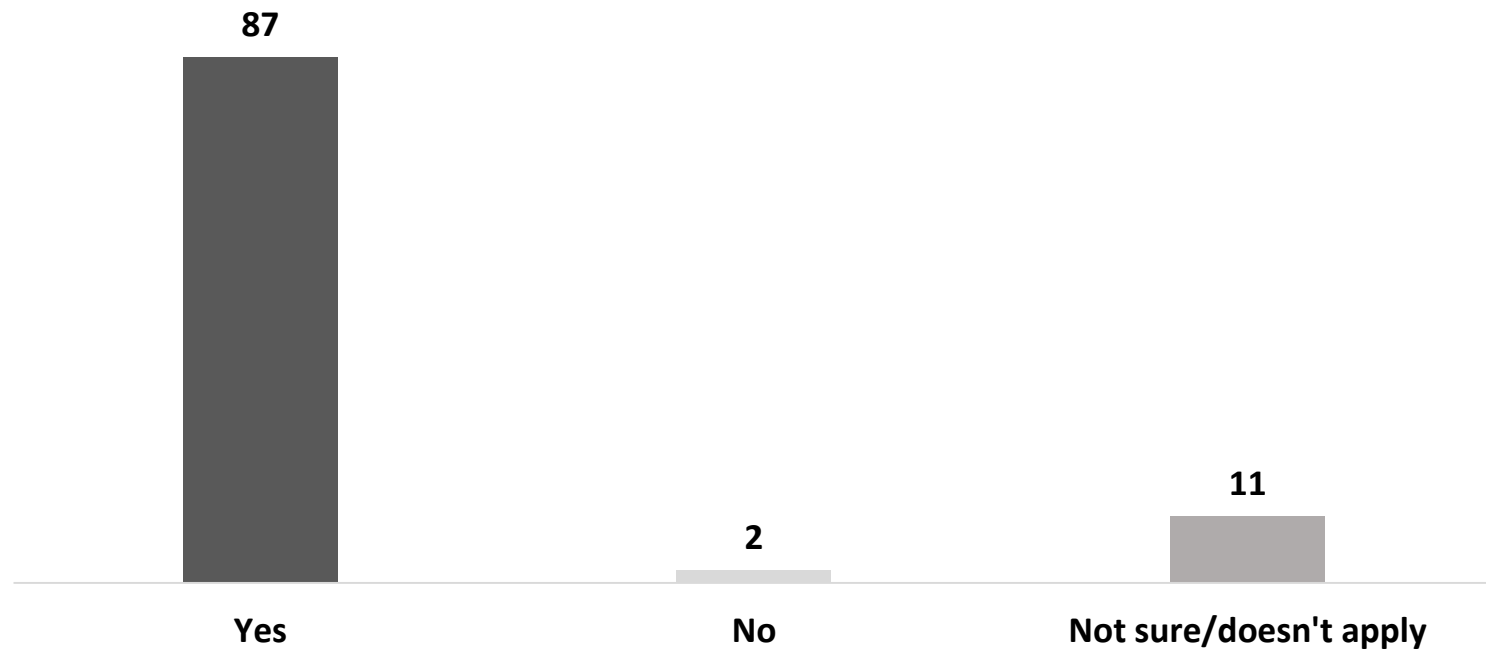
# Expanding Universal Pre-K In Delaware Is Good For Parents

- Pre-K can be expensive. **In Delaware, a full-time, full-year minimum wage earner would pay 42.9% of their earnings on childcare.**
- 52% of parents with children age 0-5 said that their family experienced financial hardship.
- 60 percent of parents with young children said they would not experience financial hardship if Delaware established universal pre-K
- Due to a lack of affordable, high quality, full-day childcare...
  - They or a family member were unable to further their education and/or career training
  - They are not working full time
  - They had to quit their job



# Parent Support For Pre-K Expansion In Delaware

**Nearly nine out of 10 parents** of children age 0-5 would take advantage of voluntary, full day, high-quality pre-K.



# Expanding Universal Pre-K In Delaware Is Good For Business

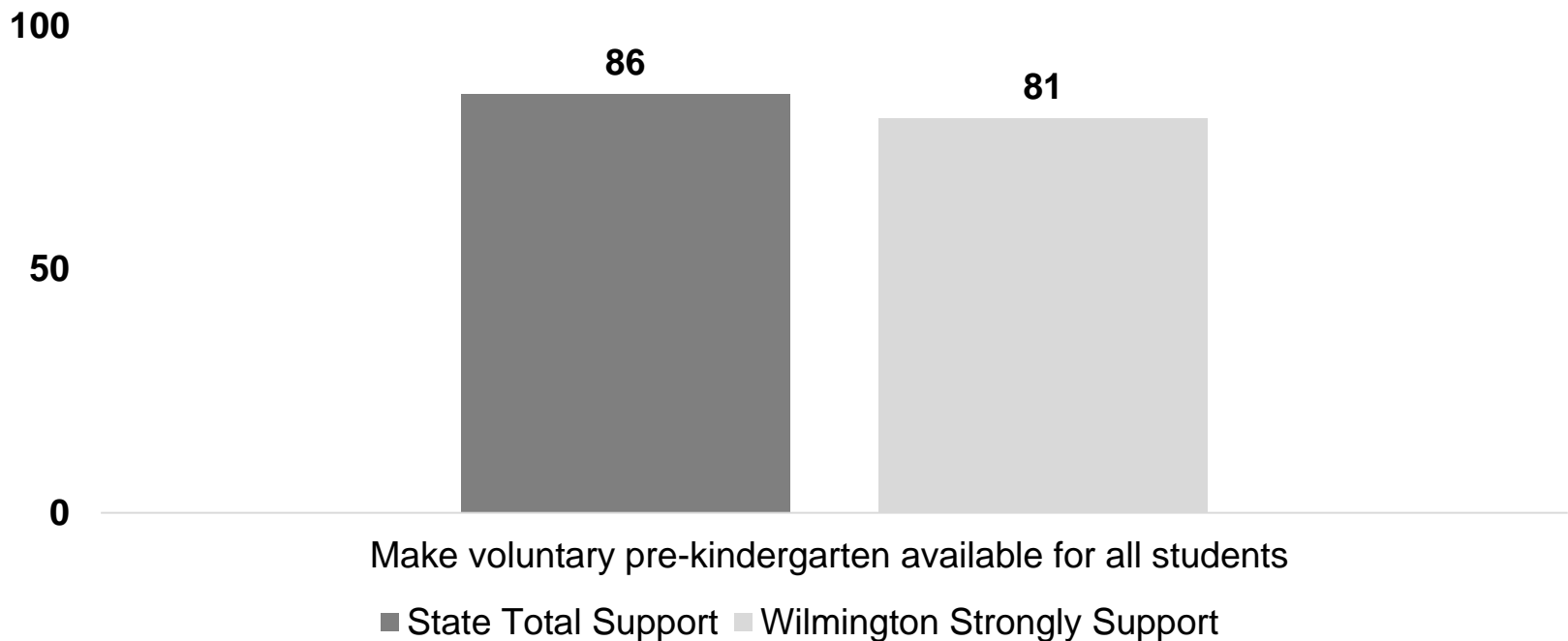
- Companies providing child care **decrease employee absences by 30% and job turnover by 60%**
- 83% of millennials say they would leave their jobs for ones with more family-friendly benefits
- U.S. **businesses lose \$3 billion annually** due to employee absenteeism resulting from childcare issues
- Every year, U.S. **families lose out on \$8.3 billion in wages** due to lack of childcare





# Public Support For Pre-K Expansion In Delaware

86% of Delaware voters **support voluntary pre-K for all students, with 65% strongly supporting**. 81% of voters in Wilmington strongly support voluntary pre-K for all students.



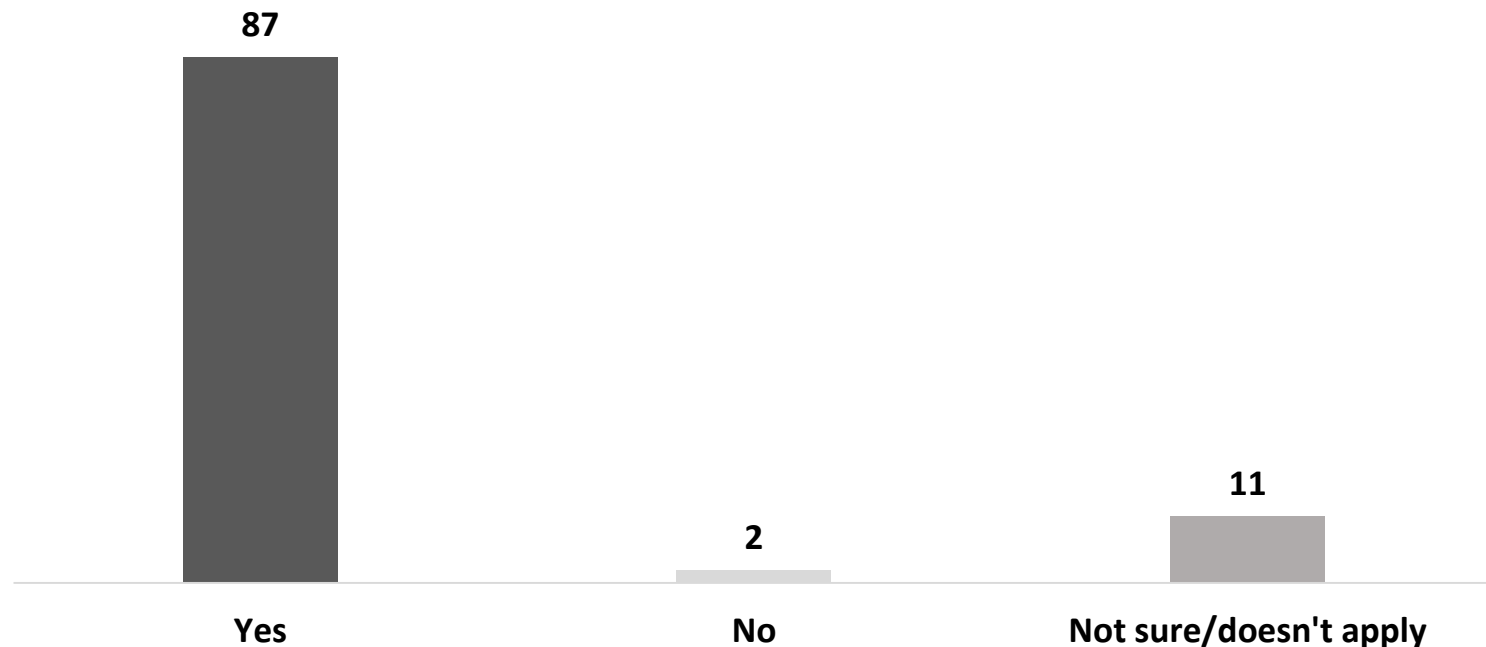
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