

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
AND CARE ADVISORY COUNCIL

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

YEAR THREE

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Early Childhood
Education & Care Department

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Advisory Council was established by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham in December 2022 through Executive Order 2022-163 and amended Executive Order 2023-059. The purpose of the ECEC Advisory Council is to assess issues relevant to the Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) and to advise, inform, and make recommendations to the Secretary of the Department in support of its commitment to create a more cohesive, equitable, and effective early childhood education and care system in New Mexico. This council was established in accordance with the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, which requires each state to establish a State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care.

Part of the Advisory Council's role is to provide recommendations to the Governor and the Early Childhood Education and Care Department. To accomplish this, each year the ECEC Advisory Council releases an annual report detailing its major activities and key recommendations for the year. This is the third annual report of the ECEC Advisory Council since its establishment.

The Council met six times in 2025, with meetings held in Santa Fe, Hobbs, Roswell, Silver City, and Albuquerque. Between regular meetings, the Advisory Council convened four subcommittees to examine critical subject areas in more depth: 1) Public-Private Partnership, 2) Early Childhood Professionals, 3) Program Quality and Accountability, and 4) Data, Infrastructure, and Analysis. Each subcommittee identified focus areas for 2025 and reported on their work at regular Council meetings.

The work of the subcommittees intertwined with the work of the full Council. Major projects in 2025 included consultation on the redesign of FOCUS, the state's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System for child care providers, Universal Child Care, the development of a Wage Scale and Career Lattice Framework, and the implementation of the Child Care Revolving Loan Fund.

At the final meeting of the ECEC Advisory Council on December 10, 2025, the Council approved a set of recommendations to advance New Mexico's early childhood system. The following represent the Advisory Council's key recommendations for 2026 by subcommittee.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP SUBCOMMITTEE

1. Develop strategic partnerships with the Economic Development Department and chambers of commerce in the state to expand child care supply through innovative financing and marketing strategies.
2. Strengthen partnerships with rural colleges and universities to provide in-person professional learning opportunities to cohorts of early childhood professionals from across the early childhood ecosystem.
3. Expand technical assistance and business supports for new and established family child care home educators to maximize impact, improve their business practices, and build their capacity.
4. Educate the business sector and community leaders regarding the positive economic impact of high-quality early childhood programs and services. Engage partners in understanding the return on investment through improved school readiness, healthy and developmental outcomes that a universal, high-quality early childhood system provides to New Mexico families that promotes a productive workforce and economic stability.

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONALS SUBCOMMITTEE

1. Implement the wage and career lattice framework, to support pathways toward increased credentials and competencies, competitive wages, and employee retention.
2. Partner with school districts, state agencies, higher education institutions, and other key partners to expand career and technical education pathways, dual credit opportunities, apprenticeships, and pre-apprenticeships.
3. Engage in regular data collection and community engagement to examine reasons early childhood professionals leave the field, factors that help to retain them, and to develop data-informed strategies for improving retention.
4. Expand and build awareness about the Developing Futures campaign, including an emphasis on the importance of child development, spotlighting the importance of early childhood careers, and different types of careers ranging from entry level pathways for high school students to those with specialized degrees.

PROGRAM QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY SUBCOMMITTEE

1. Assess quality and ensure accountability of home visiting and FIT services through the implementation of, adherence to, and use of, clear program standards.
2. Align program standards between NM PreK, community-based PreK, school-based PreK, licensing, FOCUS, and Office of Head Start.
3. Work to ensure consistency and alignment among technical assistance and professional development consultants and embedded mentors, by using consistent tools for observations, coaching cycles, and feedback. Alignment for all programs so all receive the same model of support while meeting individual program needs.
4. Strengthen Statewide Safety and Incident Reporting Accountability when self-reporting to ECECD Licensing and when families transition between programs and communities.

DATA, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND ANALYSIS SUBCOMMITTEE

1. Develop stronger policy and protocol for data sovereignty with Tribes and Nations in partnership with the Public Education Department.
2. Support Local Early Childhood Systems-Building Coalitions in using Early Development Instrument and Childhood Experiences Questionnaire data to strengthen state-local strategies.
3. Develop strategies to communicate data projects and other work to the public more broadly.
4. Use Professional Development Information System (PDIS) and other data sources to streamline accountability systems and understand workforce strengths and gaps and more intentionally engage early childhood practitioners, with real-time feedback, in shaping future initiatives and supporting higher education pathways where they are needed.

INTRODUCTION

The Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Advisory Council is pleased to present its third annual report as an advisory body. The ECEC Advisory Council was established by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham in December 2022 through Executive Order 2022-163 and amended Executive Order 2023-059. Each state is required to create a State Advisory Council on early childhood as part of the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007. These councils advise the state on early childhood issues, with membership from a range of stakeholders from across the early childhood system. Since its establishment, the Advisory Council has met regularly to support the development of New Mexico's comprehensive prenatal to age five early childhood system.

The ECEC Advisory Council's purpose is to assess issues relevant to the Early Childhood Education and Care Department and to advise, inform, and make recommendations to the Secretary of the Department in support of its commitment to create a more cohesive, equitable, and effective early childhood education and care system in the state. In alignment with this purpose, the Advisory Council publishes an annual report of its major activities and recommendations for the coming year.

The following report provides an overview of the ECEC Advisory Council in 2025, beginning with a summary of membership, meetings, and major responsibilities for the year. Then, the report details the Council's subcommittee structure for the year before diving into key areas of work across 2025. Finally, the report offers the Advisory Council's key recommendations to Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham and the Secretary of the Early Childhood Education and Care Department for 2026.

MEMBERSHIP IN 2025

ECEC Advisory Council membership is intentionally formed to represent many different stakeholders from the early childhood and related fields. As outlined in Executive Order 2023-059, Council membership includes Ex Officio membership from the Director of the Children’s Cabinet, the Cabinet Secretaries of the Early Childhood and Care Department, Public Education Department, Higher Education Department, Department of Health, Human Services Department, Children, Youth and Families Department, and the Director of the Head Start State Collaboration Office.

In addition, the Governor appoints a representative from a local education agency, a local provider of early childhood education and development services, a Head Start agency, a higher education institution, and up to eleven appointed members. In 2025, appointed membership also included representation from parents, providers, business, early intervention, philanthropy, home visiting, local government. Each appointed member brings a unique and valuable perspective to the Council’s work.

In 2025, Daisy Lira continued her appointment as Chair and Lula Brown was selected as Vice Chair. The Council was pleased to welcome two new appointed members in 2025. In March, Bridget Dixon, President and CEO of the Santa Fe Chamber of Commerce, was appointed as a representative of a chamber while Natalie Guillen was appointed as the parent representative. Ms. Dixon and Ms. Guillen have been valuable additions to this work, and the Council looks forward to their strong partnership through the years to come.

Members of the ECEC Advisory Council serve for three-year terms. As per Executive Order 2023-059, one-half of the Council’s initial membership were appointed to serve for a partial two-year term that expired December 2024, and the remaining membership terms were set for three years, ending in December 2025. The Council is pleased to report that a number of these members have been reappointed to serve a second term. Members and their term lengths are noted below, and members who have been reappointed to serve with the council for a second term are indicated with asterisks.

Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham and Secretary Groginsky would like to extend their sincere thanks and gratitude to the member who will not continue with the Council in 2026, Dr. Corrine Sanchez.

The following describes the membership of the ECEC Advisory Council at the end of 2024.

i. **Chair:** Daisy Lira

ii. **Vice Chair:** Lula Brown

iii. **Ex Officio Members:**

- a. **Gina DeBlasie**, Cabinet Secretary of Department of Health
- b. **Valerie Sandoval**, Acting Cabinet Secretary of Children, Youth and Families Department
- c. **Kari Armijo**, Cabinet Secretary of Health Care Authority
- d. **Elizabeth Groginsky**, Cabinet Secretary of Early Childhood Education and Care Department
- e. **Casey Lafferty**, Director, Head Start State Collaboration Office
- f. **Mariana Padilla**, Cabinet Secretary of Public Education Department
- g. **Stephanie Rodriguez**, Cabinet Secretary of Higher Education Department
- h. Vacant, Director of Governor Lujan Grisham's Children's Cabinet

iv. **Additional Appointed Members:**

- a. **Natalie Guillen**, Parent Representative (December 2027)
- b. **Lula Brown**, Representative of Home Visiting/Early Intervention/Infant Mental Health (December 2027)
- c. **Robert Chavez**, Representative of a Head Start Agency (December 2027)
- d. **Diane Denish**, Representative of Economic Development (December 2027)
- e. **Daisy Lira**, Representative of Local Government (December 2028)
- f. **Mayra Lovas**, Representative of Philanthropy (December 2027)
- g. **Brian Luck**, Representative of Local Educational Agency (December 2027)
- h. **Dr. Cindy Martinez**, Representative of an Institution of Higher Education (December 2027)
- i. **Lakersha Martinez**, Representative of Behavioral Health/Home Visiting (December 2028)
- j. **Teresa Quintana**, Representative of Workforce Development/Tribal (December 2027)
- k. **Allen Sanchez**, Representative of Advocacy/Home Visiting (December 2028)*
- l. **Crystal Tapia-Romero**, Representative of Local Provider of Early Childhood Education and Development Services (December 2028)*
- m. **Jacob Vigil**, Community Representative (December 2027)

MEETINGS IN 2025

ECEC Advisory Council met six times in 2025 as per its establishing Executive Order and continued its tradition of rotating meeting locations throughout the state. This year, the Council met once in Santa Fe, Hobbs, Roswell, Silver City, and twice in Albuquerque. Each meeting was hybrid, allowing members to attend in-person or virtually.

The Council strongly values public participation, and invites community partners, legislators, and all interested members of the public to attend and participate in Council meetings. Every meeting is open to the public with time reserved for public comment. Meeting dates, locations, and virtual access information are made available on the [ECEC Advisory Council Website](#) in advance of each meeting. Materials from each meeting, including agendas, minutes, handouts, and recordings can also be found on the ECECD website in the materials library. The ECEC Advisory Council also makes a commitment to have simultaneous Spanish interpretation available at every meeting.

1. Wednesday, January 22, 2025 – Santa Fe, NM (hybrid), 1-4 p.m.
2. Wednesday, March 26, 2025 – Albuquerque, NM, (hybrid), 1-4 p.m.
3. Wednesday, May 28, 2025 – Hobbs, NM, (hybrid), 1-4 p.m.
4. Wednesday, July 23, 2025 – Roswell, NM, (hybrid), 1-4 p.m.
5. Wednesday, September 24, 2025 – Silver City, NM, (hybrid), 1-4 p.m.
6. Wednesday, December 10, 2025 – Albuquerque, NM, (hybrid), 1-4 p.m.



DUTIES OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL

The ECEC Advisory Council's priorities in 2025 were driven by the duties assigned to it in its establishing Executive Order and the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007. The Council is responsible for assessing the quality and availability of early childhood education and development programs and services for children from birth to school entry. The Council is also responsible for identifying opportunities for collaboration across federal and state-funded early childhood programs and services, including opportunities for coordination across the state agencies that administer these programs. Further, the Advisory Council will develop recommendations to increase the participation of children in publicly supported child care and early childhood education programs, including outreach to underrepresented and special populations.

In addition, the ECEC Advisory Council must develop recommendations for statewide professional development and career advancement plans for early childhood educators. It will also assess the capacity and effectiveness of two- and four-year public and private higher education institutions across the state in supporting the development of early childhood educators, including whether institutions have articulation agreements, professional development and career advancement plans, and practice or internships for students to spend time in early childhood education and care programs. The Council will recommend improvements to the state early learning standards as well.

SUBCOMMITTEES

In 2024, the ECEC Advisory Council established subcommittees to facilitate its work. These four subcommittees are 1). **Public-Private Partnership**, 2). **Early Childhood Professionals**, 3). **Program Quality and Accountability**, 4). **Data, Infrastructure, and Analysis**.

In 2025, the subcommittees met at least bimonthly to hear updates from the department, discuss emerging issues, and develop recommendations. These recommendations are then shared with the full Council during regular Council meetings. Like regular Council meetings, monthly subcommittee meetings are open to the public and committee chairs encourage attendance and participation from the public. Meeting schedules, access instructions, notes, and other materials for each subcommittee are posted on the ECEC Advisory Council website.

Subcommittee membership is capped at 13 members and include both ECEC Advisory Council Members and Non-Council Members. In 2023, members of the public applied to participate on each subcommittee as Non-Council Members. The selected Non-Council Members have now served their full two-year term with their respective committee, and the ECEC Advisory Council is very grateful to these members for their hard work and dedication throughout 2025. A full list of subcommittee membership, including Non-Council Members, can be found in the Appendix to this report.

In 2025, ECECD supported each subcommittee in developing focus areas that align to the full work of the Council and the Department's priorities. ECECD staff helped facilitate external speakers and department updates for each focus area as needed.

The **Public-Private Partnership Subcommittee** is co-chaired by ECECD Cabinet Secretary Elizabeth Groginsky and Allen Sanchez. The subcommittee advocates for and promotes equitable access to early childhood programs and services through strategic investments and partnerships that strengthen infrastructure, align with community needs, and enhance the capacity of private, nonprofit and for-profit organizations, public agencies, and Tribal nations to deliver high-quality services. Major focus areas for this committee in 2025 included:

1. Engaging private sector funding to support capacity building in the prenatal to age three system.
2. Partnering with the New Mexico Finance Authority to develop and implement low-interest loans for child care facilities.
3. Exploring how universal, accessible, and affordable early care and education for all families and children can help address the "cliff effect."

The **Early Childhood Professionals Subcommittee** is co-chaired by Crystal Tapia-Romero and Robert Chavez. This subcommittee's purpose is to support and promote mechanisms for recruitment, foster inclusivity and diversity in the early childhood education field, remove barriers and create a welcoming environment for aspiring educators by engaging the community and listening to their needs, and collaborate with ECECD to share valuable feedback and well-informed recommendations, ultimately influencing policy and implementing effective programs that support and elevate early childhood education. In 2025, this committee's focus areas included:

1. Development and implementation of the Professional Development Information System (PDIS)
2. Development and implementation of Infant/Toddler Pay Parity.
3. Development of the Wage Scale and Career Lattice.

The **Program Quality and Accountability Subcommittee** is co-chaired by Dr. Cindy Martinez and Daisy Lira. This subcommittee explores and advises on processes of quality and accountability across ECECD's programs to ensure clear, consistent, and reasonable expectations with measurable standards and targeted supports for early childhood professionals. Focus areas for this subcommittee included:

1. Guiding the FOCUS redesign process.
2. Updating the Home Visiting Standards.
3. Updating the Early Learning Standards.

Finally, the **Data, Infrastructure, and Analysis Subcommittee** is co-chaired by Jacob Vigil and Secretary Elizabeth Groginsky. The subcommittee's purpose is to connect, promote, share, and champion actionable data, data systems, and information in the spirit of inclusion and collaboration to understand and communicate state early childhood needs and help drive state-level policy, funding, and infrastructure that supports incredible opportunities in improving outcomes for New Mexico children, families, and early childhood professionals. In 2025, this subcommittee focused on the development of various data projects, including:

1. Implementation of the Early Development Instrument with the Public Education Department (PED) and UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities.
2. Development of the data visualization dashboard development with RS21.
3. Implementation of the Child Care Supply and Demand Study with the Low-Income Investment Fund (LIIF).



MAJOR ADVISEMENTS OF THE COUNCIL IN 2025

Universal Child Care

In September 2025, New Mexico made the historic announcement that it will begin offering universal child care to families who are working or going to school regardless of income. The advisory council played an active role throughout both the rulemaking process and the implementation of the new rules, providing crucial feedback and policy recommendations based on their diverse experiences with New Mexico's early child care system.

Proposed regulations were reviewed and discussed in depth within both the Program Quality and Accountability Subcommittee and the Early Childhood Professionals Subcommittee. Council members and subcommittee members brought diverse perspectives informed by lived experience and professional expertise across New Mexico's early childhood landscape, including providers, educators, parents, and advocates. Their engagement ensured that the proposed policies were grounded in the realities of the state's child care system and responsive to the needs of children, families, and the workforce.

Child Care Supply and Demand Study

In June 2024, ECECD launched a comprehensive Supply and Demand Study to better understand New Mexico's child care landscape. Conducted in partnership with the Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF), the study analyzed child care and NM PreK enrollment data alongside new information from parent surveys and focus groups, as well as surveys, focus groups, and facility assessments with child care providers. Throughout the study, the ECECD Advisory Council and its Public-Private Partnership Subcommittee received regular updates and provided feedback to inform the study's development, interpretation, and use.

The study produced three reports—*Parent Voices: New Mexico Parent Perspectives on Child Care*, *Child Care Access in New Mexico*, and *Building on Success: New Mexico Child Care Provider Insights*—which identify persistent challenges related to affordability, availability, and adequacy of care. Many families face child care costs exceeding 7 percent of household income, express a strong need for infant and toddler care, and emphasize the importance of trusted, community-based providers. Statewide, the study estimates a shortfall of nearly 14,000 child care slots, with the greatest gaps in infant and toddler care due to space, licensing, and staffing constraints.

Findings also highlighted geographic disparities, including in fast-growing areas such as Lea County, where population growth has outpaced child care supply. ECECD will use the study's findings, informed by Advisory Council and subcommittee feedback, to guide funding priorities, legislative budget requests, and strategies to expand child care supply and capacity while maintaining a strong focus on quality statewide.

Wage Scale and Career Lattice

In spring 2024, ECECD partnered with the National Early Care and Education Workforce Center to develop a unified Wage Scale and Career Lattice Framework for New Mexico's early childhood workforce. A change task force, convened through the Early Childhood Professionals Subcommittee of the ECECD Advisory Council, brought together 24 representatives from across the early childhood system to inform the framework's design.

Meeting biweekly from December 2024 through July 2025, the task force developed a framework that reflects the diversity of early childhood roles and outlines shared competencies, credentials, and career pathways across five role categories. The Early Childhood Professionals Subcommittee reviewed the completed draft and provided additional feedback to strengthen clarity and feasibility, while also identifying key implementation considerations, including phased rollout, communication, professional development, and system integration.

The ECEC Advisory Council received regular updates throughout this process and provided its final recommendations to ECECD at the December 10, 2025 meeting. In 2026, the ECEC Advisory Council will provide recommendations to the department on how to implement the wage scale and career lattice in order to advance the state's efforts to strengthen and professionalize the early childhood workforce.

Child Care Facility Loan Fund

After the 2025 legislative session, the Child Care Facility Revolving Loan Fund (CCFRLF) received over \$12 million dollars to provide low-interest, long-term loans to eligible child care providers for the purpose of making health and safety improvements to child care facilities, expanding child care facilities, creating new facilities, and for operating capital. The advisory council played an integral role in providing feedback on the program, including providing guidance on how the department should administer the loans. As a result, this program prioritizes applicants who serve a proportionately high-number of state-subsidized clients and low-income families, and projects that will provide greater capacity to infant and toddler care, thus ensuring that loans are targeted to programs that will build capacity for special populations. In September 2025, ECECD partnered with the New Mexico Finance Authority to open the loan's application and received over one hundred applications.

New Mexico Early Childhood Ecosystems Transformation Accelerator

In collaboration with the New Mexico Public Education Department, local school districts, and the University of California Los Angeles's (UCLA) Center for Healthier Children, Families, and Communities, New Mexico continues to collect population-level data on kindergarten students' development and school readiness through the Early Development Instrument (EDI) and the Childhood Experiences Questionnaire (CHEQ). Together, these tools provide a statewide snapshot of children's developmental progress and early experiences, informing efforts to strengthen early childhood systems.

The EDI measures five developmental domains; physical health and well-being; social competence; emotional maturity; language and cognitive skills; communication skills and general knowledge; while the CHEQ captures parent- and caregiver-reported information about children's experiences prior to kindergarten, including family interactions, community engagement, and access to supports and services. The ECEC Advisory Council and its Data, Infrastructure and Analysis subcommittee have played a key role in providing guidance on the collection, analysis, and use of EDI and CHEQ data. Council members have offered feedback on implementation timelines, data accessibility, and strategies to support meaningful use of findings by Early Childhood System Building Coalitions across the state. This guidance has helped ensure that data is not only collected but also translated into actionable insights that inform local planning, program improvement, and cross-sector coordination.

Following completion of Wave 1 data collection, results were mapped ([EDI Interactive Map](#)) at the census tract level and made publicly available through the Early Childhood Education and Care Department. Wave 2 data collection is underway during the current 2025 school year, with updated reports and maps expected in 2026. The Council has also recommended strategies to improve participation, including expanded outreach to families to increase CHEQ response rates and strengthen the representativeness of the data used to support communities statewide.

FOCUS Redesign

The Advisory Council also provided ongoing advisement on FOCUS Redesign, an ECECD led initiative to redesign New Mexico's Quality Rating and Improvement System for child care providers. The Program Quality and Accountability subcommittee received regular updates from the Department on the progress of this work throughout 2025. During the first half of the year, the subcommittee held additional biweekly meetings dedicated specifically to FOCUS Redesign allowing members to engage more deeply in discussion around the proposed framework, phased implementation considerations, and communication strategies to the field. Through these discussions, the Department reiterated and the subcommittee affirmed the accepted framework for the redesigned FOCUS system, which centers on three core components of quality: ratios and group size, the quality of interactions between educators and children, and professional qualifications and compensation. This framework remains foundational to the redesign. As part of a sequential approach, the Department identified the quality

of interactions as the initial focus, grounded in strong evidence that children’s day-to-day experiences and interactions in their early learning environments have a direct impact on their school readiness and long term outcomes. In alignment with this approach, ECECD confirmed the selection of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) as the data source for assessing the quality of interactions for the purpose of supporting quality improvement. The Department is currently in an information gathering phase to better understand current conditions across the field. This includes expanding the certifications of our existing assessors from the Preschool CLASS, to the Infant and Toddler CLASS tool. Implementation decisions regarding how CLASS data may ultimately inform FOCUS ratings remain in development and will continue to be shaped through the redesign process. The subcommittee recommends that the use of CLASS within FOCUS is intended to be developmental rather than punitive. It should be designed to inform supports, coaching, and system-level improvements, not to penalize providers. The subcommittee will continue to provide guidance and advisement on FOCUS Redesign in 2026 as the Department advances toward implementation.

ECECD Dashboards

Finally, the Data, Infrastructure, and Analysis Subcommittee worked in close partnership with ECECD and the department’s data contractor, RS21, to support the development of publicly accessible data visualization dashboards hosted on the ECECD website. The Council and Subcommittee provided guidance on priority data elements, key policy questions, and usability considerations to ensure the dashboards effectively support transparency and informed decision-making.

Through an iterative process of review and feedback, the Data, Infrastructure, and Analysis Subcommittee helped shape dashboards designed to make complex early childhood program data clear, accessible, and actionable for a wide range of users. The dashboards present information on ECECD’s Child Care Assistance, Home Visiting, Family Infant Toddler, and New Mexico PreK programs, allowing users to explore program participation and trends across counties and regions statewide.

These tools are intended to support policymakers, researchers, and early childhood stakeholders by providing timely insights into program reach and implementation across New Mexico. By advancing the development and public availability of these dashboards, the Data Subcommittee strengthened ECECD’s data infrastructure and promoted the use of data to inform policy, planning, and continuous improvement efforts within the state’s early childhood system.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

As the Advisory Council traveled throughout the state in 2025, it intentionally invited local and regional partners to share their work and community perspectives, reflecting the Council's commitment to elevating community voice and strengthening statewide collaboration.

Throughout the year, Local Early Childhood System Building Coalitions were invited to present on their progress, priorities, and ongoing efforts to support children and families. In January, the Santa Fe Steering Committee joined the Council in Santa Fe. At the March meeting in Albuquerque, the Council heard from the Bernalillo Home Visiting Work Group and the Coalition for Science Learning in Early Childhood. During the Council's first visit to Hobbs, the Hobbs Campaign for Grade-Level Reading and the Lea County Coalition highlighted their work in southeastern New Mexico.

In July, the Council traveled to Roswell, where members heard from the Chaves County Local Early Childhood System Building Coalition, Wings for Life. A fall visit to Silver City provided an opportunity to hear from the Community Partnership for Children and their collaboration with Silver Consolidated Schools. The year concluded in Albuquerque, where the Council heard from the PB&J Early Childhood Coalition about its work in Bernalillo County and its regional partnerships to strengthen community support.

The Advisory Council is deeply grateful to these organizations for sharing their time, expertise, and insights throughout the year and looks forward to continued partnership and collaboration in 2026.



RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR

The ECEC Advisory Council is proud to present the following recommendations to create a more cohesive, equitable, and effective early childhood education and care system in New Mexico. These recommendations flow from the Council's engagement with communities, agency partners, and stakeholders throughout 2025. Recommendations from previous years are included in the appendix to this report.

Subcommittee Recommendations

Public–Private Partnership

1. Develop strategic partnerships with the Economic Development Department and chambers of commerce in the state to expand child care supply through innovative financing and marketing strategies.
2. Strengthen partnerships with rural colleges and universities to provide in-person professional learning opportunities to cohorts of early childhood professionals from across the early childhood ecosystem.
3. Expand technical assistance and business supports for new and established family child care home educators to maximize impact, improve their business practices, and build their capacity.
4. Educate the business sector and community leaders regarding the positive economic impact of high-quality early childhood programs and services. Engage partners in understanding the return on investment through improved school readiness, healthy and developmental outcomes that a universal, high-quality early childhood system provides to New Mexico families that promotes a productive workforce and economic stability.

Early Childhood Professionals

1. Implement the wage and career lattice framework, to support pathways toward increased credentials and competencies, competitive wages, and employee retention.
2. Partner with school districts, state agencies, higher education institutions, and other key partners to expand career and technical education pathways, dual credit opportunities, apprenticeships, and pre-apprenticeships.
3. Engage in regular data collection and community engagement to examine reasons early childhood professionals leave the field, factors that help to retain them, and to develop data-informed strategies for improving retention.
4. Expand and build awareness about the Developing Futures campaign, including an emphasis on the importance of child development, spotlighting the importance of early childhood careers, and different types of careers ranging from entry level pathways for high school students to those with specialized degrees.

Program Quality and Accountability

1. Assess quality and ensure accountability of home visiting and FIT services through the implementation of, adherence to, and use of, clear program standards.
2. Align program standards between NM PreK, community-based PreK, school-based PreK, licensing, FOCUS, and Office of Head Start.
3. Work to ensure consistency and alignment among technical assistance and professional development consultants and embedded mentors, by using consistent tools for observations, coaching cycles, and feedback. Alignment for all programs so all receive the same model of support while meeting individual program needs.
4. Strengthen Statewide Safety and Incident Reporting Accountability when self-reporting to ECECD Licensing and when families transition between programs and communities.

Data, Infrastructure and Analysis

1. Develop stronger policy and protocol for data sovereignty with Tribes and Nations in partnership with the Public Education Department.
2. Support Local Early Childhood Systems-Building Coalitions in using Early Development Instrument and Childhood Experiences Questionnaire data to strengthen state-local strategies.
3. Develop strategies to communicate data projects and other work to the public more broadly.
4. Use Professional Development Information System (PDIS) and other data sources to streamline accountability systems and understand workforce strengths and gaps and more intentionally engage early childhood practitioners, with real-time feedback, in shaping future initiatives and supporting higher education pathways where they are needed.

CONCLUSION

As 2025 comes to a close, the ECEC Advisory Council completes its third year of operation. The foundational work undertaken during its first two years has supported the Council's development into a thoughtful, well-organized advisory group.

This year's accomplishments demonstrate the scope and complexity of the Council's efforts and highlight its continued evolution over three years. Through the leadership of active subcommittees and the commitment of its members, the Council contributed meaningfully to forward-thinking initiatives and long-range planning in early childhood. As it enters its fourth year, the ECEC Advisory Council will continue to approach its work with intentionality and enthusiasm as it continues to guide the department in its efforts to create an equitable, universal, and accessible early childhood system.

APPENDIX A

Subcommittee Membership in 2025

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

Council Members:

1. **Co-Chair:** Elizabeth Groginsky
2. **Co-Chair:** Allen Sanchez
3. Rob Black
4. Lula Brown
5. Mayra Lovas
6. Dr. Corrine Sanchez
7. Teresa Quintana

Non-Council Members:

8. Katie Wylie
9. Natasha Gacinski
10. Kristi McBride
11. Barbara Tedrow
12. Jenn Donelli
13. Elizabeth Wieser

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONALS

Council Members:

1. **Co-Chair:** Crystal Tapia-Romero
2. **Co-Chair:** Robert Chavez
3. Brian Tate Luck

Non-Council Members:

4. April Spaulding
5. Kristeena Dehne
6. Robin Goodnight
7. Carmen Estrella Trigo Martinez
8. Merline Gallegos
9. Angela Garcia
10. Margo Dichtelmiller
11. Yolanda Philgreen
12. Donna Fletcher

PROGRAM QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Council Members:

1. **Co-Chair:** Dr. Cindy Martinez
2. **Co-Chair:** Daisy Lira
3. Lakersha Martinez
4. Casey Lafferty

Non-Council Members

5. Evakristel De Luna
6. Rosa Hammond
7. Sondra Carpenter
8. Anel Zamora
9. Alice Pecos
10. Ruth Porta
11. Holly Gurule
12. Valerie Stefani

DATA, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND ANALYSIS

Council Members:

1. **Co-Chair:** Jacob Vigil
2. **Co-Chair:** Elizabeth Groginsky
3. Alanna Dancis
4. Marianna Padilla

Non-Council Members:

5. Erica Surova
6. Jennifer Marquez
7. Norma Ochoa
8. Tara Terry Voit
9. Jackie Shipley
10. Melissa Scott
11. Lisa Shaanan
12. Helen Ortega

APPENDIX B

2025 Advisory Council Recommendations

The ECEC Advisory Council made the following recommendations to Governor Lujan Grisham in its 2024 Annual Report. These recommendations and their statuses in 2025 are included below.

Public-Private Partnership	Status
Support efforts to exempt community-based NM PreK providers from property tax.	IN PROGRESS
Strengthen workforce development opportunities for rural counties and home visiting providers.	IN PROGRESS
Provide technical assistance and business support to maximize impact and address challenges accessing funding.	IN PROGRESS
Develop strategies to market programs and educate community partners about services, such as shareable template messaging.	IN PROGRESS
Early Childhood Professionals	Status
Develop a marketing campaign to attract new individuals into the Early Childhood industry.	COMPLETE
Streamline the hiring and onboarding process for new hires that include a competitive wage.	IN PROGRESS
Create professional development opportunities/benefits to retain employees.	IN PROGRESS

APPENDIX B

cont.

Program Quality and Accountability

Status

Identify reliable and valid tools to embed within FOCUS Redesign to measure program quality.

IN PROGRESS

Assess quality and ensure accountability of home visiting and FIT services through the implementation of, adherence to, and use of clear program standards.

IN PROGRESS

Align program standards between NM PreK, community-based PreK, school-based PreK, licensing, FOCUS, and Office of Head Start.

IN PROGRESS

Provide regional technical assistance and professional development consultants and embedded mentors.

IN PROGRESS

Strengthen referrals and transitions between programs.

IN PROGRESS

Data, Infrastructure and Analysis

Status

Develop stronger policy and protocol for data sovereignty with Tribes and Nations.

IN PROGRESS

Support Local Early Childhood Systems-Building Coalitions in using Early Development Instrument data to strengthen state-local strategies.

IN PROGRESS

Develop strategies to communicate data projects and other work to the public more broadly.

IN PROGRESS

Use data from child care supply and demand study to support higher education workforce needs.

IN PROGRESS

APPENDIX C

Executive Order 2023-059
in the subsequent pages.



State of New Mexico

Michelle Lujan Grisham
Governor

EXECUTIVE ORDER 2023-059

AMENDED ORDER ESTABLISHING THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE ADVISORY COUNCIL

WHEREAS, the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Pub. L. No. 110-134, § 11(b), 121 Stat. 1363, 1411 (2007) requires the Governor to create a State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care;

WHEREAS, such a council is integral to New Mexico's administration of the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant;

WHEREAS, Governor Susana Martinez, created the Governor's Early Learning Advisory Council to fulfil this role by issuing Executive Order 2018-017;

WHEREAS, the provisions of Executive Order 2018-017 are outdated and inadequate to address the bold priorities of my administration and the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department;

WHEREAS, it is necessary to create a new advisory council with updated duties and responsibilities;

WHEREAS, the creation of a single state Early Childhood Education and Care Department in New Mexico is a significant shift in state governance toward a coordinated system that integrates prenatal-to-five services; and

WHEREAS, a more robust advisory council is necessary to support the development of New Mexico's comprehensive early childhood care system.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Michelle Lujan Grisham, Governor of the State of New Mexico, by the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the Laws of the State of New Mexico do hereby **ORDER** and **DIRECT** as follows:

1. Council Created; Purpose; Department Role: The Early Childhood Education and Care Advisory Council (the “Council”) established by Executive Order 2022-163 is hereby continued, effective immediately. The purpose of the Council is to assess issues relevant to the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department (the “Department”) and advise, inform, and make recommendations to the Secretary of the Department in support of its commitment to create a more cohesive, equitable, and effective early childhood education and care system in New Mexico. The Council’s duties will cover the services, programs, and policies administered by the Department, including those involving other state agencies. The Council recommendations shall be guided by the New Mexico Early Childhood Statewide Strategic Plan and the Department’s agency strategic plan. The Council shall be administratively attached to the Department. The Department shall periodically provide updated strategic priorities for use by the Council, and the Department may seek advice and recommendations when updating its strategic priorities.

2. Duties. The Council shall:

a. Assess the quality and availability of early childhood education and development programs and services for children from birth to school entry;

b. Identify opportunities for, and barriers to, collaboration and coordination among federally funded and state-funded child development, child care, and early

childhood programs and services, including collaboration and coordination among state agencies responsible for administering such programs;

c. Develop recommendations for increasing the overall participation of children in existing publicly supported child care and early childhood education programs, including outreach to underrepresented and special populations;

d. Develop recommendations regarding statewide professional development and career advancement plans for early childhood educators in the State;

e. Assess the capacity and effectiveness of 2- and 4-year public and private institutions of higher education in the State in supporting the development of early childhood educators, including the extent to which such institutions have in place articulation agreements, professional development and career advancement plans, and practice or internships for students to spend time in early childhood education and care programs;

f. Recommend improvements to the State early learning standards;

g. Hold public hearings and provide an opportunity for public comment on the activities described in this section;

h. Provide an annual report on the work of the Council to the Governor the Director of the Children's Cabinet, and the Secretary of the Department, and, subject to approval from the Governor, the Legislature; and

i. Perform any other duties necessary to satisfy the requirements of the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007.

3. Ex Officio Members. The Council shall consist of the following ex officio members, whom shall have the right to vote:

- a. The Director of the Children’s Cabinet, or their designate;
- b. The Secretary of the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department, or their designate;
- c. The Secretary of the New Mexico Public Education Department, or their designate;
- d. The Secretary of the New Mexico Higher Education Department, or their designate;
- e. The Secretary of the New Mexico Department of Health, or their designate;
- f. The Secretary of the New Mexico Human Services Department, or their designate;
- g. The Secretary of the Children, Youth and Families Department, or their designate; and
- h. The Director of the New Mexico Head Start State Collaboration Office, or their designate.

4. Additional Appointed Members. The Governor shall appoint one representative from each of the following entities:

- a. A local educational agency;
- b. A local provider of early childhood education and development services;
- c. A Head Start agency; and
- d. An institution of higher education.

The Governor shall appoint up to eleven additional members to the Council having experience with, or knowledge of, one or more of those the following areas: behavioral health, business, early intervention, economic development, food and nutrition, health care, home visitation, local and tribal government, maternal and child health, parents of young children, philanthropy, public safety, and workforce development.

5. Membership and Meetings:

a. The appointed members in Section 4 shall serve for a term of three years, with staggered terms. To create staggered membership terms, approximately one-half of the members of the initial Council shall be appointed for two years and the remaining members for three years. No such member shall serve more than two consecutive full terms. Any vacancy occurring other than by expiration of term shall be filled by appointment by the Governor for the unexpired term. Appointed members shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor and shall have the same membership rights as ex officio members.

b. The members shall not be compensated for their service, other than per diem allowed under the Per Diem and Mileage Act.

c. The Council shall meet at least six times over the course of the year.

d. The Department Secretary shall designate the Council Chair and Vice Chair.

e. A majority of the members constitutes a quorum for the conduct of business.

The Council shall meet at the call of the chair. The chair shall coordinate the activities of the Council.

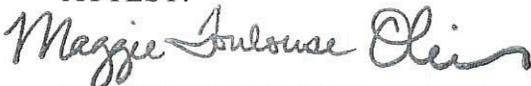
- f. A simple majority vote by the Council is sufficient to approve motions.
- g. The Council may form subcommittees or task forces to facilitate its work.

Subcommittees or task forces and their members shall be approved by the Council and may include persons who are not Council members, but who have an interest or expertise that is relevant to the purpose of the Council.

I FURTHER ORDER and DIRECT as follows:

1. This Order supersedes Executive Order 2022-163, as well as any previous orders, proclamations, or directives to the extent they are in conflict.
2. This Order shall take effect immediately and shall remain in effect until renewed, modified, or rescinded.

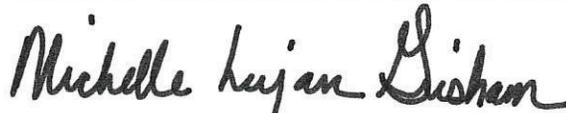
ATTEST:



MAGGIE TOULOUSE OLIVER
SECRETARY OF STATE

DONE AT THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE
THIS 12TH DAY OF MAY 2023

WITNESS MY HAND AND THE GREAT
SEAL OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO



MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM
GOVERNOR

