

New Mexico's Future



Change the first five years and you change everything

Our children are New Mexico's greatest resource. Because 85 percent of the human brain develops in the first five years of life, early learning is crucial to our state's future.

Let's invest in the health and well-being of New Mexico families by expanding support for a comprehensive array of prenatal to four-year-old programs that include prenatal care and parent support, home visitation programs, infant and toddler care and education, childcare, early intervention, and PreK. This creates a strong foundation and is proven to pay off by reducing the strain on education, criminal justice, and social service systems. Let's invest in progress. The choice is clear.

A Powerful Return on Investment

High-quality early care and education can break the cycle of generational poverty

- Every dollar spent on high-quality, birth-to-five programs for disadvantaged children delivers an annual return of 7%-20%¹
- Home visiting programs support families and positive parenting, and are proven to reduce instances of abuse and neglect
- Early learning investment improves long-term outcomes, including:
 - Third grade reading levels, high school graduation rates, and overall educational achievement
 - Well-being and support, especially for working families
 - The local economy with more jobs, earnings, and skilled workers
 - Social costs like crime and poverty are significantly reduced

Popular Policy

Voters are united in support of early learning

- 89% of voters support making quality early education for children from birth through age five, including child care, more affordable for working families²
This includes:
 - **97% of Democrats**
 - **82% of Republicans**
 - **85% of Independents**
- 85% of voters say there should be increased funding for child care that directly supports greater access to quality programs for low- and middle-income children while their parents work or attend school²
- 75% of New Mexico voters support dedicating more funds from the State budget to NM PreK

85% of voters

say there should be increased funding for child care that directly supports greater access to quality programs for low- and middle-income children while their parents work or attend school.²

62% of New Mexicans

support dedicating more funds from the State budget to NM PreK.

Early Childhood Program

Childcare Assistance

Working parents, grandparents, or guardians may apply for assistance for eligible children between the ages of six weeks and thirteen years.

- \$8,000 per year is the average cost of childcare per family, a substantial expense for many working families
- Only 16% of eligible children are currently served⁵
- Nearly 97,000 low-income children may be in need of subsidized child care

Early Childhood Program

Home Visiting

On a voluntary basis, home visitors support families in promoting positive parenting practices, screening for risks, and referring families to appropriate community services from prenatal to five years old.

- In FY 2017, the Children Youth and Families Department (CYFD) received \$17.5 M in state and federal funds to support home visiting
- 5,381 families, a fraction of eligible families, will be served in FY 2018
- Home visiting greatly reduces instances of abuse and neglect

NM PreK

NM PreK is a voluntary program funded by the State of New Mexico since 2005. It aims to ensure every child in New Mexico can attend a high-quality early childhood program before Kindergarten.

- Current state appropriation is \$64M (FY 2019)
- In FY 2018, an estimated 9,350 children (950 three year olds, 3.8%; and 8,400 four year olds, 33.6%) were served
- NM PreK is focused on quality guided by developmentally appropriate standards in the NM Early Learning Guidelines

Head Start

Both Early Head Start (birth to third birthday) and Head Start (ages three to five) include comprehensive services for young children experiencing poverty. Head Start grantee organizations are funded directly by the federal government.

- 36 grantees across New Mexico
- 9,225 children served in FY 2017 (2/3 in traditional Head Start)
- \$85.7M received in FY 2017



The Need

New Mexico kids need more early childhood services

- New Mexico is last in child well-being³
- More than 1 in 3 children under age six lives in poverty in New Mexico (highest child poverty in the nation)
- New Mexico consistently ranks last on the Chance for Success Index⁴
- 72% of the births in New Mexico were paid for by Medicaid in 2015

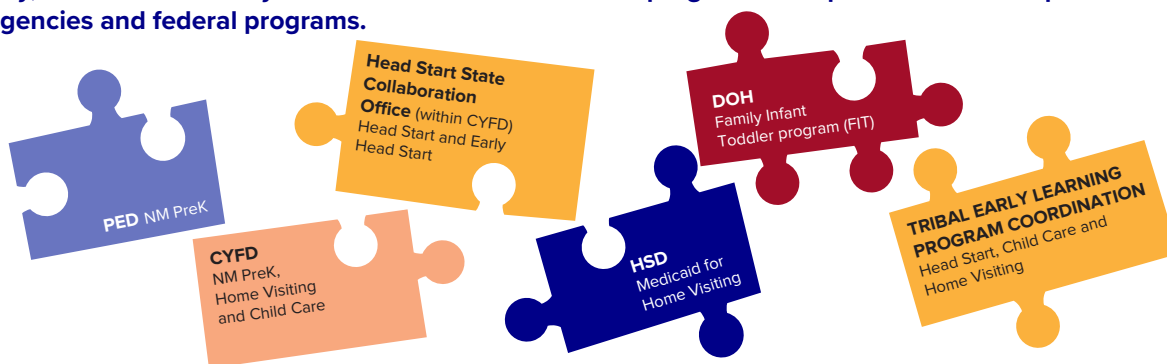
Leading the Way

Action Steps for Elected Officials – Commit to Serving New Mexico Families by pledging to:

- Significantly increase funding for early childhood programs
- Grow the number of high-quality early childhood programs and providers
- Increase job opportunities by filling the gaps in the early childhood workforce
- Invest in more facilities (e.g. classrooms) for high-quality childhood learning
- Improve early childhood program quality and efficiency by restructuring its governance, leadership, and oversight

The Importance of Early Childhood Governance and Coordination

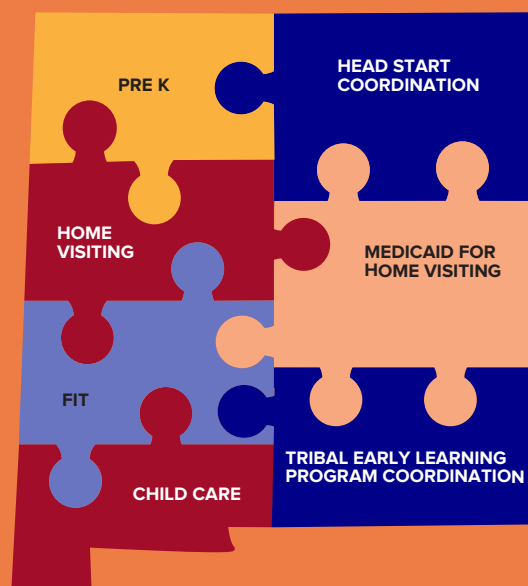
Currently, New Mexico's early childhood education and care programs are split between multiple state agencies and federal programs.



Placing early childhood programs under the governance of a single state department would increase the quality, efficiency and accountability of early childhood education and care in New Mexico. Therefore, NMECDP recommends creating a new department focused solely on early childhood education and care, in order to reduce overlap and duplication of services. This will ensure developmentally-appropriate programming and provide better efficiency in the delivery of services to New Mexico's children. All early childhood education and care programs and services would be housed under one roof, improving coordination, communication, transparency, consensus building, and aligning accountability with governance authority.

Creating a Department of Early Childhood:

Quality, Efficiency, and Accountability



1: Jean Burr and Rob Grunewald, "Lessons Learned: A Review of Early Childhood Development Studies" (Minneapolis: Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, April 2006), <http://minneapolisfed.org/research/studies/earlychild/lessons-learned.pdf/earlychild>.

2: 2017 National Poll by the First Five Years Fund - <https://ffyf.org>

3: 2018 Kids Count

4: Education Week, Quality Counts, Chance for Success Index, <http://education-next.org/quality-counts-and-the-chance-for-success-index/>

5: Eligible children are ages 0-12 and under 200% of Federal Poverty Level