



PRESS RELEASE

CONTACT:

Micah McCoy

Communications Director

(505) 629-9575 / micah.mccoy@ececd.gov.nm

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 9, 2023

ECECD offers expansive supports to families as children head back to school

SANTA FE – Today, the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) released an updated list of resources for families as children head back to school. During the 2023-2024 school year, New Mexico families will have greater access to child care, PreK, Home Visiting, and other early education and care programs than any previous year.

“Back to school time is exciting, but it can also be stressful for families who are unaware of the many supports available to them,” said ECECD Cabinet Secretary Elizabeth Groginsky. “ECECD has a range of programs and services that are designed to meet the diverse needs of New Mexico families. ECECD can help you find and pay for child care – both for young children and for school age children who need before- and after-care – access free New Mexico PreK, learn parenting skills with home visitors, and so much more.”

New Mexico PreK

New Mexico PreK is a free program for three- and four-year olds that delivers high-quality education in community-based, school-based, and some Head Start settings. New Mexico PreK is among the [top ranked programs](#) in the nation, and has recently undergone a [historic expansion](#), adding more than 3,000 new slots and expanding program hours throughout the year to increase educational opportunities for children. Families can find New Mexico PreK sites near them by visiting <https://search.newmexicokids.org/prek-map>

Child Care Assistance

Families with all available caregivers working, seeking work, or enrolled in a degree or job training program may be eligible to receive Child Care Assistance (CCA). The program is open to all eligible families earning less than 400 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) – \$120,000/year for a family of four. ECECD [recently announced](#) that it will continue to waive all family copays, making child care tuition free for participating families. Child Care Assistance pays for tuition for young children in participating child care programs, and for out-of-school time care for school-age children. Families can take a [short online survey](#) to determine eligibility.

Child Care Finder

ECECD has created a powerful online child care search tool to help families find care that meets their needs. The [Child Care Finder](#) allows parents and caregivers to search for one of the over 1,000 child care programs statewide, filtering by proximity, age of child, quality rating, tuition, language, program type, and more.

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) The Child and Adult Care Food Program provides free nutritious meals and snacks to children in child care settings throughout the state. Families seeking child care where meals are provided through CACFP can use the New Mexico Child Care Finder to find participating centers.

Home Visiting

ECECD’s Home Visiting program connects parents and caregivers with a friendly expert for in-home visits to provide guidance on safe sleep, injury prevention, nutrition, child care, breast feeding and more. The program is free to all New

Mexico families, regardless of income, and is available for families with children ages prenatal-to-five. ECECD is currently expanding Home Visiting to serve more children in more counties across New Mexico. [Contact information for Home Visiting providers by county is available here.](#)

Family Infant Toddler (FIT) early intervention program

All children develop at their own pace, but if families have concerns that their infant or toddler is not developing as expected, they can [contact ECECD's FIT program](#) to receive a free evaluation. For children experiencing developmental delays or disabilities, the FIT program provides therapies and developmental services, and supports families with strategies and techniques to promote their child's development at home. FIT services are free for all New Mexico families.

Families FIRST perinatal case management program

ECECD's Families FIRST program provides a support system during pregnancy, infancy, and throughout the first three years of a child's life for Medicaid-eligible families in New Mexico. Families FIRST nurses provide education, resources, and friendly advice on pregnancy, health, nutrition, and nurturing to help pregnant and parenting families gain a healthy start and a strong foundation in life. Families FIRST representatives may be reached at: 1-877-842-4152.

###

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](#).