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Job Search, Teleworking and Online Coursework Now Qualify Parents for Child Care Assistance

New Mexico amends Child Care Assistance regulations to help families obtain subsidies

SANTA FE - The Early Childhood Education and Care Department on Tuesday announced amendments to its child care assistance regulations, set to take effect immediately, that will make it easier for families to qualify to receive child care assistance from the state.

The amendments now include “teleworking” under the definition of “work” and count “online courses” as educational classwork eligible for child care assistance. Graduate and post-graduate students will also be eligible for child care assistance. The amendments further ensure that a family’s eligibility for child care assistance will not be negatively impacted by a family member’s disability or incapacity to work or go to school. In addition, parents facing fluctuating incomes or searching for jobs will now have an easier time qualifying to receive child care subsidies for their families. For example, ECECD will now allow up to three months of child care assistance for parents or guardians seeking employment. ECECD will also ensure that fluctuations in income, including emergency federal stimulus payments or unemployment benefits, don’t result in a loss of eligibility.

“We are fully committed to supporting parents and working families who are struggling to make ends meet,” said Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham. “New Mexicans deserve every opportunity to thrive, no matter the circumstances. This state program is targeted at the parents and families who need it most. It’s been an impossibly hard year for all of us. This administration has your back.”

“The Early Childhood Education and Care Department is committed to responding flexibly and adaptively amid the health emergency -- and that means modifying our rules to ensure that children and families have the support they need,” said ECECD Secretary Elizabeth Groginsky.

“These changes to the regulations will be made permanent to ensure families at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level receive the subsidy.”

"A survey conducted by our Department of unemployed New Mexicans found that, along with COVID health concerns, the lack of child care is one of the biggest obstacles to parents being able to get back to work," said Workforce Solutions Secretary Bill McCamley. "We strongly support any effort that will give New Mexicans better access to child care so parents can support their families and communities."

“All hardworking parents, especially those on the front line of this pandemic, need access to child care. This administration has taken important steps to increase access to quality child care by increasing pay for child care workers and making assistance affordable for families,” said Matthew Henderson, Executive Director of the OLÉ Education Fund.

“Every New Mexican should have access to quality child care. We commend the Governor and the Early Childhood Education and Care Department for collaborating with the community to increase access to child care by increasing flexibility and making child care more affordable,” said Teague González, Director of Public Benefits at the New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty.

Overall, the changes to ECECD’s regulations not only provide child care assistance and educational opportunities to New Mexico’s youngest citizens but will boost New Mexico’s economy by allowing parents and guardians to continue working, educating themselves, and seeking out new employment opportunities.

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