

Universal Child Care 101

for Families

Presented by ECECD Leadership



NEW MEXICO

Early Childhood

Education & Care Department



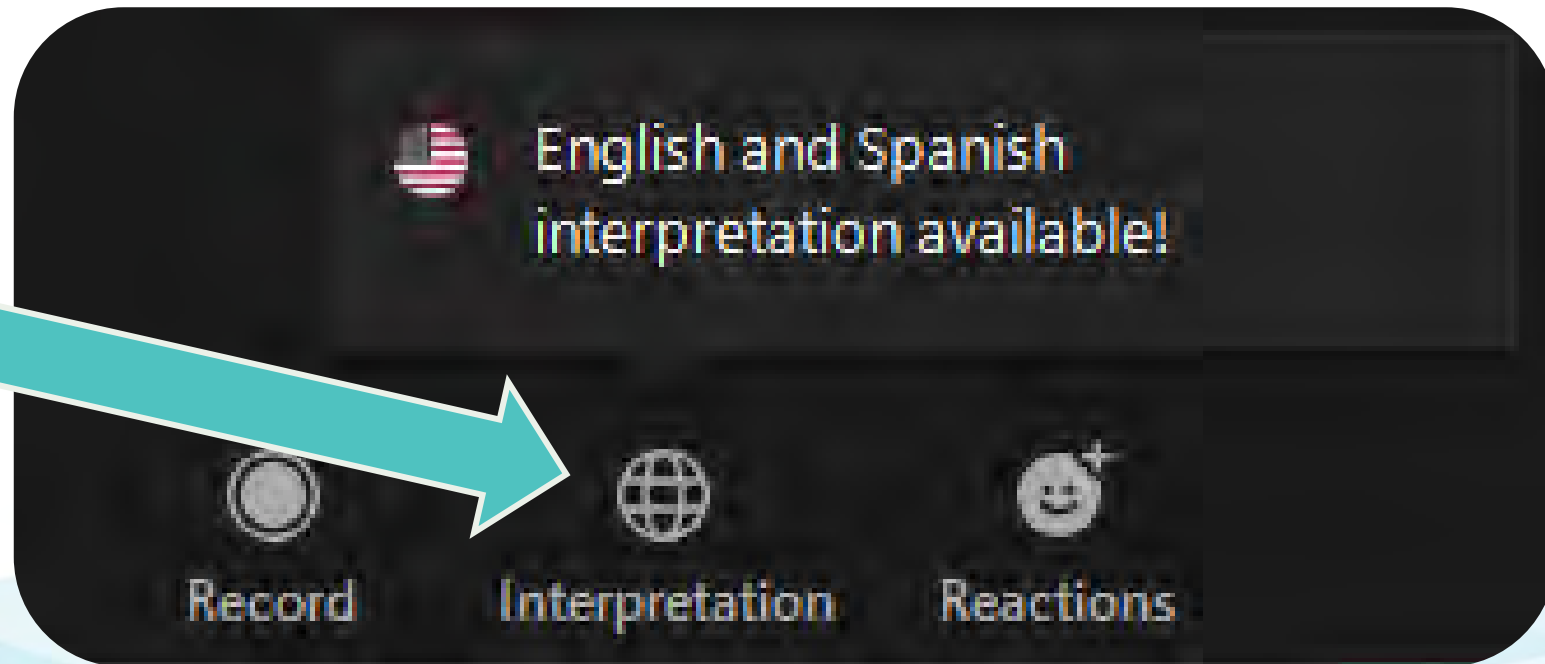
Language Instructions

Inglés > Español

Instrucciones de Interpretación

Step 1: Click the Interpretation Symbol

Paso 1: Selecciona el símbolo de INTERPRETACIÓN



Steps 2 and 3: Choose From the Menu

Paso 2 y 3: Elija del menú

- You'll then see a menu; click "Spanish" OR "English"
 - **Vas a ver el menú; haga clic "Spanish"**
- If you would prefer to hear ONLY Spanish, also click "Mute Original Audio." Otherwise you will hear the Spanish loud and clear and the English quietly.
 - **Si prefieres escuchar SOLO español, haz clic en "Mute Original Audio". De lo contrario, escucharás el español alto y claro, y el inglés en voz baja.**
- If you choose "English" you will automatically hear only English.
 - **Si seleccionas "Inglés", automáticamente solo escucharás inglés**
- You will now hear the Spanish interpretation.
 - **Usted escuchara ahora la Interpretación en Español**



Agenda

- I. Universal Child Care Basics
- II. How to Apply
- III. Top Questions from Families
- IV. Join the Conversation
- V. Help Spread the Word
- VI. Questions and Answers





Universal Child Care Basics

Universal Child Care



Starting November 1, 2025, families in New Mexico can get assistance paying for child care, no matter their income. This means less stress for you, more support for your child’s caregivers, and a safe, caring place for your child to learn and grow. Raising children is not something families should do alone. When your family is supported, the whole community benefits.

This initiative will make child care assistance available to all New Mexicans, regardless of income, by:

- Removing income eligibility requirements from the state’s child care assistance program
- Continuing the waiver of family copayments
- Adding more child care options and making it easier for families to find care—but it will take time. As more providers join and expand, access will continue to improve across the state.

More information: nmeccd.org/universal

Overview of Changes for Families

- Child Care Assistance is available to any family in New Mexico who is working or going to school, regardless of income or immigration status.
- Families can receive assistance, with minimal documentation, while their application is being processed.
- If a participating child does not have a federally eligible immigration status, the financial assistance will be paid with state funds.
- To receive assistance, families must find an available slot with a provider of their choice that accepts child care assistance.
- No copayments, gross receipts taxes, or fees.



Overview of Changes for Families *Continued*

- Activity requirements waived for certain populations, including:
 - Grandparents raising grandchildren
 - Families caring for babies born substance-exposed
 - Families experiencing housing instability
 - Families involved with the Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD)
- Presumptive eligibility will allow families to enroll in Child Care Assistance while their application is processed helping reduce delays and ensure quicker access to care.
- **Flexibility in hours of care:** families will be able to choose to enroll their child in full-time or part-time care, regardless of the hours in their work or school schedule.





How to Apply

Universal Child Care

How to Apply:

- Find a child care provider at childcare.ececd.nm.gov
- Visit nmececd.org/child-care-assistance click on “Apply for Services”
- Or call 1-800-832-1321
- Email child.care@state.nm.us if you have questions or concerns about applying for child care assistance

Here’s What You’ll Need to Apply:

- Current proof of income
- Birth Verification for all children living in the applicant’s home
- Verification of Educational Activity/School Schedule for adults (if applicable)
- Government-Issued Photo ID for Applicant
- Proof of New Mexico Residency (lease agreement, utility bill, mortgage)
- Contact information for selected child care provider

For a list of acceptable documents visit <https://www.nmececd.org/child-care-assistance/#library>

Presumptive Eligibility

Here's What You'll Need to be Presumed Eligible for up to 90 days:

| Requirement | Self-Attested or Required Document |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Birth Verification for all children living in the applicant's home | Required Documentation |
| Qualifying Activity (work or school) | Self-Attested |
| Proof of New Mexico Residency | Required Documentation |
| Government-Issued Photo ID for Applicant | Required Documentation |
| Contact info for selected child care provider | Self-Attested |



We recommend families start the application process at:

- Website:
eligibility.ececd.nm.gov
- Toll free: (800) 832-1321
- Email:
Child.care@state.nm.us



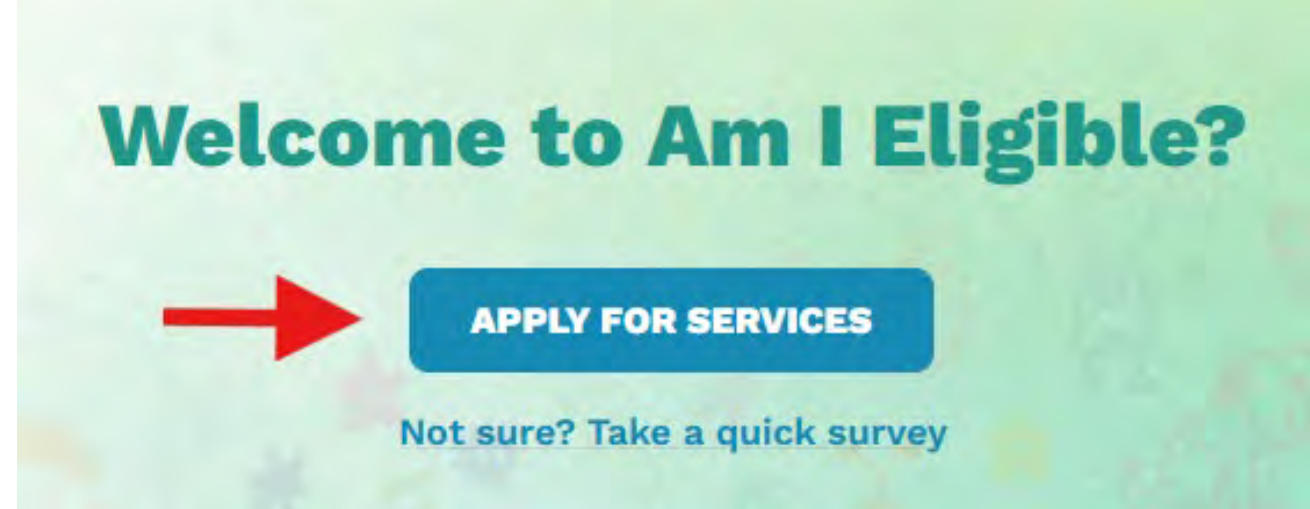
Online Steps to Apply for Child Care Assistance

Start at eligibility.ececd.nm.gov

1. Create a user account – login/register
 - Register by using a valid email address
2. Complete the application process and upload the required documents.
 - You can save progress and continue the process later if needed
3. Submit application
4. ECECD will review your application and contact you to set up an interview.
5. During this process, you will be able to check the status of your application online.
6. You may be determined Presumptively Eligible for up to 90-days
7. If you are missing any documents, you will be given a Notice of Action and deadline to provide the required documents.
8. Once all necessary documents are provided, you will be determined eligible for up to 12-months.

Online Steps to Apply for Child Care Assistance

- First time applicants, must register. After registration, you will receive a confirmation email to validate and complete registration.
- Once registered, to continue the application process, you will login with credentials created at registration.



Welcome to Online Application - Family Services of New Mexico!

Online Application helps families who are in need to apply for services and/or be referred to various state/federal early childhood programs.

You will have the option to:

Start an application to apply for and/or be referred to these programs for your family.

- [Child Care Assistance](#)
- [Pre-Kindergarten \(PreK\)](#)
- [Families First](#)

Start a Home Visiting referral by creating an account.

We may need your household details and some additional basic information based on the programs you have chosen.

In order to start an application, you will need to create an account by registering using a valid email address. Once you start an application you can save it and continue the process at a later time. After the application is submitted, it will then be reviewed and you will be contacted by our staff for next steps. With your account you will also be able to check the status of your application(s) online.

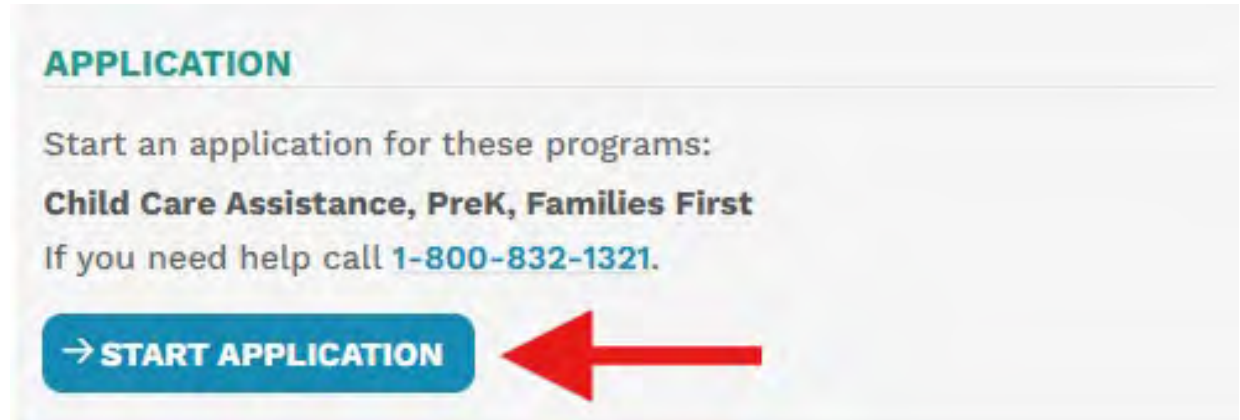
IMPORTANT INFORMATION: Providing proof of citizenship, immigration status or a Social Security Number (SSN) is not required for parents who apply for Child Care Assistance for their children. SSN and immigration status information are only required for children who participate in the program.

Please note that by completing and submitting this information is not a final determination of eligibility. Submission is not a guarantee that services will be provided. Additional information will be requested by program staff in order to determine your eligibility.



Online Steps to Apply for Child Care Assistance

- After an applicant starts the application for the Child Care Assistance program, you will enter:
 - personal information
 - contact information
 - household and income information
- Please make sure you select “**Child Care Assistance**” created at registration.



Let's get Started!

CHOOSE PROGRAMS

Please choose the programs you wish to apply for or receive referrals for by clicking on the boxes next to the program name. For program details click on the question mark next to each program name.

| | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Child Care Assistance ? | <input type="checkbox"/> PreK ? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Families First ? | |

Online Steps to Apply for Child Care Assistance

Applicant will upload required documentation to help expedite the process.

Upload Documents

You may be required to provide the required documentation below to establish the eligibility for child care assistance. **If the required documentation is not provided, your application may be DELAYED or DENIED.**

To review a list of acceptable documents, [click here](#).

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Identification of the Applicant ⓘ (Required) | UPLOAD FILES |
| Verification of New Mexico Residency ⓘ (Required) | UPLOAD FILES |
| Verification of Birth for all household children even if care isn't needed ⓘ (Required) | UPLOAD FILES |
| Current proof of income from Employment or Self-Employment ⓘ (Required) | UPLOAD FILES |
| Proof of TANF participation (Qualifying Activity) ⓘ | UPLOAD FILES |
| Other countable income, if applicable ⓘ | UPLOAD FILES |
| Unearned Income ⓘ | UPLOAD FILES |
| Verification of Educational Activity/School Schedule for adults ⓘ | UPLOAD FILES |
| Demonstration of Incapacity, if applicable ⓘ | UPLOAD FILES |
| Proof of Custody/Dependency for household members, if applicable ⓘ | UPLOAD FILES |

UPLOAD DOCUMENTS

Required Documents

Please note that if the required documentation is not provided, your application may be DELAYED or DENIED.

Upload Documents

OKAY, CONTINUE →

Online Steps to Apply for Child Care Assistance

- Applicant will review program requirements and verify understanding
- Applicants can also request support to register to vote

Your Rights & Responsibilities

The Child Care Assistance Program offers assistance with the costs of child care based on the size of your family and your family's income. The assistance payment will be issued directly to the child care provider. You may be responsible for a co-payment based on your need determination. Please visit or contact your regional [Child Care Assistance Office](#) to determine eligibility or if you have any further questions.

Please: (1) read each section carefully; (2) make sure you understand each statement; (3) ask for clarification as needed; and (4) check the box below to verify that you have read the complete "Rights and Responsibilities" section and that you understand your rights and responsibilities as a client.

Welcome to the Child Care Assistance Program. This program is to support our families while they are working, attending school, participating in an approved activity, or participating in TANF. You may request a full copy of the Child Care Assistance regulations (8.9.3 NMAC) from your local office or obtain a copy at <https://www.nmececd.org/>.

AGREEMENT TO PROVIDE INFORMATION

I agree to provide information needed to determine eligibility for benefits for myself and others for whom I am applying. I understand that my social security number is not required to receive benefits. I understand that I have to prove my eligibility and agree to do this. I give my permission to the New Mexico Early Childhood Education & Care Department (ECECD) to contact persons or agencies who have knowledge of my circumstances to obtain needed information which I may not be able to give or verify. I understand that all information given to ECECD is confidential and is restricted to ECECD employees who need it for the administration of programs for which I have applied and that this information will be used solely for the purpose of establishing eligibility, amount of benefits, or for providing services. I further understand that confidential information may be released to other agencies involved in the administration of federally assisted programs that provide income supplemental benefits.

I understand that checking this box verifies that I have read the complete "Rights and Responsibilities" section and that I understand my rights and responsibilities as a client.

Online Steps to Apply for Child Care Assistance

Once application is submitted, applicants can return to the Am I Eligible page to view status and submit additional documents, as needed.

SUBMITTED APPLICATIONS

Application - 78012

Submitted On 10/27/2025 [VIEW DETAILS](#)

| Program | Current Status | Updated On |
|-----------------------|----------------------|------------|
| Child Care Assistance | Application Received | 10/27/2025 |

[Have additional documents to upload?](#)



Top Questions *from* Families

Top Questions *from Families*

What if my child is already enrolled and I'm paying out of pocket? Ask your provider if they accept ECECD payments and are participating in the Universal Child Care program.

- If they do, you may apply at [Am I Eligible](#) and transition to child care assistance and eliminate your payments.
- If they do not, you will need to find a participating provider before applying

What if my child is already enrolled and I do not have out of pocket costs? If you are not currently required to pay tuition costs, you don't need to do anything!

What if my child is not enrolled in child care? Families not currently enrolled must first identify a provider participating in Universal Child Care and then apply for assistance at [Am I Eligible](#).

Top Questions *from Families*

What happens after I apply? Presumptive eligibility will allow families to enroll in Child Care Assistance within three (3) business days while their application is processed helping reduce delays and ensure quicker access to care. Once you are approved for child care assistance, your benefits will begin on the day your child starts care with an ECECD approved provider. Families with children currently enrolled in child care and paying out of pocket should ask their provider if they accept payments from ECECD. If they do, you can apply for assistance to help cover your child care costs, regardless of your income level.

What programs are included? Universal Child Care includes child care centers, home-based providers, before- and after-school programs, and summer programs. All programs must be licensed or registered by ECECD and accept child care assistance.

Top Questions *from* Families

Is there enough child care to support families' needs? Building a universal child care system takes time; and while New Mexico has already made major progress, not every family will immediately be able to find a child care provider with room to accept a new child. To meet families' needs, especially for infants, toddlers, and parents working non-traditional hours, ECECD is actively recruiting 1,000 registered home providers and 120 licensed homes in collaboration with our partners. Through low-interest loans and partnerships with business leaders, ECECD also hopes to license 55 more centers.

How do I find an ECECD approved child care provider? If you do not have a provider, use [Child Care Finder](#) to search more than 1,000 programs statewide by location, quality level, hours of operation, age, language, and more. For extra help, call UNM Resource and Referral at 1-800-691-9067 or visit an ECECD office (locations available at nmececd.org/contact-us).

Top Questions *from* Families

What are the activity requirements?

- Families must be working or attending school
- Grandparents raising grandchildren, children who were drug exposed at birth and children involved with CYFD are exempt from activity requirement.

I'm on a waiting list – what do I do?

- **Stay in touch with your provider(s)** - Ask how long the wait might be and whether they expect openings soon.
- **Search for other participating providers** - The state is actively working to grow provider capacity and reduce wait times.



Top Questions *from* Families

What does this mean for Nations, Pueblos and Tribes?

Universal Child Care allows Nations, Pueblos, and Tribes (NPTs) to dedicate their ECECD Child Care Assistance funding to support direct care, while weaving other available funding supports to strengthen early childhood priorities. More funding pathways mean greater support for Native children, families, and communities.

This includes:

- A range of early care options, from center-based to home-based programs
- Tribal language immersion and other culturally grounded care
- Cultural Relevance and Choice: Families can choose programs that honor their values and traditions.
- Economic Empowerment: Parents can work, pursue education, or train for new careers without child care costs becoming a barrier.



Join the Conversation

Join the Conversation: Universal Child Care Office Hours

Virtual event dates and registration information can be found at [Universal Child Care Office Hours](#).

You're Invited

Universal Child Care 101 for Families

Who Should Attend: New Mexico families who want to learn how Universal Child Care can benefit them. Join a virtual information session hosted by the Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) to ask questions and connect directly with ECECD staff.

When:

- Tuesday, October 28, 12–1:15 p.m.
- Tuesday, October 28, 6–7:15 p.m.
- Wednesday, October 29, 12–1:15 p.m.
- Wednesday, October 29, 6–7:15 p.m.
- Saturday, November 1, 9–10:15 a.m.

Registration is Required

Register at newmexicokids.org to receive the Zoom link. Each session is capped at 150 attendees.

Spanish interpretation services will be provided.



Learn more about Universal Child Care at nmeccd.org/universal

You're Invited

Universal Child Care 101 for Early Childhood Professionals

Who Should Attend: New Mexico early childhood professionals—including teachers, administrators, and home-based educators—are invited to a virtual information session hosted by the Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) to learn about Universal Child Care updates, new reimbursement rates, and supports available through ECECD.

When:

- Thursday, November 6, 12–1:30 p.m.
- Thursday, November 6, 6–7:30 p.m.
- Friday, November 7, 12–1:30 p.m.
- Friday, November 7, 6–7:30 p.m.
- Saturday, November 8, 9–10:30 a.m.

Registration is Required

Register at newmexicokids.org to receive the Zoom link. Each session is capped at 150 attendees.

Spanish interpretation services will be provided.



Learn more about Universal Child Care at nmeccd.org/universal

Join the Conversation: Universal Child Care Fall Tour

In-person events: **Roadshows**, **Community Conversations** with Coalitions, and **Eligibility Fairs**.

Roadshows



*Roadshows are in-person events for child care providers and early childhood professionals **hosted by ECECD leadership** across the state.*

Community Conversations



Community Conversations are in-person events for community members hosted by local early childhood coalitions and ECECD.

Eligibility Fairs



*Eligibility Fairs are events for families held at child care facilities across the state and **hosted by program directors** and ECECD. Families can speak directly with their program director to request an Eligibility Fair.*

Roadshow Dates

Las Cruces - Wednesday, November 5, 2025

3–5 p.m.

Espina Campus, Alex Sanches Hall, 3400 Espina St., Las Cruces,

Hobbs - Wednesday, November 12, 2025

2–4 p.m.

Hobbs Training Facility, 2210 E. Sanger, Hobbs, NM

Clovis - Thursday, November 13, 2025

12–2 p.m.

Clovis Community College, 417 Schepps Blvd., Clovis, NM

Farmington - Friday, November 14, 2025

12–2 p.m.

Farmington Museum, 3041 E. Main Street, Farmington, NM

Rio Rancho - Monday, November 17, 2025

12–2 p.m.

Loma Colorado Library, 755 Loma Colorado Blvd NE, Rio Rancho, NM

Santa Fe - Tuesday, November 18, 2025

10–12 p.m.

PERA Building, Apodaca Hall 2nd Floor, 1120 Paseo De Peralta, Santa Fe, NM 87502

Albuquerque - Tuesday, November 18, 2025

3–5 p.m.

Albuquerque Public Library Main, 501 Copper NW, Albuquerque, NM 87102

Carlsbad - Wednesday, December 3, 2025

12–2 p.m.

Carlsbad Museum, 418 W. Fox St., Carlsbad, NM

Community Conversations with Coalitions Dates

Albuquerque - Tuesday, November 4, 2025

Albuquerque – Coalition Community
Conversation

Chapparral - Thursday, November 6, 2025

6–8 p.m.
Chapparral Community Center

Gallup - Thursday, November 13, 2025

12–2 p.m.
Details TBD

Farmington - Saturday, November 15, 2025

12–1 p.m.
4601 College Blvd., Farmington, NM 87402

Albuquerque - Tuesday, November 18, 2025

Coalition for Learning Science in Early Childhood
CNM Campus North Westside, Albuquerque

Albuquerque - Wednesday–Thursday, November 19–20, 2025

Family Leadership Council
10–12 p.m.

Alamogordo - Thursday, November 20, 2025

9–12 p.m.
Cloud 9 Creative Space, 1517 East 10th St., Alamogordo

Note: Additional Road Show and Coalition Community Conversation dates and details will be announced soon.
Visit nmcecd.org/universal for the latest information.



How do I get engaged?

Universal Child Care is a historic step forward, and it will be even better with your input and support. Families are the heart of this change.

Call or email your legislator to thank them for supporting universal child care in New Mexico and share why it matters for your family:

[nmlegis.gov/Members/Find My Legislator](https://nmlegis.gov/Members/Find_My_Legislator)

Take the Universal Child Care Pledge

- ECECD invites providers, families, businesses, and community partners across the state to take the Universal Child Care Pledge.
- By taking the pledge, you show your pride in being part of this historic effort and your commitment to helping build a stronger, more equitable early childhood system for New Mexico families.
- **This pledge is about partnership, accuracy, and shared responsibility. It is a commitment to support families, providers, and communities as New Mexico continues to lead the way in early childhood care and education.**



Learn more at: nmeccd.org/universalpledge

How You Can Help Spread the Word

Everyone has a role to play in sharing Universal Child Care resources with their community:

- **Families:** Forward ECECD emails, share our posts on social media, and tell a friend about upcoming events.
- **Community Partners:** Print and display flyers, include links in your own communications, and encourage families to join upcoming sessions.
- **Providers and Educators:** Include Universal Child Care resources in your newsletters, parent packets, and send-home materials.
- **Schools:** Share invites to the events with families by email or text, print and post them in entryways and classrooms.

Universal Child Care *Resources*

- Communications Toolkit (English & Spanish) — sample posts, graphics, links for email/social/print.
- Informational Fact Sheet (English/Spanish) — overview of the program.
- At a Glance for **Families**, At a Glance for **Providers**, At a Glance for **Nations, Pueblos, and Tribes**
- Proposed Provider Rate Tables
- Public Hearing Recording
- Submit a Question Form
- Details about rulemaking (8.9.3, 8.9.4, 8.9.5 NMAC)



More information and toolkit: nmececd.org/universal

Questions and Answers



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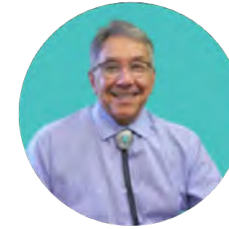
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Stay Connected with the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department



NMECECD.org



800-832-1321



**PO Drawer 5619
Santa Fe, NM
87502-5619**

ECECD's bi-weekly newsletter delivers agency announcements, resources, training opportunities, and upcoming events straight to your inbox. Join our monthly Community Call (held the first Tuesday of each month) for updates and engagement.

Sign up at nmececd.org/newsroom.



@NewMexicoECECD



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Early Childhood
Education & Care Department