# Wage Scale and Career Lattice Framework
## *and*
## Implementation Recommendations

December 8, 2025

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

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# Background

In the spring of 2024, the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) requested technical assistance from the National Early Care and Education Workforce Center (Workforce Center) to support the development of a unified wage scale and career lattice for the early childhood and education (ECE) workforce in the state, as required by statute (NMSA 9-29-11(A)). Beginning in July 2024, the Workforce Center met with staff from the ECECD to clarify their aims for this work. The following aims were identified:

- Establish an **aligned wage scale and career lattice** that rewards the experience, competencies, and education of the current ECE workforce and incentivizes increased qualifications across all sectors of the ECE workforce, inclusive of center and home-based educators, PreK, Head Start, Infant Toddler Educators, Early Intervention, and Home Visitors.

- Develop an **implementation plan for the aligned wage scale and career lattice** that identifies required policy changes, maximizes funding structures, elevates educator voice, reduces barriers to implementation, and integrates the multiple compensation related initiatives underway in New Mexico. Design and implementation of the wage scale and career lattice will include a commitment to:
  - Establish reimbursement rates across ECECD funding streams that support at least a base wage aligned to the wage scale and career lattice.
  - Reduce barriers for the workforce to attain degrees.
  - Create systems and structures for community engagement and transparent feedback loops to authentically partner with the Early Childhood Education and Care Advisory Council (the "Council") and it's subcommittees, local early childhood system building coalitions, Institutions of Higher Education, and New Mexico's early childhood workforce in the design and implementation of the wage scale and career lattice.
  - Implement an aligned wage scale and career lattice with a focus on reducing the complexity of the system and removing barriers for the early childhood workforce.

Once these aims were identified, the next phase of the Workforce Center's model of support included a self-assessment of New Mexico's current early childhood system using the [National ECE Workforce Center Systems Change Framework](#), a tool designed to support state and local leaders in driving meaningful change. The Change Framework synthesizes evidence about systems change from research, policy, and practice into a set of primary drivers that can lead to progress toward achieving the identified aims. To conduct the self-assessment, over 50 stakeholders representing each facet of New Mexico's early childhood system were convened

in a day-long workshop. The self-assessment process highlighted the following drivers to strengthen ECECD's work to establish a unified wage scale and career lattice:

- Multi-sector and multi-partner collaboration
- Engaging educators in systems change
- Data-driven decision making

To increase multi-sector and multi-partner collaboration and engage educators in the process of designing the new wage scale, a change task force was convened through the Early Childhood Professionals Subcommittee of the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Advisory Council (NMECEC Advisory Council). Individuals across New Mexico who represented those most impacted by the wage scale were recruited to participate in the Task Force (see Appendix B for Task Force Roster). The task force was comprised of 24 members representing the following sectors:

- Advocacy
- Child Care
- Family Child Care
- Family Infant Toddler (FIT) Program
- Head Start
- Higher Education
- Home Visiting
- NM PreK
- Workforce Support Partners

The New Mexico Wage Scale and Career Lattice Change Task Force began meeting in December 2024 and met every other week through July 9, 2025. Using the Early Care and Education Workforce Salary Scale Playbook: Implementation Guide published by the National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance as a guide and facilitated by the National ECE Workforce Center and Prenatal to Five Fiscal Strategies, the task force informed the design of the Unified Wage Scale and Career Lattice Framework and the recommendations for implementation. The Unified Wage Scale and Career Lattice Framework, along with recommendations for implementation, were shared with the Early Childhood Professionals Subcommittee and the NMECEC Advisory Council for consideration and endorsement.

## Acknowledgments

ECECD would like to recognize the National Early Care and Education Workforce Center, Prenatal to Five Fiscal Strategies, the Early Childhood Education and Care Advisory Council, the

Early Childhood Professionals Subcommittee, and Change Task Force members for their hard work and dedication in the development of the Wage Scale and Career Lattice Framework.

# Overview of the Framework

To achieve ECECD's aims the Change Task Force informed the design of the Unified Wage Scale and Career Lattice that includes the roles, responsibilities, shared competencies, qualifications, and minimum salary levels for professionals working in child care, NM PreK, Head Start, Home Visiting, and the Family Infant Toddler (FIT) Program.

## Role Categories

To recognize the diversity of positions across the multiple sectors included in the unified wage scale, broad role categories were identified and specific positions for each sector are nested under these role categories.  The five role categories include 1) Leadership, 2) Lead Early Childhood Professional, 3) Early Childhood Professional, 4) Specialist, and 5) Support Staff. To allow for variability of position titles and job descriptions across organizations, some positions are included in multiple role categories.  For example, the position of Home Visitor is included in both Lead Early Childhood Professional and Early Childhood Professional since one organization may assign higher level responsibilities to this position than another.  When using the wage scale, an organization can select the appropriate role category for this position based on how the responsibilities in their job description align with the responsibilities for each of these role categories in the wage scale.

## Responsibilities

Once the role categories were identified, task force members considered the essential functions that each of the role categories are responsible for within an organization.  These responsibilities outline high-level functions that are not sector specific but are most critical for the role. When the wage scale is implemented, organizations can use these responsibilities to help identify how their job descriptions align with the role categories in the wage scale.

## Shared Competencies

After outlining the responsibilities, task force members engaged in discussions to identify the foundational knowledge and skills needed to perform the essential responsibilities in each role. To support this work, a crosswalk of the following competency frameworks was created to identify the competencies shared across sectors which were then organized by each role category (see Appendix C for the Competency Crosswalk):

- The National Association for the Education of Young Children's Professional Standards & Competencies for Early Childhood Educators (NAEYC, 2019)

- The Division of Early Childhood Initial Practice-Based Preparation Standards for Early Interventionists/Early Childhood Special Educators
- Knowledge and Skills for Service Coordinators
- The National Family Support Professional Standards
- ExCELS Leadership Competencies

The shared competencies in the Unified Wage Scale and Career Pathway are not intended to replace the New Mexico Early Childhood Common Core Content and Competencies (NMCCCs), which remain the state's comprehensive and foundational framework and were developed to be fully aligned with NAEYC and DEC preparation standards and competencies and critically guide the state's early childhood higher education career lattice and IHE articulation agreement. It is important to note that the shared competencies developed for the wage scale do not fully align with the NMCCCs and, rather than serving as a substitute, the shared competencies reflect a cross-sector synthesis of foundational knowledge and skills and are intended to support broader alignment efforts across elements of New Mexico's early childhood system (e.g., higher education articulation, FOCUS Redesign)

## Qualifications

Based on the responsibilities and shared competencies identified for each role category, task force members then discussed the credentials and experiences that best develop those knowledge and skills to determine the appropriate qualifications to be included in the wage scale. The current PreK, Head Start, and Infant Toddler Pay Parity Initiatives were also reviewed to align and build on the structures of those initiatives. Qualifications levels from entry to advanced were then established for each role category.

In this work, task force members also emphasized the importance of recognizing the knowledge and skills of the experienced workforce who have not always had access to higher education or requirements to attain degrees. After a meeting dedicated to exploring options for recognizing the experience of the current workforce, task force members came to a consensus that an approach should be developed to assess knowledge and skills through a competency-based assessment as an equivalency to the degree pathways included in the qualifications component of the wage scale.  While the development of the competency-based equivalency is beyond the scope of this task force, there was agreement to include this as a placeholder in the Wage Scale & Career Lattice Framework with the recommendation for this to be developed for implementation.

## Minimum Salaries

Once the task force agreed on the appropriate qualification levels within each category, cost modeling from Prenatal to Five Fiscal Strategies (P5FS) was used to determine the minimum salary for each qualification level. The salaries are intended to be the floor for each level and not to indicate a salary ceiling for any level. P5FS has developed cost for child care, PreK, home

visiting, FIT, and other systems, which the state uses to inform fiscal planning, rate-setting, and policy decisions. Each of these cost models includes salary scales informed by multiple data sources, such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Living Wage, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), and provider-level data collected through surveys and interviews. These cost models are updated annually, with salary scales designed to incorporate higher salary floors to project costs for future years. Currently, the salary floor across all cost models is set at $18 per hour for administrative or teaching assistant positions. Salaries increase from this baseline according to the educational requirements and job responsibilities associated with each position.

## The Unified Wage Scale and Career Lattice Framework

The following **Unified Wage Scale (DRAFT) for the New Mexico Early Childhood Workforce** is inclusive of all sectors for which the Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) has regulatory oversight.  This includes Child Care, PreK, Head Start, Home Visiting, and the Family Infant Toddler (FIT) Program.  The wage scale is organized around five Role Categories that represent the range of positions across these sectors. For each Role Category, example Position Titles, Essential Responsibilities, and Shared Competencies are offered to help users determine which Role Category a specific position falls within. The listed Position Titles and Essential Responsibilities are not exhaustive of all titles and responsibilities that an organization may use in their staffing structure.  Many job titles and associated responsibilities are unique to specific organizations.  The listed Position Titles and Essential Responsibilities are included to help identify where a specific position best fits within the wage scale.  Once the appropriate Role Category is identified, the appropriate Minimum Salary can be associated with the individual's Qualifications.  The Wage Scale includes Minimum Salaries but does not include any suggested maximum salaries which would be determined by the employer.

This is an initial draft of a wage scale framework recommended by the New Mexico Unified Wage Scale & Career Lattice Task Force. The wage scale represents an aspirational goal for salaries across the early childhood workforce in New Mexico. Implementation of this requires additional funding and there is no expectation for implementation until those funds are identified.

*Note*. In the Wage Scale table that follows, asterisks are used to denote the following:

*Degree focus areas should support specialized knowledge in early childhood while also providing flexibility to recruit and develop an effective workforce

**Competency-based Assessments are recommended to be developed in the future and may not be available for all roles, sectors, or qualification levels

***5% Incentive provided for the following specializations: Dual Language Certification, Trauma Informed Care Certification, and others identified for implementation

# Wage Scale

| Role Category | Essential Responsibilities May Include the Following | Shared Competencies | Qualifications*, credentials, experience | Minimum Salary*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Leadership**<br><br>*Positions may include:*<br><br>**Home Visiting:**<br>• **Program Manager**<br>• **Executive Director**<br>• **Program Supervisor**<br>• **Nurse Manager**<br><br>**Child Care/PreK/Head Start:**<br>• **Director**<br>• **Assistant Director**<br>• **Executive Director**<br>• **Owner**<br>• **CEO**<br>• **Family Child Care Director/Owner/Operator**<br>• **Program Manager**<br><br>**FIT:**<br>• **Manager**<br>• **Executive Director** | • Financial/Budget Oversight<br>• Payroll<br>• Management<br>• Program Administration & Operations<br>• Reporting (data, grant, and/or compliance)<br>• Community Relationships & Partnerships<br>• Develop Relationships with Children & Families<br>• Establish Strong Communication with Families Served<br>• Ensure Compliance with Federal, State, and Local Regulations<br>• Staff Supervision & Performance Management | **(1) Professionalism:**<br>• Knowledge of and uses ethical and legal guidelines<br>• Identifies and participate as members of the early childhood profession<br>• Knowledge of the early childhood system, including related sectors such as ECE, Early Intervention, and Home Visiting programs<br>• Creates, implements, and coordinates plans and systems to track, monitor, and report on the quality of services provided by the organization<br>• Knowledge of Federal, State, and Local regulations<br>• Creates systems, policies, and procedures to ensure the organization complies with required regulations<br>• Understanding of effective human resource systems including staffing, performance management, and payroll systems<br>• Ensure smooth operations and fiscal management<br>• Uses reflective practices to intentionally inform their work<br>• Provides reflective supervision for others<br>• Engages in continuous learning and ongoing professional development<br>• Maintains professional boundaries<br>• Uses effective communication strategies with children, families, co-workers, and others<br>• Maintains child, family, and/or staff records<br>• Monitors and track outcomes/create goals to meet the standard of programs<br>• Is aware of required regulations, procedures, and standards that the organization must meet<br>• Ensures compliance with required regulations, procedures, and standards that the organization must meet<br>• Creates, implements, monitors and maintains an organizational budget<br>• Builds effective and collaborative working partnerships<br>• Establish and follow a vision<br>• Conduct strategic planning<br>• Implement strategic plans<br><br>**(2) Content Knowledge**<br>• Knowledge of child development across physical, cognitive, and social emotional domains<br>• Understands that children develop within the context of relationships and culture, including diverse languages, communities, and systems<br>• Understands the importance of individualized and developmentally appropriate learning<br><br>**(3) Child Health, Safety, and Nutrition**<br>• Ensure safe environments<br><br>**(4) Relationship-Based Partnerships**<br>• Establish structures that support communication and relational coordination<br>• Foster a positive workplace and organizational climate | **Level 5**<br>Doctoral degree & 5+ years' experience<br>*OR*<br>Competency-Based Assessment Equivalency (*to be developed\*\**) & 5+ years' experience | $95,251<br>$45.79/hour |
| | | | **Level 4**<br>Doctoral degree & 0-5 years' experience<br>*OR*<br>Competency-Based Assessment Equivalency (*to be developed\*\**) & 0-5 years' experience | $91,588<br>$44.03/hour |
| | | | **Level 3**<br>Master's degree & 5+ years' experience<br>*OR*<br>Competency-Based Assessment Equivalency (*to be developed\*\**) & 5+ years' experience | $87,925<br>$42.27/hour |
| | | | **Level 2**<br>Master's degree & 0-5 years' experience<br>*OR*<br>Competency-Based Assessment Equivalency (*to be developed\*\**) & 0-5 years' experience | $84,262<br>$40.51/hour |
| | | | **Level 1**<br>Bachelor's degree & 3+ years' experience<br>*OR*<br>Competency-Based Assessment Equivalency (*to be developed\*\**) & 3+ years' experience | $80,598<br>$38.75/hour |
| | | | **Entry**<br>Bachelor's degree & 0-3 years' experience<br>*OR*<br>Unrelated Bachelor's degree & 3+ years' experience<br>*OR* | $73,271<br>$35.23/hour |

| | | Wage Scale | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Role Category** | **Essential Responsibilities May Include the Following** | **Shared Competencies** | **Qualifications\*, credentials, experience** | **Minimum Salary\*\*\*** |
| | | • Understands the role of families as the foundational relationship in a child's life<br>• Create respectful, responsive, and reciprocal relationships with families<br>• Uses strength-based approaches to build relationships with families and communities<br>• Supports families to advocate for their children<br>• Is aware of community resources<br>• Sets policies to promote family partnerships<br><br>**(5) Developmental, Cultural, and Linguistic Responsiveness**<br>• Uses culturally competent approaches to building relationships with children and families<br>• Supports professional development on developmentally, culturally, and linguistically responsive practices<br>• Understands the role of assessment to inform instruction and planning<br>• Understands the pedagogy of how young children learn and process information in multiple areas including language and literacy, the arts, mathematics, social studies, science, technology and engineering, and physical education. | Competency-Based Assessment Equivalency *(to be developed\*\*)* & 0-3 years' experience | |
| **Lead Early Childhood Professional**<br><br>*Positions may include:*<br><br>**Home Visiting:**<br>• **Lead Home Visitor**<br>• **Home Visitor**<br>• **Mentor**<br>• **Nurse Home Visitor**<br>• **Clinical Home Visitor**<br><br>**Child Care/PreK/Head Start:**<br>• **Teacher/Lead Teacher (including infant/toddler/EHS, HS)**<br>• **Family Child Care Provider**<br>• **PreK Coordinator**<br>• **Early Head Start Home Visitor**<br><br>**FIT:**<br>• **Dual Role Positions**<br>• **Family Service Coordinator**<br>• **Developmental Specialist (II/III)** | • Develop Strong Relationships with Children & Families<br>• Plan & Implement Responsive and Individualized Learning Experiences with Children and/or Families<br>• Assess & Monitor Child and/or Family Outcomes<br>• Ensure Compliance with Regulations with Their Direct Purview<br>• Communicate with Families About Children's Growth & Development<br>• Collaborate with Co-Workers and Community Partners to Support Children and/or Families<br>• Mentor & Support Others<br>• Maintain Required Paperwork | **(1) Professionalism**<br>• Knowledge of and uses ethical and legal guidelines<br>• Uses reflective practices to intentionally inform their work<br>• Provides reflective supervision for others<br>• Engages in continuous learning and ongoing professional development<br>• Maintains professional boundaries<br>• Uses effective communication strategies with children, families, co-workers, and others<br><br>**(2) Content Knowledge**<br>• Knowledge of child development across physical, cognitive, and social emotional domains<br>• Understands that children develop within the context of relationships and culture, including diverse languages, communities, and systems<br>• Understands the importance of individualized and developmentally appropriate learning<br><br>**(3) Child Health, Safety, and Nutrition**<br>• Knowledge of and adherence to health, safety, and nutrition standards to promote optimal development<br>• Ensures safe environments<br><br>**(4) Relationship-Based Partnerships**<br>• Establish structures that support communication and relational coordination<br>• Understands the role of families as the foundational relationship in a child's life<br>• Collaborates with families and other professionals to support children's learning<br>• Create respectful, responsive, and reciprocal relationships with families<br>• Understands the role of bonding and attachment in child development<br>• Uses strength-based approaches to build relationships with families and communities<br>• Promote families' goals for their children | **Level 4**<br>Master's degree & 5+ years' experience<br>OR<br>Competency-Based Assessment Equivalency *(to be developed\*\*)* & 5+ years' experience | $77,000<br>$37.02/hour |
| | | | **Level 3**<br>Master's degree & 0-5 years' experience<br>OR<br>Competency-Based Assessment Equivalency *(to be developed\*\*)* & 0-5 years' experience | $74,874<br>$36.00/hour |
| | | | **Level 2**<br>Bachelor's degree & 3+ years' experience<br>OR<br>Competency-Based Assessment Equivalency *(to be developed\*\*)* & 3+ years' experience | $72,747<br>$34.97/hour |
| | | | **Level 1**<br>Bachelor's degree & 0-3 years' experience<br>OR<br>Unrelated Bachelor's degree & 3+ years' experience<br>OR | $66,685<br>$32.06/hour |

| Role Category | Essential Responsibilities May Include the Following | Shared Competencies | Qualifications*, credentials, experience | Minimum Salary*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | • Supports families to advocate for their children<br>• Is aware of community resources<br>• Actively works to connect families to community resources | Competency-Based Assessment Equivalency *(to be developed**)* & 0-3 years' experience | |
| | | **(5) Developmental, Cultural, and Linguistic Responsiveness**<br>• Plans developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate learning experiences for children and/or families<br>• Implements developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate learning experiences for children and/or families<br>• Uses data and evidence-based decision making to adapt learning experiences<br>• Uses culturally competent approaches to building relationships with children and families<br>• Supports implementation of developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate learning experiences for children and/or families<br>• Uses an evidence-based curriculum and/or program to support children and/or families learning<br>• Understands the role of assessment to inform instruction and planning<br>• Uses evidence-based screening and assessment tools that are developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate<br>• Uses strengths-based approaches to include families in assessment approaches<br>• Understands the pedagogy of how young children learn and process information in multiple areas including language and literacy, the arts, mathematics, social studies, science, technology and engineering, and physical education.<br>• Uses early learning standards and other resources to make decisions about children and/or families' learning experiences<br>• Supports professional development on developmentally, culturally, and linguistically responsive practices | **Entry**<br>Associate's degree & 3+ years' experience<br>*OR*<br>Competency-Based Assessment Equivalency *(to be developed**)* & 3+ years' experience | $62,122<br>$29.87/hour |
| **Early Childhood Professional**<br><br>*Positions may include:*<br><br>**Home Visiting:**<br>• **Parent Educator**<br>• **Home Visitor**<br><br>**Child Care/PreK/Head Start:**<br>• **Assistant Teacher**<br>• **Floater/Substitute**<br>• **Family Child Care Provider** | • Develop Relationships with Children & Families<br>• Support Responsive and Individualized Learning Experiences with Children and/or Families<br>• Prepare Materials for Learning Experiences<br>• Collaborate with Co-Workers and Community Partners to Support Children and/or Families<br>• Monitor children's safety<br>• Ensure Compliance with Regulations with Their Direct Purview | **(1) Professionalism**<br>• Knowledge of and uses ethical and legal guidelines<br>• Engages in continuous learning and ongoing professional development<br>• Uses reflective practices to intentionally inform their work<br>• Maintains professional boundaries<br>• Uses effective communication strategies with children, families, co-workers, and others<br><br>**(2) Content Knowledge**<br>• Knowledge of child development across physical, cognitive, and social emotional domains<br>• Understands the importance of individualized and developmentally appropriate learning<br><br>**(3) Child Health, Safety, and Nutrition**<br>• Ensures safe environments | **Level 6**<br>Bachelor's degree & 3+ years' experience<br>OR<br>Competency-Based Assessment Equivalency *(to be developed**)* & 3+ years' experience | $66,685<br>$32.06/hour |
| | | | **Level 5**<br>Bachelor's degree & 0-3 years' experience<br>OR<br>Unrelated Bachelor's degree & 3+ years' experience<br>OR | $64,403.50<br>$30.96/hour |

# Wage Scale

| Role Category | Essential Responsibilities May Include the Following | Shared Competencies | Qualifications*, credentials, experience | Minimum Salary*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **FIT:**<br>• **Intake Coordinator**<br>• **Developmental Specialist (I/II)** | | **(4) Relationship-Based Partnerships**<br>• Understands the role of families as the foundational relationship in a child's life<br>• Collaborates with families and other professionals to support children's learning<br>• Create respectful, responsive, and reciprocal relationships with families<br>• Understands the role of bonding and attachment in child development<br>• Uses strength-based approaches to build relationships with families and communities<br>• Supports families to advocate for their children<br>• Is aware of community resources<br>• Actively works to connect families to community resources<br><br>**(5) Developmental, Cultural, and Linguistic Responsiveness**<br>• Plans developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate learning experiences for children and/or families<br>• Implements developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate learning experiences for children and/or families<br>• Uses culturally competent approaches to building relationships with children and families<br>• Supports implementation of developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate learning experiences for children and/or families<br>• Uses an evidence-based curriculum and/or program to support children and/or families learning<br>• Understands the role of assessment to inform instruction and planning<br>• Uses evidence-based screening and assessment tools that are developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate<br>• Uses strengths-based approaches to include families in assessment approaches<br>• Understands the pedagogy of how young children learn and process information in multiple areas including language and literacy, the arts, mathematics, social studies, science, technology and engineering, and physical education.<br>• Uses early learning standards and other resources to make decisions about children and/or families' learning experiences | Competency-Based Assessment Equivalency *(to be developed**)* & 0-3 years' experience | |
| | | | **Level 4**<br>Associate's degree & 3+ years' experience<br>*OR*<br>Competency-Based Assessment Equivalency *(to be developed**)* & 3+ years' experience | $62,122<br>$29.87/hour |
| | | | **Level 3**<br>Associate's degree & 0-3 years' experience<br>*OR*<br>Competency-Based Assessment Equivalency *(to be developed**)* & 0-3 years' experience | $59,533<br>$28.62/hour |
| | | | **Level 2**<br>CDC/CDA & 3+ years' experience<br>*OR*<br>Competency-Based Assessment Equivalency *(to be developed**)* & 3+ years' experience | $56,945<br>$27.38/hour |
| | | | **Level 1**<br>CDC/CDA & 0-3 years' experience *OR* Competency-Based Assessment Equivalency *(to be developed**)* & 0-3 years' experience | $51,768<br>$24.89/hour |
| | | | **Entry**<br>High School Diploma & 0-3 years' experience<br>*OR*<br>High School Equivalency Credential & 0-3 years' experience | $44,928<br>$21.60/hour |
| **Specialist**<br><br>***Positions may include:***<br><br>**Home Visiting**<br>• **Lactation Specialist** | • Develop Relationships with Children & Families<br>• Provide Specialized Services for Children, Families, and/or Other Early Childhood Professionals | **(1) Professionalism**<br>• Knowledge of and uses ethical and legal guidelines<br>• Engages in continuous learning and ongoing professional development<br>• Maintains professional boundaries<br>• Uses effective communication strategies with children, families, co-workers, and others | **Level 7**<br>Doctorate in the field of specialty & 5+ years' of experience specific to early childhood | $103,994<br>$50.00/hour |
| | | | **Level 6** | $94,540<br>$45.45/hour |

| Role Category | Essential Responsibilities May Include the Following | Shared Competencies | Qualifications*, credentials, experience | Minimum Salary*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| • Infant Mental Health Specialist<br><br>**Child Care/PreK/Head Start:**<br>• Disabilities Coordinator<br>• Mental Health Coordinator<br>• Education Manager<br>• Nutrition Coordinator<br>• Health Coordinator<br>• Family Services Coordinator<br>• Data Collectors<br>• Management Info Support Staff<br>• FOCUS Consultants<br>• Enrollment Specialists<br>• Quality & Support<br>• Training Coordinator<br>• Curriculum Coordinator<br>• Behavior/Speech Therapist<br>• SEED<br>• Peer Mentor/Professional Development Coach<br><br>**FIT:**<br>• Speech & Language Pathologist<br>• Physical Therapist<br>• Physical Therapist Assistant<br>• Occupational Therapist<br>• Occupational Therapist Assistant<br>• Audiologist<br>• Nutritionist<br>• Social Worker (LCSW/MSW)<br>• Hearing Specialist | | **(2) Content Knowledge**<br>If their responsibilities require direct interaction with children:<br>• Knowledge of child development across physical, cognitive, and social emotional domains<br>• Understands that children develop within the context of relationships and culture, including diverse language, communities, and systems<br>• Understands the importance of individualized and developmentally appropriate learning<br>• Knowledge of a specific field to provide specialized services for children, families, and/or staff<br>If their responsibilities do not require direct interaction with children:<br>• Knowledge of a specific field or expertise related to the responsibilities of their position<br><br>**(3) Child Health, Safety and Nutrition**<br>If their responsibilities require direct interaction with children<br>• Ensures safe environment<br><br>**(4) Relationship-Based Partnerships**<br>If their responsibilities require direct interaction with families<br>• Understands the role of families as the foundational relationship in a child's life<br>• Collaborates with families and other professionals to support children's learning<br>• Create respectful, responsive, and reciprocal relationships with families<br>• Understands the role of bonding and attachment in child development<br>• Uses strength-based approaches to build relationships with families and communities<br>• Promote families' goals for their children<br>• Is aware of community resources<br><br>**(5) Developmental, Cultural, and Linguistic Responsiveness**<br>If their responsibilities require direct interaction with children or families<br>• Uses culturally competent approaches to building relationships with children and families<br>• Supports implementation of developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate learning experiences for children and/or families<br>• Uses evidence-based screening and assessment tools that are developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate<br>• Uses strengths-based approaches to include families in assessment approaches<br>• Uses early learning standards and other resources to make decisions about children and/or families' learning experiences | Doctorate in the field of specialty & 0-5 years' of experience specific to early childhood | |
| | | | **Level 5**<br>Master's degree in the field of specialty & 5+ years' of experience specific to early childhood | $92,688<br>$44.56/hour |
| | | | **Level 4**<br>Master's degree in the field of specialty & 0-5 years' of experience specific to early childhood | $84,262<br>$40.51/hour |
| | | | **Level 3**<br>Bachelor's degree in field of specialty & 3+ years' of experience specific to early childhood | $80,598<br>$38.75/hour |
| | | | **Level 2**<br>Bachelor's degree in the field of specialty & 0-3 years' of experience | $73,271<br>$35.23/hour |
| | | | **Level 1**<br>Associate's degree in field of specialty & 3+ years' of experience specific to early childhood | $61,524<br>$29.58/hour |
| | | | **Entry**<br>Associate's degree in field of specialty & 0-3 years' experience specific to early childhood | $55,931<br>$26.89/hour |

# Wage Scale

| Role Category | Essential Responsibilities May Include the Following | Shared Competencies | Qualifications*, credentials, experience | Minimum Salary*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| • **Nurse (RN/LPN)**<br>• **Psychologist**<br>• **Vision Specialist**<br>• **Family Therapist**<br>• **IT Roles for Database Platform** | | | | |
| **Support Staff**<br><br>*Positions may include:*<br><br>**Home Visiting:**<br>• **Admin Support**<br><br>**Child Care/PreK/Head Start:**<br>• **Floater/Substitute**<br>• **Administrative Support**<br>• **Cook**<br>• **Bus Driver**<br>• **Maintenance Staff**<br>• **Custodian**<br>• **Apprentice**<br>• **Assistant Teacher**<br><br>**FIT:**<br>• **Administrative Assistant**<br>• **Quality Assurance Staff**<br>• **Data Entry Specialist** | • Develop Relationships with Children and/or Families<br>• Provide clerical or administrative support<br>• Assist Other Staff to Fulfill Responsibilities<br>• Maintain Building and/or Transportation Services | **(1) Professionalism**<br>• Knowledge of and uses ethical and legal guidelines<br>• Maintains professional boundaries<br>• Uses effective communication strategies with children, families, co-workers, and others<br>• Collaborates with others to support daily operational activities and routines | **Level 4**<br>Bachelor's degree & 3+ years' experience<br>*OR*<br>Competency-Based Assessment Equivalency *(to be developed**)* & 3+ years' experience | $52,260<br>$25.13/hour |
| | | | **Level 3**<br>Bachelor's degree & 0-3 years' experience<br>*OR*<br>Unrelated Bachelor's degree & 3+ years' experience<br>OR<br>Competency-Based Assessment Equivalency *(to be developed**)* & 0-3 years' experience | $46,223<br>$22.22/hour |
| | | | **Level 2**<br>Associate's degree & 3+ years' experience<br>*OR*<br>Competency-Based Assessment Equivalency *(to be developed**)* & 3+ years' experience | $43,056<br>$20.70/hour |
| | | | **Level 1**<br>Associate's degree & 0-3 experience<br>*OR* | $40,186<br>$19.32/hour |

| | | | Wage Scale | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| Role Category | Essential Responsibilities May Include the Following | Shared Competencies | Qualifications*, credentials, experience | Minimum Salary*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Competency-Based Assessment Equivalency *(to be developed**)* & 0-3  years' experience | |
| | | | **Entry** High School Diploma *OR* High School Equivalency Credential | $37,440 $18.00/hour |

# Focus Groups

While the task force represented each of the sectors included in the Unified Wage Scale and Career Lattice Framework, gathering broad input and feedback on an initial draft of the framework was a critical step to ensure the process and final framework is responsive to the needs of the workforce.  To gather this feedback, 10 focus groups were conducted over a two-week period and were co-facilitated by task force members and staff from the National ECE Workforce Center. Over 200 individuals participated in in the focus groups representing all roles and sectors included in the framework and both in-person and virtual focus groups were conducted to ensure participation of stakeholders in central, southern, and rural New Mexico. Focus groups were also conducted in English and Spanish. In addition to the feedback gathered directly in the focus groups, 150 individuals provided feedback through an online form.  The feedback on the framework itself was positive with most questions and concerns being raised about funding and implementation.  A few final changes were made to the framework based on this feedback. Themes identified in the analysis include:

a. Role categories: focus group participants recommended adjustments to the leadership role category to reflect the multiple tiers of leadership. Some participants also expressed uncertainty that the Family Child Care Educator position could be accurately and adequately reflected within the unified role categories.

b. Responsibilities: some participants recommended additional tiers of leadership to reflect executive vs program leadership responsibilities, and others suggested specific additions to responsibilities specific to FIT. Some recommended acknowledging the overlap of responsibilities across roles, including managers who may also have direct service to children as well.

c. Shared competencies: similar to responsibilities, participants recommended acknowledging the competencies for different levels of leadership and also suggested additional competencies to include. Additionally, some participants noted that there are some competencies like bilingualism that may not be required for a role but could be recognized through a bonus or incentive built into the wage scale.

d. Qualifications: focus group participants demonstrated widespread and strong support for the competency-based assessment pathway. Rural providers noted the need for flexibility in career pathways to recruit and develop local talent.

e. Competency-Based Assessment: focus group participants highlighted the need to have the assessment reflect the day-to-day tasks of the roles and to co-design the assessments with people currently working in the field. Additionally, participants underscored the need to design for the cultural and linguistic diversity of the workforce and to utilize more contextualized assessment

strategies instead of a test, including observations, portfolio, peer and manager evaluations, and/or verbal or hands-on assessment.

f.  Salaries: focus group participants highlight the time-bound nature of salary guidance, noting that the $18 per hour floor is outdated due to inflation and that regular updates to the dollar amounts will be needed to keep pace with cost-of-living. Participants also highlighted nuance with salaries, including the need to guard against funding cliffs (i.e., loss of benefits) and the possibility to incentivize college enrollment or other priorities through pay increases.

Many of the specific recommendations offered by focus group participants point to a need for a strong communications plan, training materials, and support for users to understand the purpose and approach of a unified wage scale. Being clear, for example, that some positions within an organization may straddle two role categories or that not every single position or responsibility will be represented are key fundamental principles of the unified wage scale that could help users recognize what the wage scale is and is not, reduce frustration, and maximize positive impact. In addition to these implicit recommendations for implementation, the Focus Group participants also offered many suggestions for the Task Force and ECECD to consider as they work to implement the Unified Wage Scale. Considerations raised by Focus Group participants include:

a.  Implement a robust roll-out including roadshows around the state.
b.  Provide additional written information, including clear, plain language explanations and examples.
c.  Consider visual figures or flow charts to support understanding and use.
d.  Provide training for use of the wage scale.
e.  Ensure funding adequately supports implementation and additional administrative burden.
f.  Clarify programs' flexibility (and where there is no flexibility) in implementation.
g.  Support staff in decision-making on formal education and competency-based assessment pathways.
h.  Ensure continued access to higher education supports.
i.  Consider implementation strategies that support increased Social Security earnings.
j.  Continue gathering input from the field at regular intervals.
k.  Consider how to better support community program infrastructure and competition for staff with school districts.

## Higher Education Inventory

As the Task Force began work on the wage scale, the intersections with and implications for institutions of higher education were noted as a key factor in the planning. To explore existing

strengths and possible needs among New Mexico's higher education system to support the increased demand for credentials and degrees in early childhood fields, the National ECE Workforce Center conducted a Higher Education Inventory. Among the sectors represented in the Wage Scale, child care has the biggest gap between current credential requirements (e.g., licensing regulations) and the formal pathways on the draft wage scale. Accordingly, the Higher Education Inventory focused primarily on degrees related to child care positions.

The Higher Education Inventory was conducted using an online survey to collect data at the degree program level (i.e., institutions may have completed the survey multiple times to represent each relevant degree or credential offered). Invitations were sent to 84 programs, and 51 surveys were completed. Due to missing data, analysis was limited, and additional work should be done in partnership with the New Mexico Early Childhood Higher Education Task Force to ascertain barriers to access. For example, data from the Higher Education Inventory indicated that 3 regions have 0 BA or graduate programs (North Central, Northeast, and Northwest), and that 2 regions have 0 AA programs (North Central and Southwest). These gaps in geographic proximity may be partially addressed by distance learning options reported by 2 BA programs and 3 AA programs. Additionally, access for educators who need instruction in languages other than English is limited. Of survey respondents, 0 BA programs reported offering their degree in a language other than English, and only a small number of AA (3) and CDC (4) programs reported offering their programs in Spanish or Navajo. Many regions do not have any programs reporting coursework or full programs available in languages other than English.  In sum, available data indicate that geographic and linguistic barriers are factors that need additional examination and solutions.

Despite some missing data, the Higher Education Inventory provides important insights on three other issues beyond geographic and linguistic access: 1) barriers and facilitators for student progress and completion, 2) current practices in competency-based credit for prior learning, and 3) New Mexico's higher education capacity to meet a possible increase in demand for ECE credentials and degrees.

## Barriers and Facilitators for Student Progress and Completion

The New Mexico Opportunity Scholarship and the New Mexico Lottery Scholarship were established in 2020 to provide options for every New Mexican to pursue higher education without having to worry about the cost of tuition and fees. Additionally, the ECECD Comprehensive Scholarship Program supports current early childhood professionals through full coverage of tuition and fees and other associated costs. Despite these opportunities, progressing in and completing credentials and degrees remains a substantial challenge for many ECE professionals who are often balancing complex jobs with long hours, parenting, and other aspects of modern middle-class and working-class life. Program directors identified numerous challenges experienced by their students, including technology access, child care needs, academic preparedness, cultural and community obligations, and financial barriers. Program directors also offered insight on supports that they have observed to be helpful to their students, including flexible course formats, targeted academic support, cohort models and

peer support, workforce-aligned curricula, cultural and linguistic relevance, and credit for prior learning. Program directors highlighted that Family Child Care (FCC) Educators have unique needs and benefit from specific supports including practicum in FCC setting(s), use of their own workplace for fieldwork, relevant course content, and mentorship or faculty advising from someone experienced or knowledgeable of the FCC role and setting.

## Competency-Based Credit for Prior Learning

As noted by NM higher education program directors and highlighted by a recent brief from the [National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning](#) (2024), Credit for Prior Learning is a key strategy in recognizing the competency of the existing ECE workforce and supporting them to progress in and complete credentials and degrees. Credit for Prior Learning strategies include longstanding practices of transferring students' credits and articulation agreements between institutions as well as other evidence-based strategies to award credit for demonstrated competencies. All of these strategies offer a way to reduce friction and barriers for ECE professionals to build on their existing knowledge and skills while efficiently working toward credentials and degrees.

Program directors reported on the current credit for prior learning approaches in NM's ECE focused credential and degree programs and highlighted strengths and areas for growth. The Turquoise Book and fully articulated degree programs between 2- and 4-year institutions is a strength of the New Mexico system that prevents many barriers of continuing onto bachelor level programs. Some program directors report that additional coordination is needed between sending and receiving institutions to address misalignment in the program accreditation standards and to ensure that students complete all possible courses at the 2-year institutions (i.e., complete the needed math courses). New Mexico's ECE higher education system supports stacked credentialing from the state's Child Development Certificate (CDC) to AA which provides a cost effective and direct path to college credit. Although the CDC is equivalent to the national CDA credential, most AA programs reported that they do not award credit for completion of the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, which is different from many other states and may present a barrier for some ECE professionals (particularly those who work in Head Start which focused on the CDA or individuals who move to New Mexico after completing the CDA).

Program directors were also asked about their program's approach to awarding credit for work experience or for demonstrated competency. Most programs do not award credit for prior work experience or for professional development completed. Some programs offer a portfolio option for students to demonstrate competencies and earn credit, but these strategies are not yet widely available. To award credit for professional development completed, ECECD and higher education programs would need to partner to create a crosswalk of professional development trainings and competencies to identify credit for prior learning opportunities related to in-service professional development trainings. Some individual institutions had previously used this approach, but ECECD has moved to a different professional development system and the alignment previously identified is now out of date.

## Higher Education Capacity to Meet Demand

Program directors also reported on current strengths and needs among their programs and indicated items for consideration if the wage scale leads to increased demand for ECE credentials and degrees. Program directors indicated that, like the ECE field overall, faculty recruitment and retention in ECE is a challenge, and some expressed concern that increased wages in the ECE sector that do not include similar increases for faculty may exacerbate the challenges. Most programs are staffed by very few full-time faculty and have a substantial dependency on adjunct faculty. This staffing model often results in an administrative and operational overload for the full-time faculty.  Task force members also emphasized the potential unintended consequences of notable disparities in wages between faculty and direct service providers with the implementation of the wage scale and expressed a desire for state leadership to identify specific strategies to address faculty recruitment and retention through increased wages. While disparities in faculty wages extend beyond the field of early childhood, and addressing these disparities does not fall under the purview of ECECD, shortages in the higher education workforce have a direct impact on New Mexico's ability to recruit and retain a thriving early childhood workforce. Solving this issue can benefit from partnerships across state agencies and models from allied fields like nursing, which are addressing similar challenges.

To expand and strengthen New Mexico higher education's ability to meet the current and possible increased demand for ECE credentials and degrees, program directors highlighted the need to continue efforts for cross-institutional partnerships. One specific need is to continue streamlining and clarifying policies across institutions so that students have clear and consistent experiences of what counts for credit under what circumstances. For example, some program directors indicated a need to expand credit for prior learning approaches and to make them more consistent and accessible to students at all institutions. Finally, program directors highlighted the need to continue to innovate to provide student flexibility and support.

Overall, the Higher Education Inventory highlighted strengths of the New Mexico ECE Higher Education landscape and also identified several key areas for continued growth:

- Geographic and linguistic barriers to higher education access need further exploration and problem-solving in partnership with the ECE IHE Task Force.
- ECE professionals benefit from supports beyond financial costs covered by the ECECD scholarship, and ongoing partnership between IHEs and ECECD to provide supports including cohort models, credit for prior learning, and stipends for credit completion should be explored.
- Higher Education programs need fiscal and infrastructure support to continue streamlining and strengthening efforts of cross-institution partnership, robust support for ECE students, and recruit and retain faculty to address the linguistic and geographic barriers currently experienced and to support the administrative needs of holistic supports for ECE students.

# Implementation Recommendations

Once the initial draft of the Unified Wage Scale & Career Lattice Framework was ready for sharing with stakeholders in the focus groups, the task force engaged in work to consider recommendations for implementing the wage scale. Additionally, input from the Focus Groups was shared with the Task Force to further inform their thinking on implementation considerations. While task force members' most significant priority for implementation is to identify funding to support increased wages for the ECE workforce, other priorities included implementation considerations for a communication strategy, impacts on the higher education system, training and support for providers, and system integration and simplification.

## #1–Sustainable and Comprehensive Funding

Implementation must be backed by long-term, reliable funding that covers both wages and administrative costs. The burden should not fall solely on providers or be limited to short-term legislative appropriations. Specific considerations:

Minimize the cost consequences for both the provider/business owner and the employees:

- Payment through employers places the least amount of burden on the early childhood workforce receiving the increased salaries and ensures that they receive the benefit of increased Social Security earnings.  However, this approach increases payroll taxes and costs for employers. Funding to implement the wage scale through this approach must fully cover these additional administrative costs.

- Direct payment to early childhood professionals reduces the administrative costs, however, this approach places an increased burden on those receiving the increased salaries to plan for the additional income tax that is not deducted from the direct payment. If the wage scale is implemented through this direct payment approach, funding must include costs to provide extensive outreach and support to prepare the workforce to pay the additional tax on their increased income.

- Sixty percent of Change Task Force members prefer payment through employers while forty percent of Change Task Force members prefer direct payments to early childhood professionals

- Additional funding must be provided to programs beyond increases in reimbursement rates. To serve all children in New Mexico, programs incur costs beyond what they receive in reimbursement rates for children and families participating in child care subsidy and/or state-funded preschool programs. Reimbursement rates vary depending

on a program's quality rating and the number of children served who receive child care subsidies. Funding the wage scale must include the full cost of staffing a program to serve all children without passing any of the cost on to families.

- Funding must ensure that increased salaries account for potential loss of benefits for members of the workforce receiving public benefits.

- Increased funding must ensure that programs who operate in a fee service basis (e.g., FIT) receive enough funding to fully cover increased salaries through service reimbursement rates.

## #2–Inclusion of Higher Education

Higher education institutions play a key role in workforce development and must be included in wage scale planning to avoid salary inequities and support pipeline development. Specific considerations:

- Include the New Mexico Early Childhood Higher Education Task Force, New Mexico Association for Career and Technical Education, and New Mexico Higher Education Department in implementation planning

- Identify opportunities to compensate faculty for their contributions to system-level early childhood initiatives—such as alignment with the wage scale, statewide articulation efforts, and policy development, which often fall outside of their formal instructional duties but are essential to advancement of the early childhood workforce.

- Ensure equitable representation and inclusion of small colleges, regional institutions, and Tribal Colleges and Universities in all implementation planning and decision-making processes, recognizing their unique contributions to educator preparation across diverse communities in New Mexico.

- Leverage existing articulation agreements, interagency collaboration (e.g., NMACTE, NMECHETF), and accreditation structures to streamline degree pathways, promote consistency in credentialing, and reduce barriers to advancement for early childhood professionals across institutions.

## #3–Phased Implementation and Clear Communication Strategy

A phased or pilot approach is recommended to test and refine the wage scale before full rollout. Throughout this process, clear communication is critical to managing expectations and preventing misunderstandings. Specific considerations:

- Share direct messaging throughout the state to ensure all stakeholders understand that the Unified Wage Scale and Career Lattice will not be adopted until additional funding is identified.

- Provide more explicit details about the cost modeling formula and how the minimum salaries in the wage scale were calculated.

- Instructions for using the wage scale should provide clear guidance and support for how programs can identify the appropriate role category for individual positions based on the responsibilities and shared competencies in the framework.  This is especially true for positions like family child care educators and some leadership positions that may fall in Leadership or Lead Early Childhood Professional depending on the job description adopted by the organization.

- Communication strategies should emphasize the benefit of including foundational and shared responsibilities and competencies in the wage scale framework that is inclusive of all sectors in the ECE workforce.

- As the wage scale is implemented, messaging must clearly state what is required for those receiving state funding and what is voluntary. For example, clearly outline which salary minimums are required for each position in an organization and which salary increases are at the discretion of the employer.

- Craft targeted messaging for key audiences including Legislators/policy makers, Interagency Coordinating Councils, Home Visiting bodies, higher education partners, ECECD State Advisory Council, chambers of commerce, and early childhood coalitions

Provide messaging that communicates the following:

- Justifies the importance of achieving pay parity with K-12 educators
- Explain the rationale and benefit of a unified wage scale that is inclusive of the full ECE workforce.
- Emphasizes that the wage scale sets a floor for salaries, not a ceiling
- Explains the historical context that has led to current pay disparities between early childhood and K-12 public education as well as the pay disparities within the ECE workforce

Plan for comprehensive communication methods, including:

- Media campaign with hashtags and simplified tools like salary calculators
- Multiple modalities: flyers, QR codes, videos, physical mail, word of mouth, texts, email, and newsletters
- Use existing communication platforms (PDIS, community meetings, agency networks)
- Media campaign with hashtags and simplified tools like salary calculators

## #4–Professional Development and Technical Assistance

Effective implementation will require intentional professional development and technical assistance for those impacted by the wage scale.  This includes establishing an infrastructure to provide technical assistance as well as the inclusion of key content areas to build understanding of appropriate implementation.  Specific considerations:

Support Infrastructure:

- Establish a help line and quick-response support team sharing consistent messages
- County-based support staff for localized help
- Piloting training with a test group to refine messaging and materials

Professional Development:

- Understanding tax implications (especially for 1099 contractors)
- Clear guidance for employers, administrators, and employees on eligibility, calculations, and appeals
- Clarify implementation variations based on funding sources (subsidy, grants, contracts)

## #5–System Integration and Simplification

Tools like the PDIS system should be leveraged to streamline administration, reduce redundancy, and support tracking across the workforce. Specific considerations:

- Replicate the effectiveness of Pay Parity Initiatives, but streamline with PDIS implementation
- Provide increased grace periods for program reporting requirements.

# Conclusion

The development of the New Mexico Unified Wage Scale and Career Lattice marks a significant milestone in the state's commitment to strengthening and professionalizing the early childhood workforce. Grounded in the voices and expertise of those most directly impacted, this framework is a comprehensive and inclusive response to long-standing challenges related to compensation, qualifications, and career advancement. The recommendations presented reflect a deep understanding of the systemic changes needed to support successful implementation, including stable and predictable funding, higher education partnerships, and thoughtful communication and technical assistance strategies. While the work ahead is substantial, the collaborative spirit and shared vision that guided this process lay a strong foundation for lasting transformation. As New Mexico moves toward adoption and implementation, continued partnership with educators, providers, advocates, and institutions of higher educations will be essential to ensure the wage scale fulfills its promise of equity, stability, and opportunity for the entire early childhood and education field.

# Appendix A

**Technical Assistance Partners**

**National Early Care and Education Workforce Center**

Home - Early Care & Education Workforce Center

The National Early Care and Education (ECE) Workforce Center is a joint research and technical assistance center that equips state and local leaders to drive change in ECE workforce policy. This center uses a research-to-practice model to strengthen compensation and career advancement for early educators.

A collective of four partner organizations (Child Trends, UMass Boston, University of Delaware, and ZERO TO THREE) informed by collaborating partners, ECE educators, federal agencies, and other advisory bodies, the National ECE Workforce Center addresses the fundamental need for changes to ECE career advancement systems, compensation, and workplace policies that reflect the value and skills the workforce provides to our communities. We view these as key mechanisms for facilitating the successful recruitment and retention of a qualified, effective workforce and critical to providing high-quality experiences for children and families across all ECE settings and programs.

**Prenatal to Five Fiscal Strategies**

Fiscal Home | Prenatal to Five Fiscal Strategies

P5FS is led by Jeanna Capito and Simon Workman. Jeanna and Simon are nationally recognized experts on prenatal to five fiscal issues and have worked in close partnership for nearly a decade.  In this time, they have conducted comprehensive fiscal analysis projects, developed revenue and expense models, and have provided technical assistance on prenatal to five fiscal and governance issues for numerous states and communities. They are the only consultants to have supported states in using cost modeling to inform CCDF subsidy rate setting.

Jeanna and Simon formalized their partnership with the founding of Prenatal to Five Fiscal Strategies in 2020. P5FS seeks to address the broken fiscal and governance structures that exist within the P5 system, with a comprehensive, cross-agency, cross-service approach. This initiative is founded in a set of shared principles that center the needs of children, families, providers, and the workforce and fundamentally re-thinks the current system in order to better tackle issues of equity of funding and access.

# Appendix B

**Wage Scale and Career Lattice Change Task Force Members**

| Name and Title | Organization | County | Language | Programs Represented |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Angela Garcia<br>*Chief Executive Officer and Owner* | Toy Box Early Learning and Child Care Centers | Doña Ana | English | Child care, PreK, home visiting |
| Angela Redondo<br>*Assistant Professor* | Early Childhood Multicultural Education, New Mexico Highlands University | San Miguel | English | Higher education (two year) |
| April Spaulding<br>*Executive Director* | Abrazos Family Support Services | Catron* | English | FIT |
| Autumn Bruton<br>*CEO and President* | Amplified Therapy | Luna* | English | FIT, home visiting |
| Barbara Luna Tedrow<br>*Policy Chair;*<br>*Owner, CEO, and Founder* | New Mexico Early Childhood Association; A Gold Star Academy & Child Development Centers | San Juan | English | Child care, PreK |
| Carmen Estrella Trigo Martinez<br>*Director and Educator* | Estrellas del Futuro Learning Center, LLC. | Bernalillo | Español | Family child care |
| Catron Allred<br>*Executive Director* | Early Childhood Center of Excellence, Santa Fe Community College | Santa Fe | English | Higher education, home visiting |

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| Chelsea Morris<br>*Assistant Professor* | Family and Child Studies,<br>University of New Mexico | Bernalillo | English | Higher education (four year) |
| Crystal Tapia-Romero<br>*Executive Director* | New Mexico Early Learning Academy | Bernalillo | English | Child care, PreK |
| Cynthia Manos<br>*Budget Manager* | Early Childhood Programs,<br>Western New Mexico University | Grant | English | Child care, PreK |
| Debra Baca<br>*Vice President* | Early Childhood Education,<br>Youth Development, Inc. | Bernalillo | English | Head Start/Early Head Start, PreK, home visiting |
| Evelyn Ramos<br>*Community Program Specialist* | Partnership for Community Action | Bernalillo | English, Español | Advocacy |
| Holly Gurule<br>*Senior Director for Partnership Services* | Central New Mexico Community College – CNM Ingenuity, Inc. | Bernalillo | English | Administrative |
| Jacob Vigil<br>*Chief Legislative Officer* | New Mexico Voices for Children | Bernalillo | English | Advocacy |
| Lizzet Vargas<br>*Program Manager* | Partnership for Community Action | Bernalillo | English | Advocacy |
| Oriandi Mellas<br>*Community Program Specialist* | Partnership for Community Action | Bernalillo | English | Advocacy |
| Lula Brown<br>*Vice President of Early Childhood Programs* | ENMRSH, Inc. | Curry* | English | FIT, home visiting |
| Matthew Henderson<br>*Executive Director* | Organizers in the Land of Enchantment (OLÉ) | Bernalillo | English | Advocacy |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Merline Gallegos<br>*Director and Educator* | Kelly's Learning Academy, LLC. | Doña Ana | Español | Family child care |
| Michelle Quintana<br>*Director of Children's Services* | Presbyterian Medical Services | Santa Fe | English | Head Start |
| Rebecca Baran-Rees<br>*Vice President of Policy and Community Development* | Growing Up New Mexico | Rio Arriba and Santa Fe* | English | Advocacy, PreK, home visiting, child care |
| Roberta Calderon<br>*Home Visiting Program Manager* | ENMRSH, Inc. | | English | Home visiting |
| Robin Goodnight<br>*Executive Director;*<br>*Secretary and Treasurer* | Little Flower Learning Center;<br>New Mexico Early Childhood Association | Bernalillo | English | Child care, PreK |
| Teena Dehne<br>*Chief Financial Officer* | The Learning Curve (TLC) Development Centers | Valencia | English | Child care, PreK |
| Valeria Raenell Holloway<br>*Owner and Educator* | Best of the Southwest Daycare | Doña Ana | English | Family child care, PreK |

*Note*. In the "County" column, counties with an asterisk symbol* indicates that the member's organization serves families and children in more than one county.

# Appendix C

## Professional Competencies Crosswalk

| NAEYC Professional Standards & Competencies for Early Childhood Educators | Family Support Professionals (Home Visitors) | Family Support Professionals (Supervisors) | Initial Practice-Based Prep Standards for EI/ECSE | Knowledge & Skills for Service Coordinators (EI) | ExCELS Leadership Competencies | SHARED COMPETENCIES |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Professionalism as an Early Childhood Educator** Early childhood educators (a) identify and participate as members of the early childhood profession. They serve as informed advocates for young children, for the families of the children in their care, and for the early childhood profession. They (b) know and use ethical guidelines | **Professional Practice** In home visiting, relationships form the foundation upon which all other work is built. The quality of the relationships between home visitors and families has a significant impact upon our ability to make a difference in the lives of families and young children. Home visitors must learn strategies for establishing, building and | **Professional Practice**<br>• Ethical and legal practice<br>• Reflective practice<br>• Professional boundaries<br>• Quality improvement<br>**Effective Work Environment**<br>• Strengths-based, reflective supervision<br>• Crisis management | **Standard 7: Professionalism and Ethical Practice** Candidates identify and engage with the profession of early intervention and early childhood special education (EI/ECSE) by exhibiting skills in reflective practice, advocacy, and leadership while adhering to ethical and legal guidelines. Evidence-based | **Professionalism:** *Service Coordinators demonstrate professionalism by using personal and professional boundaries, flexibility, resiliency, time management, dependability, and by engaging in ongoing professional development.* **Leadership/Teaming:** *Service Coordinators* | **Strategic Practices: Establish and Implement a Shared Strategic Vision**<br>• Establish and follow a vision<br>• Conduct strategic planning<br>• Implement strategic plans<br>• Evaluate strategic plans<br>• Engage in self-reflection and learning | **Professionalism**<br>• Knowledge of and uses ethical and legal guidelines<br>• Identifies and participate as members of the early childhood profession<br>• Knowledge of the early childhood system, including related sectors such as ECE, Early Intervention, and Home Visiting programs<br>• Creates, implements, and coordinates plans and systems to track, monitor, and report on quality of services provided by the organization |

| NAEYC Professional Standards & Competencies for Early Childhood Educators | Family Support Professionals (Home Visitors) | Family Support Professionals (Supervisors) | Initial Practice-Based Prep Standards for EI/ECSE | Knowledge & Skills for Service Coordinators (EI) | ExCELS Leadership Competencies | SHARED COMPETENCIES |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| and other early childhood professional guidelines. They (c) have professional communication skills that effectively support their relationships and work young children, families, and colleagues. Early childhood educators (d) are continuous, collaborative learners who (e) develop and sustain the habit of reflective and intentional practice in their daily work with young children and as members of | enhancing relationships with families in a way that also promotes the strengthening of relationships within the family. Home visitors will develop skills to help them prepare and process home visits that build upon family strengths and promote resiliency. | • Staff development<br>• Coaching and mentoring<br>**Leadership**<br>• Professional development<br>• Advocacy<br>• Administration | and recommended practices are promoted and used by candidates. | *demonstrate ability to be an effective leader by building professional, supportive partnerships with families; collaborating and teaming with IFSP team members to include family members; and engaging/collaborating with a variety of community partners* | **Operational Practices: Manage Consistent, Efficient Organizational and Fiscal Operations and Performance Management**<br>• Comply with regulations and requirements<br>• Carry out operational activities<br>• Ensure smooth operations and fiscal management | • Knowledge of Federal, State, and Local regulations<br>• Creates systems, policies, and procedures to ensure the organization complies with required regulations<br>• Understanding of effective human resource systems including staffing, performance management, and payroll systems<br>• Ensure smooth operations and fiscal management<br>• Uses reflective practices to intentionally inform their work<br>• Provides reflective supervision for others<br>• Engages in continuous learning and ongoing professional development |

| NAEYC Professional Standards & Competencies for Early Childhood Educators | Family Support Professionals (Home Visitors) | Family Support Professionals (Supervisors) | Initial Practice-Based Prep Standards for EI/ECSE | Knowledge & Skills for Service Coordinators (EI) | ExCELS Leadership Competencies | SHARED COMPETENCIES |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| the early childhood profession. | | | | | | • Maintains professional boundaries<br>• Uses effective communication strategies with children, families, co-workers, and others<br>• Maintains child, family, and/or staff records<br>• Engages in effective team work with other staff to assist them with their responsibilities and support their goals<br>• Collaborates with others to support daily operational activities and routines<br>• Monitors and track outcomes/create goals to meet the standard of programs<br>• Is aware of required regulations, procedures, and |

| NAEYC Professional Standards & Competencies for Early Childhood Educators | Family Support Professionals (Home Visitors) | Family Support Professionals (Supervisors) | Initial Practice-Based Prep Standards for EI/ECSE | Knowledge & Skills for Service Coordinators (EI) | ExCELS Leadership Competencies | SHARED COMPETENCIES |
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| | | | | | | standards that the organization must meet<br>• Ensures compliance with required regulations, procedures, and standards that the organization must meet<br>• Creates, implements, monitors and maintains an organizational budget<br>• Builds effective and collaborative working partnerships<br>• Establish and follow a vision<br>• Conduct strategic planning<br>• Implement strategic plans |
| **Child Development and Learning in Context**<br>Early childhood educators (a) are grounded in an understanding of | **Infant and Early Childhood Development**<br>Supporting the healthy physical, cognitive, and social | | **Standard 1: Child Development and Early Learning**<br>Candidates understand the impact of different theories and | **Infant and Toddler Development:**<br>*Service Coordinators demonstrate knowledge of* | | **Content Knowledge**<br>• Knowledge of child development across physical, cognitive, and social emotional domains |

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| the developmental period of early childhood from birth through age 8 across developmental domains. They (b) understand each child as an individual with unique developmental variations. Early childhood educators (c) understand that children learn and develop within relationships and within multiple contexts, including families, cultures, languages, communities, and society. They (d) use this multidimensional | emotional development of children is the critical component of all early childhood work. Family Support Professionals must understand and identify typical and atypical early childhood development across multiple domains and within the context of environment, culture, and family systems. Family Support Professionals help parents understand and support the healthy growth and | | philosophies of early learning and development on assessment, curriculum, instruction, and intervention decisions. Candidates apply knowledge of normative developmental sequences and variations, individual differences within and across the range of abilities, including developmental delays and disabilities, and other direct and indirect contextual features that support or | *infant and toddler development including factors that contribute to development such as family context, relationships, culture, socio-economic considerations, environment, and experiences to inform intervention decisions, child development and learning within natural environments.* | | • Understands that children develop within the context of relationships and culture, including diverse languages, communities, and systems<br>• Understands the importance of individualized and developmentally appropriate learning<br>• Knowledge specific of a specific field to provide specialized services for children, families, and/or staff |

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| knowledge to make evidence-based decisions about how to carry out their responsibilities. | development of their children. | | constrain children's development and learning. These contextual factors as well as social, cultural, and linguistic diversity are considered when facilitating meaningful learning experiences and individualizing intervention and instruction across contexts. | | | |
| | **Child Health, Safety, and Nutrition**<br><br>The health and safety of all family members is essential to family well-being. Family | | | | | **Child Health, Safety, and Nutrition**<br><br>• Knowledge of and adherence to health, safety, and nutrition standards to promote optimal development |

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| | Support Professionals help families develop safe and healthy practices that promote optimum child growth and development and ensure the safety and health of all family members.<br><br>**Family Health, Safety, and Nutrition**<br><br>The health and safety of all family members is essential to family well-being. Family Support Professionals help families develop safe and healthy | | | | | • Ensures safe environments |

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| | practices that promote optimum child growth and development and ensure the safety and health of all family members. | | | | | |
| **Family-Teacher Partnerships and Community Connections** Early childhood educators understand that successful early childhood education depends upon educators' partnerships with the families of the young children they serve. They (a) know about, understand, and value the diversity in family | **Parent-Child Interactions** Parent-child relationships form the foundation upon which all other work is built. Family Support Professionals promote and enhance healthy parent-child relationships. Family Support Professionals understand the importance of | **Relationship-Based Partnerships** • Respect and responsiveness • Positive communication • Safe environments for young children • Building community relationships • Collaboration | **Standard 2: Partnering with Families** Candidates use their knowledge of family-centered practices and family systems theory to develop and maintain reciprocal partnerships with families. They apply family capacity-building practices as they support families to make informed | **Family-Centered Practices:** *Service Coordinators demonstrate ability to respect and support the distinctive qualities of each family, recognizing the family as the teacher, support, decision-maker and advocate for their child.* | **Relational Coordination within the Center to Create and Sustain a Culture of Respect, Collaboration, and Continuous Learning** • Build and sustain relationships with and between staff • Foster a positive workplace and organizational climate | **Relationship-Based Partnerships** • Foster a positive workplace and organizational climate • Establish structures that support communication and relational coordination • Understands the role of families as the foundational relationship in a child's life • Collaborates with families and other professionals to support children's learning |

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| characteristics. Early childhood educators (b) use this understanding to create respectful, responsive, reciprocal relationships with families and to engage with them as partners in their young children's development and learning. They (c) use community resources to support young children's learning and development and to support children's families, and they build connections between early learning settings, schools, and | bonding and attachment and facilitate healthy attachment between caregivers and children.<br><br>**Dynamics of Family Relationships**<br><br>A strength-based approach guides all work with families. Family Support Professionals help families identify and develop protective factors to strengthen family security and improve family functioning. Family Support Professionals work with families to identify risks and | | decisions and advocate for their young children. They engage families in opportunities that build on their existing strengths, reflect current goals and foster family competence and confidence to support their children's development and learning. | | • Emphasize participation and collaboration across staff levels and among peers<br>• Establish structures that support communication and relational coordination<br><br>**Relational Coordination to Promote Family and Community Partnerships Beyond the Center**<br><br>• Set policies to promote family partnerships | • Create respectful, responsive, and reciprocal relationships with families<br>• Understands the role of bonding and attachment in child development<br>• Uses strength-based approaches to build relationships with families and communities<br>• Promote families' goals for their children<br>• Supports families to advocate for their children<br>• Is aware of community resources<br>• Actively works to connect families to community resources<br>• Set policies to promote family partnerships |

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| community organizations and agencies. | stressors that impact family well-being and work together with families to set family-centered goals. Family Support Professionals help families to navigate the various relationships that may be present in any given family and understand the ways that trauma, gender, culture, and religion impact family systems.<br><br>**Community Resources and Support**<br><br>Engaging community | | | | • Conduct activities to engage with families<br>• Engage with the community and field | |

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| | resources and support are a critical component to positive outcomes for parents and children. Each community is unique in the specific services that are available to families. Effective Family Support Professionals are knowledgeable of the network of supports available and advocate for services where gaps exist. Family Support Professionals work with parents to plan for transition from the moment they are enrolled. They coach parents on | | | | | |

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| | how to advocate for themselves and their children and how to access resources when needed.<br><br>**Relationship-Based Family Partnerships**<br><br>Relationship building skills are essential for the Family Support Professional. Working with the family in their home sets the stage for building the partnership but the skill set of the professional is the key ingredient. Domain 7 describes the specific skills needed to achieve | | | | | |

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| | strong relationships with families. | | | | | |
| **Developmentally, Culturally, and Linguistically Appropriate Teaching Practices** Early childhood educators understand that teaching and learning with young children is a complex enterprise, and its details vary depending on children's ages and characteristics and on the settings in which teaching, and learning occur. They (a) understand and demonstrate positive, caring, supportive | **Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness** The relationship between the family members and the professionals are key to achieving family retention and positive outcomes. To achieve a positive relationship, the professional must be sensitive to the cultural and linguistic needs of the family members. The professional must remain open to learning more about the cultures | **Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness** • Cultural competency • Cultural humility • Linguistic responsiveness | **Standard 6: Using Responsive and Reciprocal Interactions, Interventions, and Instruction** Candidates plan and implement intentional, systematic, evidence-based, responsive interactions, interventions, and instruction to support all children's learning and development across all developmental and content domains in partnership with | | **Instructional Quality Practices: Promote, Facilitate, and Enable High-Quality Teaching & Classroom Quality** • Use observation and feedback to help teachers (or peers) improve • Promote ambitious instruction and learning • Use data for improvement • Dedicate time for collaborative instructional | **Developmental, Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness** • Plans developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate learning experiences for children and/or families • Implements developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate learning experiences for children and/or families • Uses data and evidence-based decision making to adapt learning experiences • Uses culturally competent approaches to building relationships with children and families |

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| relationships and interactions as the foundation for their work with young children. They (b) understand and use teaching skills that are responsive to the learning trajectories of young children and to the needs of each child. Early childhood educators (c) use a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate and culturally and linguistically relevant, anti-bias, and evidence-based teaching approaches that reflect the principles | of the families they serve. | | families and other professionals. Candidates facilitate equitable access and participation for all children and families within natural and inclusive environments through culturally responsive and affirming practices and relationships. Candidates use data-based decision making to plan for, adapt, and improve interactions, interventions, and instruction to ensure fidelity of implementation. | | planning and supports<br>• Support professional development | • Supports professional development on developmentally, culturally, and linguistically responsive practices |

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| of universal design for learning. | | | | | | |
| **Child Observation, Documentation, and Assessment** Early childhood educators (a) understand that the primary purpose of assessment is to inform instruction and planning in early learning settings. They (b) know how to use observation, documentation, and other appropriate assessment approaches and tools. Early childhood educators (c) use screening and assessment tools in ways that | | | **Standard 4: Assessment Processes** Candidates know and understand the purposes of assessment in relation to ethical and legal considerations. Candidates choose developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate tools and methods that are responsive to the characteristics of the young child, family, and program. Using evidence-based | **Coordination of Services**: *Service Coordinators demonstrate ability to coordinate and monitor the timely delivery of identified evidence-based early intervention services.* | | • Understands the role of assessment to inform instruction and planning<br>• Uses evidence-based screening and assessment tools that are developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate<br>• Used strengths-based approaches to include families in assessment approaches |

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| are ethically grounded and developmentally, culturally, ability, and linguistically appropriate to document developmental progress and promote positive outcomes for each child. Early childhood educators (d) build assessment partnerships with families and professional colleagues. | | | practices, candidates develop or select as well as administer informal measures, and select and administer formal measures in partnership with families and other professionals. They analyze, interpret, document, and share assessment information using a strength-based approach with families and other professionals for eligibility determination, outcome/goal development, | | | |

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| | | | planning instruction and intervention, monitoring progress, and reporting. | | | |
| **Knowledge, Application, and Integration of Academic Content in the Early Childhood Curriculum** Early childhood educators have knowledge of the content of the academic disciplines (e.g., language and literacy, the arts, mathematics, social studies, science, technology and engineering, physical education) | | | **Standard 5: Application of Curriculum Frameworks in the Planning and Facilitation of Meaningful Learning Experience** Candidates collaborate with families and professionals to use evidenced-based, developmentally appropriate, and culturally responsive early | | | • Understands the pedagogy of how young children learn and process information in multiple areas including language and literacy, the arts, mathematics, social studies, science, technology and engineering, and physical education. • Uses early learning standards and other resources to make decisions about children and/or families' learning experiences |

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| and of the pedagogical methods for teaching each discipline. They (a) understand the central concepts, methods and tools of inquiry, and structures in each academic discipline. Educators (b) understand pedagogy, including how young children learn and process information in each discipline, the learning trajectories for each discipline, and how teachers use this knowledge to inform their practice. They (c) apply this knowledge using | | | childhood curriculum addressing developmental and content domains. Candidates use curriculum frameworks to create and support universally designed, high-quality learning experiences in natural and inclusive environments that provide each child and family with equitable access and opportunities for learning and growth. | | | • Collaborates with families and other professionals to support children's learning<br>• Uses an evidence-based curriculum and/or program to support children and/or families learning |

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| early learning standards and other resources to make decisions about spontaneous and planned learning experiences and about curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation to ensure that learning will be stimulating, challenging, and meaningful to each child. | | | | | | |
| | | | **Standard 3: Collaboration and Teaming** Candidates apply models, skills, and processes of teaming when collaborating and communicating | **Transition:** *Service Coordinators implement smooth and effective transition plans with the family that identify the events, activities, and* | | |

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| | | | with families and professionals, using culturally and linguistically responsive and affirming practices. In partnership with families and other professionals, candidates develop and implement individualized plans and successful transitions that occur across the age span. Candidates use a variety of collaborative strategies while working with and | *processes associated with key changes between environments or programs during the early childhood years.* | | |

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| | | | supporting other adults. | | | |
| | **Effective Home Visits** Home visits are the service delivery location for many family support programs. Meeting with the family in their home assists in equalizing the power differential and helps the family members to feel more comfortable because they are in their own environment. Increased family comfort should lead more quickly to fostering a trusting relationship between the | **Home Visiting Practice** • Promoting a competent workforce • Trauma informed care • Evidence based practice | | | | |

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|  | professional and the family members. For the professional, it is an opportunity to see how the family functions in their own environment with all members of the family. Home visiting paints a more vibrant picture of the family with the complexity of their relationships revealed. |  |  |  |  |  |