

# Spotlight on 2026 Legislative Session *for Families and Community*

Emcee: Sonya Martinez,  
Communications Director  
Tuesday January 20, 2026



NEW MEXICO

**Early Childhood**

Education & Care Department



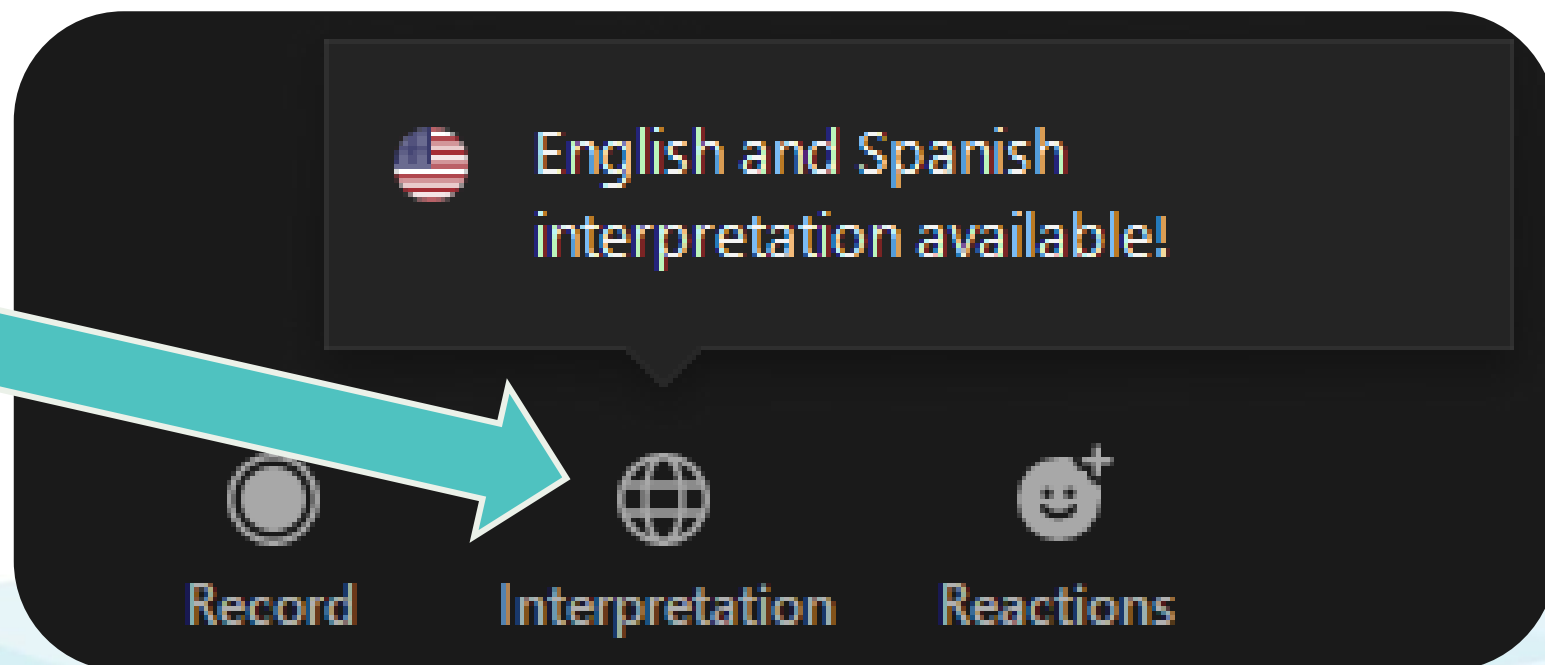
# Language Instructions

*Inglés > Español*

# Instrucciones de Interpretación

Step 1: Click the Interpretation Symbol

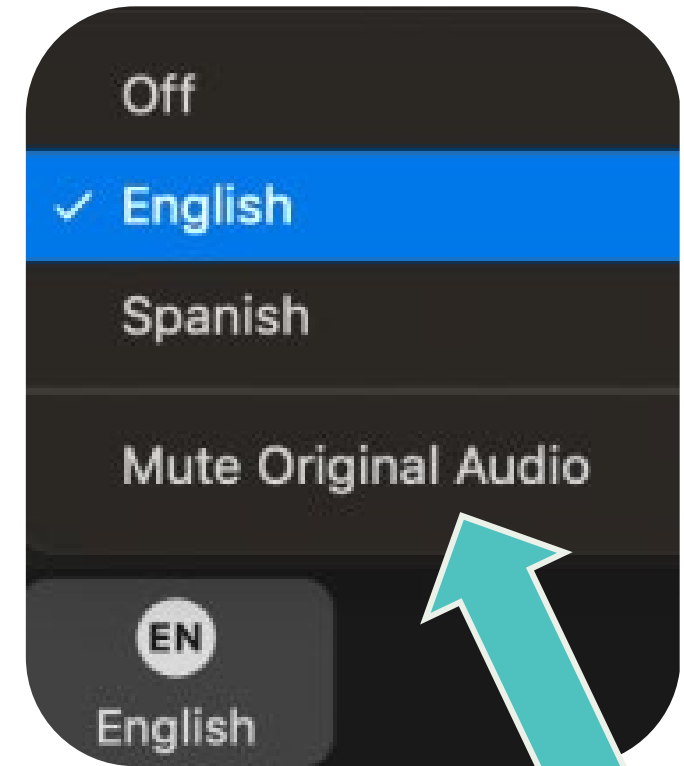
**Paso 1: Selecciona el símbolo de INTERPRETACIÓN**



## Steps 2 and 3: Choose From the Menu

### Pasos 2 y 3: Elija del menú

- You'll then see a menu; click "Spanish" OR "English"
  - **Vas a ver el menú; 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 usted prefiere escuchar SOLO Español, también clic "Mute Original Audio"**  
**De lo contrario, oirás el español alto y claro y el inglés en voz baja.**
- You will now hear the Spanish interpretation.
  - **Usted escuchara ahora la interpretación en Español.**
- If you choose "English" you will automatically hear only English.
  - **Si eliges "English", automáticamente escucharás sólo inglés.**





**We have a Spanish-language version of today's presentation available.**

Click the QR code or see the link in the chat.

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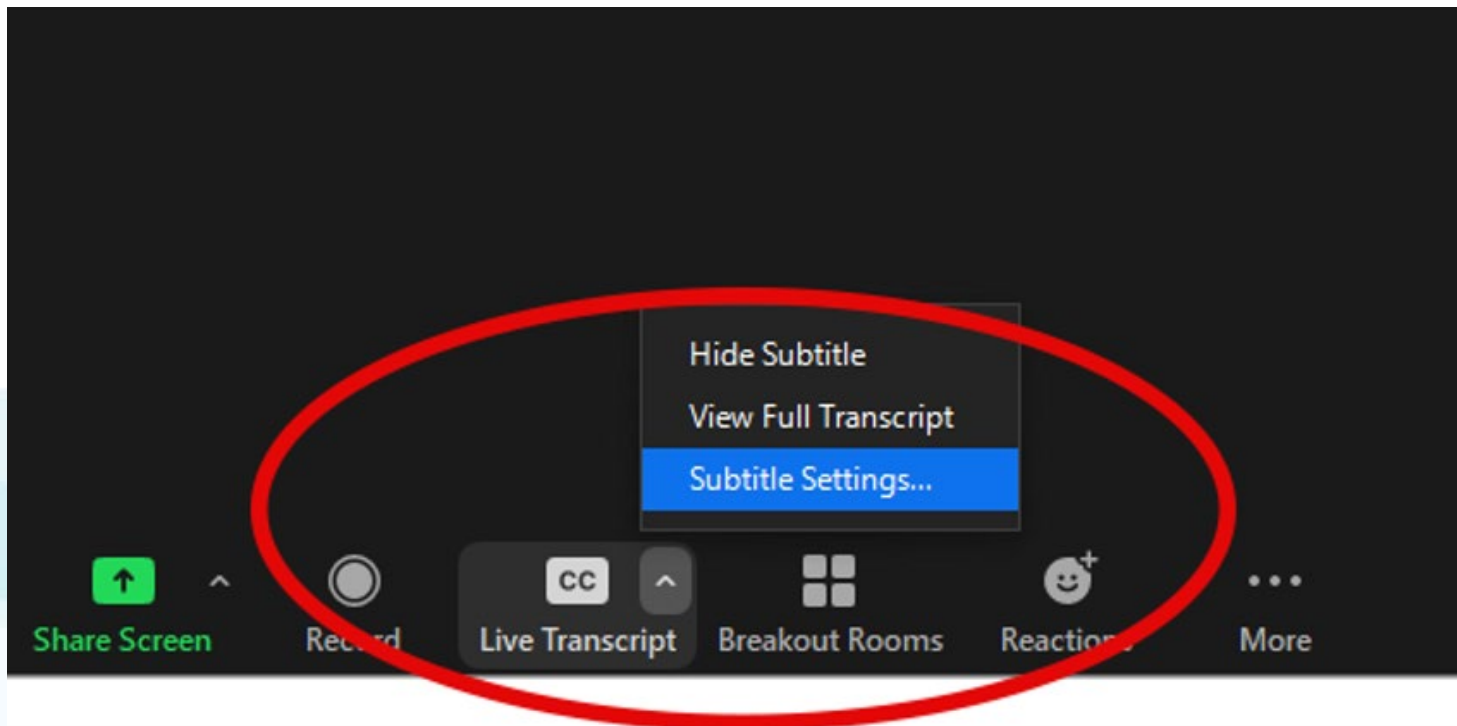
**Contamos con una versión en español de la presentación de hoy.**

Código QR o enlace en el chat.



# Enable Closed Captions

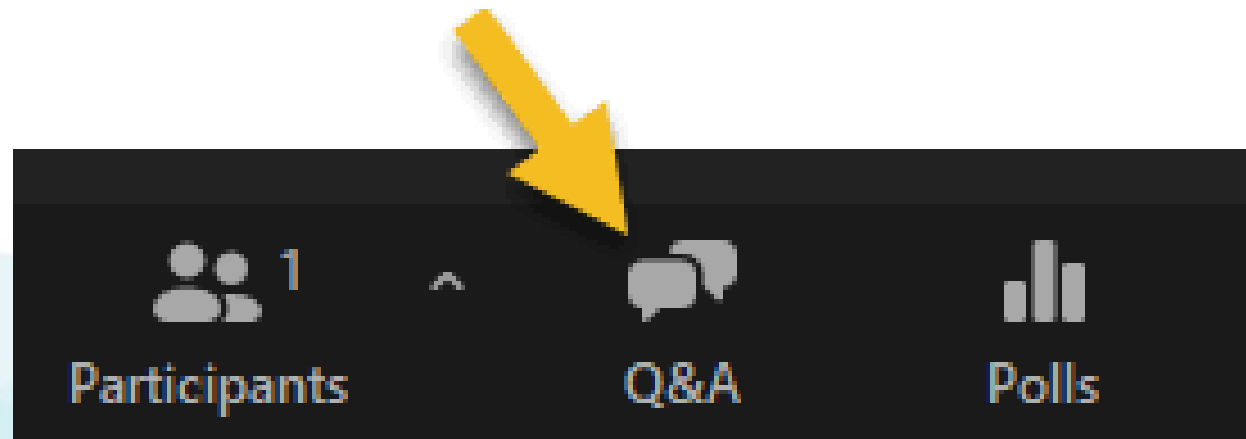
- See the Show Captions or CC button in the toolbar.
- Click it and choose Show Captions to turn them on (or Hide Captions to turn off).
- You can click the small arrow next to CC/Captions to adjust caption size.



# Zoom Q&A Instructions

We welcome your questions. Please use the **Q&A** feature in Zoom (located at the bottom of your screen) to submit your questions at any time during the event.

While we may not get to every question during tonight's event, we will review all submissions and make sure they are addressed in our session resources.



# Agenda

- I. Welcome - *Elizabeth Groginsky, Cabinet Secretary*
- II. Guest Speakers
- III. Legislative Session 101 - *Kendal Chavez, Deputy Secretary*
- IV. FY27 Executive Budget Overview and Universal Child Care - *Elizabeth Groginsky, Cabinet Secretary*
- V. Legislation Overview - *Shelley Strong, General Counsel*
  - Child Care Zoning Requirements
  - Tax Credit Incentive for Donations to Child Care Facilities
- VI. Get Involved in the 2026 Legislative Session - *Sonya Martinez, Communications Director*
- VII. Closing and Next Steps - *Elizabeth Groginsky, Cabinet Secretary*

A photograph of a man with a dark beard and mustache, wearing a grey button-down shirt, sitting on a couch and holding a baby. The baby is wearing a white patterned dress and holding a colorful toy. The background is a bright, out-of-focus indoor setting with a window. The text 'Welcome' is overlaid on the left side of the image.

# Welcome

Elizabeth Groginsky, Cabinet Secretary



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# Legislative Session 101

A photograph of a man with a dark beard and mustache, wearing a grey button-down shirt, sitting on a couch and holding a baby. The baby is wearing a white patterned onesie and is holding a colorful toy. The man is looking down at the baby with a smile. The background is a bright, out-of-focus indoor setting with a window.

Kendal Chavez, Deputy Secretary



# Legislative Session

- At the beginning of each year, New Mexico's elected Representatives and Senators meet at the State Capitol, called the Roundhouse, for the legislative session.
- The state holds two types of regular sessions:
  - 60-day session happens in odd-numbered years like 2025 and 2027. Legislators can discuss any topic during these sessions.
  - 30-day short session happen in even-numbered years like 2026 and 2028. This session is focused mainly on the state budget and specific topics the Governor asks them to consider.
- The Governor can also call special sessions at other times of the year if needed.



*Early Childhood Day at the Roundhouse, 2025.*

# New Mexico *Legislative Process*

- **STEP 1: A BILL IS INTRODUCED AND ASSIGNED TO COMMITTEE(S)**

- **STEP 2: THE BILL IS HEARD IN COMMITTEE**

The bill starts in one chamber—either the House or the Senate. A small group of lawmakers, called a committee, reviews the bill. They talk about it, ask questions, and may suggest changes.

- **STEP 3: THE COMMITTEE VOTES**

The committee decides whether the bill should move forward. Each bill is typically reviewed by at least two committees and must pass each.

- If they vote **yes**, the bill continues.
- If they vote **no**, the bill dies.

- **STEP 4: THE FULL HOUSE OR SENATE VOTES**

The bill is debated and voted on by all members of the House or the Senate. This is called a floor vote.

**The bill goes to the other chamber:** If the bill passes one chamber, it goes to the other one (House or Senate) to repeat the same steps.

- **STEP 5: THE GOVERNOR DECIDES**

If both chambers pass the bill, it goes to the Governor. The Governor can:

- Sign it into law
- Veto it

- **STEP 6: THE BILL BECOMES LAW**

If the Governor signs the bill, it becomes a law. Some laws go into effect immediately. Others become effective later in the year.



# Contact your Legislators

Your state senator and representative want to hear from you!

- Not sure who your legislators are? Visit: [nmlegis.gov/Members/Find\\_My\\_Legislator](https://nmlegis.gov/Members/Find_My_Legislator)

How to reach them:

- Call the session switchboard at **505-986-4300** and leave a message
- Email them directly (contact info is on their legislative profile)

For technical questions about the nmlegis.gov website or for general questions about the Legislature [Contact the Legislative Council Service](#) by sending an email to [lcs@nmlegis.gov](mailto:lcs@nmlegis.gov).

*Stay tuned for additional resources to help you contact your legislator later in the presentation.*



*Early Childhood Day at the Roundhouse, 2025.*



# Legislative Budget Hearings:

## *Public Participation Encouraged!*

The New Mexico Legislature's finance committees review and make recommendations on state spending, budget priorities, and funding proposals that **shape how programs and services are delivered in communities across New Mexico.**

### House Appropriations and Finance Committee

- Wednesday, January 21, 2026 at 1:30 p.m.
- Room 307, New Mexico State Capitol (Roundhouse)
- 490 Old Santa Fe Trail, Santa Fe, NM 87501
- Public comment at end of day

Meetings are open to the public and available to attend or view online at [www.nmlegis.gov](http://www.nmlegis.gov).



*Alax, the Intergalactic Ambassador of Ca  
with Lieutenant Governor Howie Moral  
during Early Childhood Day at the  
Roundhouse, 2024.*



## Executive Budget Overview

Elizabeth Groginsky,  
Cabinet Secretary

# Welcome to ECECD's *Spotlight* on the 2026 Legislative Session for Families and Community

Tonight's briefing is designed to orient families and community members to ECECD's priorities for the 2026 legislative session, discuss how early childhood policy decisions impact the lives of **families and** the early childhood **workforce**, and New Mexico's **economic stability**, and share how you can stay informed and engaged throughout the session.

## Legislative and Budget Priorities:

FY27  
Executive Budget



Universal Child  
Care



Child Care Zoning  
Requirements



Tax Credit Incentive  
for Donations to Child  
Care Facilities





# The FY27 Executive Budget Overview

- The FY27 Executive Budget builds on the strategic and successful investments of the New Mexico Legislature and Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, which have improved the lives of tens of thousands of New Mexico families and young children.
- New Mexico became the first state in the nation to offer no-cost, universal child care on November 1, 2025. This created better access to families no matter their income, while saving them up to **\$14,000 per child each year**.
- This historic investment makes families stronger and more stable, supports the early childhood workforce, and gives families access to high quality child care.



## ECECD Proposed 2026 Legislation

**Child Care Zoning Requirement Act**

Support child care supply building efforts and improve access to quality care for families by providing statewide consistency in land use for child care homes and centers.

- Requires county and municipal authorities to treat licensed and registered child care homes as residential use in the application of local regulations
- Prohibits local authorities from not applying to other residential parking
- Ensures child care homes are not subject to safety codes
- Requires licensed child care centers to be located in multi-family residential zones and not subject to restrictions on child care centers
- Prohibits counties and municipalities from imposing additional fees and taxes to operate child care centers
- Restricts HOAs from prohibiting child care centers

**Tax Credit Incentive for Donations**

Encourage investment in child care facilities by providing tax credits for those who donate to child care facilities. The bill stipulates an aggregate cap of \$5,000 per taxpayer per year. The supply and demand for child care in New Mexico by incentivizing donations and fundraising opportunities for facilities.

**VISION:** All New Mexico children have access to high-quality early childhood programs.

**MISSION:** Optimize the lives of babies, toddlers, and young children by providing equitable, community-based early childhood programs.

[nmeccd.org/2026-legislation](https://nmeccd.org/2026-legislation)

in @NewMexico

## 2026 Legislative and Budget Priorities

*Building a Brighter Future for New Mexico Families and Young Children*

The FY27 Executive Budget builds on the strategic and successful investments of the New Mexico Legislature and Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, which have improved the lives of tens of thousands of New Mexico families and young children. The Executive Budget also supports ECECD's 2022–2027 Strategic Plan through targeted recurring and non-recurring investments.

Line Item	Executive Budget	LFC Recommendation	Difference
<b>Recurring</b>			
Universal Child Care	\$160.6M	10M	-\$150.6M
Department Infrastructure	\$4.3M	\$2.4M	-\$1.9M
Home Visiting	\$4M	\$3.9M	-\$100K
Family Infant Toddler (FIT) Rate Change	\$3M	\$3M	\$0
New Mexico PreK Expansion	\$7.5M	\$7M	-\$500K
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$179M</b>	<b>\$26.3M</b>	<b>-\$153.1M</b>
<b>Non-recurring</b>			
Wage Scale and Career Lattice (3 yrs, GRO)	\$57M	\$0	-\$57M
Child Care Pilot	\$0	\$48M	+\$48M
Child Care Facility Revolving Loan Fund	\$20M	\$5M	-\$15M
FIT Professional Development and Support	\$3M	\$0	-\$3M
Local Early Childhood System Building Coalitions (3 yrs, GRO)	\$3M	\$0	-\$3M
Native American Early Childhood Convening	\$400K	\$0	-\$400K
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$83.4M</b>	<b>\$53M</b>	<b>-\$30.4M</b>
<b>Category 2 (CZ)</b>			
FIT Data System Phase I	\$2.25M	\$0	-\$2.25M
EPICS Replacement Discovery	\$250K	\$0	-\$250K
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$2.5M</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>-\$2.5M</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$256.5M</b>	<b>\$76.9M</b>	<b>-\$179.4M</b>

Scan the QR code to view the 2026 Legislative and Budget Priorities overview in English and Spanish.





**Investments in early childhood education and care yield substantial long-term benefits for individuals and society—a 13% annual return on investment through improved outcomes in education, health, and economic productivity.**





# FY27 Executive Budget: *What It Delivers for Families and Providers*

## *Recurring Investments*

- Universal Child Care **\$160.6M**
- PreK expansion **\$7.5M**
- Department infrastructure to sustain access and quality **\$4.3M**
- Home Visiting **\$4M**
- FIT rate changes **\$3M**

## *Non-Recurring Investments*

- Wage scale and career lattice **\$57M**
- Child Care Facility Revolving Loan Fund **\$20M**
- FIT Professional Development and Support **\$3M**
- Local Early Childhood System Building Coalition **\$3M**
- Native American Early Childhood Convening **\$400K**

## *Category 2 (One-Time Systems and Infrastructure)*

- FIT data system (Phase I) **\$2.25M**
- EPICS replacement discovery **\$250K**

**Total Executive Budget Request: \$256.5M**

*These investments support access, affordability, workforce stability, and long-term system sustainability.*

# Universal Child Care (UCC)

*What it's delivering for New Mexico families, providers, and communities*



**44%**

Families newly enrolled had household incomes that fell below the previous eligibility cap



**64%**

New Mexico Child Care workforce growth



**\$14,000**

Average annual out-of-pocket savings per child for New Mexico families



**37%**

Of new child care contracts are infants and toddlers



**9,390**

New families accessing free child care since November 1



**12,008**

New children accessing free child care since November 1



**Want to see Universal Child Care in your county?**  
Scan the QR code to view county-level data and enrollment trends.

# Why This Budget Matters

- The FY27 Executive Budget reflects New Mexico's continued commitment to families with young children and the early childhood workforce.
- As the legislative session moves forward, budget decisions will shape whether families can continue to rely on affordable child care, whether providers can stay open and retain staff, and whether our system remains stable for the long term.

*Budget decisions are family decisions. The choices made this session will shape access to child care, workforce stability, and economic opportunity for New Mexico families.*





# Legislative Priorities Overview

A photograph of a man with a dark beard and mustache, wearing a grey button-down shirt, sitting on a couch and holding a baby. The baby is wearing a white patterned onesie and is holding a colorful toy. The man is looking down at the baby with a smile. The background is a bright, out-of-focus indoor setting with a window.

Shelley Strong, General Counsel

# Child Care Zoning Requirements

**Support child care supply building efforts and improve access to quality care for families by providing statewide consistency in land use for child care homes and centers.**

- Requires county and municipal authorities to treat licensed and registered child care homes as residential use in the application of local regulations
- Prohibits local authorities from imposing extra restrictions on child care homes that do not apply to other residences, such as special permits or additional off-street parking
- Ensures child care homes are treated like other private residences in fire and life safety codes
- Requires licensed child care centers to be permitted in commercial, mixed-use, or multi-family residential zones and prohibits local authorities from placing more restrictions on child care centers than those applied to others in the same zone
- Prohibits counties and municipalities from requiring child care providers to pay additional fees and taxes to operate a licensed or regulated child care facility
- Restricts HOAs from prohibiting child care homes in HOA governed communities



# Tax Credit Incentive for Donations to Child Care Facilities

- Encourage investment in child care by providing personal and corporate income tax credits for those who donate to any child care facility licensed by ECECD.
- The bill stipulates an aggregate cap of \$10 million per year and a cap of \$500,000 per taxpayer per year.
- The supply and quality of child care will be strengthened in New Mexico by incentivizing donations that provide financial enhancements and fundraising opportunities for facility development and operational costs.



# Get Involved in the 2026 Legislative Session

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Sonya Martinez,  
Communications Director



# Legislative Session Resources

ECECD has launched a centralized set of resources to help families, community members, and policymakers stay informed during the 2026 Legislative Session.

- **2026 Legislative Session webpage**  
A one-stop hub for session updates, resources, and materials
- **Family Guide to New Mexico's 2026 Legislative Session**  
Family-friendly information sheets and guidance on how to contact legislators
- **2026 Legislative and Budget Priorities (English and Spanish)**  
A high-level overview of ECECD's policy and budget priorities for the session
- *Tuesday* **Session mailer**



[nmeccd.org/2026-legislative-session](https://nmeccd.org/2026-legislative-session)





## Key Dates:

- **Jan 20:** Session begins
- **Jan 21:** House Appropriations and Finance Committee, 1:30 p.m.
- **Feb 14:** Early Childhood Day at the Roundhouse
- **Feb 19:** Session ends

2026



NEW MEXICO  
Early Childhood  
Education & Care Department

# Early Childhood Day at the Roundhouse

**SAVE THE DATE**

**Saturday, February 14**

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
New Mexico State Capitol

Join early childhood educators, families, partners, and advocates for a day of **celebration**, **connection**, and **learning** at the New Mexico State Capitol.

*More details to come.*





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*Alax, the Intergalactic Ambassador of Capitol Hill, sits with Lieutenant Governor Howie Morales during Early Childhood Day at the Roundhouse, 2024.*



# Executive Leadership Contacts



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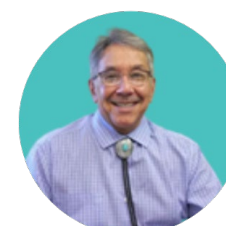


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# *Stay Connected* with the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department



**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](https://nmececd.org/newsroom).**



**@NewMexicoECECD**



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