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*Advisory Council Membership in Attendance:* Alma Martell, Amelia Black, Anita Rios, Anna Marie Garcia, Barbara Tedrow, Candace Keams-Benally, Catron Allred, Dana Bell, Diana Hammond, Elizabeth Beers, Francine Cachucha, Franz Joachim, Gil Vigil, Hope Morales, Janis Gonzales, Joan Baker, Julie Lucero, Kara Masteller, Kelly Dineyazhe-Hunter, Kelly Klundt, Lori Martinez, Marc Sparenberg, Maria Elena Salazar, Meribeth Densmore, Michael Armendariz, Ruth Ortiz, Sally Green, Taylor Etchemendy, Terry Anderson, Trisha Moquino

*Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) Attendees:* Cabinet Secretary Elizabeth Groginsky, Assistant Secretary Jovanna Archuleta, Claire Dudley-Chavez, Mayra Acevedo, Maria Wickstrom (Interpreter), Rhonda Montoya (ECECD Support)

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

*Public Allies in Attendance:* Charlene, Erica Gallegos, Frances, Miles Bonny, Pam Remstein, Tracy Jaramillo

[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 from ECECD Secretary Groginsky
- Recap of Morning Session
  - Description of the two workgroups (Workforce & Long Term Sustainability)
  - Overview of previous work refining ideas of strategies, “pathways”, aimed at achieving the North Star. The North Star represents family, child and community well-being. The work acknowledges the starting point while focusing on outcomes and how they will be measured along the way.

## **Whole Group Discussion**

- Workgroups report their key areas of focus and potential strategies

### Workforce Development, Presenters: Ruth Ortiz and Trisha Moquino

The Stars are focused on three areas to emphasize the workforce and their hard work and dedication to families in New Mexico. The stars are intended to help support early childhood providers and reflect all that they are doing.

Star #1: To increase the early childhood workforce.

Star #2: To increase quality and alignment of early childhood providers and their professional development.

Star #3: Offer living wages to early childhood providers.

During discussion for the third star, the group was trying to determine what would be the best wording because they want to be sure the language is encompassing those that have degrees as well as those that are providing child care but not on an education pathway for a higher degree. The aim is to support all providers and what they're doing to ensure that early childhood providers are being compensated. What are the words we want to use, for example, what is living wage? Who do we want to focus on when talking about compensation? Early childhood is the most important time for brain development. We want to be sure those that are working with children are focused on to show the importance and significance of what we are trying to do as a state.

Feedback: Do you all use the New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines (ELGs)? Birth-kinder?

Response: That came up with the second star and discussion on training and what it's going to look like across the board for different entities (Home Visiting, Early Intervention, the ELGS). How is that going to be encompassed across NM. So we look at it [training] in a way that will fit with all those providing services to build on a high quality early childhood provider workforce, along with incorporating the infant mental health competencies.

Feedback: Will the roadmap be available to the public and where can we go to find it?

Response: We are still working on fine-tuning the roadmap. Once it is finalized it will be posted on the ECECD website.

*Star #1: To increase the early childhood workforce.*

Pathway (key aims/strategies):

- Focus on clarifying different levels of need. There are different roles held within the early childhood workforce. Need to consider how everyone is being supported to be respected for their experience since not all have access to education.
- In learning from professionals, experts, we also need to remember there are indigenous people here with knowledge of traditions, experience and how to raise children.
- Raise awareness of early childhood and encourage more men into the field. Also, acknowledge the patriarchy, sexism, racism and how does that exist in early childhood across the whole system within all the stars. What are we doing to dismantle and disrupt those things that hinder people to be able to be part of the workforce?
- How do we use technology for people to access what they need (classes and support)?

*Star #2: To increase quality and alignment of early childhood providers and their professional development.*

Pathway (key aims/strategies):

- Be clear in supporting access to education and acknowledging how the department [ECECD] will work with all funders to support that.
- How are we acknowledging and centering the wealth and breadth of language and culture in our state; indigenous and Spanish.
- Training. Centering and supporting communities in what's relevant; creating culturally relevant education from birth throughout early childhood. With consideration of higher education, what are they doing to acknowledge ways they are steeped in whiteness and how do culturally relevant paradigms get into the turquoise book for early childhood principles?
- Supporting Infant Mental Health (competencies/endorsement) across the field.
- Important to align all the work and acknowledge the importance of establishing substitutes for care.

-Pay student interns as a path to professionalism; recognizing interns can't always work for free, ensure they are compensated.

*Star #3: Offer living wages to early childhood providers.*

Pathway (key aims/strategies):

-Offer a wage to thrive, not just live. Learn from models that are working in other states and be mindful of the wealth of knowledge and practices in NM.

-Always remember the work that has already been done and information that has been gathered. Be in partnership to know what all are doing to grow and strengthen early childhood teachers.

-Establish statewide legislation that honors and respects children; honors and respects the people that care for our children every day. How does that become in policy and how is it manifested in people's wages where they're able to thrive. When people feel respected the workforce will grow.

Feedback: Yes we want that high quality it's a must.. and how about the 45 - hour entry level class and the importance of the entire class especially health and safety for all children. And we need to make sure our teachers are staying up to date with everything. Such as a director should keep up with a professional development plan for each teacher.

Response 1: This went into the professional development piece and component of the pathways of early childhood. Looking at those setting up curriculum and pathways already in existence; and recognizing differences among people and how they're going to become those professionals working with families.

Response 2: Yes, this was covered under the training component. It wasn't discussed in detail, but meeting them where they're at and building from there, recognizing the non-traditional learners.

Response 3: This is also part of the existing career lattice.

Feedback: The ECED Teacher Residency Program at UNM Taos does lend itself to being paid during their coursework. It's something to explore further for the state.

Long-Term Sustainability, Presenters: Anna Marie Garcia and Taylor Etchemendy

The group's task has been to come up with stars and a roadmap, a journey, which is leading to those stars and ultimately the north-star which is well-being for children, families and communities. When looking at that piece of sustainability, we want to make sure that regardless of what staff are at ECECD, the plan we are talking about will sustain. Four main stars were identified:

Star #1: ECECD establishes equitable and widespread access to high quality programs and services.

Star #2: ECECD uses data informed decision making to continuously improve to meet specific outcomes and targets

Star #3: The ECECD is aligned across sectors and programs to create a coherent comprehensive system for child, family and community well-being

Star #4: ECECD is sustained by robust and resilient resources for the future.

*Star #1: ECECD establishes equitable and widespread access to high quality programs and services.*

Pathway (key aims/strategies):

-Important to build a strong foundation. Define authenticity and strong relationships...look at how the department can have strong values and principles that reflect things like community based work, family

based, strength based, the importance of relationships and building those between children and families/caregivers.

- How do we truly look at data, alignment, curricula, all of it; while looking at history, traditions and cultures of those we serve here? It would be hard to look at data and alignment of data if we don't acknowledge that we have a richly diverse state, geographically and linguistically diverse.
- Define authentic family engagement and relationship, visiting families in their homes, acknowledging the child as fully capable and competent. Not only children but families.
- Acknowledge the role of Covid and social unrest in the field and how that is impacting the work we do.
- Understand equity is not always fairness. We need to map what's there, community demographics and needs. Acknowledge the need to go beyond referral of families to resources, providers need to coordinate between various programs.
- Family engagement means giving parents the opportunity to understand the role, know the difference between giving them voice and allowing them to share the voice they already have and be part of decision making (time and establish trust). Acknowledge the role of celebrating all cultures, language, traditions and types of learning. Family navigation is a role and how to outreach to others to develop relationships in their community, develop partnerships in the community.
- Importance of the Children's Cabinet and statewide meetings being open and streamed.
- Explore use of other options for classrooms (outdoor and remote).

*Star #2: ECECD uses data informed decision making to continuously improve to meet specific outcomes and targets*

Pathway (key aims/strategies):

- Important to create a strong structure. Data looks differently across the state (quantitative and qualitative). In many cultures, data is about the stories they have.
- We need to start again on how we value data; it's also important to understand why, not only how, we collect data and what we are going to do with it. Use data to inform practice.
- Acknowledge there are challenges with collecting precise data, especially when families and children are in multiple programs. We need to determine how we are going to track that.

*Star #3: The ECECD is aligned across sectors and programs to create a coherent comprehensive system for child, family and community well-being.*

Pathway (key aims/strategies):

- Cross sector alignment is vital with respect to providing opportunities for well-being. It fits across the board with respect to workforce through sustained funding. Without alignment across sectors, we're not going to be able to provide the comprehensive support to children, families and communities that we need to.
- Approach everything from an equity lens and build a plan that helps establish culture and structure within the system to help define work across sectors.
- Think about what the available resources are with respect to Early Childhood Educators and programs. Consider how programs are interrelated, connected and interface with one another.
- Establish what constitutes high quality. Need to think about defining what that is and how it translates to a common language and common understanding across agencies and systems in order to provide equitable access.
- Every conversation has to acknowledge that every community is different. We need to be able to think together with individual communities and be culturally responsive; take into account the context, values, cultures, and traditions that are important to each community. There needs to be a process for

co-construction and conversation around resources, and what high quality means to that community with respect to thinking about cultural competency as part of the foundation of work.

-To create alignment and coordination we need to think about that structure statewide. Mapping resources and acknowledging that many statewide coalitions/networks exist and have been successful in creating collaboration and cooperation rather than competition. It is important to learn from, and with, statewide networks and coalitions; important to acknowledge, what vocabulary and work is being integrated, think about how to support one another. Build structure, norms, and protocols to create more formalized alignment.

*Star #4: ECECD is sustained by a robust and resilient resources for the future.*

Pathway (key aims/strategies):

- Early Childhood Education and Care has to be acknowledged as a profession and funded as a profession.
- There needs to be better leveraging of funding and coordination of what is available. [Example: Think of how programs have come together to effectively work together during Covid; there has been success across the state.]
- Consider federal funding and how it's being leveraged (ex: Medicaid, HS); matching.
- Continue to build on what's working post-covid.
- Permanent land grant fund as potential funding source for early childhood.
- Expand sources and tap into new revenue. This has to be based on individual income and acknowledge the difference among communities and the resources they have.
- Investment Zones need to be redefined to acknowledge realities.
- Look at federal and state funding and what exists but also need to engage local governments, municipalities and counties. We need engagement from government on all levels.

- Large Group Discussion

Feedback: "So with covid -19 and our families and children are you all including maybe a training for educators on becoming a QPR Gatekeeper to look for signs on any type of emotional distress. And help look for signs of depression with our children and families. Question, Pursued, Refer. Three steps anyone can learn to help prevent suicide. As a QPR Gatekeeper you will recognize the warning signs of suicide, know how to offer hope, know how to get help and save lives."

Response: In the workforce group, there was one of the benchmarks along that pathway. Discussion was really focused on the more expansive role of early childhood providers in identifying family needs and linking them to resources. The comment fits in to thinking more globally, as early childhood is the touch point for the family and what are the supports needed for educators in that role.

Question: Did anyone see any major gaps or holes in what was shared? Or disagree with anything that was said? We want to keep refining the roadmap.

Suggestion: Hearing the stories of families who overcame obstacles to reach their level of sustainability would be great to hear as well. Maybe have stories from families could be one presentation?

Response: Absolutely. Hearing stories from across the state would help us keep going more, help families as well.

Question: Thinking about work on data collection and the importance of measurement, does any of that need to make its way into this conversation, be a little more present?

Response: Thinking about an earlier comment of honoring workforce knowledge from a cultural - heritage perspective and perhaps widening on what educators should be taught and learn in higher education... how can we be more culturally responsive in how and what we teach in the universities...

Feedback: This work is building shared service models across the state, yet we have not used that verbiage. There are many shared models across the state. Currently, there is work happening in southern NM to connect child care centers with the community but mostly success is connecting all people working with children for one voice. Seeing that as bigger picture, models should look like communities. We are missing the boat by not putting "shared services" language in the plan. Suggesting to use that terminology.

Response: We've been using the word "coalitions" to refer to what is being described as shared services.

Question: Do you see a distinction between coalitions and shared services?

Response 1: Sure. Shared services is a better word. We are trying to network public schools with early childhood for the first time ever and are doing adventurous things across the state. There's more communication with new department with and to the field. All has to do with how we want to design shared services, networks, in all communities. Other states have been very successful but we need to design it for NM.

Response 2: Yes, shared services needs to be a part of cross-sector alignment that works within networks and coalitions. ECECD is trying to achieve that to have us under one umbrella to figure out how to interface and work better together across sectors. Parallel processes with respect to counties, municipalities, more local settings, are trying to achieve alignment within communities. It's important to create a structure of shared ongoing learning. As mentioned previously, high quality should be a verb not a noun, and that's part of the goal of this new department. Part of the goal is defining high quality across the workforce and institutions of higher education. Learning opportunities need to account for context and culture, the importance of community and community voices. There needs to be a parallel for cross-sector alignment of groups, from state to local communities, to be able to create structure of sharing and learning together and with each other.

Feedback: I think these presentations were so great, and so many times the teachers in the classroom are not included in these conversations. How great to know that is not the case this time. I look forward to the ultimate workforce wage and career ladder that will come out of this work. When can we expect to see that?

### **Closing**

As Secretary Groginsky shared in her opening, this work is intended to be a strategy for improvement, a roadmap for going forward with clear steps and goals to achieve something. This is not something to sit on a shelf, rather a plan to be truly actionable. Acknowledging all efforts and taking them to the next level to achieve something together.

Thank you for your time today. Thank you for the meaningful and rich discussion, level of commitment and engagement.

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Next Meeting: Friday, October 16<sup>th</sup>