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Question	Answer
Provider Eligibility	
1. As it is written, only FOCUS programs can apply and not accredited centers? Are accredited centers being excluded from this opportunity? As the Offeror know, Christina Kent is the oldest licensed center in NM, and we serve a demographic that primarily falls below 200% of poverty and communities that are underserved - which is why we opened new classrooms.	This program is designed for currently licensed child care providers, with at least a 3-star FOCUS rating (including 5-star rated providers through ECECD national accreditation), and Nations, Pueblos, and Tribes (NPTs) who are willing to participate in the FOCUS rating program. Providers who have a 5-star rating through one of the seven ECECD approved National Accreditation bodies, as listed in regulations, are deemed to have met the requirement of equivalent of FOCUS 5-star for this purpose.
2. Can the Offeror clarify that a nationally accredited program does NOT have to participate in FOCUS in addition to our national accreditation?	Providers who have a 5-star rating through one of the seven ECECD approved National Accreditation bodies, as listed in regulations, are deemed to have met the requirement of equivalent of FOCUS 5-star for this purpose, and do not have to participate in the state's FOCUS program.
3. Can the Offeror please provide the seven nationally accredited bodies that are recognized by the ECECD?	Per ECECD Regulations 8.9.3, The following are the only national accrediting bodies that are approved by ECECD: 1. The Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) 2. The Council On Accreditation (COA) for early childhood education and after school programs 3. The International Christian Accrediting Association (ICAA) 4. The National Accreditation Commission for early care and education programs (NAC)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

RFP 2026-1000: Infant and Toddler Contracted Slots

Question	Answer
	5. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) academy for early childhood program accreditation 6. The National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA) 7. The National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC)
4. Are faith-based sites, with faith-based curriculum, encouraged to apply?	All currently licensed child care providers, with at least a 3-star FOCUS rating, and NPTs who are willing to participate in the FOCUS rating program are encouraged to apply.
5. Can a single provider organization submit one proposal covering multiple facilities (separate FEIN and License Numbers), or must we submit separate proposals for each location? If separate, do we need separate references for each facility?	A single provider organization that has multiple facilities can submit one proposal; however, the respondent MUST complete APPENDIX G. PROVIDER INFORMATION FORM for EACH facility where requested slots will be located.
6. We plan to apply for a loan to upgrade our center in Santa Fe, which was a licensed childcare center approximately four years ago. Although we stopped using the facility, it was previously licensed, and we are hoping to renew its license and reopen it. When completing the application, should we mark "Yes" for licensed or "No"?	Providers and specific locations will need to be in good standing and fully licensed at the time of application
Child Eligibility	
7. Is a program allowed to apply for only infants (6 weeks to 23 months) and the rest of the classrooms for toddlers (2 and 3 year olds) remain at the licensing standards?	Providers can apply for one or both age groups. For continuity of care, it is recommended to consider both Infant and Toddler slots to account for children remaining covered for this specialized program until the child turns 36 months. The RFP evaluation will consider each program's Transition Planning – specifically, how the organization supports children as they move across age groups. (please see Section IV(A)(19) of the RFP)
8. Are programs allowed to pick which classrooms they want to apply, if they have multiple infant and toddler classrooms in the same facility? How would that work when the children turn 2 and this grant states they must remain in the program until they transition into NM Early PreK?	Yes, providers can pick which classrooms would be best to accommodate these contracted slots. Child care providers have the option to create and plan for transitions, based on what works for their center and families. Please keep in mind when planning for slots, any classrooms that contain a contracted slot child will need to adhere to the specific ratios, group size and regulations. The RFP evaluation will consider each program's Transition Planning – specifically, how the organization supports children as they move across age groups. (please see Section IV(A)(19) of the RFP).
9. Is the reward based on how old the child is September 1st or their actual age? Is it based on	To enter a contracted slot, children must be between the ages of 6 weeks to 36 months

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Question	Answer
children themselves or is it based on how many childcare slots a facility has?	
10. If we operate mixed-age classrooms (Type 1: 6 weeks-24 months or Type 2: 18-35 months), can we allocate contracted slots flexibly within those classrooms, or must we designate specific "infant-only" and "toddler-only" slots?	These contracted slots can be incorporated into the provider's program in variety of different ways. As long as program ratios, group sizes and other program requirement are met within each classroom where the funded slots are placed and no children are displaced, providers have the option to incorporate these slots with what works for the provider's program and child transition plans.
11. Can contracted slots be moved between infant and toddler categories during the contract term based on enrollment demand, or are allocations fixed once awarded?	No, contracted slots may not be moved between infant and toddler categories during the contract term. Contracted providers must indicate the proposed number of infants and toddlers to be served in APPENDIX D. BUDGET.
12. Regarding the two-phase eligibility process (Section IV.A.10): (a) What is the typical timeline between Phase 1 (presumptive eligibility by provider) and Phase 2 (full eligibility determination by ECECD staff)? (b) If a child is deemed ineligible in Phase 2 after enrollment, what happens? Must we disenroll the child, or can they remain enrolled as private pay? Would this count against our 90% enrollment requirement? (c) Will providers receive training on conducting presumptive eligibility assessments, or will ECECD provide specific screening tools/forms?	(a) The maximum amount of time a family can remain presumptively eligible is 90 days. Families are expected to apply through "Am I Eligible" within 30 days of enrollment with a contracted provider. (b) If a child is deemed ineligible in Phase 2, the contracted provider will be notified by ECECD and provider must begin disenrollment process. ECECD will close the contracted slot 14 days from notification date. (c) Yes, contracted providers will receive training on the program requirements upon receiving award.
13. How does this affect children that do not meet the 200% level currently in our care? It says we can not displace or disenroll? What do we do with them?	Children whose families are above the 200% FPL are welcome to stay in the facility under a private pay slot or child care placement agreement, as space allows. If families start under a presumptive eligibility and then when they apply for full eligibility, they do not meet the 200% FPL, these children will need to exit the contracted slot and will need to be transferred to a private pay spot, child care placement agreement or other program. Presumptive eligibility will give the provider a first glimpse or idea if the family might not be eligible and should not be enrolled under a contracted slot.
14. What evidence will we need to provide showing the disability?	Children with disabilities or medical conditions may have several acceptable forms of documentation. Acceptable documents include but are not limited to: Physician written authorization, Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) / Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Therapy Referrals, etc.

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Question	Answer
15. To qualify for the pilot program, must the family/child fall into multiple priority populations or one priority? Example: If a child has a documented disability, is there an income level that also limits whether that child can participate? I've referenced the sections that refer to priorities for the proposal as well as the language that seems to contradict the priority populations.	They only need to meet one priority level, a child with a disability does need to meet the under 200% FPL criteria.
Ratios/Classroom Size	
16. Is there a max request amount, or a max on the number of slots or classes that can be requested?	There is no maximum amount that can or must be requested. Actual awarded slots will be determined based on provider interest and slots available.
17. The RFP states that a program "A. Children must not be displaced or disenrolled due to participation in this pilot". ...can the Offeror clarify? My infant room currently is full at 12 slots with 3 teachers following a 1:4 ratio, however, under this RFP the maximum group size is 8. I will have to disenroll 4 children from the program. Does the disenrollment of children disqualify me from applying?	As part of the required qualifications, providers applying for the Contracted Slots Program must confirm that children will not be displaced or disenrolled because of the provider's participation in this pilot program. Additionally, the RFP evaluation will consider each program's transition planning – to include how the organization will allow children to age out rather than be disenrolled to meet the lower ratio and group size during this initial transition period. To clarify, children that are currently enrolled and qualify for the contracted slots pilot may be transferred into a contracted slot. There is an amendment being considered that may change our answer to this question. If an amendment is issued, the answer to this question will be updated.
18. The RFP states that we cannot displace children in order to apply for this grant. Does this disqualify us? I would displace 57 infants and toddlers between my sites in order to reduce group sizes to a maximum of 8.	As part of the required qualifications, providers applying for the Contracted Slots Program must confirm that children will not be displaced or disenrolled as a result of participation. Additionally, the RFP evaluation will consider each program's transition planning – to include how the organization will allow children to age out rather than be disenrolled in order to meet the lower ratio and group size during this initial transition period. To clarify, children that are currently enrolled and qualify for the contracted slots pilot may be transferred into a contracted slot. There is an amendment being considered that may change our answer to this question. If an

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Question	Answer
	amendment is issued, the answer to this question will be updated.
19. I need clarification on children who age out at 36 months and move into NM Early PreK. The problem is that nobody can move out until August 2026...that is NEXT YEAR. So if no children can move out then no slots will open up. Keep this in mind....displacement would have to happen to keep an 8 group size. This is in regards to displacement and staying at the 8 group size.	Contracted Providers will need to consider how these types of transitions will work within their child care locations and part of the RFP application will be developing a written transition plan for children aging out of the infant/toddler pilot program. To help with this transition period, depending on the provider's program structure, a child can remain in their contracted slot while waiting to enroll in the PreK program. This extension can continue beyond the typical 36-month limit but cannot exceed 48 months total. However, if the child is enrolled in a mixed Infant Toddler classroom, this extended stay beyond 36 months is not possible. To clarify, children that are currently enrolled and qualify for the contracted slots pilot may be transferred into a contracted slot. There is an amendment being considered that may change our answer to this question. If an amendment is issued, the answer to this question will be updated.
20. It states the ratio is 1:4 for infants and 1:4 for toddlers, is this correct?	Yes. For Child Care Centers with children less than 12 months and children 13 to 35 months, the max staff to child ratio is 4:1, with a max group size of 8. For Small Family Child Care Homes: A. The small family child care home licensed to care for a maximum of six children may have two children under two years of age. B. The small family child care home licensed to care for a maximum of six children may care for more than two but not exceed four children under the age of two when a second caregiver/teacher is present and the home is licensed to provide such care. C. The small family child care home caregiver's/teacher's own children as well as any other children in the home temporarily requiring supervision are included in the child to staff ratio. During nap time, at least one adult should be physically present in the same room as the children. For Large Family Child Care Homes:

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Question	Answer
	The large family child care home licensed to care for a maximum of 12 children may care for up to four children under age two providing a second caregiver/educator is present in the home and the home is licensed to provide such care. There is an amendment being considered that may change our answer to this question. If an amendment is issued, the answer to this question will be updated.
21. Does the ratio remain 1:4 until a 3 year old can go into a NM Early PreK program, regardless of when the child turns 3?	If a child is still being covered under Contracted Slot funding, the ratio will still need to be adhered to. A child can remain in their contracted slot while waiting to enroll in the PreK program. This extension can continue beyond the typical 36-month limit but cannot exceed 48 months total. However, if the child is enrolled in a mixed Infant/Toddler classroom, this extended stay beyond 36 months is not possible. There is an amendment being considered that may change our answer to this question. If an amendment is issued, the answer to this question will be updated.
22. If the ratio is 1:4 until a child enters NM Early PreK, why are there different rates?	Infant and toddler contracted slots payment rates were informed by a cost estimation model and with extensive statewide stakeholder engagement. It was developed to set rates at a level that supports the true cost of delivering high quality early childhood education required at each different age group. There is an amendment being considered that may change our answer to this question. If an amendment is issued, the answer to this question will be updated.
23. Is the group size the same for infants and toddlers (which include 3 year olds) at a maximum of 8 children per classroom?	Yes, for Child Care Centers with children Less than 12 months and children 13 to 35 months the max group size is 8. There is an amendment being considered that may change our answer to this question. If an amendment is issued, the answer to this question will be updated.
24. Can the Offeror clarify the group size of 8 maximum? Is this for the whole classroom, or can classrooms be split into two different areas	Yes, a room can be split if the quality standard of 42 square feet per child is met, and in alignment with ECECD Licensing regulations 8.9.4, more than one

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Question	Answer
with 8 in each area and have 16 in the classroom?	group of children may occupy a room, provided the following conditions are met: (a) the room is divided so that different activity/interest areas are well-defined (i.e. creative art, dramatic play, books, manipulatives, blocks, science, and math); (b) each activity/interest area will have a posted capacity, which may vary according to the activity and size of the space, and will not exceed the group size requirement as specified in Paragraph (1) of Subsection C of 8.9.4.23 NMAC; (c) placement of cabinets, tables, carpeting, room-dividers, or shelving clearly define the different activity/interest areas; (d) individual children may freely move from one activity/interest area at their own pace as long as the capacity of any individual interest area is not exceeded; (e) a single educator is responsible for supervising up to the number of children allowed in the adult to child ratio age grouping specified in Paragraph (1) of Subsection C of 8.9.4.23 NMAC in one or more interest area as long as every child is in direct eyesight of the educator; and (f) the total number of children in a larger room must not exceed the room capacity based on activity space. For example, if a three to five year old classroom has a capacity of 40, and the maximum group size is 28, the room must be divided by at least two well-defined spaces that include various activity/interest areas and be supervised by at least three educators, who are spread out so that every child is "attended." There is an amendment being considered that may change our answer to this question. If an amendment is issued, the answer to this question will be updated.
25. Regarding group size limits - if our current classroom configuration allows 12 children per room per licensing (or 20 for 24 month old), but the RFP requires maximum 8 per group, can we (a) divide one physical classroom into smaller "groups" of 8 with separate staff, or (b) must we have separate physical classroom spaces? If physical reconfiguration is required, is this within the 18-month phase-in period?	See response to question above.

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Question	Answer
26. Can the Offeror explain the group size of 8...is this a maximum of 8 children in one room? Can we divide one large classroom that is licensed for 16 into two areas with group sizes of 8 and 8 in one room?	Low child:staff ratios are most critical for infants and toddlers (birth to thirty-six months). Child development and quality improves greatly when group size and ratios are smaller. Research conducted from National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs shows these child:staff ratios are within the range of recommendations for each age group from partnering accreditation organizations. Yes, a large classroom can be split into 2 areas if the quality standard of 42 square feet per child is met, and in alignment with ECECD Licensing regulations 8.9.4. For additional information please see the answer to question #24 above. There is an amendment being considered that may change our answer to this question. If an amendment is issued, the answer to this question will be updated.
27. The RFP requires both 4:1 staff-to-child ratios AND maximum group sizes of 8 children "within 18 months" (Section V.B.1.F). What ratios and group sizes are acceptable at contract start? Can we begin with current NM licensing ratios (e.g., 6:1 for toddlers with 12 group size) and phase into the 4:1/8 maximum requirement over the 18-month period?	Section V.B.1.F of the RFP requires the provider to follow the child ratio requirement. Appendix H references the 18 months to come into compliance with this section. There is an amendment being considered that may change our answer to this question. If an amendment is issued, the answer to this question will be updated.
28. Why is the rate different if the ratio is 1:4 until the child enters NM Early PreK? I have submitted written questions, but want to reiterate that the reimbursement to be lowered for toddlers and children who must stay in the program until they enter NM Early PreK does not make financial sense. The math should be recalculated in the cost model with a 1:4 ration regardless of age due to staffing and limiting the group size.	Infant and toddler contracted slots payment rates were informed by a cost estimation model and with extensive statewide stakeholder engagement. It was developed to set rates at a level that supports the true cost of delivering high quality early childhood education required at each different age group. There is an amendment being considered that may change our answer to this question. If an amendment is issued, the answer to this question will be updated.
29. Are the center ratios listed accurately? Children aged 24 – 35 months have a higher ratio than children 0-23 months in centers. This is part of the justification for the lower reimbursement rate. If the ratio and group size are the same, shouldn't the payment amounts also be the same?	Infant and toddler contracted slots payment rates were informed by a cost estimation model and with extensive statewide stakeholder engagement. It was developed to set rates at a level that supports the true cost of delivering high quality early childhood education required at each different age group.

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Question	Answer
	There is an amendment being considered that may change our answer to this question. If an amendment is issued, the answer to this question will be updated.
30. <i>Section V B 1 C. Commit to not displacing or disenrolling children because of the pilot initiative;</i> Question: Lowering the ratio for 2 year olds will by default reduce the capacity of most centers. Will that automatically disqualify them from this program?	Reducing capacity won't automatically disqualify the provider, but as part of the required qualifications, the Offeror must have a transition plan and must confirm that children will not be displaced or disenrolled because of the provider's participation in this pilot program. There is an amendment being considered that may change our answer to this question. If an amendment is issued, the answer to this question will be updated.
31. Do we have to have a separate classroom for these children?	There is no requirement for separate classrooms. These contracted slots can be incorporated into the program in variety of different ways. As long as program ratios, group sizes and other requirements are met, and no children are displaced, the Offeror has the option to incorporate these slots with what works for the program and child transition plans.
32. <i>Section IV A 10 B. Eligible children will receive funding from the pilot program until they turn three years old, at which point they will transition into a PreK program. Note: a provider does not have to provide a PreK program to be eligible for the Infant Toddler Contracted Slots Pilot. A child will be deemed ineligible in Phase 2 only if their household income exceeds the requirements at the time of application (e.g., more than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level).</i> If a center has multiple classrooms that serve infants and toddlers, would the full capacity of those classrooms need to be contracted slots to ensure each child from 6 wks to 3 yrs would be able to 'retain' their slot? 6 Classroom breakdown example = Infants 0-6m, Wobblers 7-13m, The Younger 1s, Older 1s, The Younger 2s, Older 2s. 3 Classroom breakdown example = Babies, 1s, 2s	Providers can apply for one or both age groups. For continuity of care, it is recommended to consider both Infant and Toddler slots to account for children remaining covered for this specialized program until the child turns 36 months. The RFP evaluation will consider each program's Transition Planning – specifically, how the organization supports children as they move across age groups.
33. When the Offeror are required to maintain at least 90% how do the Offeror ensure that the Offeror have the space to move children up to the next age group when necessary?	Contracted providers must commit to achieving and maintaining at least 90% enrollment levels as documented in EPICS within two months of contract execution throughout the entire contract period. As part of the required qualifications, providers applying for the Contracted Slots Program must confirm that children will

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Question	Answer
	not be displaced or disenrolled because of the provider's participation in this pilot program. Additionally, the RFP evaluation will consider each program's Transition Planning – specifically, how the organization supports children as they move across age groups.
34. Carlsbad, NM is in an extreme childcare desert, we recently applied for the Child Care Facility Loan, if we are granted this loan as well as awarded this RFP, could the approved amount be expanded to include the new spaces for the remaining 3 years of the award?	As a Pilot program, specific award amounts will be granted during this RFP cycle. Our hope is to expand and at that time we could consider changes to contract awards or application for new spaces.
35. The square footage for the classroom is 42 sq ft per child minimum, will ECECD come out and check the sq footage before a program is awarded the grant? Will exemptions for the 42 sq ft per child be allowed? Licensing is 35 sq ft per child. Will ECECD verify the sq footage? Our surveys will not show this, it would take a visit to the facility.	If the classroom was originally measured to meet the 35 square feet per child requirement, and the Offeror is now increasing that to 42 square feet per child while also reducing classroom ratios and group sizes, it's likely that the space will meet the requirements outlined in the contracted slots program. If the Offeror suspects this to not be true, it's important to confirm directly with the ECECD licensing contact. This will ensure compliance and avoid any delays or misunderstandings during implementation. The program monitor will also work in coordination with the ECECD Regulatory team to verify square footage, if capacity is in question.
36. Requiring more square footage reduces the amount of spots, how does this help families? If we are working toward universal childcare, reducing the number of available slots doesn't help New Mexico families. Also, if we are already at a capacity larger than these ratios, how can we move toward these requirements without displacing these families?	The Infant/Toddler Contracted Slots Pilot Program complements Universal Child Care by focusing on targeted, high-quality access for infants and toddlers. ECECD remains committed to equity and access. Contracted slots are reserved for low-income families and priority populations, ensuring those who need care most aren't left behind. As part of the required qualifications, providers applying for the Contracted Slots Program must confirm that children will not be displaced or disenrolled because of the provider's participation in this pilot program. Additionally, the RFP evaluation will consider each program's Transition Planning – specifically, how the organization supports children as they move across age groups. There is an amendment being considered that may change our answer to this question. If an amendment is issued, the answer to this question will be updated.

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Question	Answer
Provided Supplies	
37. Does the facility have to provide all diapers, wipes, bottles, cups, etc for the children in this program? "classroom supplies, and children's individual supplies (e.g., formula, diapers and wipes, and any other supplies that are required to meet the child's needs) into their Infant toddler classroom budgets funded by the pilot".	Yes, the increased rate of pay was established to fully support the families eligible for this program and reduce this additional financial strain.
38. Can families bring their own diapers/wipes or must they be center provided? Hopefully the payments from the state are enough to sustain buying all supplies for children.	Under this program, the child care provider will be providing the supplies such as classroom supplies, and children's individual supplies (e.g., formula, diapers and wipes, and any other supplies that are required to meet the child's needs). Providers may allow but not require families to bring their own supplies. Funds for these products was considered when setting the increased rates.
Financial Stability	
39. For the <i>Financial Stability</i> Section listed on page 22 of the RFP, are there specific requirements/instructions and word limits that applicants must describe their financial stability, or do applicants only need to submit their most recent independent financial statement, to include all of the requested information in the audit (instead of a narrative description)?	ECECD is not requesting a budget narrative. Complete and return Appendix D. Offerors must submit copies of the most recent years independently audited financial statements, to include the audit opinion, the balance sheet, and statements of income, retained earnings, cash flows, and the notes to the financial statements.
40. On page 34 of the RFP, C.1. Financial Stability, can the Offeror clarify if only one audit is required (the most recent the applicant has on file), or do they need to submit more than one year? If more than one year, can the Offeror clarify how many years they need to submit?	Only one year is required. If independently audited financial statements do not exist, the Offeror must state the reason, and should submit copies of the most recent balance sheet, statements of income, retained earnings, and cash flows, and/or full tax return with schedule C or SE.
41. If we don't have independently audited financial statements (Section IV.C.1), what alternative financial documentation is acceptable? Will this disqualify our application? For instance, if we have a 3 rd party who prepares the Financials, would this suffice?	If independently audited financial statements do not exist, the Offeror must state the reason and instead should submit copies of the most recent balance sheet, statements of income, retained earnings, and cash flows, and/or full tax return with schedule C or SE.
42. If our business is a LLC that is run for taxes as a schedule C, what other options are available instead of a audit? We have not been required to hold a formal independent audit, what are our options at this point?	If independently audited financial statements do not exist, Offeror must state the reason, and should submit copies of the most recent balance sheet, statements of income, retained earnings, and cash flows, and/or full tax return with schedule C or SE.
43. For Appendix C, do applicants need to include a completed draft contract template in the application, or is it only included as a reference in	The contract is only provided as a reference for applicants to review before submitting their application. This contract contains boilerplate

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Question	Answer
the RFP for applicants to review before submitting their application?	language that will be included in all resulting contracts.
44. For the Financial Stability section listed on page 34 of the RFP: The specific applicant is not required to have an audit because they are below the threshold that would require them to have one. Do they still have to submit financial statements, along with an explanation of why they don't have an audit? Or, they only need to explain why they don't have an audit without having to submit financial statements they have on hand?	If independently audited financial statements do not exist, Offeror must state the reason. For example: a financial audit has not been completed for the organization since its inception in 2015. If awarded a contract, the organization agrees to provide financial audits to the agency as required.
Budget/Reimbursement	
45. How does the payment work when a child turns 24 months?	Eligible children will receive funding from the contracted slots program until they turn three years old, at which point funding will stop under the Contracted Slot program and child can transition into a NM PreK program, private pay or Child care Placement Agreement through child care assistance. Depending on the provider's program structure, a child can remain in their contracted slot while waiting to enroll in the PreK program. This extension can continue beyond the typical 36-month limit but cannot exceed 48 months total. However, if the child is enrolled in a mixed Infant Toddler classroom, this extended stay beyond 36 months is not possible.
46. I am assuming this operates off a monthly invoice submission process?	Contracted providers will be required to submit monthly reports, at least 15 days prior to the first of the month, outlining child attendance, retention plans and supports needed, in correspondence with the program and enrollment requirements.
47. For further clarity on the monthly requirements, will payments be the same each month throughout the term of the grant? Do we maintain monthly records of our expenses specific to this grant? Do the records need to only reflect the amount we are being paid each month? If this is explained in the RFP, can the Offeror please give me the page to reference? This pilot program has many similarities to the PreK grant program. Will we be reimbursed after we submit monthly budget reports.	Contracted providers will receive a monthly payment. Monthly submission reports will be required 15 days prior to the first of the month to receive payment for the following month. These monthly reports will need to outline child attendance, retention plans and supports needed, in correspondence with the program and enrollment requirements. Budget information will not be required in this monthly submission report. Information about the monthly submission report can be found on the RFP page 24 and 31.
48. Can a budget be submitted for the construction of a classroom, if so can it be a two story?	ECECD is not requesting a budget narrative. Offerors are only required to complete and return Appendix D.

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Question	Answer
	Offerors interested in funding for construction may apply for the Child Care Facility Loan Fund Early Childhood Education & Care Department
49. Can a budget be submitted for a passenger van for transportation of children?	ECECD is not requesting a budget narrative. Offerors are only required to complete and return Appendix D.
50. Can a budget be submitted for hiring of part-time employees. Is there a limit?	ECECD is not requesting a budget narrative. Offerors are only required to complete and return Appendix D.
51. Can a budget be submitted for hiring of full-time employees. Is there a limit?	ECECD is not requesting a budget narrative. Offerors are only required to complete and return Appendix D.
52. To confirm, a budget narrative is not required, correct?	Correct. Complete and return Appendix D.
53. We had an additional question. For the budget on page 54 of the RFP, should applicants submit a 1-year budget, or request the amount for 4 years?	Appendix D should be completed and returned providing information for one year.
54. APPENDIX D-Budget: Question: If the current license is for 6 children over 2 and 2 under two but capacity can be expanded to 10 children, given current space but pending license, can we include it as part of the scope of work, even if the license is only for 6 children at this point, and add the additional children in the budget template.	No, the Offeror can only apply for what the Offeror is currently licensed for.
55. APPENDIX D-Budget: Question: If the child home care is a 5 stars FOCUS and is open and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, given a second caregiver is available, can a budget be submitted reflecting additional 6 children, 2 per shift.	Evening care, weekend care, or overnight care is considered non-traditional child care that does not qualify for funding under this pilot and would need to be supported through an individual child care assistance program placement agreement directly through ECECD.
56. APPENDIX D-Budget: Question: - What is the maximum amount to be awarded per contract?	The maximum amount of awards granted will depend on several factors, including: the amount of interested providers, provider eligibility, funding availability, etc.
57. Will the established state assistance contracts, for not-participatory children in the Pilot program, remain at the current pay-out (dependent on star status, of course), or will there be an increase?	ECECD has proposed to increase child care assistance rates across all star levels. The public rule hearing for these changes is scheduled for October 9, 2025. The proposed provider rate table can be found here: https://www.nmcecd.org/universal/ .
58. How does this program coordinate with the FOCUS program and those reimbursement rates?	The rate the Offeror receives under the Contracted Slot pilot is a set rate and does not fluctuate based on the provider's FOCUS star level.
Personnel, Wages and Benefits	
59. In regards to the medical insurance that we must offer, do we have to pay for it at 100%? If we don't and maybe even if we do, what if they decline coverage?	If Contractor has, or grows to, six (6) or more employees who work, or who are expected to work, an average of at least 20 hours per week over a six (6) month period during the term of the contract, Contractor certifies, by signing this agreement, to

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Question	Answer
	have in place, and agree to maintain for the term of the contract, health insurance for those employees and offer that health insurance to those employees if the expected annual value in the aggregate of any and all contracts between Contractor and the State exceed \$250,000 dollars. Contractor agrees to maintain a record of the number of employees who have (a) accepted health insurance; (b) declined health insurance due to other health insurance coverage already in place; or (c) declined health insurance for other reasons. These records are subject to review and audit by a representative of the state. Contractor agrees to advise all employees of the availability of State publicly financed health care coverage.
60. Do we encourage the staff to apply for the infant/toddler parity pay or what is the amount requirements that we pay?	Different from each teacher usually having to apply for the parity pay program, these minimum salary amount and qualifications need to be already implemented into teacher pay for teachers who are in the contracted slots classrooms.
61. How does this work with the universal childcare and the incentives surrounding the wages for the employees? If the state keeps requiring us to give them raises without requiring anything else of them, then the Offeror are taking away the ability to incentivize staff to take the required college courses because they are already making more and more money.	Programs will be required to implement the Infant Toddler pay parity scale in accordance with the minimum qualification requirements for each teacher. This scale incentivizes teachers to increase their education and experience years, in order to continue receiving a higher salary.
62. Can the Offeror explain the Infant Toddler Pay Parity and what it means, specifically: Do we have to pay those amounts (differentials) or submit their names for Parity? On November 1 st 2025, whilst not confirmed yet, the entry level wage is set to increase with the enacting of the Universal Child Care. Would we then automatically move to that platform and if so how would the new rates work against this RFP?	Contracted Programs will be required to implement the Infant Toddler pay parity scale in accordance with the minimum qualification requirements. More information about the Infant Toddler Pay Parity Program can be found here: https://ececdscholarship.org/infant-toddler-pay-parity-program/ .
63. The RFP says that "all educators" must have a CDA or CDC at the time of award or within 6 months of being hired, per the NMSU website the CDC is slated to take a minimum of 1 year. I wonder how the stressors of a new job plus a full load of classes could translate to mental health for the educator. Is it truly "all" educators that must have this formal education component, or is it just the lead teacher?	All educators in Contracted Slot classrooms must meet this requirement.

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Question	Answer
64. <i>Section IV A 14 B. All educators must have an Infant/Toddler Child Development Associate (CDA) or a New Mexico Child Development Certificate (CDC) at the time of award or within six months of being hired.</i> Question: Does this mean ALL teachers in the entire center (including floaters/breakers and school age teachers), or only the primary teachers assigned to the classroom(s) serving the contracted slots?	All educators working in the infants and toddlers that are funded through this contracted slots pilot must have an Infant/Toddler Child Development Associate (CDA) or a New Mexico Child Development Certificate (CDC) at the time of award or within six months of being hired.
Hours of Operation	
65. Does this program run the traditional school year?	The infant/toddler slot covers a full day/full year of traditional child care. A full year is defined as the full school/contract year (September 1 through August 31).
66. Is it acceptable to propose for “wrap around” hours under this RFP? For example: we are funded with Head Start funding for 6.5 hours. Can we use these funds to increase hours to 10 hours/day, but only would use the state funds for the remaining 3.5 hours that Head Start does not cover?	“Wrap Around” care, Evening care, weekend care, or overnight care is considered non-traditional child care that does not qualify for funding under this pilot and would need to be supported through an individual child care assistance program placement agreement directly through ECECD.
67. If we open at 6:30 am, are families required to drop off at that time or does the center just need to have availability for them to be able to?	No, families are not required to drop off children when the provider opens. For non-traditional hours (outside of 7am-7pm), families can have these hours covered through a Child Care Placement Agreement.
68. What is considered non-traditional care hours?	Evening care, weekend care, or overnight care is considered non-traditional child care that does not qualify for funding under this pilot but can be covered under a Child Care Assistance Placement Agreement. Traditional care hours include hours Monday through Friday, 7am-7pm.
69. It states that children requiring full time care (minimum of 7 hours per day) can participate, if we are attempting to obtain this RFP for all slots that are not currently prek, do we disenroll any children that do not attend 7 hours per day? What if parents consistently drop off late or pick up early? What is our recourse to ensure that we are meeting compliance?	As part of the required qualifications, providers applying for the Contracted Slots Program must confirm that children will not be displaced or disenrolled because of participation in the contracted slots pilot. Additionally, the RFP evaluation will consider each program’s Transition Planning – specifically, how the organization supports children as they move across age groups. Contracted providers should have clear policies and procedures in place to manage late drop-offs and pick-ups. We rely on the providers to handle such situations in a way that prioritizes the child’s well being while respecting the realities of family schedules.

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Question	Answer
RFP Specifications	
70. Is there a word limit for the following Technical Proposal sections listed on page 22 of the RFP? - Response to Contract Terms and Conditions - Offeror's Terms and Conditions - Responses to Specifications - Organizational Experience - Detailed Organizational Information	There is not a word/page limit for the Technical Proposal. However, all Offerors should strive to answer each question thoroughly while still keeping in mind that their proposal is not the only proposal being read by the committee. Focus on the expertise and qualifications of the provider organization.
71. Are there specific requirements/instructions and word limits for the Organizational Experience Section listed on page 22 of the RFP?	There is not a word/page limit for Organizational Experience section. However, all Offerors should strive to answer each question thoroughly while keeping in mind that their proposal is not the only proposal being read by the committee. Focus on the expertise and qualifications of the Offeror's organization in this section.
72. Are there specific requirements/instructions and word limits for the Detailed Organizational Information Section listed on page 22 of the RFP?	There is not a word/page limit for Organizational Information section. However, all Offerors should strive to answer each question thoroughly while keeping in mind that their proposal is not the only proposal being read by the committee. Focus on information that pertains to the Offeror's organization in this section.
73. For the optional proposal summary on page 22-Is there a page or word limit for this?	There is no page or word limit specified for the optional proposal summary. However, it is a summary so it should not be too lengthy. Typical length for a summary is one page.
74. For the <i>Responses to Specifications</i> on page 22 of the RFP, is this the section where applicants respond to questions 1-14, which are on pages 32 - 34 of the RFP?	This section (IV. Specifications) lays out the requirements of all entities enrolled in the program. Please respond stating the Offeror agrees to the requirements laid out in pages 22-31. Some areas will correlate with questions 1-14 that start on page 32. However, potential Offerors should respond by agreeing to the requirements of the program laid out in that section.
75. This is my first time having to provide organizational reference questionnaires. What exactly are the Offeror looking for?	Organizational references should be from another entity the Offeror dealt with as a business. Some examples are: families served, other providers the Offeror collaborated with, etc. Think of entities dealt with in the Offeror's capacity of running a child care center.
76. For the <i>Response to contract Terms and Conditions from Section II.C.15 on page 22 of the RFP</i> , if the applicant does not propose any new or revised Terms and Conditions, do they just indicate NA in the proposal?	Potential Offerors can state they agree to all Terms and Conditions laid out in Section II.C.15 and don't have any alternative or revised language to propose. It can be a sentence.

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Question	Answer
Miscellaneous Questions	
77. What is the benefit of applying? What is the difference between universal childcare and these contracted slots?	Contracted slots are for low-income families and other priority populations. The benefit of applying for the Contracted Slots Pilot is the stability and enhanced support it offers to providers serving infants and toddlers. This program complements Universal Child Care, which uses child care placement agreements to fund providers and is available to families, regardless of income.
78. Is this all paid through a state funding stream? Or federal included?	The contracted slots will be funded through federal and state funds.
79. Why are there oral presentations? It says we COULD be required. I think its standard language.	Oral presentation language for finalists is standard language included in RFPs. The language states oral presentations may be held at the discretion of the evaluation committee. Oral presentations have not been planned or scheduled at this time.
80. For item #14 in Appendix I: Does the applicant have to have a document on file that certifies they are a Minority-Owned Business Enterprise in order to check this box? If so, what is that documentation, and do they have to turn it in as proof in the application (or during the award phase)?	Preference certificates are provided by the NM Taxation & Revenue Department. The certificate must be provided in order to receive preference points. https://www.tax.newmexico.gov/businesses/business-preference-certification/
81. Section II B 2. Acknowledgement of Receipt Form <i>The procurement distribution list will be used for the distribution of written responses to questions, and/or any amendments to the RFP.</i> Why was I not notified about the amendment to the RFP setting the TIME for the Pre Proposal Conference? I checked the website at 1pm only to find that the conference was at 10am. Was it recorded? If so, where can I access the recording?	The time of the Pre-Proposal Conference was announced via an email to ECECD's full distribution list, social media posts, during the provider town hall events on September 20, and on the ECECD website. The recording of our Pre-Proposal Conference can be found on the ECECD RFP Page. https://www.nmececd.org/grants-rfps-and-procurement-opportunities/
82. How do we know if the Offeror received are acknowledgement of receipt form?	We will respond via email acknowledging receipt of the Offeror's form submitted.
83. The link to other relevant links on page 7 of the RFP indicates no results found. Is there a different link we need to access?	This link is directing readers to the ECECD NMAC Regulations 8.93 which can be found at https://www.srca.nm.gov/parts/title08/08.009.0003.html or on NMECECD.org