



2020 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

NEW MEXICO ASSOCIATION FOR THE
EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN

DATE

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LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Development of stable and long-term funding sources for the full continuum of early childhood services.

NMAEYC supports a constitutional amendment to provide an additional 1 percent annual distribution from the Land Grant Permanent Fund and earmark it for early childhood education and care services in order to provide a sustainable and predictable revenue stream.

NMAEYC supports efforts to create an Early Childhood Trust Fund, which would establish a permanent funding source for early childhood and care investments in our children.

Increased investment in early childhood education and care services.

NMAEYC supports the Executive Budget Recommendation for investments in early childhood education and care services. The Executive Budget Recommendation increases early childhood education and care programs by \$74 million (recurring funding). This increased investment will help serve an additional 4,100 children in families needing childcare assistance, provide wage supplements for more than 3,000 childcare providers statewide, and expand pre-K and home visiting services for New Mexico families.

Investments in and support of professional development and continuous quality improvements for early childhood professionals and programs, birth to age eight, to recognize, honor, and sustain the current workforce in the field of early childhood.

NMAEYC supports the creation of wage supplements for early childhood professionals to incentivize retention and professional development. The annual media wage for childcare teachers in New Mexico is \$19,740, 13 percent below the national average of \$22,290. Additionally, 26 percent of childcare workers in New Mexico used Medicaid in 2019.

LEGISLATIVE OUTCOME

EARLY CHILDHOOD WIN

House Bill 83 (Early Childhood Education & Care Fund)

House Bill 83, sponsored by Representative Doreen Gallegos and Senator John Arthur Smith, creates the Early Childhood Trust fund, which is a permanent funding source over time for investments in early childhood education and care services. The fund is launched with a general fund appropriation of \$320 million, and will be sustained by the surplus of two revenue sources. In FY 22, the fund will distribute \$20 million for early childhood education and care services, and in FY23 and each year thereafter, the fund distributes a minimum of \$30 million per year.

The legislation passed by the House of Representatives (51-14), and subsequently passed by the Senate (37-1) before heading to Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham for a signature.

Joined by early childhood advocates, including NMAEYC Executive Director, Alicia Borrego; Governor Lujan Grisham signed House Bill 83 on February 18, 2020.

In the Governor's press release, the Governor stated, "We are clear about the unequivocal benefits of early childhood education and care, and we are implementing policy that reflects both our convictions and the needs of New Mexicans."

LEGISLATIVE OUTCOME

STALLED LEGISLATION

House Bill 86 (Early Childhood Care Workforce Support Program)

House Bill 86, sponsored by Representative Christine Trujillo, would have created a voluntary early childhood and education workforce support program that included \$18 million of funding compensation incentives for certain teachers and staff. The bill also required the Early Childhood Education and Care Department to contract with a nonprofit to facilitate the program.

The bill was tabled in the House Education Committee (7-6). Many members of the House Education Committee raised concerns over the bill requiring that the Early Childhood Education and Care Department contract with one or more nonprofits to administer the program. Concerns were raised over the requirement to contract with a nonprofit would mean less dollars would go to wage supplements for teachers because portions of the funds would be used to cover administrative costs of the nonprofit. Another concern that was discussed was related to taxes that would need to be paid by the employee and potentially an employer. Would these wages be paid similar to a 1099 (contract employee), and therefore the employee would be liable for 100 percent of the taxes at the end of the year.

LEGISLATIVE OUTCOME

STALLED LEGISLATION

House Joint Resolution 1 (Permanent Funds for Early Childhood, Constitutional Amendment)

House Joint Resolution 1, sponsored by Representative Moe Maestas, would have amended the New Mexico Constitution to provide an additional 1 percent annual distribution from the Land Grant Permanent Fund. The additional 1 percent distribution would have been earmarked for early childhood education and care services. If proposal had passed it would have provided for an additional \$77 million to the general fund for early childhood education and care services.

The Joint Resolution passed the House of Representatives (44-25). The proposal was then referred to the Senate Rules Committee, then the Senate Finance Committee. A full hearing in the Senate Rules Committee was delayed several times because of a lack of quorum. Finally, on February 17 (3 days before adjournment of the session) the Senate Rules Committee approved the proposal (6-2). However, the committee amended the proposal to reduce the additional distribution from the permanent fund from 1 percent to .5 percent.

With only three days left in the legislative session, the proposal never received a hearing in the Senate Finance Committee.