



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 4, 2022

Early Childhood Coalitions Convene to Strategize Building Early Childhood Infrastructure and Child Care Supply at the Local Level

SANTA FE – On April 27 and 28, Local early childhood coalitions funded through New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department’s (ECECD) Local Early Childhood Systems Building Grant conducted their inaugural statewide convening to strategize improving access to quality early childhood services and child care at the local level. The early childhood coalitions are comprised groups of local stakeholders dedicated to building early education and care in their communities, including local child care businesses, early childhood service providers, and individual community members. The convening is the first opportunity for the grant recipients to network, share knowledge, and strengthen coordination between state government and local communities.

“The Lujan Grisham administration is committed to building a family-focused system of early childhood programs and services that is responsive to the needs of local parents and communities,” said ECECD Cabinet Secretary Elizabeth Groginsky. “That won’t be possible without close coordination and strong partnerships with the local early childhood coalitions already doing the work on the ground in their communities. We have invested more than \$4 million to build the capacity of these coalitions, and last week we conducted our first formal convening to learn from each another and strategize on how we can best meet New Mexico families’ needs.”

Through ECECD’s Local Early Childhood Systems Building Grant, the Lujan Grisham administration has invested an estimated \$4,274,486 in 15 local early childhood coalitions over the next two years, with funding made possible by the Coronavirus Response and relief Supplemental Appropriation (CRSSA) Act. This will support existing coalitions build stronger state and local partnerships, as well as assist in the development of new or emerging coalitions across New Mexico.

The grant awarded as much as \$150,000 annually to each qualifying coalition in FY22 and FY23 to support the following objectives:

- Establish a coalition coordinator position (min .75 FTE) focused on outreach, communication, coordination, and collaboration on the local level, as well as connecting to state level early childhood work
- Employ strategies to develop, strengthen, and align local early childhood systems, especially in rural areas where the need for early childhood programs and services is greatest
- Uncover and address underlying issues that impede parents’ and caregivers’ awareness of early childhood services, improving overall access to child care, home visiting, and early intervention services

- Develop culturally inclusive family and coalition leadership
- Advance local planning efforts and shared decision-making to maximize community voice and parent choice in early education and care

“We come from a small community, and so this gathering allows us to share our vision, to learn from other early childhood advocates across the state, and to collect as many resources as we can to support our work toward building an effective early childhood coalition for Guadalupe County,” said Melanie Saiz-Storey, coordinator for Nuestros Niños de Guadalupe Early Childhood Coalition.

In accordance with the objectives and goals laid out in its New Mexico Early Childhood Strategic Plan (2021-2024), the Local Early Childhood Systems Building Grant will help ECECD to create more cohesive, equitable, and effective early childhood systems in New Mexico. This will require coordinating a continuum of exceptional family-driven, community-based programs and services available and accessible to all New Mexico families.

Photos from the Local Early Childhood Systems Building Grant inaugural statewide convening are available here: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/12DYE7rf0LZsjaAME0YEobcvLMXBdHs8a?usp=sharing>

###

Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham launched the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) in 2020, making New Mexico among the first states to consolidate all early childhood programs and services under a single cabinet-level agency. Under this administration, ECECD has led the nation by expanding access to free New Mexico PreK, overseeing the largest investment in early childhood infrastructure in state history, and implementing cost-free child care for a majority of New Mexico families. Learn more about how ECECD supports children, families, and the early childhood professionals that serve our communities at nmececd.org. On Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram as [@NewMexicoECECD](https://www.instagram.com/NewMexicoECECD).