



New Mexico Association for the
Education of Young Children

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NM's Early Childhood Workers Are Essential Frontline Workers During COVID-19 Pandemic and Ensuing Fiscal Recovery

The New Mexico Association for the Education of Young Children (NMAEYC) recently disseminated a survey on the impact of COVID-19 on New Mexico's early childhood learning and care workforce. Over 500 respondents, from 27 of New Mexico's 33 counties, overwhelmingly agreed that early childhood professionals continue to demonstrate their essential community value to New Mexico's businesses during the COVID 19 pandemic. The survey data also underscored three areas of immediate concern:

- uncertainty around centers/schools reopening and returning to work.
- The availability of no-cost professional development opportunities for New Mexico's early childhood workforce in order to support providers with a framework for reopening.
- Financial support and restructuring of New Mexico's early childhood learning and care system to provide quality early childhood services.

New Mexico's long-term economy is dependent on an early childhood learning and care system that works for every family. Given the scope of the COVID-19 pandemic on New Mexico's economy, the Governor and NM's legislators must ensure that a robust early childhood learning and care system is available to parents as they return to work and restart our economy.

In addition to economic reforms that diversify the economy beyond oil and gas, legislators need to provide financial relief to the early childhood learning and care system. We respectfully ask that New Mexico's economic reformers consider the following recommendations:

- pass the Early Childhood Constitutional Amendment, *Permanent Funds for Early Childhood*, HJR 1, to provide reliable and sustainable funding for this crucial sector of our state.
- Ensure state funding that will allow the early childhood learning and care system to provide pay and benefits to staff, cover fixed costs, and continue expansion of services statewide.
- Continue support for centers that remain open during the COVID-19 pandemic, including financial support for lost revenue and essential COVID 19 supplies and protective equipment.

It is time to recognize the foundational role that the early childhood workforce plays in the fiscal well-being of our entire state. It is time to recognize the importance of early childhood learning and care for every family in New Mexico. It is time to fully and appropriately fund early childhood learning and care.