



NEW MEXICO

Early Childhood

Education & Care Department

Florencer

Progress and Accountability Report **2025**

What's Inside

- 1 • Introduction
- 2 • Strategic Plan Impact by the Numbers
- 3 • **Goal 1: School Readiness**
- 5 • **Goal 2: Family and Community Engagement**
- 8 • **Goal 3: Government-to-Government**
- 10 • **Goal 4: Ecosystem**
- 12 • **Goal 5: Organizational Excellence**
- 13 • **Goal 6: Actionable Data**

December 2025

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.



Introduction

Dear Friends and Partners,

Floreceer is New Mexico's Early Childhood Strategic Plan. It is our roadmap for ensuring that every child and every family in New Mexico has the opportunity to thrive. Floreceer is Spanish for "flourish" and reflects our shared commitment to helping children grow strong and healthy from the very start. Each year, ECECD publishes a Progress and Accountability Report to show how we are advancing toward the goals of Floreceer and to keep ourselves accountable to the families, providers, and communities we serve. In FY24, we laid the foundation for New Mexico's transition to Universal Child Care, and throughout FY25 we strengthened systems, expanded access, and aligned quality improvements to ensure families, providers, and communities were prepared for the full launch in FY26. We are pleased to share the FY25 Progress and Accountability Report.

ECECD advanced initiatives that strengthen quality and expand opportunity. New Mexico PreK programs showed encouraging improvements in classroom environments. The department expanded the "Am I Eligible?" intake system to simplify referrals for families into home visiting. ECECD increased the number of Social Emotional Early Development (SEED) consultants, now serving 13 communities, to support this critical component of early development. The state's first Child Care Supply and Demand Study was completed, identifying a shortfall of nearly 12,000 infant and toddler slots and providing vital information to guide future investment. Families also celebrated

the statewide expansion of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, which now reaches every ZIP code and ensures that every New Mexico child can receive free monthly books during their first five years. And we saw national recognition when The Early Show with Alax won a regional Emmy Award for educational programming.

ECECD deepened our partnerships with Nations, Pueblos, and Tribes, invested in family leadership through five regional summits, and expanded local early childhood system building coalitions that reflect the voices and priorities of communities across our state. **Additionally, the New Mexico Children's Cabinet made historic progress including establishing new Family Resource Centers, implementing Medicaid coverage for doulas, and strengthening support for kinship caregivers.**

As this progress report shows, New Mexico is building a system that is family centered, culturally grounded, and guided by data. These accomplishments belong to every parent, educator, partner, and advocate who is helping us realize the promise of early childhood. Thank you for your ongoing commitment and partnership. Together, we are shaping a future where every child in New Mexico can flourish.



With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth Groginsky".

Elizabeth Groginsky
ECECD Cabinet Secretary

Strategic Plan Impact *by the Numbers*



Growth in New Mexico PreK

- Children served, FY24: **17,530**
- Children served, FY25: **18,376**



5% increase



Growth in Infant Toddler Child Care

- Children served, FY24: **8,354**
- Children served, FY25: **9,317**



12% increase



Growth in Child Care Assistance

- Children served, FY24: **28,348**
- Children served, FY25: **31,006**



9% increase



Growth in Home Visiting

- Children served, FY24: **7,764**
- Children served, FY25: **8,755**



12% increase



Growth in Family Infant Toddler (FIT)

- Children served, FY24: **15,732**
- Children served, FY25: **16,217**



3% increase

Goal 1: School Readiness

ECECD continues to advance equitable, culturally responsive policies, programs, and services to ensure all children enter kindergarten with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed. In FY25, ECECD moved this vision forward by improving the quality of PreK classrooms, streamlining family access to home visiting, expanding early intervention supports, and investing in social and emotional development. These steps mark clear progress toward a future where every child in New Mexico begins school prepared to thrive.

New Mexico PreK Quality Initiatives

New Mexico PreK uses the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) to strengthen teacher-child interactions and drive continuous program improvement. Between FY24 and FY25, CLASS data reveal encouraging trends across both community-based and school-based programs. Community-based programs show gains across all CLASS domains—Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support—indicating broad-based improvements in classroom climate and instructional practices. School-based programs show gains specifically in Classroom Organization, while scores in Emotional Support and Instructional Support declined slightly, highlighting areas for targeted growth.



Secretary Groginsky joined Family Support and Early Intervention division leadership and staff at a breakfast welcoming Family Connects New Mexico nurses to the department.

New Entry Points for Home Visiting Services

New Mexico's Home Visiting intake referral system, Am I Eligible, was launched as a unified entry point for families and community members to learn about ECECD Home Visiting program and request services or make a referral for someone in their community. The system streamlines referrals and provides ECECD with detailed data on referral volumes, processing timelines, and enrollment rates. ECECD also strengthened its collaboration with the Department of Health to support the transition of Family Connects New Mexico to ECECD. This light-touch home visiting model serves as an entry point into a continuum of care.

Family Infant Toddler (FIT) Inclusion Coaches

In FY25, the Family Infant Toddler (FIT) program grew its roster of inclusion coaches. Inclusion coaches work to expand access to ECECD services for children with or at risk for developmental delays or disabilities. They delivered training to ECECD staff and early childhood professionals working in child care and early intervention settings.

Wage Scale and Career Lattice Framework

Sponsored by the Early Childhood Professionals Subcommittee of the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Advisory Council, a 24-member task force representing the state's early childhood ecosystem—including advocates, center- and home-based child care providers, higher education faculty, early intervention specialists, home visiting, NM PreK, and other workforce support partners—helped design and shape recommendations for ECECD's Wage Scale and Career Lattice framework. The framework outlines multiple role categories with minimum salary levels tied to each role. The task force also developed implementation recommendations to guide putting the framework into practice.

Social and Emotional Early Development (SEED) Initiative

The Social and Emotional Early Development (SEED) Initiative grew to 20 consultants serving communities across New Mexico, including Acoma Pueblo, Albuquerque, Clovis, Deming, Farmington, Gallup, Hobbs, Las Cruces, Lordsburg, Rio Arriba County, Roswell, Santa Fe, and Silver City. In addition to supporting early childhood teachers in 48 care centers, SEED hosted a Professional Development Institute to strengthen and sustain the work of its consultants.

Child Care Supply and Demand Study

A statewide supply and demand study drew on enrollment data, surveys, and focus groups with families and providers to identify an estimated shortfall of nearly 14,000 child care slots across New Mexico. The study found that parents needing infant and toddler care face the greatest challenges due to limited space, licensing requirements, and staffing costs—yet this care is critical for supporting working families and fostering early development. The study's findings will guide agency funding priorities, legislative budget requests, and strategies to close gaps in supply and capacity.



Goal 1: Stories

On October 15-16, 2024, ECECD and New Mexico Association for Infant Mental Health hosted the SEED Professional Development Institute in Albuquerque, where consultants reunited in person for the first time in over a year. **ECECD's SEED Initiative offers free Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, partnering mental health professionals with early childhood educators to support children's social-emotional development.**

By collaborating with the primary people in children's lives, the SEED Initiative will help ensure that all New Mexico families are thriving.



Pictured: The Early Show with Alax team celebrates winning a Rocky Mountain Regional Emmy Award for Outstanding Educational and Informational Programming, alongside Alax, New Mexico's intergalactic ambassador of care.

Goal 2: Family and Community Engagement

In FY25, ECECD advanced effective, transparent, and trust-based engagement with New Mexico's diverse families and communities, elevating family leadership and voice in decision making, program design, and service delivery. Guided by the Floreecer Strategic Plan, this work focused on building mutual respect, inviting dialogue, strengthening family well-being, and promoting children's learning and development.

Regional Emmy Award for The Early Show with Alax

ECECD's original web series, [*The Early Show with Alax*](#), won a Rocky Mountain Emmy Award for Outstanding Educational and Informational Programming in November 2024. This recognition spotlighted ECECD's innovative approach to connecting families with young children with high-quality, research-based information through creative storytelling. The bilingual series, hosted by Alax—an intergalactic ambassador of care—covers topics critical to family and child well-being, including safe sleep, the role of play in skill-building, language development, recognizing developmental milestones, fatherhood, pregnancy care, and preparing for school. Each episode blends humor, warmth, and practical guidance, showing families that it's okay not to have all the answers. Since its launch, *The Early Show with Alax* has garnered more than 11 million views and over 26,000 on YouTube. The Emmy win affirms ECECD's leadership in using media to promote early childhood development, family engagement, and community connection.

Statewide Expansion of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

ECECD expanded the Dolly Parton Imagination Library to serve every ZIP code in New Mexico, ensuring that every child from birth to age 5 can receive a free, high-quality book each month delivered directly to their home. An additional \$1 million investment in FY25, enabled an expansion that will reach 30,000 more children and builds on the nearly 2 million books already delivered to New Mexico families. Research shows that since the program's inception, daily reading among participating New Mexico families has nearly doubled.



Pictured: Dancers from Te Tsu Geh Oweengeh Community School and the Pueblo of Tesuque Early Childhood program perform at the annual Early Childhood Day at the Roundhouse.



Pictured: Casandra Carrasco, NM PreK Bureau Chief, leads a storytelling session during Early Childhood Day at the Roundhouse 2025.

Early Childhood Day at the Roundhouse 2025

ECECD hosted the fourth annual Early Childhood Day at the Roundhouse, with more than 750 early childhood professionals, families, lawmakers, and community members in the New Mexico Capitol. The public event united the early childhood community together under the theme *Meeting the Moment, Building the Future: Let's work together to strengthen and sustain early childhood programs for generations of New Mexicans.*

Parents' Guide to Quality Child Care

ECECD released the [Parents' Guide to Selecting Quality Child Care](#), giving families a clear resource to make informed choices about their child's care and early learning environment. The guide, available in English and Spanish, outlines types of child care, emphasizes the importance of choosing licensed providers, and explains how to recognize programs that deliver high-quality services that supports children's growth, learning, and school readiness.

Telly Award for Summer Food Campaign

A marketing campaign for the Summer Food Service Program earned a silver Telly Award in the General Public Service/PSA category for its playful and engaging television spot. The campaign was part of ECECD's effort to reduce food insecurity in New Mexico by raising awareness and boosting participation in the program, which operated hundreds of meal sites statewide to help keep kids healthy and energized throughout the summer. [Watch the award-winning video in English or Spanish.](#)

Governor's Early Childhood Summit

On July 24, 2024, [Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham](#) and ECECD convened an Early Childhood Summit that brought together approximately 200 participants from across New Mexico's early childhood ecosystem. Attendees included professionals from state and Tribal programs, K-12 and higher education, legislators, parents, advocates, healthcare providers, and national experts. The summit celebrated shared successes, recommitted partners to continued improvements in New Mexico's early education and care system, and set the stage for Universal Child Care.

Family Leadership Summits

In partnership with families and the University of New Mexico's Family Development Program, ECECD hosted regional Family Leadership Summits in Farmington, Las Cruces, Albuquerque, Pojoaque, and Roswell. The summits attracted 381 participants and created opportunities to elevate family voices, build leadership capacity, and strengthen connections among parents, caregivers, and early childhood professionals across New Mexico. A statewide planning committee of 30 family leaders played a central role in shaping the event agendas and guiding the conversations.

Survey Showed Rising Awareness and Family Well-Being

In 2025, 3,449 caregivers participated in ECECD's annual Family Engagement and Satisfaction Survey. Awareness of early childhood programs grew from 71 percent in 2022 to 80 percent in both 2024 and 2025. Among families who used ECECD's four core programs—licensed child care, NM PreK, FIT, and Home Visiting—91 percent reported improvements in family well-being in 2025, up from 84 percent in 2022.

Local Early Childhood System Building Coalitions

ECECD's Local Early Childhood System Building Coalition network expanded to reach 14 counties and strengthened their role in advancing early childhood systems across New Mexico. With 18 active coalitions, communities led cross-sector strategies aligned with Floreecer and the New Mexico Early Childhood Strategic Plan. Their work included culturally responsive outreach events, literacy nights, and resource fairs, many bilingual, to ensure families receive support where they live. Family leadership emerged as a key driver, guiding priorities and shaping initiatives that reflect community needs.

- The Los Alamos Early Childhood Collaboration hosted a Fall Clothing Swap that served more than 500 families, reducing financial strain and strengthening community connections.
- The Partners in Early Childhood Education Coalition in Lincoln County began work to launch a Family, Friends, and Neighbors caregiver network to support informal caregiving.
- The McKinley County Early Childhood Coalition prepared trauma-informed TRIBES training (Trauma Informed to Build Resilient, Indigenous, Balanced Communities Enhanced with Strength) to address child abuse and promote family resilience.
- 100% Otero in Otero County organized Family Dialogue Circles, including sessions at Holloman Air Force Base, to better understand and respond to challenges tied to poverty and isolation.

2025 SILVER WINNER

General Public Service/PSA

New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department
Summer Food Program



Winner of the Silver Award in the General Public Service/PSA category for a playful and engaging television spot promoting the Summer Food Service Program, **which provides FREE, nutritious meals to children and teens (ages 1-18) throughout the summer months.**

"We're thrilled to see this lighthearted but impactful spot recognized nationally," said ECECD Cabinet Secretary Elizabeth Groginsky.

Goal 2: Stories



Traditional dancers performed at the grand opening of the T'siya Enrichment and Learning Center in Zia Pueblo on December 19, 2024. The celebration brought together Tribal and state leaders.

Goal 3: Government-to-Government

ECECD continued to expand and deepen government-to-government relationships and collaboration with Nations, Pueblos, and Tribes across the state. This work prioritized consultation, culture, language, data sharing, and facility improvements to strengthen outcomes for Native American families and young children. Over the past year, ECECD advanced this commitment through partnerships that honored sovereignty, elevated Native language and culture, and created opportunities for shared leadership in shaping New Mexico's early childhood system.

Tribal Colleges Partnerships and Educator Pathways

ECECD partnered with Tribal colleges and universities to create culturally-grounded, affordable pathways for early childhood educators that support degree attainment while centering Native language and culture in their curriculum. Through these partnerships, 243 scholarships were awarded to Native students, 22 bilingual certification incentives were provided to Native early childhood educators, and 170 multilingual pathway participants received \$1,500 stipends.



Pictured: Members of NMECTAC and the Colorado Department of Early Childhood gathered in Isleta Pueblo on April 18, 2024, to discuss workforce pathways and tribal investment strategies. The visit included a tour of the Isleta Head Start and Child Care Center, with a surprise appearance by the Easter Bunny.

New Mexico Early Childhood Tribal Advisory Coalition

The New Mexico Early Childhood Tribal Advisory Council (NMECTAC) grew to include representatives from 19 Nations, Pueblos, and Tribes. Monthly Tribal communication calls continued with an average of 40 to 50 participants, strengthening dialogue and collaboration across communities.

LANL Foundation-Supported Tribal Home Visiting

ECECD continued its collaboration with the LANL Foundation to strengthen Tribal home visiting services. The partnership launched new programs in Jemez, Nambe, Pojoaque, and San Ildefonso Pueblos, while also advancing implementation efforts in Tesuque Pueblo.

Planning for SEED in Tribal Communities

ECECD partnered with Acoma and Zuni Pueblos to plan the launch of SEED services in local early childhood settings. This work will expand social and emotional development supports and strengthen culturally responsive early learning in Tribal communities.



ECECD proudly participated in the 3rd Annual Tribal Child Care Conference, at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, a gathering that brought together early childhood champions from the Nations, Pueblos, and Tribes across the state of New Mexico.

Dr. Joannie Suina, Assistant Secretary for Native American Early Childhood Education and Care, opened the conference with heartfelt words grounded in gratitude, community, and vision:

“We are gathered here not simply as professionals, but as protectors of futures, defenders of joy, and keepers of stories.”

Dr. Joannie Suina, Assistant Secretary for Native American Early Childhood Education and Care.



Pictured: ECECD honored and congratulated six Families FIRST nurses for their nomination for the 2024 New Mexico Nursing Excellence Awards. Three of the nominees received category awards, and all were recognized as passionate professionals dedicated to uplifting families of young children through education, support, and care.

Goal 4: Ecosystem Alignment

ECECD is fostering coordination and collaboration within and across the early childhood, health, and child welfare sectors to build a holistic, family-centered, culturally responsive, and integrated ecosystem. This work strengthens supports for families, reduces child abuse and neglect, and improves school readiness. Over the past year, ECECD advanced alignment efforts that connect services, expand partnerships, and ensure families experience a more coordinated system of care.

ECECD Nurses Recognized for Excellence

On April 12, 2025, six nurses from ECECD's Family Foundations Bureau were honored at the New Mexico Nursing Excellence Awards. Kym Halliday Clear, Ruth Gonzalez, Kristi Romero, Anita Lozano, Susie Arredondo, and Marisa Anaya were recognized for their compassion, expertise, and dedication to families served through ECECD's Families FIRST program statewide.

NM PreK, Part C, and Family Infant Toddler Collaboration

ECECD advanced alignment among IDEA Part B-619, FIT, and NM PreK to improve service delivery and transitions. Key steps included updating NM PreK Standards to ensure equitable access for children with disabilities, issuing new Individualized Education Program guidance to community-based programs for greater consistency across care settings, and streamlining Child Find referrals with the Public Education Department to reduce delays in services.

New Mexico Children's Cabinet

The New Mexico Children's Cabinet brings together leaders from across state government to coordinate policies and investments that improve outcomes for children and families. In FY24–FY25, the Cabinet advanced several landmark initiatives through strengthened interagency collaboration. One of the most significant was the investment in Family

Continued on next page →

Resource Centers, community hubs where state agencies co-locate with local partners to better serve families. Four new centers opened in high-acuity counties, serving more than 1,000 New Mexicans in their first year, including flood and fire victims, with two more centers in development.

Other Children's Cabinet priorities achieved included expanding Medicaid to cover doula services and extending perinatal Medicaid to one year postpartum; enacting one of the nation's most progressive tax codes; completing a statewide basic needs review across higher education institutions; hosting the first annual Parent University for families with children with special needs, a collaborative effort between the Public Education Department (PED), Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD), and the Higher Education Department (HED); advancing the federally mandated Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA); and launching a pilot program to support kinship caregivers.



Pictured: Secretary Groginsky joined by fellow Cabinet Secretaries for the New Mexico Children's Cabinet convening on September 23, 2025 in Morieta, NM.

New Mexico Children's Cabinet Members

Cabinet Secretaries

Kari Armijo, Health Care Authority

Rob Black, Economic Development

Jason Bowie, Department of Public Safety

Gina DeBlassie, Department of Health

Debra Garcia y Griego, Department of Cultural Affairs

Elizabeth Groginsky, Early Childhood Education and Care

Emily Kaltenbach, Aging and Longterm Services

AliceLiu McCoy, Director, Developmental Disabilities Council

Josett Monette, Indian Affairs Department

Sarita Nair, Department of Workforce Solutions

Marianna Padilla, Public Education

Wayne Probst, Department of Finance and Administration

Charles Reado, Office of African American Affairs

Stephanie Rodriguez, Higher Education

Valerie Sandoval, Children, Youth, and Families

Stephanie Schardin Clarke, Tax and Revenue

Ricky Serna, Department of Transportation

Alisha TafoyaLucero, Corrections

Goal 5: Organizational Excellence

ECECD is committed to building efficient and effective fiscal, human resource, and constituent service systems, supported by strong information technology infrastructure. These efforts ensure the department can fulfill its core responsibilities while delivering high-quality customer service for all New Mexicans. Over the past year, ECECD advanced initiatives that strengthen internal operations, support staff, and improve the department's ability to meet the needs of families and communities.

Department Equity Supports

ECECD launched the Community Equity Learning Series (CELS), a monthly training series designed to help staff better support the communities they serve. A total of 139 employees participated, and 93 percent reported the training supported their work. All staff also gained access to a new Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) resource site offering guidance on topics such as developing land acknowledgements, creating accessible materials, workplace disability etiquette, and cultural humility. In addition, the “Our Work Through a JEDI Lens” program reached 30 managers and supervisors, with 100 percent of participants who provided feedback reporting it was valuable and directly supported their roles.

Early Childhood Education and Care Advisory Council

The Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Advisory Council completed its third year as an active advisory body, offering guidance and recommendations to ECECD in support of a cohesive, equitable, and effective early childhood system statewide. The Council met regularly at locations across New Mexico, addressing key initiatives and priorities. In 2025, its focus areas included the Statewide Community Assessment, redesign of FOCUS (New Mexico's Quality Rating and Improvement System), development of ECECD data dashboards, and advancing infant and toddler pay parity. The Council's work was furthered by four subcommittees—Public-Private Partnership, Early Childhood Professionals, Program Quality and Accountability, and Data, Infrastructure, and Analysis—which developed and presented targeted recommendations for consideration.



Secretary Groginsky joined by child care providers for the Early Childhood Education and Care Advisory Council meeting in Roswell, NM on July 23, 2025. ***The ECEC Advisory Council celebrated its third year driving big strides in early childhood—advancing quality, equity, and innovation across New Mexico!***

Goal 5: Stories

Goal 6: Actionable Data

ECECD is committed to collecting and sharing relevant, reliable, and actionable data to inform policy decisions, empower partners, and deepen community understanding of the importance of the prenatal to age five period of development. Over the past year, ECECD advanced efforts to build data systems and tools that translate information into insight, supporting continuous improvement across programs and strengthening outcomes for New Mexico's youngest children and their families.

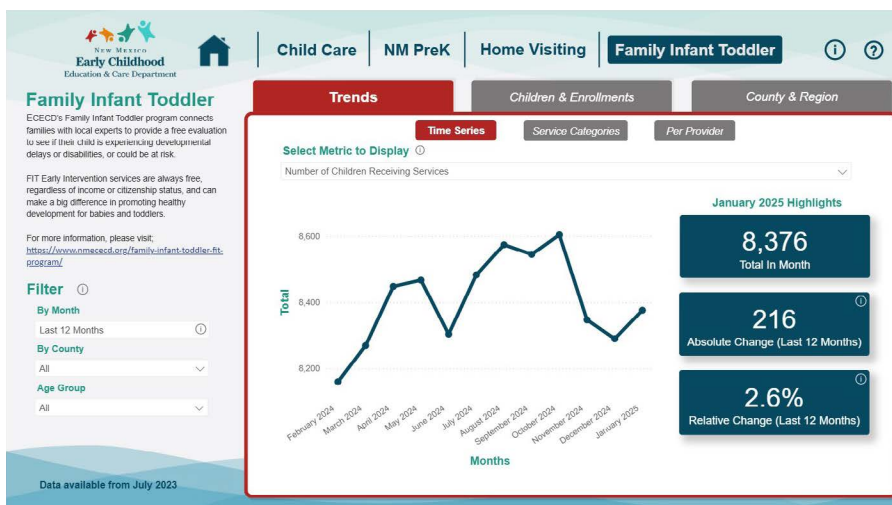
Survey Data Highlights Children's Early Experiences Across New Mexico

Over 5,500 kindergarten parents across New Mexico completed the Childhood Experiences Questionnaire (CHEQ) to share information about their children's early experiences that are known to be important to healthy development and wellbeing. The CHEQ captures insights into children's nutrition and sleep habits, physical activity, language and cognitive enriching experiences, peer relationships and conversations about emotions. Combined with statewide data collected in Spring 2024 by kindergarten teachers using the Early Development Instrument (EDI), this effort offers a comprehensive picture of how young children are developing in their earliest year, highlighting both strengths and areas of need.

The CHEQ and EDI data serve as a catalyst for understanding and amplifying the stories behind children's early experiences and the opportunities available to them. They are being shared with the Local Early Childhood Systems Building Coalitions to inform decision-making and accelerate meaningful change within communities across the state. This effort represents a partnership between PED, ECECD, and the University of California Los Angeles Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities.

Family Infant Toddler (FIT) Cost Model

ECECD completed a cost model for FIT to ensure rates more accurately reflect the true cost of delivering services across New Mexico. The updated model supports sustainability for providers while maintaining equitable access for families. Findings from the cost model will guide future rate setting, budget planning, and efforts to strengthen the long-term stability of FIT statewide.



ECECD's NEW public-facing dashboards with tools to display data from key agency programs, including Family Infant Toddler (FIT), Home Visiting, PreK, and Child Care.

The dashboards are designed to provide a clear view of data from enrollment metrics, services provided, and program outcomes from the last five years. ***This initiative underscores ECECD's commitment to transparency and helps the community understand the impact of early childhood programs in New Mexico.***

Goal 6: Stories



Florencer

Progress and
Accountability Report

2025

nmececd.org

PO Drawer 5619

Santa Fe, NM 87502-5619

Toll free: (800) 832-1321



NEW MEXICO

Early Childhood

Education & Care Department