



NEW MEXICO

## Early Childhood

Education & Care Department

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **State of New Mexico expands access to child care assistance for families**

SANTA FE – – The Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD), the state agency responsible for administering the child care assistance program for New Mexican families, published updated regulations governing child care assistance yesterday. ECECD aims to ensure that all New Mexican families and young children have access to high-quality and safe early child care opportunities, believing that early intervention, care, and monitoring are New Mexico’s best tools to address systemic issues such as juvenile justice, social and economic inequality, and generational poverty.

The new regulations increase access to care, clarify current procedures, and reduce the administrative burdens for families and providers in order to better serve New Mexico’s families and young children. The amended regulations (8.15.2 NMAC) can be found here: <http://164.64.110.134/parts/title08/08.015.0002.html>

Some of the updates issued yesterday ease the burdens placed on families seeking care, such as allowing for “telework” and “online job searches” as qualifying activities for which subsidies are available. Other amendments not only ease the burden on the families seeking care, but also reduce the burden on the private early childhood providers receiving the subsidy by streamlining the “recertification” process and removing other unnecessary burdens.

“We are fully committed to supporting parents and working families who need safe, quality early education opportunities for their children,” said ECECD Cabinet Secretary Elizabeth Groginsky. “New Mexicans deserve every opportunity to thrive, no matter the circumstances. These amendments not only make it easier for parents and guardians to

find care so that they can work or go to school, they also provide a jump start for children's educations, helping them thrive and achieve success in school and later in life."

The changes to 8.15.2 NMAC ease the requirements on providers and families by permitting more breaks in care and ensures that providers are paid for all periods of care. For example, ECECD changed the "notification" procedure that providers use to update ECECD about changes to a family's child care attendance or disenrollment to make it easier on all involved. Further, the amendments also remove the requirement that custodial parents file for child support with the New Mexico Human Services Department in order to receive the child care subsidy.

"I am happy to see the Early Childhood Education and Care Department take the concerns of New Mexico parents so seriously. These regulation changes mean that more parents can qualify for childcare assistance without facing obstacles, so they can focus on caring for their family," said Karina Pizarro, an OLÉ Education Fund leader.

"When families have access to child care assistance, they are better able to access high quality child care and have more resources to cover basic needs for their families as well as progress in their careers and education. These rule changes will enable many more New Mexican families to get the care they need for their children. We thank the ECECD for its leadership and working with advocates and the community to improve the Child Care Assistance Program," said Tim Davis, Staff Attorney with the New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty.

Overall, the changes to ECECD's regulations not only provide child care assistance and educational opportunities to New Mexico's youngest citizens, but will also boost New Mexico's economy by allowing parents and guardians to continue working, educating themselves, and seeking out new employment opportunities.

ECECD invites parents and guardians who think that they may benefit from any of these changes to contact their eligibility interviewer to discuss their case. For more information about contacting your eligibility interviewer, or for any other information regarding child care assistance, please visit: <https://www.nmeccd.org/information-for-parents/>