



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

## Mid-Session Check-in

17 days remain

Emcee: Sonya Martinez,  
Communications Director  
Monday Feb. 2, 2026



NEW MEXICO

**Early Childhood**

Education & Care Department



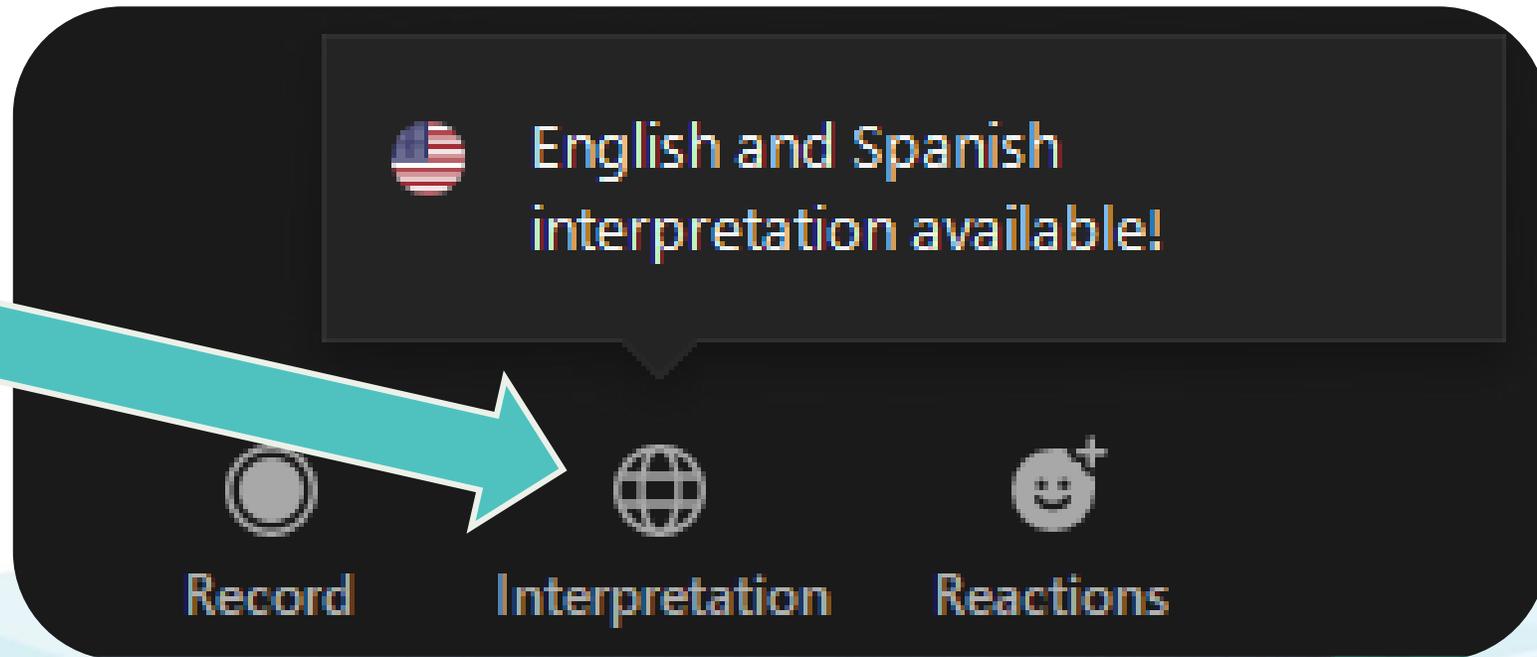
# Language Instructions

*Inglés > Español*

# Instrucciones de Interpretación

Step 1: Click the Interpretation Symbol

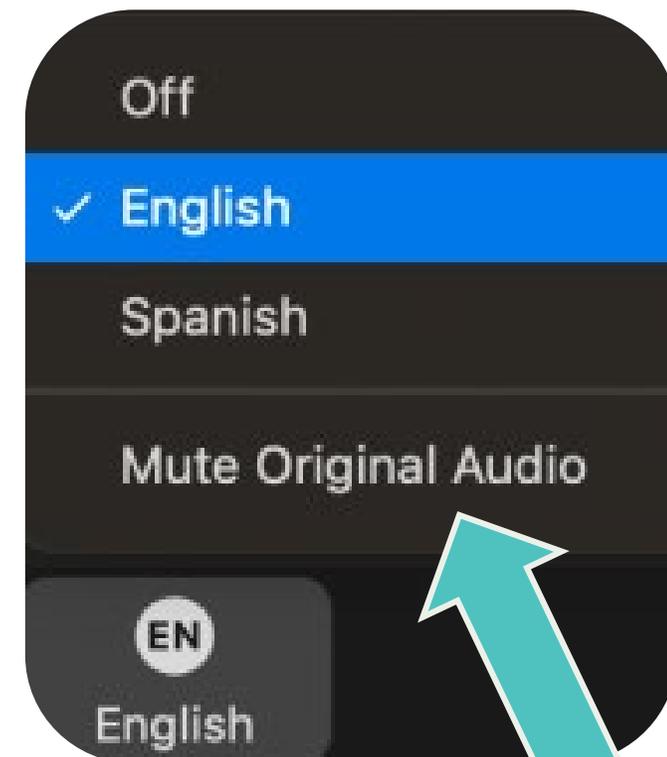
**Paso 1: Selecciona el símbolo de INTERPRETACIÓN**



## Steps 2 and 3: Choose From the Menu

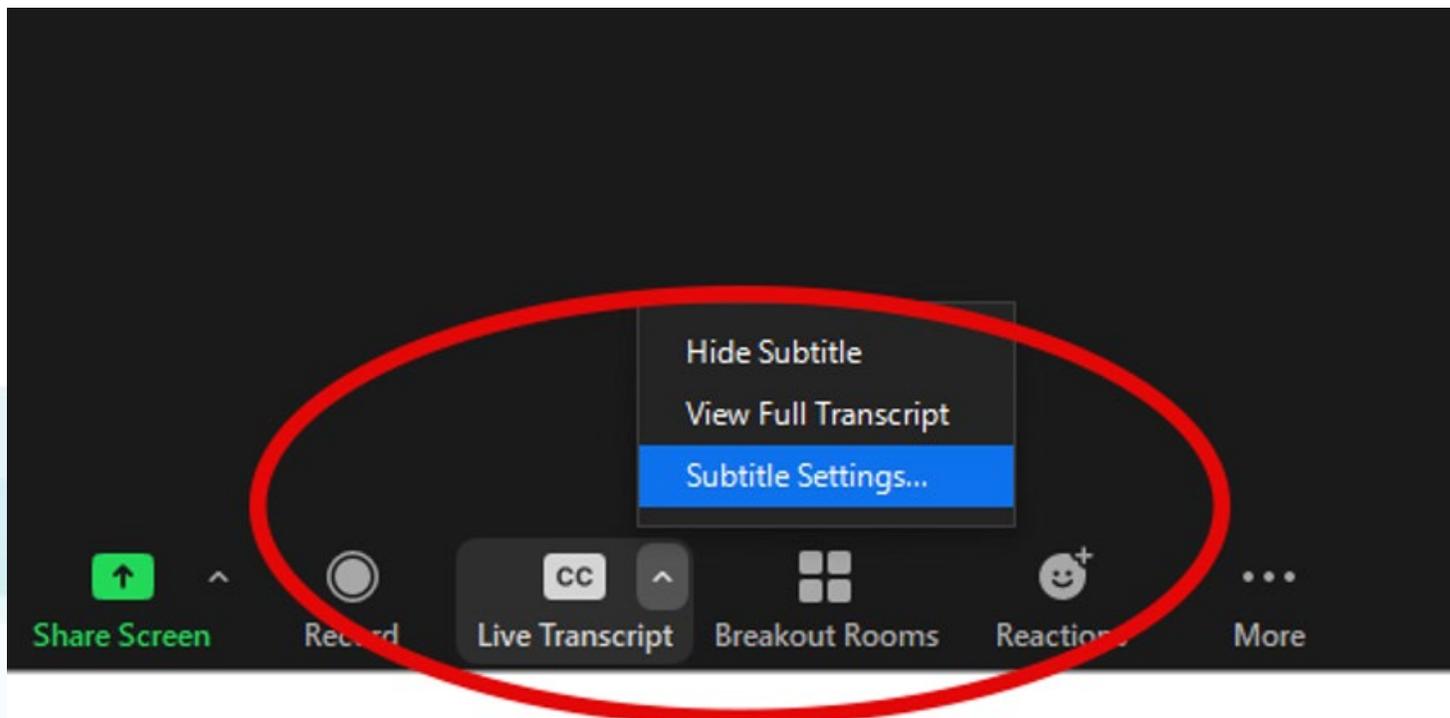
### Pasos 2 y 3: Elija del menú

- 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.**



# Enable Closed Captions

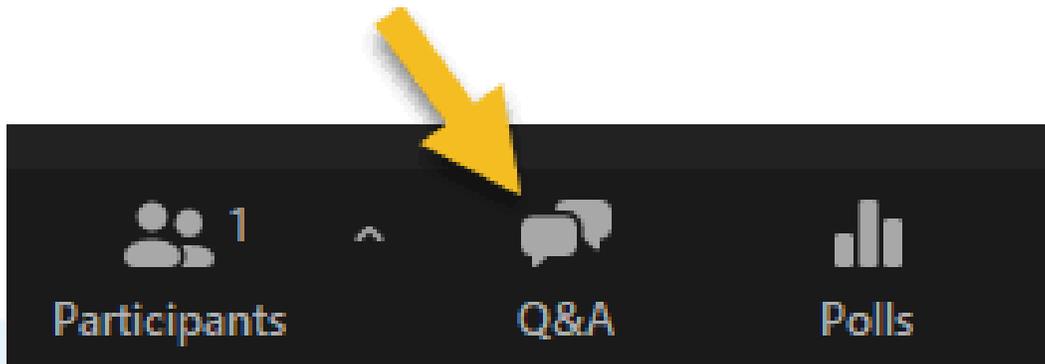
- See the Show Captions or CC button in the toolbar.
- Click it and choose Show Captions to turn them on (or Hide Captions to turn off).
- You can click the small arrow next to CC/Captions to adjust caption size.



# 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.



The **chat is open** for comments and conversation with fellow attendees. Please submit any questions for our presenters using the **Q&A** feature to help us stay organized.

# Enfoque en la Sesión Legislativa 2026 para Familias y Comunidades: Revisión de Medio Período

Sesión en español

**Tuesday, February 3, 2026**

7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.

Join via Zoom:

<https://nmececdorg.zoom.us/j/81238084709>

Tuesday's session will be offered in Spanish, facilitated by Jaime Bencomo, Deputy Communications Director at ECECD, and José González, Engagement Coordinator.

**Today's Midway Session Check-in is hosted in English.**

Spanish-language attendees are welcome to stay for the English session if they would like.

# Agenda

- I. Welcome - *Elizabeth Groginsky, Cabinet Secretary*
- II. Guest Speakers
- III. FY27 Executive Budget Overview and Universal Child Care - *Elizabeth Groginsky, Cabinet Secretary*
- IV. Legislation Overview - *Shelley Strong, General Counsel*
  - Child Care Zoning Requirements
  - Tax Credit Incentive for Donations to Child Care Facilities
- V. Get Involved and Thank Your Legislators - *Kendal Chavez, Deputy Secretary*
- VI. Closing and Next Steps - *Elizabeth Groginsky, Cabinet Secretary*

A photograph of a man with a full dark beard and mustache, wearing a grey short-sleeved button-down shirt, sitting on a light-colored sofa. He is holding a young child with blonde hair, wearing a white patterned dress, who is smiling and holding a colorful toy. The background is bright and slightly blurred, suggesting an indoor setting with large windows. The overall mood is warm and affectionate.

**Welcome**

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Elizabeth Groginsky, Cabinet Secretary





# Executive Priorities Overview

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Elizabeth Groginsky,  
Cabinet Secretary

# 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 treated as safety codes
- Requires licensed child care centers in multi-family residential zones and 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




### 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>

# 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 Coalitions **\$3M**
- Native American Early Childhood Convening **\$400K**

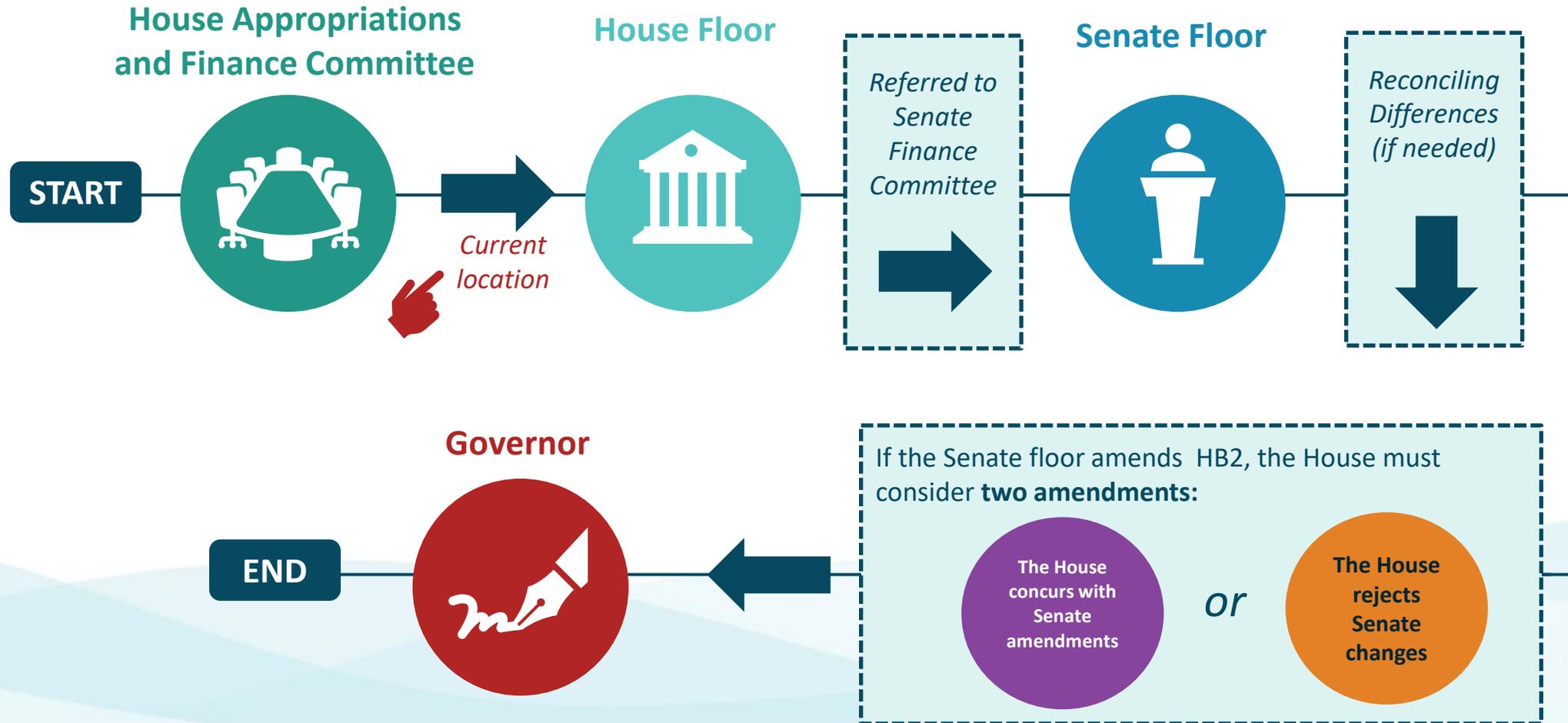
## **Category 2 (One-Time Systems and Infrastructure)**

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

**Total Executive Budget Increase Request: \$265.3M**

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

# HB2 - the General Appropriation Act Status



# Universal Child Care - *Return on Investment*

## The Economic Case for Universal Child Care



Universal child care is one of the **most cost-effective** labor market policies evaluated in the United States.

### Annual Loss When care is **Unavailable**



# \$586M

Each year, New Mexico loses an estimated \$586 million in productivity, wages, and revenue due to child care shortages.

Council for a Strong America, ReadyNation. (2023). The growing, annual cost of the infant-toddler child care crisis.

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



## The Economic Case for Universal Child Care



Universal child care is one of the **most cost-effective** labor market policies evaluated in the United States.

# \$4.2B

Reduced workforce participation due to child care shortages results in \$4.2 billion in lost tax revenue annually.

Economic Policy Institute. (2020). Who's paying now? The explicit and implicit costs of the current early care and education system.

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



# 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?  
[Click here or scan the QR code to view county-level data and enrollment trends.](#)

# Committee Hearings *and* Budget Presentations to Date

- **January 15, 2026:** Senate Finance Committee
- **January 21, 2026:** House Appropriations and Finance Committee
- **January 29, 2026:** Senate Finance Committee

Copies of all committee presentations and materials are available at:

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



# Legislative Priorities Overview

Shelley Strong, General Counsel



## Mid-Session Check-in

# SB96: Regulated Child Care Zoning Requirements

Formerly known as 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



# SB96: Registered Child Care Home Provisions

- 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

## SB96 Status

Senate Health & Public  
Affairs Committee

Senate Tax, Business &  
Transportation Committee

*If SB96  
passes both  
committees*

Senate floor  
for consideration

 House  
*SB170 will be referred  
to committees that  
have not yet been  
determined*



Wednesday,  
Feb. 4



## Mid-Session Check-in Continued

# SB170: Child Care Facility Donation Tax Credit

Formerly known as 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 a child care facility licensed by ECECD that serves at least 50 percent of children who receive child care assistance.
- 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.

### SB170 Status



# Get Involved and *Thank Your Legislators*

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*Kendal Chavez, Deputy Secretary*



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.*



# Send a *Valentine* to Your Legislators

- This Valentine's Day, share the love by sending a short thank-you message to your New Mexico State Representative and Senator for supporting funding for Universal Child Care from **February 12-14**.
- ECECD has created four Universal Child Care Valentine's Day graphics for you to tag, email, mail, or drop off to your legislators.

Printed cards will be available at the ECECD Early Childhood Day welcome table.



# How to Send Your *Valentine*

- **Email:** Look up your legislator's contact information at [nmlegis.gov/Members/Find My Legislator](http://nmlegis.gov/Members/Find_My_Legislator)
- **Phone:** Call the legislative session switchboard at 505-986-4300 and leave a thank-you message.
- **Mail or drop off** a note to your New Mexico legislator at:  
New Mexico State Legislature

[Legislator's Name]

Room [\_\_\_], State Capitol

490 Old Santa Fe Trail

Santa Fe, NM 87501

Valentine flyer and graphic links will be included in ECECD's Tuesday session mailer.



**This Valentine's Day, share the love by sending a short thank-you message to your New Mexico State Representative and Senator for supporting funding for Universal Child Care.**

Universal Child Care helps parents work or go to school, supports young children during their most important early years, and strengthens families, providers, and communities across New Mexico. Legislators have stood with families by supporting this historic effort. A short message of gratitude or support is powerful!

### How to Send Your Valentine

Don't know who your representative or legislator is? Check out [this](#) tutorial.

- ♥ **Email:** Look up your legislator's contact information at [nmlegis.gov/Members/Find My Legislator](http://nmlegis.gov/Members/Find_My_Legislator)
- ♥ **Phone:** Call the legislative session switchboard at 505-986-4300 and leave a thank-you message.
- ♥ **Mail or drop off** a note to your New Mexico legislator at:  
New Mexico State Legislature  
[Legislator's Name]  
Room [\_\_\_], State Capitol  
490 Old Santa Fe Trail  
Santa Fe, NM 87501

### Pick a Valentine Message and Graphic

You are encouraged to personalize your message. Click to download the graphic (PNG, Facebook-sized), or use the [Canva template link](#) to customize.



Supporting Universal Child Care means showing love to the educators our families rely on — thank you for standing with them.



Because of Universal Child Care, our family can work and plan for the future — thank you for your support.



Roses are red, violets are blue — Universal Child Care matters, and we thank you!



Cupid's Arrow hit us—we love Universal Child Care and we know you do, too!

**You don't need to be an expert — your experience as a parent, caregiver, or community member matters.**

# Write and Submit an Op-Ed

## How to write one:

- **Start with your message:** In one sentence, say what you support and why.
- **Explain the “why”:** Share a personal story, local example, or a few key facts.
- **Make it timely:** Mention the bill or issue and what you want lawmakers to do (support, oppose, amend).
- **Keep it clear and respectful:** Use plain language and stay focused on one main point.
- **End with a call to action:** Tell readers what they can do next or urge your policymakers to take a certain action.

## How to submit:

- Find the “Opinion” or “Submit an Op-Ed” page on your local newspaper’s website.
- **Follow the word limit** and include your name, city, and contact info.
- **Submit as soon as you can.** Some outlets publish within a few days, while others may hold pieces for a week or longer depending on volume. Sending early improves the chance your essay runs while the issue is still timely and decisions are being made.

# Where to Submit Op-Eds:

Here are some publications across the state that make it easy to submit an op-ed:

- **Santa Fe New Mexican** – submit by form: [Letter to the Editor | santafenewmexican.com](#)
- **Albuquerque Journal** – submit by form: [Submit an op-ed to the editor](#)
- **Las Cruces Sun-News** – submit by form: [Las Cruces: Submit a Letter to the Editor - Intellistack](#)
- **Rio Rancho Observer** – submit by form: [Letter to editor rro](#)
- **Sandoval Signpost** – submit by form: [Submit a letter to the editor - Sandoval Signpost](#)
- **Taos News** – submit by form: [Online Services | taosnews.com](#)
- **Source NM** – submission by email. See guidelines here: [Commentary Submission Guidelines • Source New Mexico](#)

## **More** 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



**[Click here for the](#)  
[Tuesday Session Mailer](#) or  
visit [nmececd.org/2026-legislative-](https://nmececd.org/2026-legislative-session)**

session

# *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**



NEW MEXICO  
**Early Childhood**  
Education & Care Department



# Executive Leadership Contacts



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