



NEW MEXICO

Early Childhood

Education & Care Department

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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December 3, 2020

Early Childhood Education and Care Department Requests \$401 Million for Fiscal Year 2022

Strategic Investments Will Preserve Key Services for Children and Families, Support Healthy Child Development and Cradle-to-Career Success, and Aid State's Economic Recovery

SANTA FE – In testimony before the Legislative Finance Committee, the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) today announced an FY22 budget request of \$401 million.

“Amid a global pandemic and an economic downturn, ECECD recognizes the importance of ensuring that all children have access to high-quality early care and education – and of supporting the early childhood professionals who deliver these indispensable services,” said Cabinet Secretary Elizabeth Groginsky.

The agency’s request proposes strategic investments that will also support New Mexico’s economic recovery. ECECD’s FY22 budget request protects funding for high-priority programs and services, including:

New Mexico PreK

Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham is committed to moving New Mexico toward universal preK. ECECD’s FY22 budget maintains and expands access to this critical program, creating slots for hundreds of additional students in New Mexico PreK and Early PreK.

“Spending on quality early education programs yields far higher savings for society over the long haul: fewer teen pregnancies, better graduation rates, lower health care and incarceration costs, and overall improved well-being for children and families,” said Cabinet Secretary Groginsky.

Workforce Pay Parity

Currently in New Mexico, early childhood professionals in the private sector earn significantly less income than their public sector counterparts. ECECD is committed to increased compensation for the early childhood workforce, and this year's budget will bolster compensation for at least 200 private sector PreK teachers with equivalent credentials to public sector teachers.

“New Mexico is proud of its mixed-delivery PreK system; our children and families depend on the dedication, skills, and knowledge of early childhood professionals in the public and private sector. Professionals with similar credentials and years of experience should receive similar compensation,” said Cabinet Secretary Groginsky.

Families FIRST

This program connects young families with a variety of essential services - health, educational, and financial. Next year, ECECD aims to expand access to these services to an additional 1,700 New Mexican families.

“Every young family needs support. Families FIRST provides just that, helping New Mexicans take advantage of important state programs that make life a little easier - and more affordable,” said Cabinet Secretary Groginsky.

Child Care Assistance

ECECD continues to enhance customer service and streamline the child care subsidy application process. Currently, New Mexican families can qualify for child care assistance with income up to 200% of the federal poverty line (\$52,400 for a family of four). Families can apply online or by calling (800) 691-9067.

“Throughout the pandemic, ECECD has preserved essential services and supported New Mexico's early childhood system. As a result, these programs and services – and the professionals who run them – will be able to continue serving children and families after the emergency is over,” said Cabinet Secretary Groginsky.

Since its official launch in July, 2020, ECECD has successfully integrated programs and services from three other departments and consulted with tribal governments and Head Start programs on how to improve coordination of early childhood services. In addition, the agency continues to collaborate with institutions of higher education and other key stakeholders on how to advance a diverse, well-compensated and well-credentialed early childhood workforce.

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