



NEW MEXICO
Early Childhood
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Press Release

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ECECD Secretary Elizabeth Groginsky testifies before U.S. Senate HELP Committee on New Mexico's child care innovations

New Mexico invited to share recent successes using federal relief funds to revolutionize New Mexico's child care system in Senate hearing

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) Secretary Elizabeth Groginsky testified before the U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee in a hearing titled, "Solving the Child Care Crisis: Meeting the Needs of Working Families and Child Care Workers."

Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT), chairman of the committee, invited Secretary Groginsky to testify about New Mexico's innovative use of federal emergency relief funding during the COVID-19 pandemic to make remarkable progress towards improving child care access, choices, and affordability for families; quality early learning environments for young children; and better wages and credentials for early childhood professionals.

During her oral testimony, Sec. Groginsky said:

“Today, New Mexico leads the nation in early childhood investment and innovation and is a roadmap for other states looking to make similar changes. However, continuous federal investment is necessary to maintain the transformational gains in states. New Mexico is proof of the enormous impact that a significant federal investment can have on children, families, and their communities. An investment in quality child care is an investment in a more vibrant and secure future for our country.”

“As a head start alumnus I know the importance of quality early childhood education and believe that Congress should be strengthening its support for child care in this country, not taking steps backwards,” said New Mexico Senator Ben Ray Luján, during his introduction of Secretary Groginsky. “Secretary Groginsky is here to share how transformational these one-time investments were, but also emphasize that they are worth sustaining.”

During her testimony, Sec. Groginsky provided an overview of many of the innovations that have made New Mexico a national leader in early childhood policy, including:

- The [most expansive child care assistance program in the nation](#), making most NM families eligible for free child care
- [Historic wage increases](#) for early childhood educators
- New Mexico becoming the [first state in the nation to use a cost model](#) to set child care subsidy rates, helping fix the broken child care market
- New Mexico's [successful stabilization of the child care industry](#) during the COVID-19 crisis

Thanks to the leadership and vision of Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, the voters of New Mexico, and support from the New Mexico State Legislature, New Mexico is better able to sustain these improvements compared to many other states who received one-time relief funds due to significant new sources of early childhood funding via the Early Childhood Trust Fund and Land Grant Permanent Fund.

Watch Sec. Groginsky's oral testimony [here](#)

A full recording of the hearing may be viewed [here](#).

A copy of Sec. Groginsky's full written testimony provided to the committee is [here](#).