

NMAEYC Legislative Agenda

Though the body of research on child development and public interest has been continuously expanding, Early Childhood Education and Care still lacks support to fund programs at the levels that would allow all eligible children in New Mexico to receive high-quality education care from an appropriately compensated workforce. There is also the ongoing struggle for families to access high quality affordable access to these opportunities. Early care and education are not only critical for the development of our youngest constituents, but an important foundational economic component of a sound fiscal society. With this in mind, the New Mexico Association for the Education of Young Children supports the following Executive recommendations.

Executive Recommendations include:

Early Childhood Education

- \$35 million to ECECD to add 2,000 slots for infant and toddler childcare statewide.
- \$20 million to expand prekindergarten quality support, providing assistance, and classroom training/feed-back for early childhood educators. This will, in part, help us ensure all PreK teachers have structured literacy training and coaching to ensure children enter kindergarten with critical foundational literacy skills. The \$20 million will also go towards ensuring all childcare and early childhood programs have access to high-quality training and consultation.
- \$40 million to ECECD from the Early Childhood Trust Fund (ECTF) to continue policies enacted during Covid, including increasing eligibility for assistance to 400% of the federal poverty guidelines, increasing educator pay and restructuring copayments.
- \$10 million of general fund to support a wage/career ladder for early childhood professionals.
- \$3 million of nonrecurring general fund for low-interest loans, in partnership with New Mexico Finance Authority, to increase infant and toddler care in the state's childcare deserts.

NMAEYC Recommendations:

- NMAEYC fully supports the executive recommendations, additionally, we are asking for an increase of \$20 million for a total of \$30 million to support a wage and career ladder for early childhood professionals.
- NMAEYC requests funding in order to appropriately support and increase home visiting. We request \$7 million to increase the number of families participating in evidence-based home visiting that is funded through Medicaid through incentives and a more coordinated intake and referral system.

New Mexico is making great strides in its support of Early Childhood Education and Care with substantial and sustainable funding, yet there is still much to be done. Continued and increased funding is needed to ensure all families have access to equitable and quality early care and education.

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