

Link to Facebook Broadcast: <https://www.facebook.com/NewMexicoECECD>

*Advisory Council Membership in Attendance:* Maria Elena Salazar, Ruth Ortiz, Julie Lucero, Gil Vigil, Amber Wallin, Michael Armendariz, Amelia Black, Kelly Klundt, Anita Rios, Melanie Skinner, Pam Remstein, Terry Anderson, Kelly Dineyazhe-Hunter, Elizabeth Beers, Dana Bell, Candace Keams-Benally, Meribeth Densmore (DFA), Franz Joachim, Noemi Langley, Diana Hammond, Catron Allred, Janis Gonzales, Taylor Etchemendy, Marc Sparenberg, Alma Martell, Anna Marie Garcia, Trisha Moquino

*Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) Attendees:* Assistant Secretary Jovanna Archuleta, Deputy Secretary Jennifer Duran-Sallee, Claire Dudley-Chavez, Alejandra Rebolledo-Rea, Mayra Acevedo, Maria Wickstrom (Interpreter), Rhonda Montoya (ECECD Support)

*Facilitation Team:* Zach Taylor, Patricia Bowie, Elena Fiallo, Liz Welch, Viola Clark

*Public Allies in Attendance:* Patricia Grovey, Olga Valenzuela-Zavala, Andy Gomm, Tracy Jaramillo, Sarah Baca, Judy Barnstone, Cesia Otero, Meighen Nieto, Erica Gallegos

[Note: Members of the public were able to join the meeting via Zoom or by viewing the Facebook Live broadcast. A recording of the session is available on the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department Facebook page.]

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### *Welcome Remarks and Introduction of ECECD Team*

Claire Dudley-Chavez, Division Director of Policy, Research and Quality Initiatives

### *Overview of Timeline for Advisory Council and Key Focus for Meetings*

- July 24, 2020: Focus on purpose & surfacing the drivers for change
- August 21, 2020: Co-designing for collective action and large-scale change  
Today's meeting- Thinking about the purpose and what is the North Star, how do we design a pathway to get there. This afternoon session is focused on going deeper into designing pathways with the lens of racial equity and social justice to center the work. The panel discussion will focus on having panelists share their perspectives and opening up thought to ensure the work is approached with pure intent of a racial equity and social justice lens. The following meeting [September] will hone in on deepening milestones and benchmarks to build address gaps and build out recommendations.
- September 18, 2020: Going beyond alignment to building accountability towards learning and improvement
- October 16, 2020: Solidifying recommendations

*Centering Activity for Grounding-* A focus on child and family well-being

### *Recap of Morning Session: We Are On a Journey*

Acknowledging connections of where we're at, where we've been and where we want to go, embarking on a fresh start while building on past work. Points of consideration include a holistic approach, what it means when talking about child and family well-being, and incorporating a lens of equity, inclusion and social justice.

During discussion of the North Star and the vision under equitable access to high-quality early childhood opportunities, council members shared the following:

- Work should not just be providing opportunities but considerate about experiences; the individuality of experiences and environments around the child, family and community well-being;
- Need to acknowledge the context of experiences;
- Every child needs to be valued, adored and respected;
- De-colonization of dominant culture;
- Look at family life span;
- North Star to serve as an anchor for the work.

*Workgroup Pathways: Sustainability and Workforce*

Guiding question: How will we know we have achieved the journey towards our north star?	
SUSTAINABILITY	WORKFORCE
-Mapping of early childhood education resources -How we listen to families -How COVID challenges are addressed and how that changes needs -Funding -Agility of data -Acknowledge that equity is not always fairness -How we facilitate a more child and family centric program enrollment -Clear professional pathways are in place	-Redesigned approach of how we support people [structure and strategy] -Raised awareness of early childhood as a profession -Training and professional development is based on roles and context of the role -Rethink what’s being taught within cultural context of community -There is consideration of living wages and who is in the workforce -Technology is used to create access -Structured cohort and mentorship models -Built in home providers of support
Emergent themes of large group report out: flexibility of program, listen to families and community. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Precision, not prescription.</i> Services to be intentional and thoughtful for each community and center; intentionality in the way high quality is defined but not prescriptive.</li> <li>○ <i>Targeted universalism-</i> equity doesn’t mean equal. Reflect on as a piece of language and how recommendations are designed for policy moving forward with a framing of targeted universalism within policy. Start with universal- what it is you want to achieve for everyone. Then address targeted- the nuances and precision for special needs.</li> </ul>	

**PANEL DISCUSSION**

**Yvette Kaufman-Bell**

Former Director of the NM Office of African American Affairs & current board member of Voices for Children

**Edward Tabet-Cubero**

Fellowship with the Kellogg Foundation (project on cultural and linguistically responsive PreK programming), former Associate Director for Dual Language Education of NM; former Executive Director of NM Center on Law and Poverty; current State Director for the Office of US Senator Martin Heinrich

**Trisha Moquino**

From the Pueblo Villages of Cochiti, Ohkay Owingeh, and Kewa; Founding Education Director of the Keres Children's Learning Center

**Kelly Dineyazhe-Hunter**

Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Multicultural Education at Navajo Technical University

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***What does it mean for there to be equitable access to high quality childhood opportunities (and experiences) that affirm the identity of young children?***

- Proud of state for making child well-being a priority in word, deed, and finance. Equitable child care or services for early childhood children around the state...number one, New Mexico is a state that is multi-cultural. All children are having lived experiences that effect well-being; all races need to be included, no matter the population percentile. Native American, Asian American, African American, Blacks, Immigrants, everyone needs to be included to raise level of well-being in economics, education and health, a holistic approach is needed. Child care is not just child care now, conversations need to go more in depth and hold a holistic approach. Secondly, don't shy away from hard conversations, the lived experiences that all ethnic groups are facing are real. We've shied away from talking about racism, institutional and individual, it strengthens institutional racism from folks that have been hired and voted for; we've shied away for too long. Key points: do not forget all ethnic groups, a holistic approach is important, don't shy away from conversations. There has to be a paradigm shift, a new way of doing things.
- If working in an early childhood space you need to think about how do I approach the caregiver, the parents, and the child when that hand off happens. Do I see that parent as the child's first teacher and do I fully acknowledge that? Do I have an assets based perspective of all the gifts of that child entering into my care that have been given to them by their parents or primary caregiver? Think of the gift of language. Earlier, the term "cultural needs" as used in the report out. When thinking about culture, it's not something that needs something, it's all the gifts that are given to our children by their families and communities; the gift of language, faith, food customs and traditions. Culture, when attaching the word "needs" can be problematic because it's not acknowledging all that culture is. The previous panelist talked about words and good intentions, they can only get us so far but when dispersed to action, we have needed laws and policies to make happen. Focus on the cultural gift of language, one is not better than another but in the U.S. English is treated as superior. Language is one of the first gifts from a mother to child. Approaching language as a gift, regardless of language, that's how a family has instilled a gift to help that child, to express themselves, negotiate, and apply meaning and understanding of the world around them. All language needs to be valued. The early childhood system might say those things but we haven't caught up from the policy perspective to make it happen. In NM, 33% speak language other than English at home; we need to ensure that percentage is seen as an asset. In K-12 there are civil rights protections in place that include identifying proficiency in English and other languages and providing inclusive, bilingual settings. Things are included in law but right now they are not applied to PreK settings in NM. We need to look into those civil rights protections regarding language that apply in K-12 and begin applying to PreK children.

- The need for equity needs to be access for all...all families should have access to quality early childhood opportunities regardless of income. Looking at quality of programs and how they are branching out and partnering with others, they're not in silos. Need to think about how institutions of higher education are working with early childhood programs in the area, we need to be offering equity when it comes to curriculum. Representation needs to happen in early childhood centers; there needs to be cultural relevancy so students are able to see themselves within the learning that is happening, relevant to where they're at locally. Working closely with programs and communities, with institutions of higher education, it helps open opportunities for research at the state, local, community, and tribal levels so we are supporting one another and giving, improving quality of education within communities.
- In thinking about the response from the previous panelist, want to circle back around to recognizing gifts that children come with, language. Sometimes there is an assumption that native children come knowing their native language, but sometimes not case; that was taken from them early on starting with boarding schools and different journeys with that. We really need to help tribes with what they're trying to do with revitalization programs. The best time for learning language is the early childhood years. Another panelist talked about having hard conversations, but sometimes we don't have a common language to do so. That needs to be upon the leadership of NM to do reckoning with some of the vocabulary in order to have that conversation. Also need to consider settler colonialism and how has the state perpetuated settler colonialism, one is the wealth of the land and how that was acquired, living on stolen land and resources. In working for a non-profit, there is no reason why we should be feeling like we need to beg for money for the program [KCLC]. Money should be funneled to our program, money that's rightfully ours. How are we rectifying that and the state of NM and the nation to value all children; valuing children as a society. When we value children there is no question that we're going to do right by them. What's the message to NM of how we value children, actions speak louder than words; what is action and where is the policy behind that. We also need to address the turquoise book [Higher Education Articulation]. How are we building critical consciousness with all early childhood education? Thinking about settler colonization, the dominate narrative is steeped in whiteness. The Indigenous Teacher Montessori Institute was started because of the need to train teachers as needed for our communities; the need for immersion, dual language and the Montessori approach.
- Equal access doesn't always mean equity. In 2018 a report was commissioned with NM Voices for Children. The report was to address the well-being of black children in NM and how they compare to other racial groups, to inform what resources are needed and how to advocate for permanent systematic changes [policy]. In 2018, about 75% of children were from minority families/communities; 2.5% were African American children. African American and other ethnic groups have been deemed insignificant as a way of saying it's not a high enough population of people to address their issues but these groups still have some of the same issues. They still need improved lived experiences while in NM. Although 23% of African American children lived in poverty, resources like TANF, food support, and economic support, were gathered at low rates (SNAP-1.9%, 3.1% received TANF), only 2.6% of children were in early childhood programs. Data tells about lived experiences. The state could benefit by engaging the black community, ensure we are at the table, that lived experiences are voiced and talk about systemic racism. Why are blacks not applying at 23% for assistance?? Perhaps because of systemic racism. Used

to use the term “school to prison pipeline” but now using “preschool to prison pipeline” because children are being expelled from preschool. Preschool, where children are developing the foundation for the rest of their lives. We need to talk about the holistic approach, it’s important to know what people are facing, especially now with the impact of COVID. Also, children need to see themselves in every profession and in early childhood settings. Our history, heritage, and legacy is important to the identity of people; when not being taught accurately or in depth, they don’t see themselves accurately. African Americans did not come to U.S. willingly, we are not far removed from the Civil Rights Act, the attitude of privilege needs to go. Black folks are well educated, knowledgeable, and skillful the hindrances are in institutions. In previous work, when travelling the state and listening to people, to black folks, there are hindrances in institutions to receiving equal/equitable resources that go to other groups of color. They feel oppressed, resources are going to other communities of color and they are not able to receive same resources. Our population may be only 2.5% but we are still here. Black lives matter, Indigenous lives matter, Latino/Hispanic lives matter...we all matter! Leave no one behind, leave no one out, we all deserve resources!

- Imagine individual young children of different races/ethnicity and you see them as they each have all the potential in the world...one is not better than the other, all have equal potential but, on the other end, they don’t have equal outcomes. There are 25-30 point achievement gaps at the other end, children are more likely to be suspended or expelled from our schools if they are Black/Hispanic. When there are equal levels of potential but at the end of the system there are not equitable outcomes that tells you there is something not equal, our systems are inequitable. Our education system and societal. We need to work purposefully in our system to counter those. Our entire system, from Home Visiting, Early Care and K-12 we need to reflect diversity. The system wasn’t built by and for people of color. Decision making spaces need to reflect the people. Senator Heinrich continues to focus on his Two Generational Economic Empowerment Act, an approach that honors parents as their child’s first teacher and works against systemic inequity to better align early childhood supports and all other social supports alongside the education system. It treats the family as a unit and honors the family as a whole instead of working with the individuals of a generation.
- The Coalition for the Majority acknowledges that the majority of people of the state is groups of color; so we should not be saying minority anymore. The world now, the global majority, is primarily made up of people of color so we should push toward the use of common language to breakdown systemic racism. The dominant culture, from the book “This book is anti-racist”, is the group of people in society who hold the most power and are often but not always in the majority. In the U.S. people who are white, middle class, Christian, sys-gender are the dominant culture. They are in charge of institutions and have established the values, norms. etc in the country. We have to name it [dominant culture] which is whiteness. Early childhood is steeped in whiteness; terms like high-quality and evidence-based, are terms that automatically marginalize indigenous systems that are still strong in NM. We need to push to start gaining common knowledge and to have the hard conversations.

*Facilitator Updates:* Comments from the Advisory Council are supportive of the panel discussion regarding equity being connected to de-colonizing standards for education in NM; providing equity and

meeting families and communities where they're at, and the idea that saying "high quality" can have marginal feeling when coming from the majority culture. Following the discussion on equitable access...

***What are the first steps the department can make...what would you tell the department?***

- Invite the NM Office of African American Affairs to the table. Invite Black Professionals to the table, those that are doing the work; not only to discuss but to help implement. Invite organizations that are not just ABQ based to get a true statewide approach, allow them to help do the work. Look at systemic, institutionalized racism and do something about it. Educate the Early Childhood Educators, give them a raise, a living wage! We need folks that will stay in the field and hold them at a higher esteem, they're teaching our kids, building character for future, helping them be successful; include out of school time; let's raise level of professionalism and provide a track to career. Let's move the idea from preschool to prison to preschool to higher education. Agreeing with the concept of a Community School, use a holistic approach and check in with parents. Also, every Department needs to work together to support family and children.
- Regarding preschool suspension, why or what causes that? Previously, if a child was injured by another child within the same program, the center could get sanctioned up to \$10,000. Small business owners, primarily women of color, were scared to be sanctioned, they had no other supports no other means to help the children, teachers, program or community. About 750 programs across the state are owned by women of color; we see many things happen and being implemented without these women at the table for things that are affecting them and their livelihoods. We implement policies that could shut these women down. We need to look at policy with an equity lens and consider how it is affecting these women and the businesses they've worked to build.
- Time to move from words to actions. At the federal level there is a continued push for the Child Care is Essential Act and for an additional 50 billion dollars for CARES funding, part of which is for increasing salaries, with focus also on the Two Generational Economic Empowerment Act. Reminder, as you're approaching policies, supports, etc., always approach children as fully capable and whatever we do from practice to policy treat as children equal peers, fully capable.

**CLOSING**

Thank you to our panelists for sharing and giving thought to the constant refining process.

*Closing Remarks from Claire Dudley-Chavez*

Thank you. For Advisory Council Allies, those participating as members of the public and those of greater NM, there is opportunity to participate in a portion of every meeting, you are also able to access information and submit question through the ECECD website. You are encouraged to reach out and submit questions/comments.

Thank you!

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