

March 2021

# **New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department Advisory Council**

## Final Report and Recommendations



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## Final Report and Recommendations

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**The Population Change Institute**

**Santa Fe Center for Transformational School Leadership**



For:

**New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department**

**[www.nmeccd.org](http://www.nmeccd.org)**



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## New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department Background

New Mexico has a long-standing commitment to early childhood development, education, and care, particularly through services such as childcare, early intervention, home visiting, and pre-K. Until recently, however, early childhood programs and services lived within multiple state agencies, creating alignment and coordination challenges. For decades, early childhood advocates and legislators pressed for the creation of a cabinet-level agency to administer early childhood programs and services.

In March 2019, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham signed the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Act and created the Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD), see NMSA 1978, § 9-29-1, et seq. (2019). The creation of ECECD brought together the early childhood programs and services that previously resided within other agencies of government, creating the country's fourth cabinet-level early childhood agency.

As of the formal launch on July 1, 2020, ECECD now administers the following programs and services for families and young children:

- Child and Adult Care Food Program
- Child Care Assistance
- Child Care Regulatory and Oversight
- Families FIRST (Perinatal Case Management)
- Family Infant Toddler (FIT) Program (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part C)
- Head Start State Collaboration Office
- Home Visiting
- New Mexico Pre-Kindergarten (PreK), public schools and community-based organizations

The agency's mandate is clear: build a more cohesive, equitable, and effective prenatal to five early childhood system in New Mexico. To achieve these aims, ECECD is focusing on the following:

- Integrating programs and systems from the Public Education, Health, and Children Youth and Families Departments
- Building an organizational culture that values compassion, trust, flexibility, transparency, accountability, and equity
- Creating a recognizable brand identity with clear and consistent communications
- Aligning program requirements and workforce development
- Ensuring active consultation and collaboration with tribal communities and Head Start programs
- Supporting New Mexico's diverse cultures and languages
- Engaging communities and educators

**ECECD is committed to working closely with stakeholders to cultivate community, family, and child well-being across the state of New Mexico. Since its inception, ECECD has sought strategic guidance from a variety of stakeholders, including families, early childhood experts, advocates, and practitioners throughout the state and across the country. This is a key priority of the Department.**

**We have tribal programs that provide language immersion programs and programs that are wrapped with traditional responses. Our state also has tribal early childhood educators who transfer their knowledge to take back to our villages.**

-Advisory Council Member

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## New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department Advisory Council

The establishment of an Advisory Council was mandated by the Early Childhood Education and Care Act (see NMSA 1978, § 9-29-11). The work of the ECECD Advisory Council was outlined in the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Act and included the following:

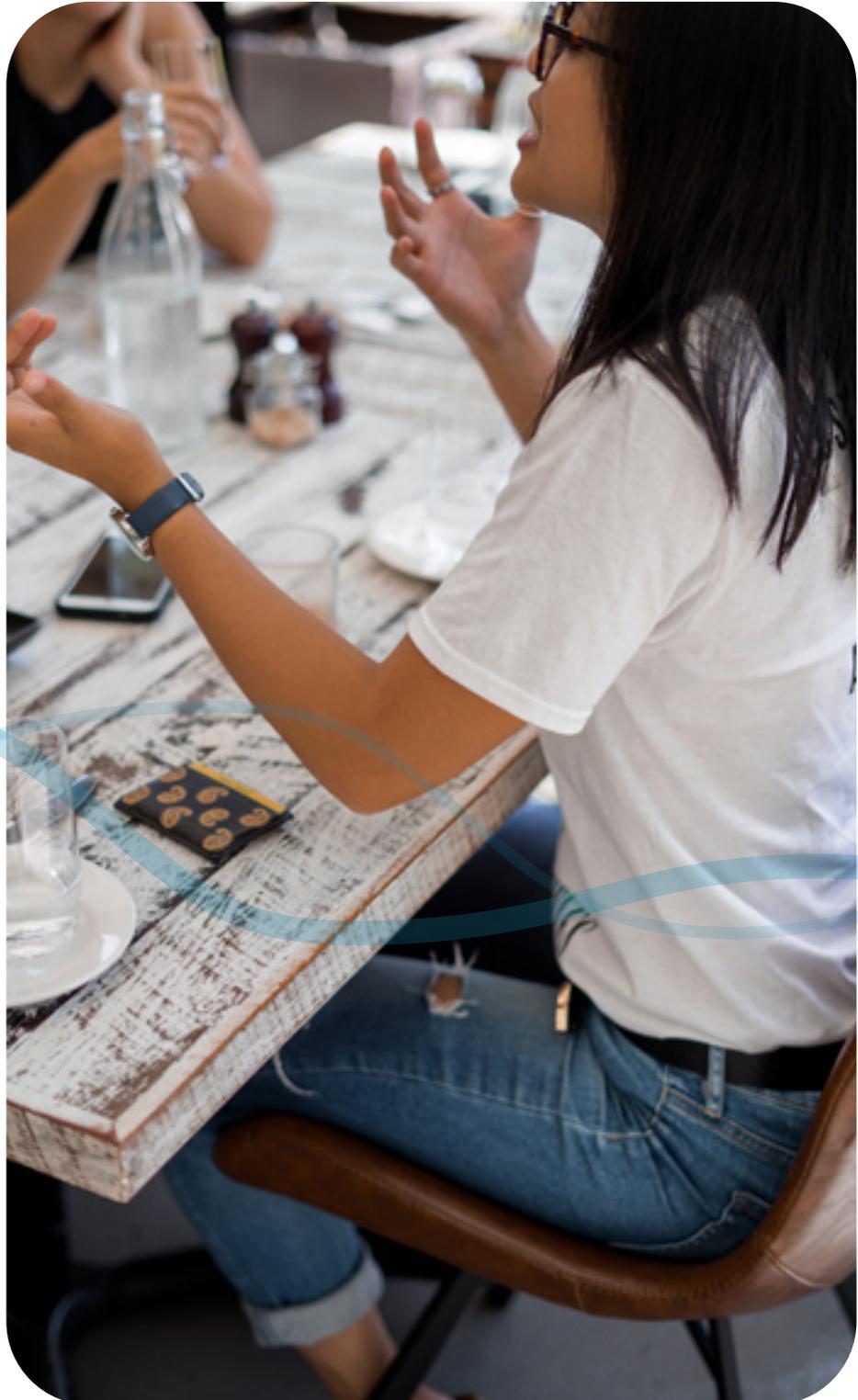
- Develop an outcomes measurement plan to monitor outcomes for children and families receiving services through early childhood programs.
- As part of that plan, develop goals and objectives with corresponding indicators that measure whether each of those objectives is reached and;
- Develop a workforce development plan to include a career ladder, wage structure and professional development plan that applies to the full continuum of programs within ECECD.



## Advisory Council Membership

To launch this effort, ECECD announced an open application for volunteers to serve as members of the Council. More than 300 members of New Mexico's early childhood community submitted applications.

After a thorough inter agency review and selection process, 41 individuals were selected to serve on the Advisory Council. Individuals were chosen based on their experience and expertise in a variety of early childhood education and care settings. These individuals provide direct care, education, health services to children and families and also have experience in workforce development and higher education. The members further represent New Mexico's ethnic, geographic, gender, and cultural diversity.



## Members of the ECECD Advisory Council

NAME	ORGANIZATION	COUNTY
Catron Allred	Central New Mexico Community College	Bernalillo
Terry Anderson	Community Partnership for Children	Grant
Michael Armendariz	Tresco Children Services	Dona Ana
Beth Beers	Socorro General Hospital	Socorro
Joan Baker	BEFORE	Bernalillo
Elsa Begueria	Lake Arthur Municipal Schools	Chaves
Dana Bell	Cradle to Career Policy Institute	Bernalillo
Candace Keams Benally	Central Public Schools	San Juan
Amelia Black	Dine College	San Juan
Francine Cachucha	Jicarilla Child and Family Education Center	Dulce
Amber Cadena	CHINS	Otero
Nora Hernandez Cordova	New Mexico Immigrant Law Center	Bernalillo
Representative Rebecca Dow	New Mexico House of Representatives	Sierra
Taylor J. Etchemendy	INSPIRE Bilingual Early Center	Taos
Anna Marie Garcia	Los Alamos National Laboratories Foundation	Los Alamos
Dr. Janis Gonzales	New Mexico Department of Health	Santa Fe
Sally Green	Roswell Independent School District	Chaves
Diana Hammond	Ruidoso Public Schools	Lincoln
Kelly Dineyazhe Hunter	Navajo Technical University	McKinley
Franz Joachim	New Mexico Public Broadcasting Company	Bernalillo
Kelly Klundt	New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee	Santa Fe
Noemi Langley	Child and Family Services of Lea County	Lea
Julie Lucero	Santa Fe Public Schools	Santa Fe
Alma Martell	Ole	Bernalillo
Lori Martinez	Ngage New Mexico	Dona Ana
Trisha Moquino	Keres Children's Place	Sandoval
Hope Morales	Teach Plus	Chaves
Coda Omness	Eastern New Mexico University – Ruidoso Campus	Lincoln
Ruth Ann Ortiz	New Mexico Association for Infant Mental Health	Dona Ana
Anita Rios	Community Partnership for Children	Grant
Elsa Rojas	Partnership for Community Action	Bernalillo
Secretary Debbie Romero	The Department of Finance and Administration	Santa Fe
Doris Salazar	Desert Montessori	Santa Fe
Maria Elena Salazar	University of New Mexico	Bernalillo
Melanie Skinner	Brown Early Childhood Center	Roosevelt
Mark Sparenberg	Child and Family Services of Lea County	Lea
Crystal Tapia	Early Childhood Solutions	Bernalillo
Barbara Tedrow	A Gold Star Academy	San Juan
Elizabeth Torrison	Native American Professional Parent Resources	Bernalillo
Gil Vigil	Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Council	Santa Fe
Amber Wallin	New Mexico Voices for Children	Bernalillo

## Advisory Council Sessions

The Advisory Council held four sessions, each lasting four hours, beginning in summer and ending in autumn 2020. The Council discussed many important challenges and opportunities facing ECECD and New Mexico's early childhood community. The Advisory Council members proposed, vetted, and refined elements that are critical to building an effective early childhood education and care system in New Mexico. At the same time, the Advisory Council members were cognizant that they were planning and outlining an approach to improving outcomes for young children and their families in a particularly challenging and dynamic time.

Throughout this planning process, New Mexico, as the rest of the Country, was in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and remains concerned for the health and economic viability of its residents, businesses, and public sector services. The Advisory Council members were made aware of the supports ECECD provided to families and providers:

- Free child care for children of first responders
- Differential payment for child care assistance contracts to providers
- Essential childcare professionals wage incentive program
- Childcare stabilization and recovery grants
- Waived family childcare assistance co-payments
- Payment for all children enrolled in childcare, regardless of attendance
- Provided health and safety training and supplies to providers
- Family Infant Toddler Program telehealth opportunities and reimbursement.



**“I would like us to think about how we are reaching out past our silos to be constantly working together”**

-Equity Panelist



Advisory Council members also urged the Department to pursue additional needed supports for families and providers throughout the process.

A site for shared documents was created and an array of resources were provided to the members of the Advisory Council including the Preschool Development Grant Birth – Five New Mexico Early Childhood Needs Assessment, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cpQ5rtvjCWYyflJxmU8U3-YnZ2adTVHE/view>

A professional team facilitated the Advisory Council sessions and designed a virtual collaborative space using a variety of processes and tools. This included video conferencing, brainstorming and collective sense making processes, sorting and prioritizing ideas and recommendations, and using graphic representations to capture the collective process. Each meeting day allocated time for public participation and feedback.

Interpretation services were available for all participants. For further information, please see a detailed description of the collaborative processes as well as the session-by-session description of the Advisory Council convenings in the Appendix.

Following the conclusion of the four sessions, the professional facilitation team drafted a report outlining the Advisory Council's establishment, purpose, work and recommendations. Advisory Council members provided their feedback to this report and each member was asked the following questions about the report:

- (1) Does the report reflect the work of the Council accurately?**
- (2) What idea, hope or outcome should be captured in the plan?**
- (3) What has not yet been captured?**

The professional facilitation team provided council members with a Google Form to provide written comments. In addition, council members provided feedback on the report during two virtual listening sessions. The reflections and deliberations of the Advisory Council and the public participants resulted in the key recommendations outlined in this report.

The recommendations developed by the Advisory Council will impact the development of ECECD's policies and practices and will be implemented wherever possible. The recommendations of the Advisory Council will also guide ECECD's budget and legislative priorities and strategies. ECECD will distribute the final report to the Governor and the New Mexico State Legislature. It will be translated into Spanish, posted on the ECECD website, and distributed to key early childhood education and care stakeholders around the state.

**Folks are willing to talk to each other about needs and about best practices.**

-Advisory Council Member

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## Executive Bodies & Initiatives Informing the Advisory Council Efforts



**The Children’s Cabinet** - The revitalization of the New Mexico Children’s Cabinet under Governor Lujan Grisham has buoyed the efforts of ECECD. The purpose of the Children’s Cabinet is to study and make recommendations for the design of programs that will assist the children of New Mexico. It was revived during the early days of the administration of Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham and elevated through coordination directly from the Office of the Governor.

Created through the Children’s Cabinet Act, the group studies and makes recommendations to maximize outcomes for children and youth under age 21. This includes looking at: physical and mental health; family and community safety and support; preparedness for and success in school; successful transition to meaningful and purposeful adulthood and employment; and valued contributions to and active participation in communities. The Children’s Cabinet produces an annual report card.

The Director of the Children’s Cabinet participated in the Advisory Council meeting and the Advisory Council report will be shared with the members of the Children’s Cabinet.

**ECECD Transition Committee** - In partnership with the Hunt Institute, ECECD Cabinet Secretary Elizabeth Groginsky convened a Transition Committee. The committee was co-chaired by Lieutenant Governor Morales and Secretary of State Toulouse Oliver and included cabinet secretaries, legislators, state and national leaders and representatives from around the state with experience in a variety of sectors. The committee developed a Final Report and an 18-month Action Plan that outlined five overarching priorities: (1) grow investments; (2) advance a diverse, well-compensated and credentialed workforce; (3) increase quality and access; (4) achieve equity and (5) enhance authentic collaboration.

**Pritzker Children's Prenatal to Three (PN-3) Initiative: Enhancing Equity by Expanding Access**

- This initiative will develop and expand a policy agenda to expand high-quality support for low-income infants and toddlers and their families, beginning prenatally, to ensure preparedness for school and success in life. The long-term vision is to ensure that each and every child, prenatal to age 3, and their families, will have equitable access to quality early learning opportunities to support their development, health and well-being, ensuring that they are ready to succeed in kindergarten and beyond. Specific policy recommendations to achieve this vision will be developed and implemented.

**Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five (PDG B-5) New Mexico Early Childhood Needs Assessment** - In collaboration with thousands (1,500 direct interactions and 2,100 completed surveys) of New Mexicans, ECECD conducted a needs assessment of early childhood education and care programs and opportunities throughout the state. This needs assessment provided a detailed view of the early childhood landscape and a comprehensive strategy for moving forward to address the needs of children and families in New Mexico.

Some of the members of the Advisory Council participated in the initiatives listed above. ECECD worked to incorporate these efforts into the Advisory Council process to help inform the work of the Council.

A woman with long dark hair is smiling and looking down at a stack of colorful foam blocks. A young boy in a white shirt is reaching out to place a block on top of the stack. Another child in a plaid shirt is holding a red block. The background shows a classroom setting with a window and a blue curtain.

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## Recommendations

Advisory Council members request that ECECD consider their recommendations and report as a living document to guide approaches for positive transformation in New Mexico. To this end, the Advisory Council offers ECECD the following recommendations and potential areas for innovation. The reflections and deliberations of the Advisory Council and the public participants resulted in the key recommendations outlined in this report.

The Advisory Council supports ECECD in their development of measurement efforts and encourages the agency to draw upon the proposed fundamental principles presented below as measurement efforts are developed and implemented.

## Principles

- Establish equitable and widespread access to high quality programs and services.
- Align across sectors and programs to create a coherent, comprehensive system for child, family, and community well-being.
- Use data-informed decision-making to continuously improve to meet specific outcomes and targets. Collect qualitative and quantitative data. Share data across programs and sectors. Distribute it to stakeholders as necessary, and, in doing so, recognize the context of culture and equity.
- Increase the early childhood workforce within New Mexico.
- Increase the quality and align early childhood provider professional development to meet New Mexico standards of professionalism.
- Create a wage structure that offers living wages for early childhood education and care professionals with increases to honor experience and professional growth.
- Ensure long-term sustainability with robust and resilient resources for the future.

The Advisory Council recommends that ECECD establish a larger cross-system with the aim of improving the well-being of all children, families and communities. This takes monitoring child and family outcomes for those receiving services through early childhood programs into consideration. It also ensures that the Department provides equitable access to high-quality opportunities and experiences throughout New Mexico.

To achieve this significant purpose, ECECD must focus on building a system-wide culture of continuous improvement and growth. This includes engaging with families and communities to listen to specific needs, collect data, and hear stories. ECECD should then reflect on this information and make changes in collaboration with stakeholders.

## Legislative Directive One

Establish an outcomes measurement plan to monitor outcomes for children and families receiving services through early childhood programs.

The Advisory Council recommends the following:

- Use data to continuously improve the quality of programs. Evaluate current, existing programs and systems to project expansion, increased access and quality.
- Go beyond statistics and test scores to determine effectiveness. Value data from all people using both qualitative and quantitative methods and data. Capture qualitative data that demonstrates relationships.
- Consider socio-economic measures and evaluate if we are collecting data that is inclusive of a larger picture. Define and identify what makes data useful.
- Share integrated data. There are consequences to siloed data. Understand how actions in one area can impact overall outcomes for early childhood programming.
- Review cross-systems data to ensure that helping one agency or program doesn't harm another.
- Develop ways to determine if the final impact is positive or harmful to families, providers and the system as a whole.
- Focus on actionable items. Ensure that data drives, or is used to stop, actions. Develop and use dashboards and other visual tools. This can help everyone use data to take action.

**Part of well-being is acknowledging context. We are all different. Equitable access to opportunities, experiences, services and supports must be deeply rooted in the meaningful relationships built upon understanding contexts.**

-Advisory Council Member

In the next year, the Department will release the first annual outcomes report as required by the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Act (see NMSA 1978, § 9-29-11). The report will include the following information on families receiving services through early childhood programs that includes:

- The number and type of early childhood programs funded by the department.
- The income levels of families served.
- The reasons stated by families for applying for participation.
- The number of children served, including by county and the monthly average.
- Evidence of improved school readiness, child development and literacy among children served.
- The number of kindergarten-age children served who enter kindergarten ready to learn.
- The number and percentage of children served who receive regular immunizations.
- Evidence that children served are served meals regularly.
- Retention rates, wages and certification and education levels of staff members.
- Evidence that families of children served are engaged in the programs.

**“There’s a need for equity and access for all regardless of income people should be able to access quality programs.”**

-Equity Panelist

## Legislative Directive Two

Develop goals and objectives with corresponding indicators that measure whether each of these objectives is reached.

The Advisory Council recommends the following:

- Use data-informed decision making to continuously improve to meet specific outcomes and targets.
- Build a shared culture of accountability to ensure investments are made in services that work to improve long-term outcomes for children and families.
- Create a common understanding of what should be measured and collected, why it should be measured and collected, and how the data will be shared.
- Establish equitable and wide-spread access to high-quality programs and services by engaging with communities, families, and listening to the specific needs of each community.
- Align programs and opportunities to create a coherent comprehensive system for child, family, and community well-being to ensure coordination, identify duplication or gaps in services, and foster local networks.
- Ensure that ECECD is sustained by robust and resilient resources for the future.

## Legislative Directive Three

Develop a workforce development plan to include a career ladder, wage structure, and professional development plan that applies to the full continuum of programs within the department.

The Advisory Council recommends the following:

- Expand the early childhood education and care workforce within New Mexico by working with key stakeholders (including current early childhood education and care professionals and existing early childhood local coalitions) to establish a clear, inclusive, and strengths-based career ladder.
- The career ladder shall include the establishment of cultural, gender and lifestyle sensitivity trainings, and the dismantling of stereotypes about child rearing and gender roles. This career ladder will include the unique and distinct core competencies required of professionals working with families and young children. It will also recognize prior experience, demonstrated competency, and mentorship, and cohort opportunities.
- Commit to improving the quality of the workforce by aligning professional development opportunities for all early childhood education and care professionals. This includes training on engaging with indigenous tribes and children in a decolonized, indigenized way, implementation of reflective practice, and trauma informed practice.
- Establish a licensing approach to standardize professional development and maintain a focus on quality and effectiveness of staff in order to obtain high-quality outcomes for children.
- Create a wage structure that offers living wages for early childhood providers with increases to honor experience and professional growth. This includes working with funders to coordinate professional development opportunities.
- Develop a comprehensive professional development information system (workforce registry) of early childhood education and care professionals.

- Implement an increase in wages and benefits across the early childhood system that is above the current pay rate.
- Acknowledge colonialism to reconcile the gap between culture and language and formal training. Foster connections to bridge awareness and understanding.
- Advance legislation and/or an Executive budget requests that enhances wages for early childhood professionals, allocates dollars to provide scholarships to support access to higher education for early childhood care and education professionals, and supports individuals to continuously improve their early childhood knowledge and skill development.

## Opportunities for Innovation

The Advisory Council offered a series of strategies and explored potential areas for innovation. They examined innovative approaches for developing and sustaining the early childhood workforce, as well as for providing supports to families. Advisory Council members stated the need to build upon past efforts in New Mexico. Strategies highlighted potential areas to improve stakeholder engagement and interagency coordination and collaboration.

## **“Include community and families in our discussion and experiences”** -Advisory Council Member

- Expand who is accepted as an early childhood professional by establishing cultural, gender, and lifestyle sensitivity training. Recruit more men into the profession and dismantle stereotypes about child rearing and gender roles. Launch a public awareness campaign that reiterates early childhood is a valued profession.

- Pursue emerging technologies to support early childhood education and care professionals in rural communities so that they may enroll in professional development, training, and higher education opportunities.
- Establish partnerships with local coalitions as hubs so that ECECD will have a presence throughout the state.
- Consult with current professionals, stakeholders, and other relevant groups to continue building out the existing career ladder as a working framework for establishing career pathways. Establish a substitute pool for all early childhood education and care professionals.
- Enhance a centralized referral system to help families enroll in appropriate services and models.
- Build additional partnerships with municipalities, churches, and community organizations to provide infrastructure support.
- Ensure the effectiveness of referrals whereby families and providers have real time access to which programs have slots available. Implement frequent early childhood public awareness campaigns highlighting which services are available and why early childhood is important.
- Utilize the Children's Cabinet to coordinate programs that impact families with children across all departments. Ensure coordination exists with the Human Services Department, Children, Youth and Families, Department of Health, and the Public Education Department. Coordination will allow children and families who utilize the ECECD programs to also have access to beneficial health, food, education, and economic security programs.

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## Conclusion

This is a time of great promise and opportunity in New Mexico. For the first time in state history, New Mexico has a cabinet-level Early Childhood Education and Care Department. Establishing the Advisory Council was a one of the first important steps of the new department. The work of the council was significant and will have a lasting impact. This final report will be presented to the Governor and the members of the New Mexico Legislature and ECECD will base policy decisions and process changes on the recommendations developed by the Advisory Council.

The Advisory Council believes that ECECD will be instrumental in helping New Mexico realize meaningful change. ECECD is poised to address long-term challenges such as racial, economic and geographic disparities in the outcomes of children, families, and communities throughout the State. The Advisory Council was clear that the measure of success should not be limited to service or programmatic outcomes but focused on high level goals and systems aimed at improving the wellbeing of children, families and communities in New Mexico.

Despite the formal conclusion of the Advisory Council, Council members remain trusted advisors to ECECD. They provide an important voice of experience and expertise that represent the legacy of commitment to and care for children and families in New Mexico.



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# Appendix A

## **OVERVIEW OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL PROCESS**

## Overview of the Advisory Council Process

**Pre-session Phone Interviews with the Advisory Council** - Prior to the first session, the facilitation team reached out to each Advisory Council member to better understand the Council members' backgrounds and interest in early childhood. From this information, the facilitation team designed activities and discussions that brought forth the rich and diverse experiences and interests of the participants. **Capturing and Building on Ideas**- The facilitation team used web-based tools to capture the salient points of the council's conversations. During the whole group discussions, part of the facilitation team took notes on a shared Google Document. During the small group discussions, the groups were also given instructions and links to organized Google Documents and graphic organizers to write down the main points of their conversations. In this way, even those ideas that weren't shared out to the whole group were captured and passed on to the facilitators to be integrated into the conversation later.

The participants also interacted with two interactive collaboration and ideation tools. One is called Jamboard, where participants created virtual sticky notes and posted them on a virtual whiteboard. The other tool is called Miro. Miro also was used to post virtual sticky notes but allowed for greater sorting and sense making in real time with the participants. In this way, the ideas and comments from the brainstorming sessions were evaluated, categorized and eventually processed into recommendations for the department.

**Graphic Harvesting** -The facilitation team included a strategic harvester. She was able to create in real time an artistic depiction of the comments, sentiments, and themes of the group conversations. She then presented to the Advisory Council and to the public her artistic creation, which encapsulated the day's discussion. The group was able to use her visualizations to reflect and synthesize their thinking. This also served to help visual learners connect more easily to the content.

**Public Engagement** - Each of the four meetings included at least an hour of facilitated discussion that was open to the public. A Zoom link as well as Facebook Live were utilized to allow anybody from the general public to listen in and participate in the discussion. The links to the sessions and the agenda were posted on the ECECD website and proper notice was given as stipulated by the Open Meetings Act. Public comments were taken live through video and voice as well as through the chat functions on Zoom and Facebook. The facilitators incorporated the public comment to the best of their ability throughout the public meeting time. The facilitation team also incorporated the public comments into the final recommendations.

**Interpretation/Translation** -Live, simultaneous interpretation from English to Spanish was available at every session. Pertinent documents, including agendas, PowerPoint slides and primary resources were also translated from English into Spanish.

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# Appendix B

## **SUMMARY OF SESSIONS**

## Summary of Sessions

### **Meeting 1: Collective aspiration and compelling purpose and surfacing the drivers for change**

**Guiding Questions: What do we want the early childhood experience in New Mexico to be? What is already going well for New Mexico?**

The facilitation team led the members through reflection and discussion about what a positive early child experience looks like. The purpose was to create collective aspiration and a vision of what the group wanted for families and children in New Mexico.

- Members spoke about wanting equitable access to services.
- They mentioned the need to remove bureaucratic, financial, and geographic barriers to access.
- They envisioned early care programs that affirm the identities of the children and families by supporting learning in the specific language and culture of each child.
- They saw the need to have flexible and creative programs that give families and communities choices that best fit their needs and wants.

In the latter part of the meeting, the group was divided into their two workgroups: “Long-term Sustainability” and “Workforce Development.” These groups were created in order to focus the conversations and outcomes to connect to the stated goals of the Advisory Council.

The Long-Term Sustainability workgroup focused on the following:

- Long-term goals of ECECD
- Strategies and structures for continuous and consistent communication
- Identifying benchmarks and indicators for success
- Continuous learning and improvement.

The Workforce workgroup focused on the following:

- Recruitment and retention of ECECD workforce (compensation, work culture, creativity, recognition)
- Professional development
- Accountability (competencies, front-line leadership, internal motivation, personal mastery)

Each group identified challenges and barriers that they perceive keep early childhood education and care in New Mexico from reaching their vision. Some of the common themes that arose from this conversation were:

- Lack of alignment and communication between departments and/or sectors.
- The existence of “silos” and sometimes even competition within the system.
- Inequitable funding
- Low pay for early childhood practitioners
- Barriers to access for services (including cost to families, geographic proximity, confusion and redundancy in the application process, family’s lack of knowledge about what is available).

### **Meeting 2: Establishing our north star and focusing on social justice and equity**

**Guiding Questions: What do we mean by child, family, and community well-being? How do we create equitable access to high-quality childhood opportunities that affirm the identities of young children?**

Day two started with the group clarifying and specifying their ideas for goals of ECECD. The facilitation team introduced the concept of the North Star, that which keeps Advisory Council members oriented in taking steps towards their goal. To this end, the Advisory Council members answered the question: What do we mean by child, family, and community well-being? The group was divided into small groups and each group captured their answers to this question on a shared graphic organizer in Google Documents.

In the second half of the morning the whole group was divided again into their workgroups, Long-Term Sustainability, and Workforce Development. In these groups, members identified key benchmarks and milestones that will lead ECECD to achieving the elements they described as the “North Star.” The facilitation team used a virtual collaboration platform called Miro to capture the ideas. These ideas became the basis for the work in the following sessions and were built upon to become the final recommendations.

The afternoon of day two centered around a panel discussion on Equity and Social Justice. ECECD invited four local experts in the field: Trisha Moquino, Founding Education Director of Keres Children's Learning Center; Kelly Dineyazhe-Hunter, Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Multicultural Education; Yvette Kauffman-Bell, Board member, New Mexico Voices for Children, and Edward Tabet-Cubero, State Director for US Senator Martin Heinrich. The panel discussion was open to the general public and included a short question and answer section. The panelists answered the overarching question: What does it mean for there to be equitable access to high quality childhood opportunities that affirm the identity of young children?

### **Meeting 3: Going beyond alignment, co-designing for collective action and large-scale change**

#### **Guiding question: What is the developmental trajectory of the department (ECECD) and of the early childhood workforce?**

Members continued to collaborate to build on the key milestones and benchmarks of the two workgroup pathways. Members worked in their workgroups on Miro boards to settle on 3-4 key areas or big ideas that would help organize and give focus to the strategies that were already in place. These big ideas became the main recommendations of each pathway.

The members were then broken up into small groups and asked to go through a design charrette [1] where they cycled through four questions. As the groups answered these questions, they were able to see and build on the answers of other groups. The questions were:

1. What data we are looking at that tells us how our children, families, and communities are doing - are we achieving well-being (our north star)? How are we able to look at the varied segments (race, ethnicity, special needs, income) of the population?
2. What data/information do people need to see and share to understand how well the system and corresponding parts/programs are functioning?
3. How do we share data that is actionable?
4. What do we want to do - and what do we not want to do - when we use/discuss/share data?

The Advisory Council members and facilitation team integrated the answers to these questions into the final recommendations stated above.

Day three ended with a public session whereby the workgroups presented their key areas and strategies to each other and to the public. Public comments and questions were included in the discussion and included in the refinement of the key areas and strategies.

### **Meeting 4: Establishing high level recommendations and key action steps**

#### **Guiding Question: How is the new department accountable to learning and improvement?**

The final sessions with the Advisory Council included a final look at our North Star and vision for ECECD. Members were asked to work individually to describe their vision of a thriving ECECD in 3-5 years and what transformation would need to take place for that vision to become a reality.

Then members entered small breakout groups to share their visions and identify common themes. These themes were then used to bolster and further refine the strategies, benchmarks, and goals that had been previously developed. The exercise integrated one more layer of creative thinking to the process that informed the final recommendations.

In the afternoon of the final day, the facilitation team opened the meeting to the public. The group divided into two to look at the two pathways, Long-Term Sustainability and Workforce Development. Each group used the notes from the design charrette on effective use of data to identify gaps in the recommendations. The ECECD executive team, the facilitation team, and members of the Advisory Council closed the day with words of gratitude and appreciation for one another. Many Advisory Council members expressed their interest to be involved in future conversations as ECECD continues their work.

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## Appendix C

### **EXPANDED RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES**

## Expanded Recommendations and Strategies

Members of the Advisory Council provided the expanded discussion of the recommendations for legislative directives two and three.

Legislative directive two: Develop goals and objectives with corresponding indicators that measure whether each of these objectives is reached.

- The ECECD uses data-informed decision making to continuously improve to meet specific outcomes and targets.
  - o Build a shared culture of accountability to ensure we are investing in services that work to improve long term outcomes for children and families.
    - Identify common outcomes, services goals, and a common definition of ‘quality’.
      - Take into consideration community context and culture.
      - Be inclusive of tribal communities and context.
      - Be clear about what the data is really being used for.
  - o Include the community in data collection processes.
    - Communicate in different languages (community and culture).
    - Build protections over who owns data - data sovereignty.
  - o Integrate data.
    - Measure growth and changes over time for providers and programs.
    - Understand workforce numbers, qualifications, and how people enter.
    - Clarify the difference between providers and workforce.
  - o Improve reflection of and interpretation of data.
    - Increase the use of big data for decision making.
    - Improve use of data visualization tools.
  - o Share data and build data literacy skills.
    - Share data that is meaningful to communities and families.
    - Share importance of data for providers.
- ECECD establishes equitable and wide-spread access to high quality programs and services.
  - o Provide the highest quality of services for each family and child.
    - Look at families as true partners, how do we make sure this really happens regardless of where they are.
      - Be relationship-based.
      - Develop strong community engagement and support.
      - Empower and engage- building confidence of families to advocate for themselves, strengthening families’ relationships with providers to improve professional development and continuous learning.
    - Look at community and family as the lead for all this work.
      - Develop a strong model for leadership and leadership development
    - Create a clear, coherent message to families about what is available. Develop a marketing plan with coordinated messaging.
      - Provide families with access to professional development, trainings, and resources.

- ECECD is aligned across sectors and programs to create a coherent comprehensive system for child, family, and community well-being.
  - o Bring multiple sectors to the table.
    - Place emphasis on care and the recognition that everything should be fluid, connected, and transparent. This includes food, housing, childcare, and all systems impacting the child.
  - o Build alignment and coordination throughout the system, identify any duplication or gaps in services or programs, and foster localized networks who communicate with the department.
    - Apply a universal approach to coordinating quality programs and services, eliminate stigma, and eliminate the duplication of services.
  - o Improve service coordination for families.
    - Increase communication between service providers.

Establish team meetings where providers can talk, coordinate, and focus on specific families.

- is sustained by robust and resilient resources for the future.
  - o Have a collective voice so we can better create systems for alignment and network building.
    - Establish a coordinated focus on policies and legislation.
  - o Connect the early childhood education and K- 12 public education systems
    - Establish early childhood as part of a continuum of education.
  - o Establish sustainable funding for the key aims.

**Legislative Directive Three:** Develop a workforce development plan to include a career ladder, wage structure, and professional development plan that applies to the full continuum of programs within the department.

The following includes long-term goals and a summary of objectives the Advisory Council considers essential to building and sustaining the workforce needed to provide services and support to children and families in New Mexico. These goals and objectives will help to ensure improved outcomes for children, families and communities within New Mexico.

- Increase the early childhood workforce within New Mexico.
  - o Establish a clear career ladder to draw people in and support them while in the field.
    - Support workforce with financial support and other professional supports to prevent burnout.
  - o Build community readiness and awareness by working with communities to allow for learning and engagement in the issues surrounding early childhood.
    - Community must learn about the importance of early childhood programs, as well as the services that are provided and available to them.
- Increase quality and align early childhood provider professional development to meet New Mexico standards.
  - o Focus on quality and effectiveness of staff in order to obtain high-quality outcomes for students.
    - Build a culture and system for continuous learning.
      - Develop individual learning plans.
        - Include intentional actions for equity, make it part of the individual learning plan.
      - Remember to add the importance of reflective practice through all Early Childhood programming.

- Acknowledge colonialism to begin to reconcile the gap between culture and/or language and training. Make connections to bridge gaps between these two.
- Establish a geographic focus of training and support.
- Increase provider cross-trainings so providers know what is out there beyond their specific area.
- Create a wage structure that offers living wages for early childhood providers with increases to honor experience and professional growth.
  - o Use a coordinated focus on early childhood policies and legislation.
    - Establish statewide legislation that enhances wages for early childhood professionals and allocates dollars to provide scholarships for individuals to improve their early childhood knowledge and skill development.
  - o Establish sustainable funding for the key aims.
    - Work with funders to coordinate professional development opportunities (like New Mexico Early Childhood Funders Group).



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