



NEW MEXICO
Early Childhood
Education & Care Department

Florencer

Strategic Plan 2022-2027



Revised August 2025

The release of this revised strategic plan replaces and supersedes the previously released strategic plan.

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Icon Key:

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Introduction



Dear New Mexicans,

Anyone who has ever started a garden knows how critical the early stages are. You can't just throw seeds in the ground and expect them to grow and thrive. You must work to create the right conditions by enriching the soil, providing water, and ensuring ample light. Once this strong foundation for growth is established, roots sink deep, stalks grow tall, and flowers bloom bright.

All living things need a strong foundation to grow and develop, and that foundation is what the Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) has focused on building since the agency's founding in July 2020.

We've accomplished a great deal in that time – we've overseen the single largest investment in early childhood infrastructure in state history, expanded our state's child care assistance program so most New Mexico families now qualify for free child care, expanded Home Visiting services, and established New Mexico as a top-tier early intervention state.

Having built this strong foundation, ECECD is working to ensure that New Mexico's children and families continue to grow, thrive, and flourish, or in Spanish, *florecer*.

***Florecer*, ECECD's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan, has six main components: improving school readiness, building family and community engagement, fostering strong government-to-government relationships, aligning the early**

childhood ecosystem, ensuring organizational excellence, and improved transparency through the visualization and use of actionable data. This Plan was developed in collaboration with ECECD leadership and their teams over the course of several months, informed by feedback from key constituents and partners, and finalized with input from the entire ECECD staff. I am grateful to the ECECD staff whose passion, knowledge, experience, and expertise were invaluable to creating this Plan.

As we laid out the ambitious goals, objectives, and activities contained in this plan, our focus was on building a cohesive, equitable, and responsive prenatal-to-five system that supports families, strengthens communities, and enhances child health, development, and well-being. We understand what an incredible opportunity we have before us here in New Mexico. The first years of a child's development set the stage for a lifetime of growth and learning. By building a system that supports children and families in these critical early years, we will see generations of New Mexico families flourish and thrive.

We owe much **gratitude** to Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, whose leadership and dedication has revolutionized early education and care in New Mexico and made our state a national role model for early childhood innovation and investment. We also are extremely grateful to the New Mexico State Legislature for their ongoing financial support of these vital programs and services and their steadfast commitment to improving the lives of New Mexican families and young children. It has been inspiring to see how New Mexico's leaders, early childhood professionals, advocates, and families across the state have come together united in a vision of a better future for New Mexico children and families.

We are proud to share with you ***Florecer***, our five-year plan for making that better future a reality.

Sincerely,

Secretary Elizabeth Groginsky

Florecer

Spanish for **Flourish**

Synonyms: grow · thrive · prosper · do well · develop · bloom

1. (of a person, animal, or other living organism) grow or develop in a healthy or vigorous way, especially as the result of a particularly favorable environment.

Our Commitment

Our commitment to New Mexicans is to create a cohesive, equitable, and responsive prenatal to five early childhood system that supports families, strengthens communities, and enhances child health, development, education, and wellbeing.

Vision:

All New Mexican families and young children are thriving.

Mission:

Optimize the health, development, education, and well-being of babies, toddlers, and preschoolers through a family driven, equitable, community-based system of high quality prenatal and early childhood programs and services.





Core Values

Family Driven

We recognize and value all types of family structures and strive to design, develop, and implement multilingual and multicultural programs that are informed and led by families, and meet their unique and diverse needs.

Organizational Excellence

We act with a sense of urgency and hold ourselves and each other accountable to providing high-quality, equitable programs, and services. We are transparent in our actions and focus on delivering excellent customer service and getting the details of our core work right.

Integrity

We value the trust and respect of our community and coworkers, and we work diligently to support and inspire each other. We commit to being consistent and to use data to make decisions and to improve our systems and processes.

Teamwork and Collaboration

We value diversity in many forms and believe that it strengthens our team and our work. Guided by mutual trust, compassion, and respect, we will operate with a generosity of spirit and inspire, challenge, and support each other to be our best.

Partnership

We value relationships and work intentionally to build strong communities and deepen connections for families; always valuing and promoting the rich culture, language, and geographic diversity of New Mexico.



Strategic Plan Impact

By 2027, ECECD aims to impact families, children, communities, and early childhood professionals through our **ambitious goals**.

- **5,000** additional children enrolled in high-quality NM PreK
- **20,000** more children receive affordable high-quality early care and education
- **33** counties in New Mexico supported by an active and engaged local early childhood coalition
- **23** Tribes, Pueblos and Nations have improved early childhood facilities
- **ECECD Advisory Council** is active, engaged, inclusive, and accountable
- **80 percent** of families and babies with Plans of Care will be supported
- **2,000** additional infants and toddlers will have access to high-quality, inclusive child care
- **500** indigenous early childhood educators are supported in achieving higher credentials
- **5,000** additional families engage in evidence-based home visiting

As we move forward over the next **five years**, these four pillars will guide and help focus the work of the Department

Pillar 1

Equity

Develop and implement internal and external policies, procedures, and programs that reflect the diverse needs of staff, facilities, and the families and young children we serve.



Pillar 2

Partner Engagement

Engage partners, families, and the communities we serve throughout the policymaking and implementation process in meaningful ways that allow for authentic and actionable feedback.



Pillar 3

Early Childhood Program Supports

Improve the quality of early childhood programs through the development and implementation of capacity building programs that support continuous improvement.



Pillar 4

Systems of Accountability

Meaningful and transparent data is shared with stakeholders regularly, through the development and improvement of data collection and reporting mechanisms.





GOAL 1: School Readiness

ECECD will create and implement equitable, culturally responsive policies, programs, and services that will ensure all children have the skills and knowledge needed to enter kindergarten ready to succeed.



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Goals and Objectives



Objective 1.1

All early childhood professionals are supported by an implemented equitable career and compensation system

Activity


1.1.1 Complete the design of the career and compensation lattice in collaboration with providers, advocates, and policymakers


1.1.2 Begin implementation of the new career and compensation system


Objective 1.2

Support for the social and emotional development of children will be enhanced through the Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) initiative

Activity

 **1.2.1** Develop job description for New Mexico IECMH consultant

 **1.2.2** Create a Training Institute focused on IECMH consultation, as part of a broader IECMH training system that is closely aligned with the NM Association for Infant Mental Health (NMAIMH) to benefit the broader workforce supporting the Early Childhood System

 **1.2.3** Develop a model of IECMH consultation that will build capacity in early care and education (ECE) and home visiting providers



1.2.4 Foster collaboration between IECMH consultants and Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) directors, Indian Health and Behavioral Health Services to ensure that ECE, home visiting providers, and families have a referral network



1.2.5 Design and implement an impact evaluation

Objective 1.3

Early care and education services for children are supported through a redesigned FOCUS program that incorporates outcome-based measures of quality and supports diversity, equity and inclusion

Activity



1.3.1 Establish a draft framework for the redesign of FOCUS

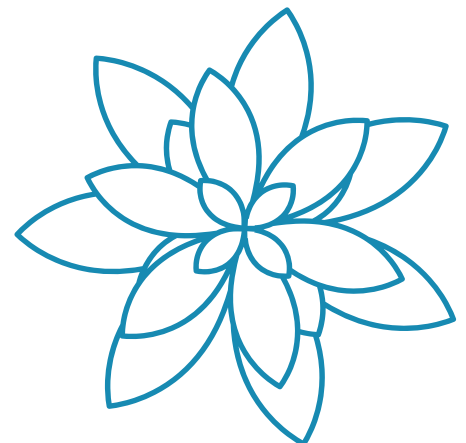


1.3.2 Engage with the early childhood community for listening and feedback on the draft framework



1.3.3 Revise the framework and redesign FOCUS

1.3.4 Create a communications, training and implementation strategy for redesign of FOCUS





Objective 1.4

Quality, universal, accessible, and affordable early care and education is available for all families and children

Activity

-  **1.4.1** Conduct a supply and demand study of infant and toddler child care
-  **1.4.2** Sustain funding for families at 400% of the federal poverty level to access child care assistance
-  **1.4.3** Redesign co-payment chart to simplify and reduce family financial burden
-  **1.4.4** Expand hours and days of service in NM PreK
- 1.4.5** Improve access and coordination for children with developmental delays and disabilities in early care and education programs
-  **1.4.6** Develop an accessible, statewide home visiting system that is cooperatively financed with federal (i.e. Medicaid, Maternal and Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting funds) and state funds
- 1.4.7** Develop an approach to provide financial support for all families as part of achieving universal access
- 1.4.8** Increase participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in support of healthy food for children, affordability for families, and improved provider revenue





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A photograph of a woman with long red hair and a purple patterned shawl standing in a living room, smiling and interacting with a young boy who is standing on a light blue sofa. The room has a white door, a lamp, and decorative wall art.

GOAL 2: Family and Community Engagement






ECECD commits to effective, transparent, and trust-based engagement with New Mexico's diverse families and communities to increase family leadership and voice in decision making and program and service design.

Objective 2.1

A framework for family engagement and leadership is developed and implemented that is built on mutual trust and respect


Activity

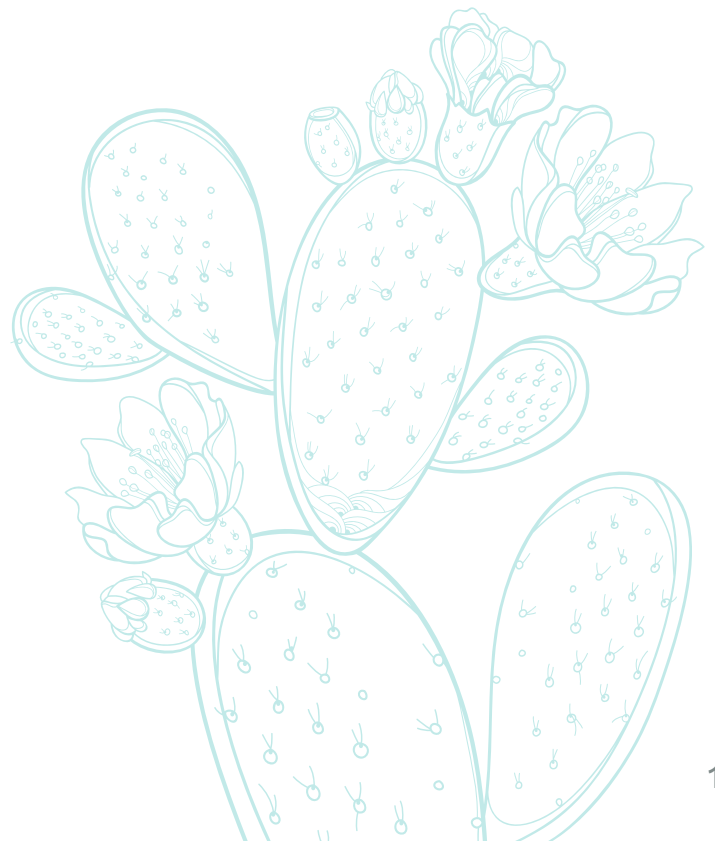
-  **2.1.1** Hire a family engagement coordinator to lead
-  **2.1.2** Identify and dedicate recurring funding for family engagement
-  **2.1.3** Develop a family leadership council representative of ECECD programs
- 2.1.4** Establish family engagement and leadership policies and standards, and a toolkit to support implementation
- 2.1.5** Convene a family summit on a regular basis that includes family input in ECECD policy and programs

Objective 2.2

Each New Mexico community is served by an early childhood coalition that ensures stronger state-local coordination and decision making

Activity

- 2.2.1** Identify unserved communities and identify and address obstacles so that all communities have an early childhood coalition
-  **2.2.2** Identify actions ECECD can take to ensure long term sustainability and expansion of coalitions
- 2.2.3** Demonstrate the impact and accomplishments of the early childhood coalitions and share widely
- 2.2.4** Develop a toolkit and guidance to assist new coalitions and strengthen existing coalitions





GOAL 3:

Government-to-Government

ECECD will expand and deepen government-to-government relationships and agreements with all Tribes, Pueblos, and Nations with a focus on consultation, culture, language, data sharing, and facility improvements to improve outcomes for Native American families and young children.



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Objective 3.1

An active and engaged ECECD Early Childhood Tribal Advisory Coalition works with ECECD to support desired outcomes of each Tribal community

Activity



3.1.1 Establish the Early Childhood Tribal Advisory Coalition, with each Tribal community represented, to provide policy, budget, legislative, and advocacy recommendations to ECECD

3.1.2 Develop and implement the Early Childhood Tribal Advisory work plan with action timeline

3.1.3 Ground the Tribal Advisory Coalition through meetings in tribal communities

3.1.4 Bring together Tribal Advisory Council with other ECECD advisory groups to ensure mutual communication

Objective 3.2

Tribal communities are supported by ECECD to address early childhood facilities needs

Activity

3.2.1 Ensure resources are available for facilities assessments by Tribal communities

3.2.2 Pursue investment in facility renovation and expansion resources



3.2.3 Establish and implement guidelines for distribution and use of funding and procurement methods with mutual agreement between ECECD and Tribal leadership

Objective 3.3

The Tribal investment strategy grows to support the defined outcomes of Tribal communities

Activity

3.3.1 Continue implementing intergovernmental agreements (IGAs) between ECECD and Tribal communities

3.3.2 Conduct ongoing, individual, and meaningful consultation with each Tribal community to identify and support the vision of each Tribal community for its prenatal-to-age-five services and programs



3.3.3 Document implementation and progress through a reporting system



3.3.4 Support Tribal communities to research and apply for grant and other funding opportunities


Goals and Objectives



Objective 3.4

Tribal communities are supported in the development of a culturally and linguistically early childhood workforce

Activity


 **3.4.1** ECECD engages with the Higher Education Department as it establishes technical assistance centers (TAC) to serve Tribal communities, inclusive of early childhood

3.4.2 ECECD supports the technical assistance centers as they implement early childhood culturally and linguistically relevant instructional materials; career pathways for Tribal educators; professional development in culturally and linguistically relevant pedagogy; and capacity building for early childhood policy development and implementation

Objective 3.5

Tribal communities and ECECD collaboration is supported

Activity

 **3.5.1** ECECD designates 11 tribal liaisons representing each program administered by the department

3.5.2 Make infant and early childhood mental health consultants available in Tribal communities

3.5.3 Ensure the PDIS is accessible to Tribal early childhood professionals

 **3.5.4** Share information that is relevant to Tribal communities through dedicated webpages



GOAL 4:

Early Childhood Ecosystem Alignment

ECECD will foster coordination and collaboration within and among the early childhood, health, and child welfare sectors to create a holistic, family centered, culturally responsive, and integrated early childhood ecosystem that supports families, reduces child abuse and neglect, and improves school readiness.



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Objective 4.1

The prevention, intervention and promotion of the health and well-being of children, families, and communities is equitably supported through use of early childhood cross-agency resources and expertise

Activity

4.1.1 Coordinate with Children’s Cabinet in implementing the Thriving Families Plan

4.1.2 Work in collaboration with Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD), Department of Health (DOH), and Health Care Authority (NMHCA) to engage families affected by substance use to connect them with early childhood services



4.1.3 Develop shared impact measures with internal and external stakeholders to measure the impact of prevention, intervention, and promotion of health and well-being of children, families, and communities

Objective 4.2

ECECD’s professional development and technical assistance system builds the capacity of early childhood professionals to support high quality, equitable services that are aligned to the early learning guidelines and meet the geographic, cultural, and linguistic diversity of programs and communities

Activity



4.2.1 Review and identify all of professional development (PD) and technical assistance (TA) content being offered, and evaluate for content gaps in areas such as cultural and language support

4.2.2 Complete the Professional Development Information System (PDIS) so that early childhood professionals can have full access to all PD that is available



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GOAL 5: Organizational Excellence


ECECD will have efficient and effective fiscal, human resource, and constituent service systems and information technology infrastructure to meet critical job functions and duties of the department and ensure high quality customer service for all New Mexicans.

Goals and Objectives

Objective 5.1

A staffed department-wide justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) initiative is fully implemented

Activity

 **5.1.1** Hire a Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Specialist Coordinator


5.1.2 Develop and implement ECECD equity training plan

5.1.3 Develop and implement a language access plan


Objective 5.2

The Department will have consistent, high-quality and responsive customer service systems for families and professionals

Activity

 **5.2.1** Develop and implement an agency-wide systems mapping process to identify fiscal support gaps

5.2.2 Design and develop standard operating procedures for all public facing communications systems

 **5.2.3** Develop and use feedback loops for external entities to engage with ECECD and to support program improvements


5.2.4 Ensure adequate child care eligibility staffing resources for external customer service and timely application processing


5.2.5 Develop a tracking system to ensure high-quality customer service

Objective 5.3

The ECECD Advisory Council is active, engaged, inclusive, and accountable as it helps advance equitable and effective policies and practices

Activity

 **5.3.1** Design, define, and develop a charter for the ECECD Advisory Council that includes families and diverse statewide representation and aligns with federal and state laws

 **5.3.2** Engage the Advisory Council and its sub-committees and task forces in long-term strategic planning activities

5.3.3 Designate staff to attend, coordinate and support the Advisory Council

Objective 5.4

ECECD is an employer of choice with an equitable, inclusive, happy, healthy, and thriving staff, and a culture of respect, support, and accountability

Activity

5.4.1 Develop systems to ensure all staff can access resources to equip them with the knowledge and support necessary for excelling in their roles, fostering engagement and driving organizational success

 **5.4.2** Offer flexible schedules, and wellness opportunities

5.4.3 Review organizational structure and employee classifications and present recommendations for change in accordance with the state's architecture



GOAL 6:

Actionable Data

ECECD will collect and share relevant, reliable, and actionable data to inform policy decisions, empower partners to improve, and enhance community understanding of the importance of the prenatal to age five period of development.



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Objective 6.1

The NM Longitudinal Data System (NMLDS) is collaboratively developed with the Higher Education Department, Public Education Department, and the Department of Workforce Solutions and tracks outcomes for children and educators and supports data-driven decision making

Activity



6.1.1 Engage with the project agencies in development of data structures and files

6.1.2 Work within ECECD divisions to develop NMLDS data reporting requirements and visualization matrix

6.1.3 Dedicate resources to support multi-agency training, implementation and use

Objective 6.2

Data on school readiness is available to all communities statewide

Activity

6.2.1 Implement the Early Development Instrument (EDI)

6.2.2 Implement the Childhood Experiences Questionnaire (CHEQ)

6.2.3 Support local early childhood communities in engaging families and cross-sector partners in use of EDI and CHEQ to improve school readiness

Objective 6.3

ECECD creates a data governance plan and has internal and external dashboards that display ECECD's impact and inform decisionmaking

Activity



6.3.1 Procure vendor for implementation of dashboards and data visualization tools and platform



6.3.2 Determine key performance indicators (KPI) for fiscal and programmatic success

6.3.3 Train data analysts and business subject matter expert team members in using visualization tools

6.3.4 Identify requirements and complete internal and external dashboards

6.3.5 Establish data governance policies and procedures to standardize data management practices and ensure alignment with organizational goals and regulatory requirements

6.3.6 Implement a data stewardship program to define roles and responsibilities for data management, enhancing accountability and oversight

6.3.7 Develop and deliver comprehensive data governance training sessions to educate staff on best practices and regulatory compliance



Pumpkins grow to many sizes.
Bree found a big pumpkin!

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NUBLADO

TRUENO

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ARCO IRIS

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