



Press Release

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NIEER declares New Mexico a "national leader" in PreK

State of PreK Report gives New Mexico high marks on progress towards universal PreK

SANTA FE – Today, the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) released its annual “State of PreK Yearbook” report that analyzes and ranks state preschool programs, giving New Mexico top marks for its progress towards establishing free, universal PreK and the state’s significant investments in early education. The report ranks New Mexico in the top ten states for PreK for four-year-olds and 13th for three-year-olds, with the state meeting nine out of ten benchmarks for PreK quality.

“When I took office, I promised to deliver free, universal PreK for New Mexico families,” said Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham. “We’ve made incredible progress by increasing access to early education, raising teacher salaries, and funding the largest PreK expansion in our state’s history. These investments establish New Mexico as a leader in early education. This is the solid foundation children in New Mexico deserve so they can learn, grown and thrive in the future.”

Since the beginning of the Lujan Grisham administration, New Mexico has taken significant strides to improve access to high-quality PreK in school based, community-based, family child care, and Head Start programs. Since 2018, New Mexico has:

- Boosted PreK enrollment from 10,989 in FY19 to 14,183 in FY22

- Increased full-day PreK by 25 percentage points (from 53 to 81 percent)
- Created a PreK Pay Parity program that compensates credentialed community-based PreK educators similarly to PreK educators in school based classrooms
- Enacted a historic \$109 million expansion of New Mexico PreK to improve PreK teacher compensation, increase instructional hours, and expand access to thousands of children across the state

“New Mexico has a historic and generational opportunity to build an early education and care system that meets families’ needs and supports healthy growth and development for children,” said Elizabeth Groginsky, Cabinet Secretary for the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department. “High-quality PreK supports young children’s learning and social emotional development skills and prepares them for Kindergarten and beyond.

A copy of the NIEER State of Preschool 2022 report is available at nieer.org

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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).