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NMAEYC Policy Ask AGENDA 2021

Situation: Childcare providers are vital to our *State's* economies. It's common sense that industry, business, and government employees with young children need access to quality childcare in order to obtain and retain their jobs. During COVID-19, private and government-subsidized early childhood education programs were part of New Mexico's essential critical infrastructure workforce. Given the importance of quality childcare to our State economy, Governor Michelle Lujan Gresham and New Mexico's legislators must provide financial support to ensure the existence of a robust early childhood system that is available to parents as they return to work; and the legislature must enact economic reform that diversifies the New Mexico economy beyond oil and gas.

Recommendations:

New Mexico's economic reform must 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's economy. It is time to do the right thing for New Mexico's businesses and industries and our State's fiscal recovery.
- Ensure State funding that will allow the early learning and care system to pay staff with benefits, cover fixed costs, and expand services.
- Continue support for centers that remain open during the COVID 19 pandemic with financial support for revenue loss and essential COVID 19 supplies and personal protective equipment.

New Mexico's economic development strategies rest upon the foundation of the essential early childhood workforce. Our state's long-term economic health is dependent on an early childhood system that works for every family.

Signed,

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