Welcome
Bienvenidos
Yá’át’ééh
Chào mừng

November 2026 Community Call



New Mexico
Early Childhood
Education & Care Department

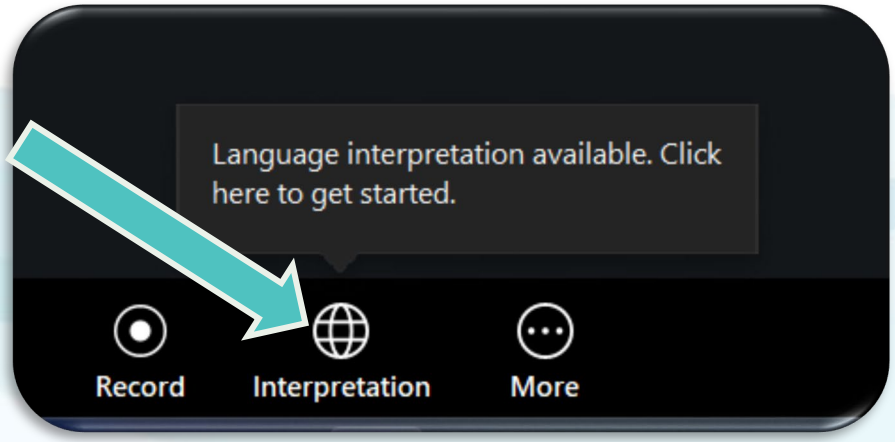
Instrucciones de Interpretación

Inglés > Español

Paso 1: Seleccione el símbolo de interpretación y Elija del menú *Español 2*

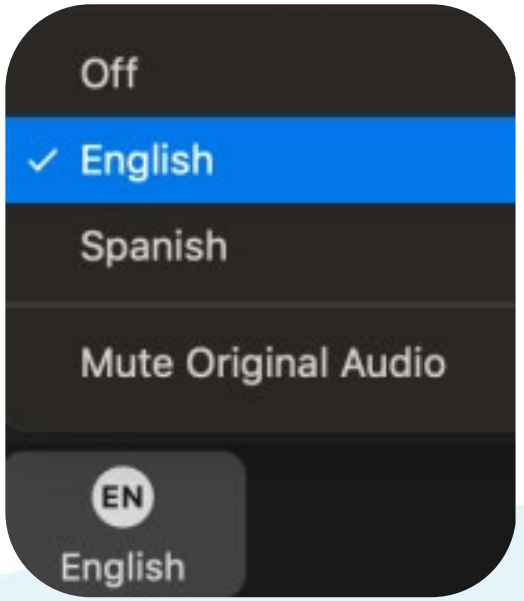
Localize el símbolo de Interpretación

1. Busque el ícono de **Interpretación** (globo) en la barra inferior.
2. Si no lo ve, presione **Más (More)** (…) y seleccione “Interpretation”.
3. En celular, **deslice hacia la izquierda** en la barra inferior para encontrar **Interpretación**.



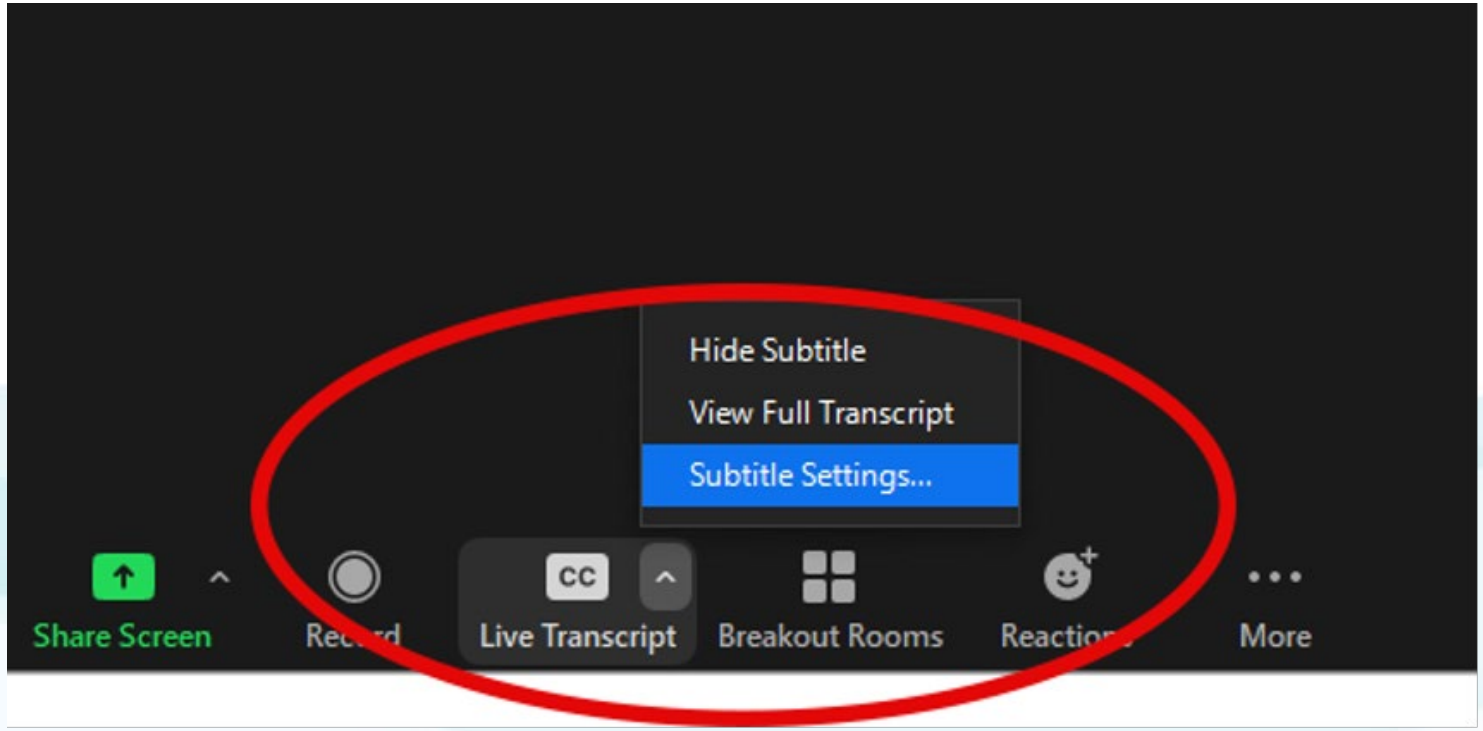
Paso 2 Audio: Elija del menú *en Español*

- Vas a ver el menú; clic “Spanish”
- Si usted prefiere escuchar SOLO Español, también clic “Mute Original Audio” De lo contrario, oirás el español alto y claro y el inglés en voz baja.
- Usted escuchara ahora la interpretación en Español.
- Si eliges “English”, automáticamente escucharás sólo inglés.



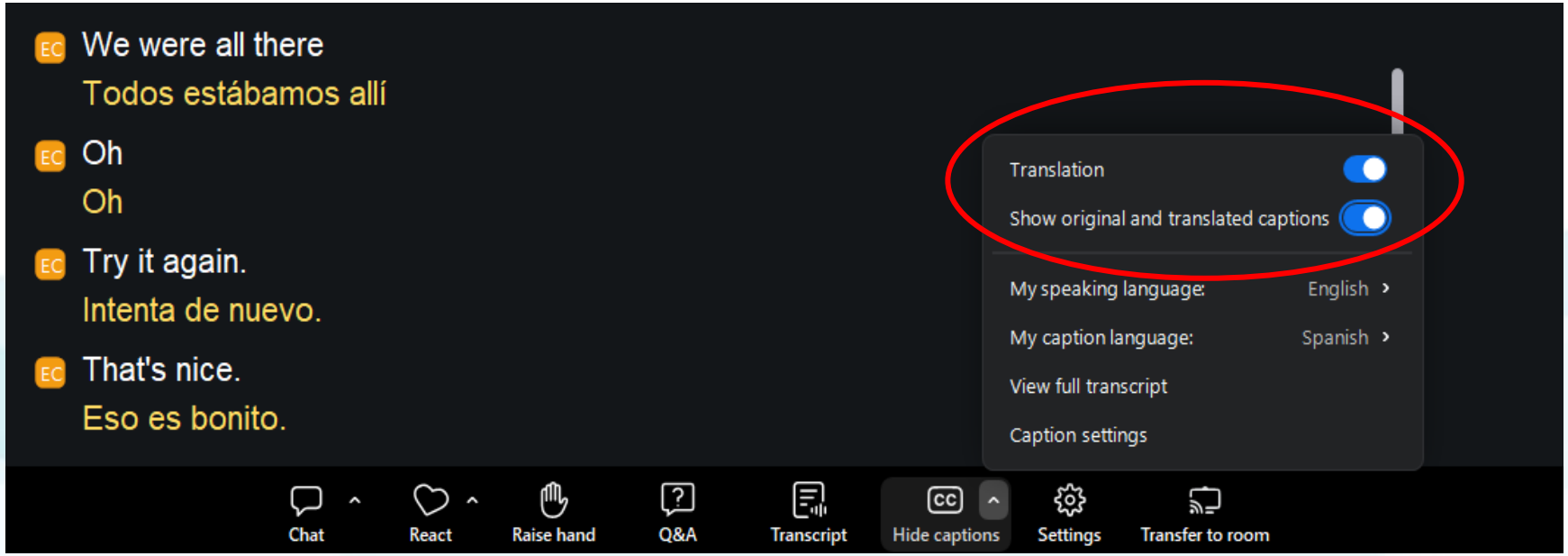
Enable Closed Captions

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



Habilitar subtítulos traducidos

- Vea el botón de Mostrar subtítulos o CC en la barra de herramientas.
- Haga clic en él y elija mostrar subtítulos y subtítulos traducidos para activarlos (o Ocultar subtítulos para desactivarlos).
- Si desea ver solo la traducción, seleccione “traducción”.
- Si prefieres ver los subtítulos originales y los traducidos, selecciona ambas opciones.



Agenda

- Welcome and Spanish Interpretation Instructions – Jaime Bencomo, Deputy Communications Director
- Updates and Announcements – Elizabeth Groginsky, Secretary
- Updates from OAS – Dr. Joannie Suina, Assistant Secretary, Native American Early Childhood Education and Care
- Family Engagement Survey – Dr. Soraya Gallop, Director, Education Initiatives, UNM Project ECHO
- UCC Proud and Early Childhood Champion Campaigns – Kendal Chavez, Deputy Secretary for Policy and Programs
- Health and Wellness Webinar – Jose Gonzalez, Family & Community Engagement Coordinator

Updates and Announcements

Secretary Groginsky



Remembering Carmen P. Lucero



Carmen P. Lucero passed away on Wednesday, Oct. 28, 2026. Carmen, along with her sister, Lupe Nevarez, opened **"The Children's Garden Child Development Center"** in Las Cruces, N.M., in 1997. What began as a small child care center with 12 children grew to a thriving endeavor, providing care for more than 700 children at six locations throughout the greater Las Cruces community. Carmen devoted her life to expanding New Mexico childcare to a higher standard and providing a safe, fun and quality learning environment for children of all ages. Services for Carmen Lucero will begin at 10 a.m., Thursday, Nov. 5, 2026, at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, 1240 S. Espina St., followed by burial at Hillcrest Memorial Garden Cemetery, 5140 W. Picacho Avenue Las Cruces, N.M.

For more, click here to view Carmen's obituary: **Carmen P. Lucero Obituary - Las Cruces Sun-News.** Share condolences by clicking this link: **Obits Memory Board.**

Early Childhood Education and Care Advisory Council

You're invited!
Wednesday, November 18, 2026, from 1–4 p.m.
CNM Workforce Center Room 101
Albuquerque, NM 87113

Can't make it in person? **Join the meeting via Zoom here.**
Zoom Meeting ID: 843 2370 7252

This meeting will cover essential updates on early childhood initiatives, including rulemaking actions, Executive Function, the Child Care Business Calculator, and the Early Development Instrument.

1-Year UCC Anniversary

Key data and Highlights

Families:

- More than 50,000 children now enrolled, up from 33,000 before UCC
- Significant impacts on mothers' labor force participation and economic autonomy

Programs and Supply:

- Since UCC announcement, care capacity is up 9% and the number of providers is up 14%
- Reversed longstanding decline in registered homes, which are now increasing

Early Childhood Professionals:

- Child care wages up 65% since 2019—the highest of any state
- Size of the child care workforce up 64% since 2019, as the national child care workforce shrunk

Proposed Rulemaking: 8.9.3 & 8.9.4 NMAC (1 of 4)

- ECECD is proposing amendments to 8.9.3 NMAC and 8.9.4 NMAC.
- Important Dates:
  - **Public Notice:** November 3, 2026.
  - **Public Comment Period:** November 3 – December 3, 2026.
  - **Public Rule Hearing:** December 3, 2026, 9 a.m. – 11 a.m.
- Submit public comment via email, mail, or at the public hearing.
  - **Email:** ECECD-ECS-PublicComment@ececd.nm.gov .
  - **Mail:** PO. Drawer 5619, Santa Fe, NM 87502-5619.
- Attend the public rule hearing:
  - **Virtual:** https://nmececdorg.zoom.us/j/81019322296
  - **In-person:** Apodaca Hall at 1120 Paseo de Peralta, Santa Fe, NM 87502.

Proposed Rulemaking: 8.9.3 & 8.9.4 NMAC (2 of 4)

- **Key Proposed Changes to 8.9.3 NMAC:**
  - Replaces percentage-based copayments with fixed monthly amounts based on household income.
  - Introduces a gradual copayment progression across income levels, reducing sharp increases at 600% and 900% FPL.
  - Establishes separate copayment amounts for families with one child and families with two or more children in care.
- A copayment FAQ will be available on ECECD's website to help families and providers understand copayments and how it may affect families.

Proposed Rulemaking: 8.9.3 & 8.9.4 NMAC (3 of 4)

- **Proposed Copayment Schedule:**

FPL Percent Income Increments	Monthly Copayment Amount for a Family with One Child in Care	Monthly Copayment Amount for a Family with Two or More Children in Care
0.00 to 150.00	$0	$0
150.01 to 250	$2	$3
250.01 to 600	$4	$6
600.01 to 650	$15	$22.50
650.01 to 700	$25	$37.50
700.01 to 750	$35	$52.50
750.01 to 800	$45	$67.50
800.01 to 850	$55	$82.50
850.01 to 900	$65	$97.50
900.01 to 950	$75	$112.50
950.01 to 1000	$85	$127.50
1000.01 and higher	$99	$148.50

Proposed Rulemaking: 8.9.3 & 8.9.4 NMAC (4 of 4)

- **Key Proposed Changes to 8.9.4 NMAC:**
  - Aligns licensed home requirements with Senate Bill 96, effective July 1, 2026.
  - **Zoning Designation:** Licensed home applicants must submit proof of the zoning designation for the licensed home location, not written zoning approval.
  - **Fire Authority Approval**: Removes the requirement for licensed home applicants to obtain written approval from the State Fire Marshal or another applicable fire prevention authority other than ECECD.
  - **Applicant Responsibility:** Licensed home applicants are responsible for knowing and following all applicable rules and ordinances related to operating their business.
- Copies of the proposed rule amendments will be available on ECECD's website at www.nmececd.org/regulation-changes/ 30 days prior to the public rule hearing.

FOCUS Redesign Timing

- Over the past three years, ECECD has worked alongside the early childhood community to redesign FOCUS so it reflects what quality early care and education looks like across New Mexico.
- As part of its responsibility to ensure continuity across administrations, ECECD is preparing to share with the incoming administration the work completed to date, the input and recommendations of the provider community and other stakeholders, and potential next steps for implementation and rulemaking.
- Because the FOCUS redesign is a significant, long-term initiative, the department will coordinate future rulemaking with the incoming administration to ensure alignment with the priorities and direction established after the January 2027 transition.

Updates from the Office of the Assistant Secretary

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

New Mexico
Early Childhood
Education & Care Department



Sacred Roots, Sovereign Futures Convening

November 19 – 20, 2026, Ohkay Owingeh Convention Center



This statewide convening will bring together the Nations, Pueblos, and Tribes of New Mexico; state and federal partners; early childhood professionals; families; and community leaders to advance Native early childhood education, strengthen Tribal sovereignty, and foster meaningful collaboration.

Day 1: Vision, Leadership and Sovereignty

Day 2: Program Innovation and Collaboration

Happy Native American Heritage Month



Scan the QR Code to Register for Sacred Roots, Sovereign Futures Convening.

Click here to view the 2026 State-Tribal Collaboration Act Report

Scan the QR Code or click here to watch the Alax’s episode where we learn about the importance of preserving Indigenous languages for future generations.



What New Mexico Families Told Us:

Findings from the 2026 Family Engagement and Satisfaction Survey

Soraya Gollop PhD, Director of Education Initiatives
ECHO Institute, University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center

UNM HEALTH SCIENCES

Project ECHO®

Five Years, One Story, Our Community Effort

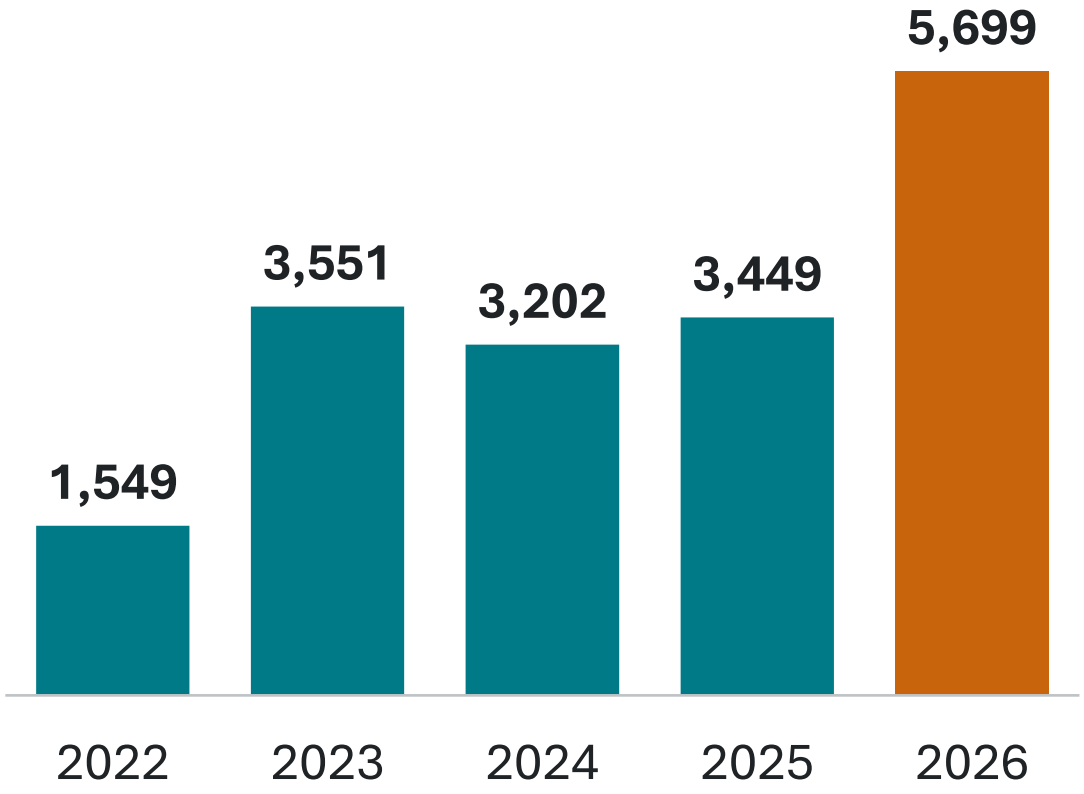
5,699

families responded in 2026, the most in five years

Up from 1,549 in 2022

Thank you. We could not have done this without the Early Childhood Community in New Mexico.

Survey responses by year, 2022–2026



Families Told Us These Programs Make a Difference

93%

of families reported a positive impact on well-being

Up from 84% in 2022, and every program held steady or improved. Thank you for the care, outreach, and relationships behind that number.

UNM HEALTH SCIENCES Project ECHO

What Families Told Us Is Working

Key findings at a glance

38% of child care families named affordability as a most valuable aspect, up from 26% in 2023

29% of CCA/UCC families said the program let them work, add hours, or take a promotion

61% of NM PreK families felt their child was ready for kindergarten and excited to learn

52% of FIT families felt more confident helping their child grow and learn

71% of Home Visiting families said their home visitor met their family's needs, the highest-rated outcome in the survey

53% of the ways families learned about programs were trusted messengers: providers, family, health care, schools

Where Families Still Face Gaps

Key findings at a glance

23% of families with unmet child care needs said care isn't available in their area (a new answer option in 2026)

46% of rural families still paying for child care can’t find a provider participating in the Child Care Assistance program (14% metro)

18% of preschool families said wait times were too long, a five-year high

18% families worrying often or always about housing is up from 14% in 2025

Families answered

3 types of questions

What do you know about programs?

How have they affected your family?

Where do you still face barriers?

In 5 program areas

Program area	Responses
Child care services	**3,376**
New Mexico PreK (NM PreK)	**2,917**
Child Care Assistance / Universal Child Care (CCA/UCC)	**2,792**
Home Visiting	**1,026**
Family Infant Toddler (FIT) program	**945**

Putting the Numbers in Context

Who answered

5,699 parents and caregivers using ECECD services in 2026, reached through providers, partners, and social media. Every county and Tribal community was represented.

Who it reflects

Families already connected to the early childhood system. It is not a random sample of New Mexico families, and change over time can reflect who responded.

What it measures

Self-reported awareness, experience, and barriers. It does not measure enrollment, attendance, or child outcomes from administrative data.

What changed in 2026

Universal Child Care began mid-cycle. A new barrier option, 'not available in my area,' was added. The sample grew 65% over 2025.



Awareness of Programs

HEALTH SCIENCES

Project ECHO

Awareness of All Programs Is Broad and Gaps in Awareness Between Groups Are Narrowing

Awareness rose for eight of nine programs from 2025 to 2026.

The gap between the most- and least-aware families narrowed for nearly every program.

Native American families gained 8 to 12 points in awareness of Home Visiting and the FIT program.

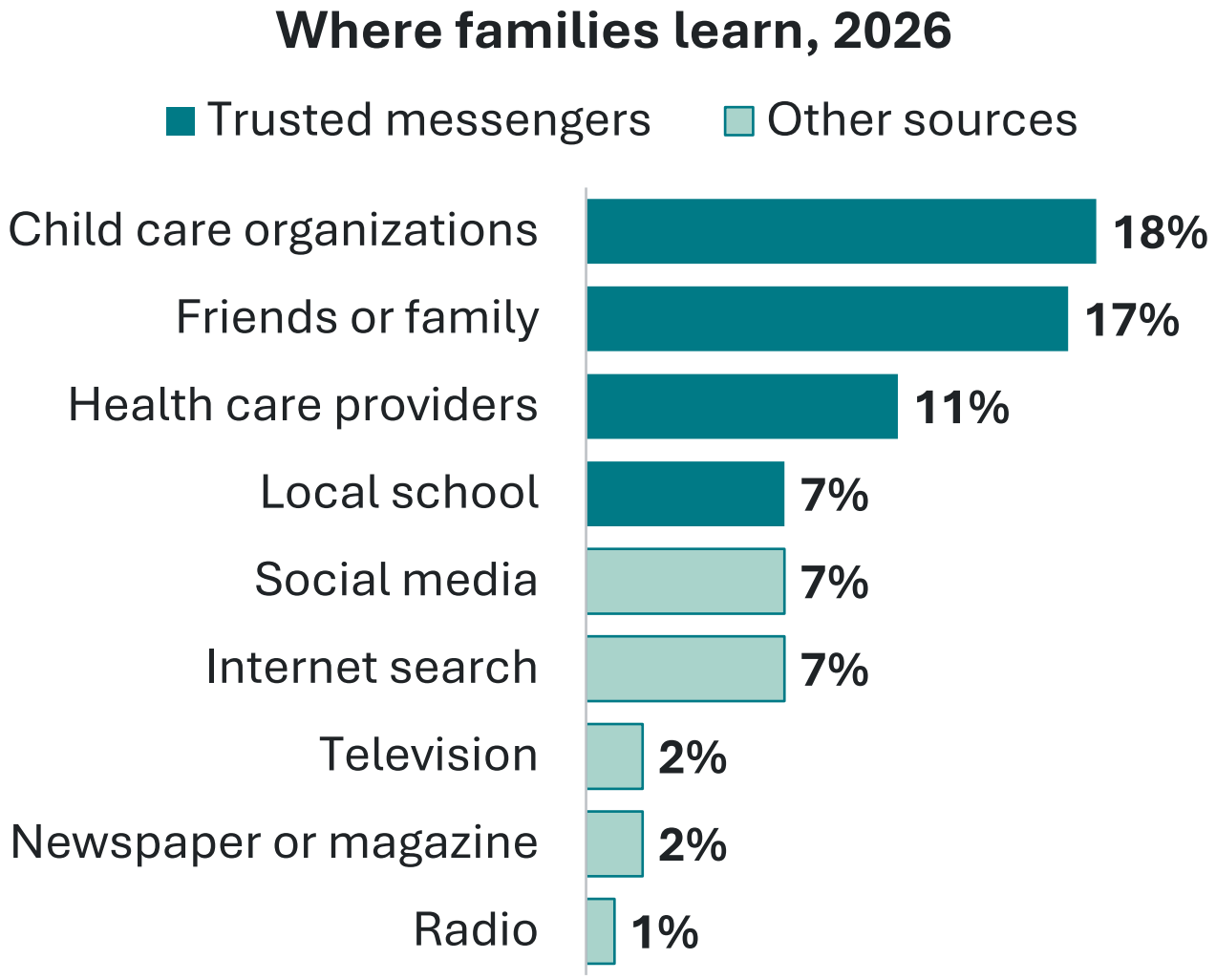
One area to watch: the CCA/UCC awareness gap widened as the expansion drew attention from newly eligible families.

Families Learn About Programs From You

For the first time, child care organizations were the most-cited source of program information, at 18%.

Trusted messengers—providers, friends and family, health care, and schools—made up 53% of all sources.

Relationship-based outreach continues to outperform advertising.





Impacts of Programs on Families

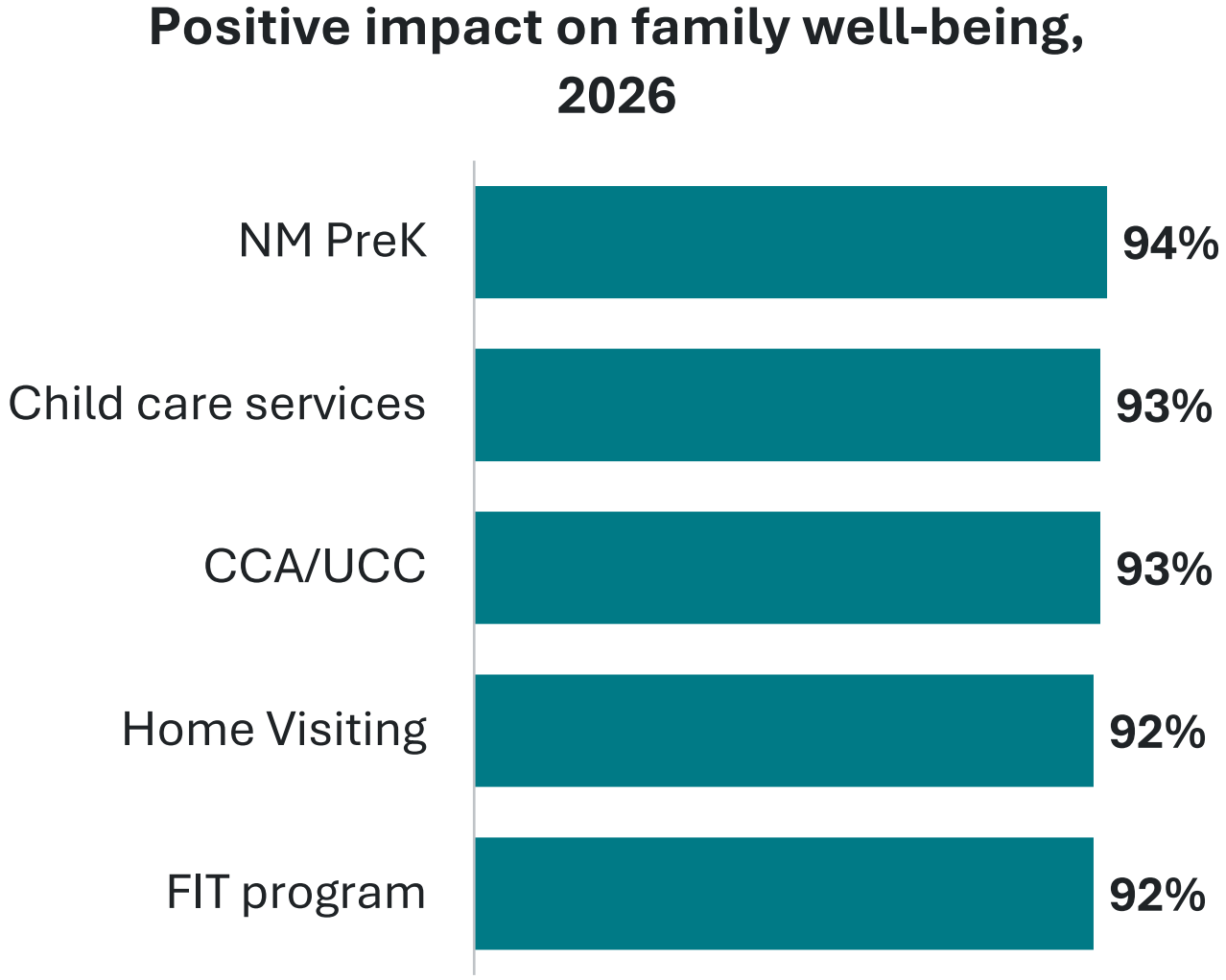
HEALTH SCIENCES

Project ECHO

We Heard the Strongest Well-Being Impacts in Five Years

Across the five core programs, 93% of families reported a positive impact on well-being, up from 84% in 2022.

For the first time, every program held steady or improved from the prior year.





Reliable Care, Brighter Futures

Impact of Child Care Services in New Mexico

“[Child care] provided a safe space for my child so we could work.”

— Survey respondent, 2026

“We unexpectedly became full-time caregivers for our infant granddaughter while we both worked full time. It has been a lifesaver, and I wish it had been an option when my children were younger.”

— Survey respondent, 2026

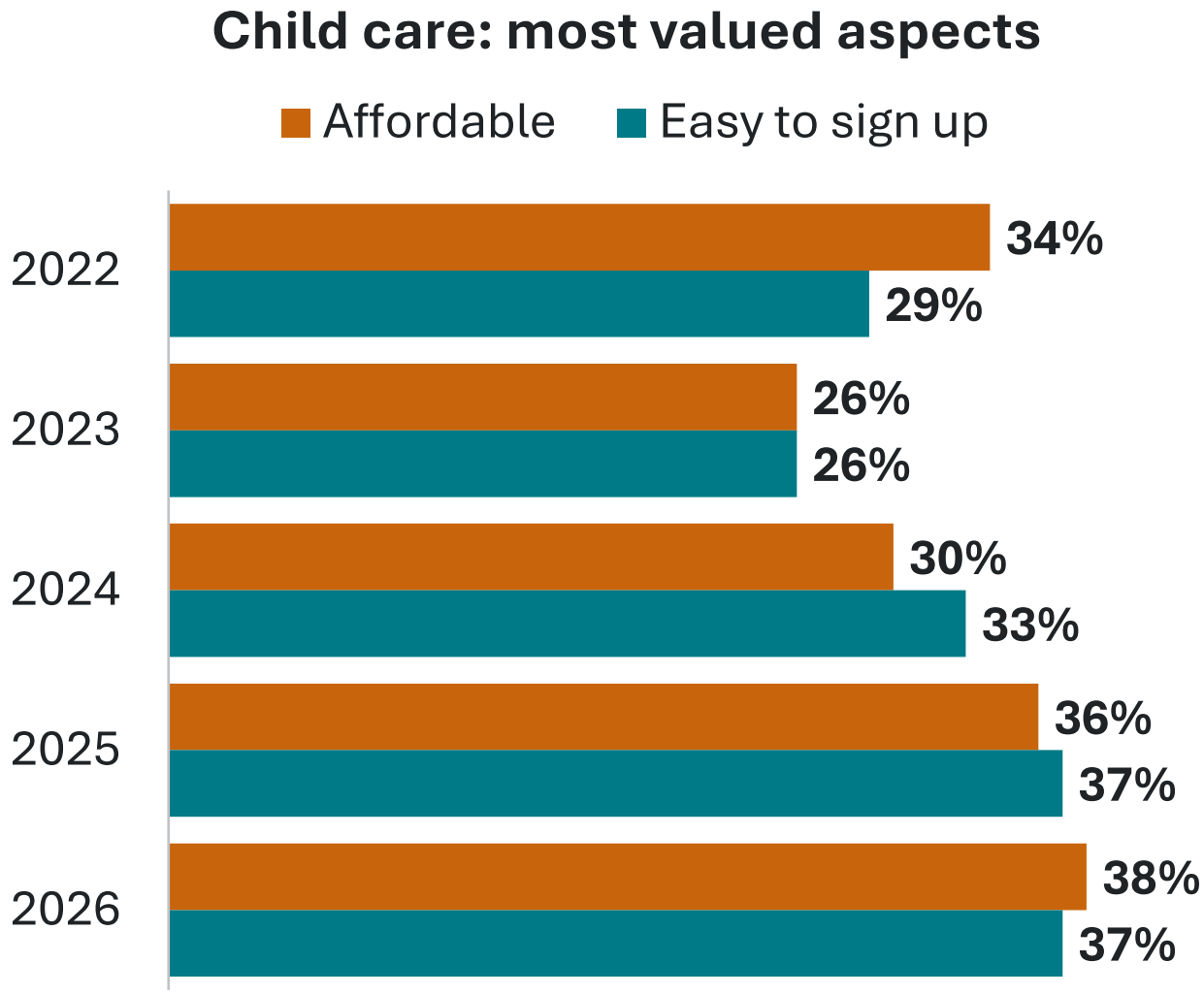
Child Care Has Become More Affordable and Easier to Use

Families using child care services were asked what was most valuable about the services they used.

Affordability has climbed every year since 2023, from 26% to 38%.

Ease of signing up rose from 26% to 37% over the same period.

In 2026, 46% said no improvements were needed.



Care for Today. Opportunity for Tomorrow.

The Impact of Universal Child Care in NM

“Removed the stigma I had before of feeling embarrassed to apply. Now all of my friends use it.”

— Survey respondent, 2026

“For years, I was terrified of getting a raise. If I made just a little more, I would lose my child care subsidy and the new private pay rate would be more than the raise itself. Now that the program is universal, I finally accepted the management position. I’m actually bringing home more money for my family instead of just working to pay the daycare bill. It feels like the glass ceiling in my career was finally shattered.”

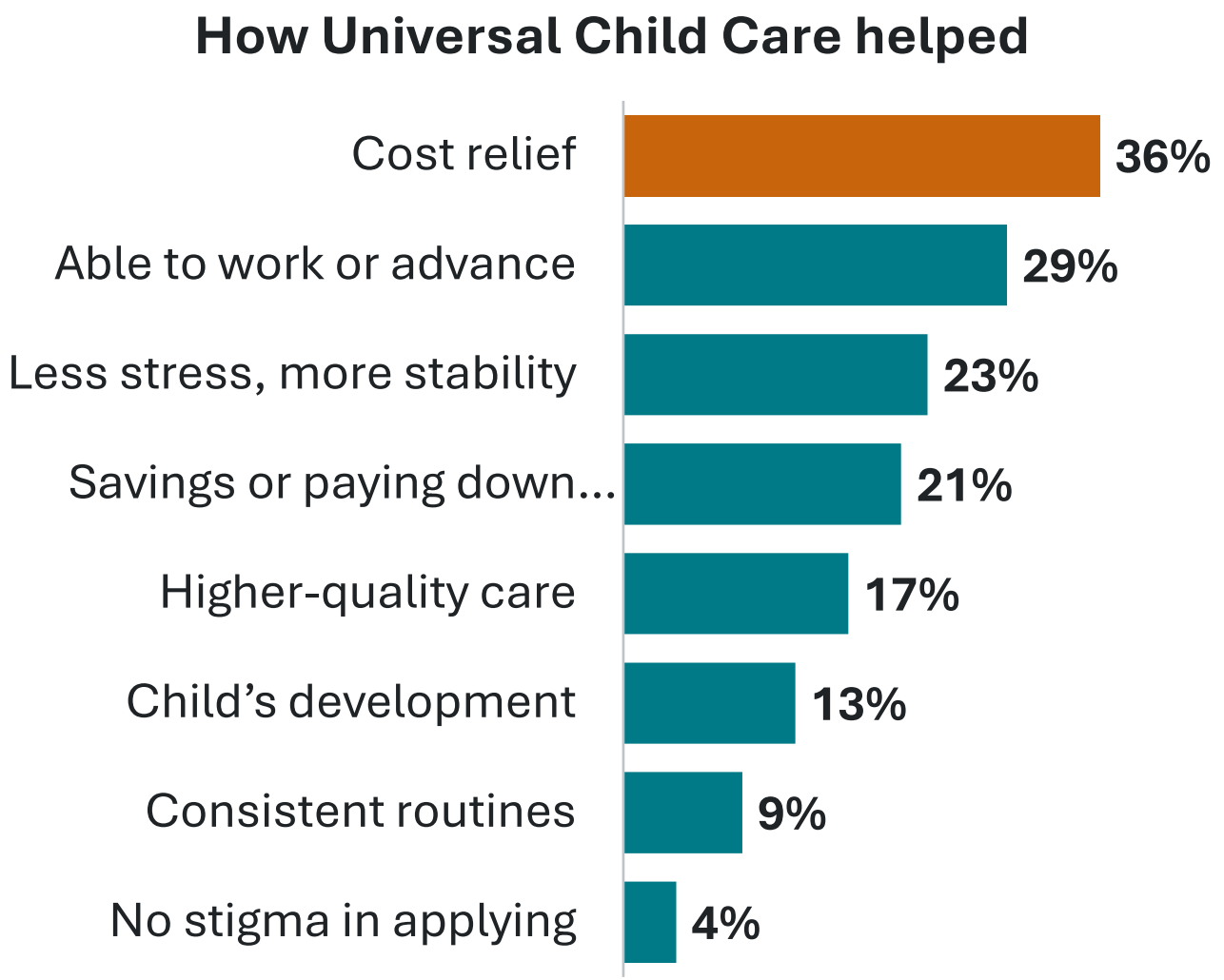
— Survey respondent, 2026

How Universal Child Care Changed Family Life

Nearly 2,000 CCA/UCC families described in their own words how the program affected them.

Cost relief led by a wide margin, but nearly one in three families connected the program to a job, more hours, or a promotion.

Only 1% raised a concern, most often waitlists or care for children with disabilities.





Improving School Readiness

The Impact of New Mexico PreK

“The program prepared our child for kindergarten, so the transition into elementary school did not come as a shock. Our child had a smooth transition and did not struggle to keep up with the lesson plan.”

— Survey respondent, 2026

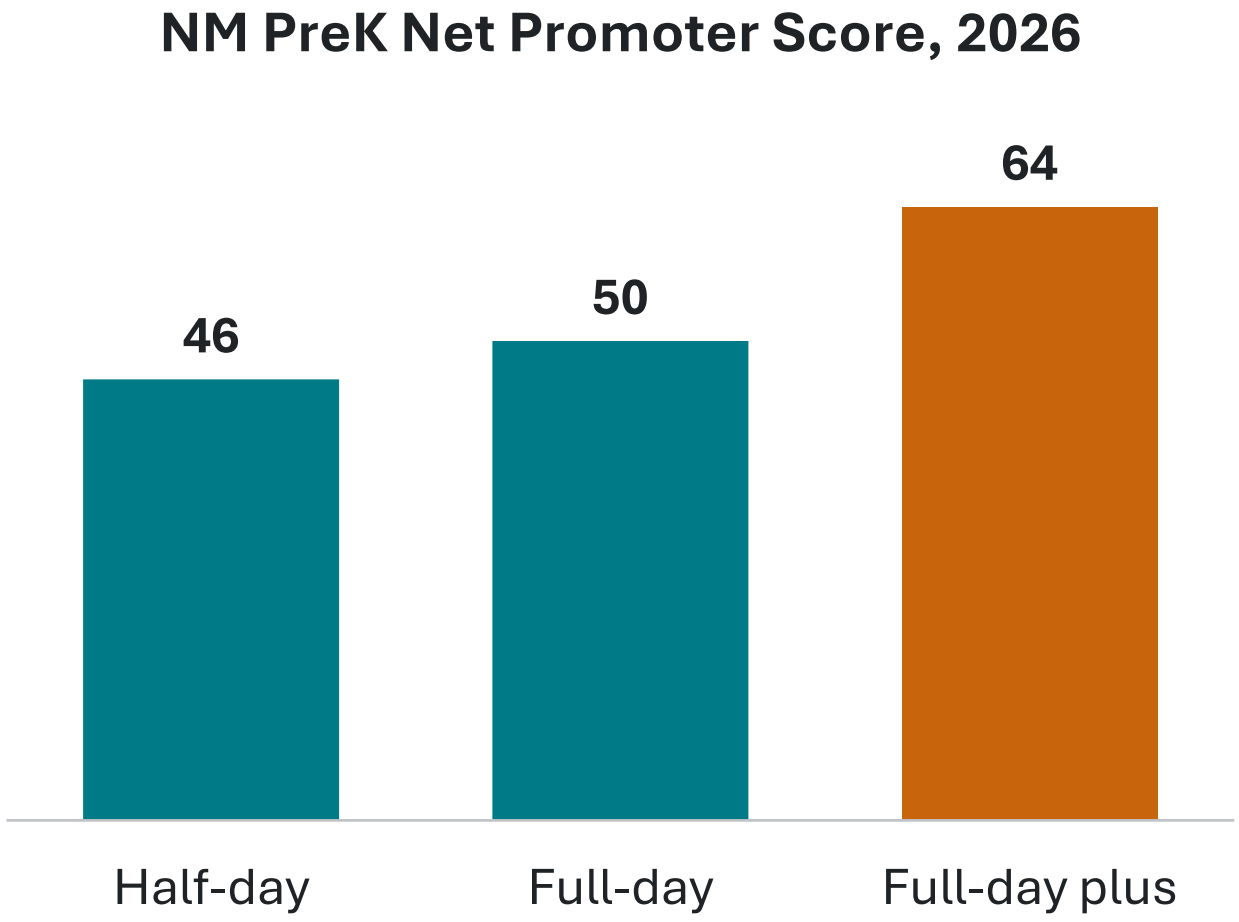
“NM PreK made our lives better by helping our child learn and grow while supporting and respecting our nontraditional family structure and culture.”

— Survey respondent, 2026

Families Recommend Preschool More When the Day Is Longer

Families with longer preschool schedules recommended the program more.

In 2026, 13% of NM PreK families had a full-day plus schedule; 53% had full-day and 37% half-day.





Strong Starts, Bright Futures

The Impact of the Family Infant Toddler Program in NM

“The FIT program helped me understand my child in a way I hadn’t before. Instead of feeling overwhelmed, I finally felt like I had tools that actually worked for our everyday life.”

— Survey respondent, 2026

“It helped us understand how to better connect with my child, as he wasn’t the expressive type.”

— Survey respondent, 2026

FIT's Strongest Outcomes Are for Caregivers

945 FIT families told us what was most valuable about the program.

The outcomes at the top are about the caregiver: confidence, trust, and connection.

Watching their child make progress was valued by 46%, and 46% learned to share their child's needs with teachers, providers, and doctors.

52%

felt more confident helping their child grow and learn

49%

trusted the people who visited and answered their questions

48%

felt closer to their child by learning new ways to help them



From the Very First Days

The Impact of Home Visiting

“On the day of the first visit, I was very nervous someone was going to come into my home and see that I wasn’t able to handle being a mom…but the opposite happened. In one visit, my home visitor had boosted my spirits…I learned different ways to interact with my baby to help her develop.”

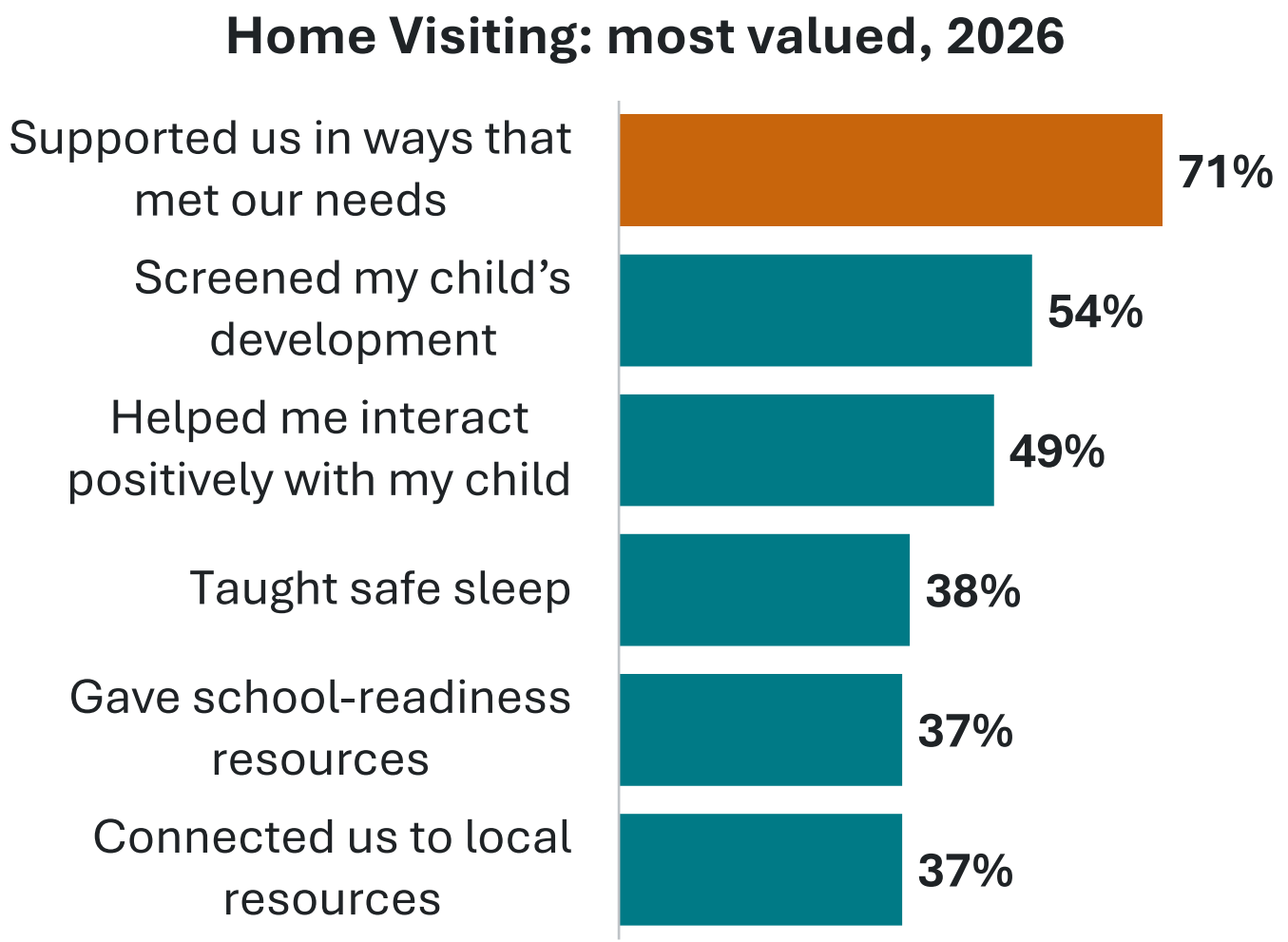
— Survey respondent, 2026

Home Visitors Meet Families Where They Are

1,026 Home Visiting families told us what mattered most.

Support that met their family's needs was the single highest-rated outcome of any program in the survey, at 71%.

Developmental screening and guidance on positive interaction followed.





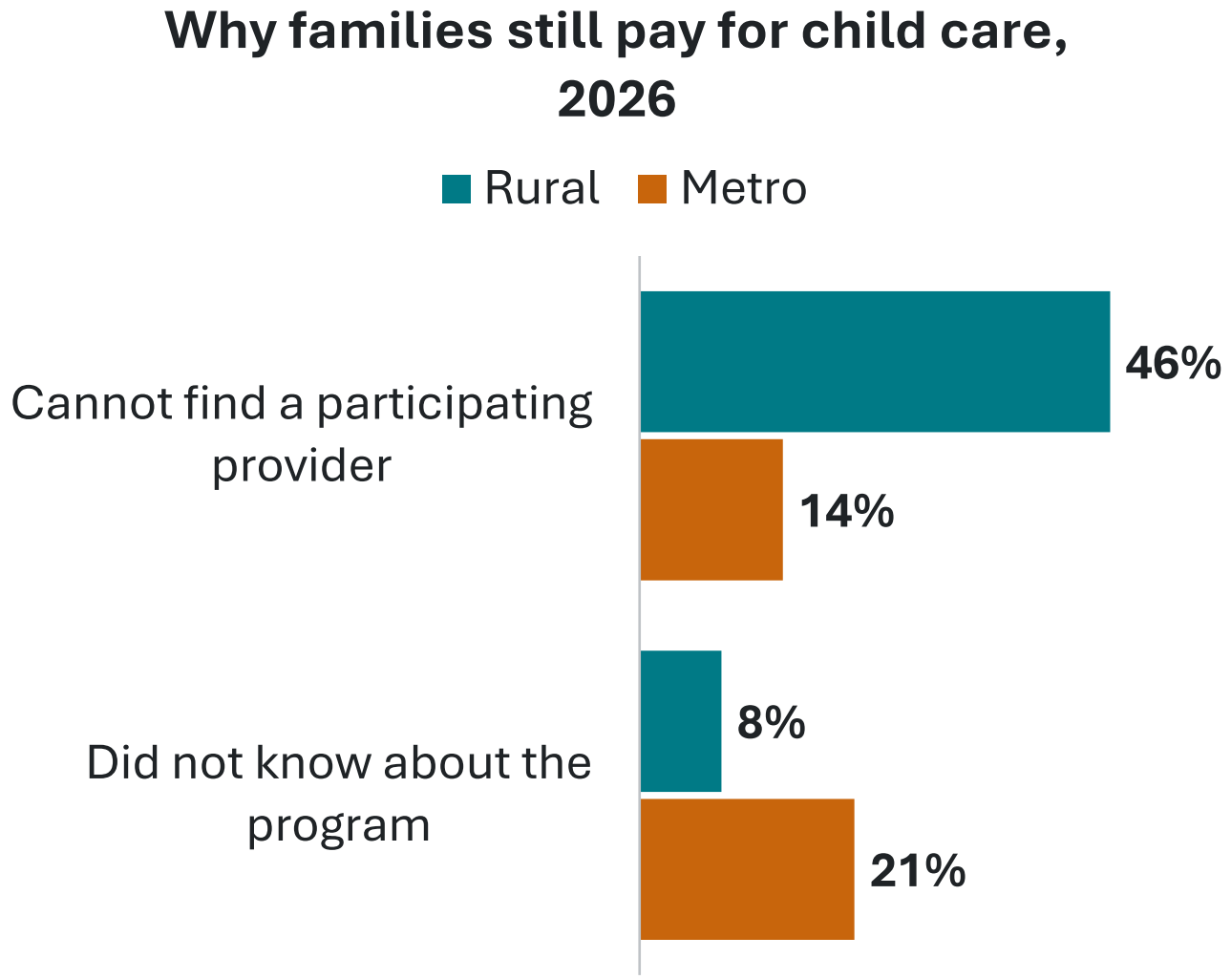
Barriers Families Face

Primary Barriers to Accessing UCC Are Structural

Roughly four in five families using child care for young children are enrolled in CCA/UCC.

Among families still paying, the leading barrier is a provider who does not participate.

Rural and Metro areas have different barriers

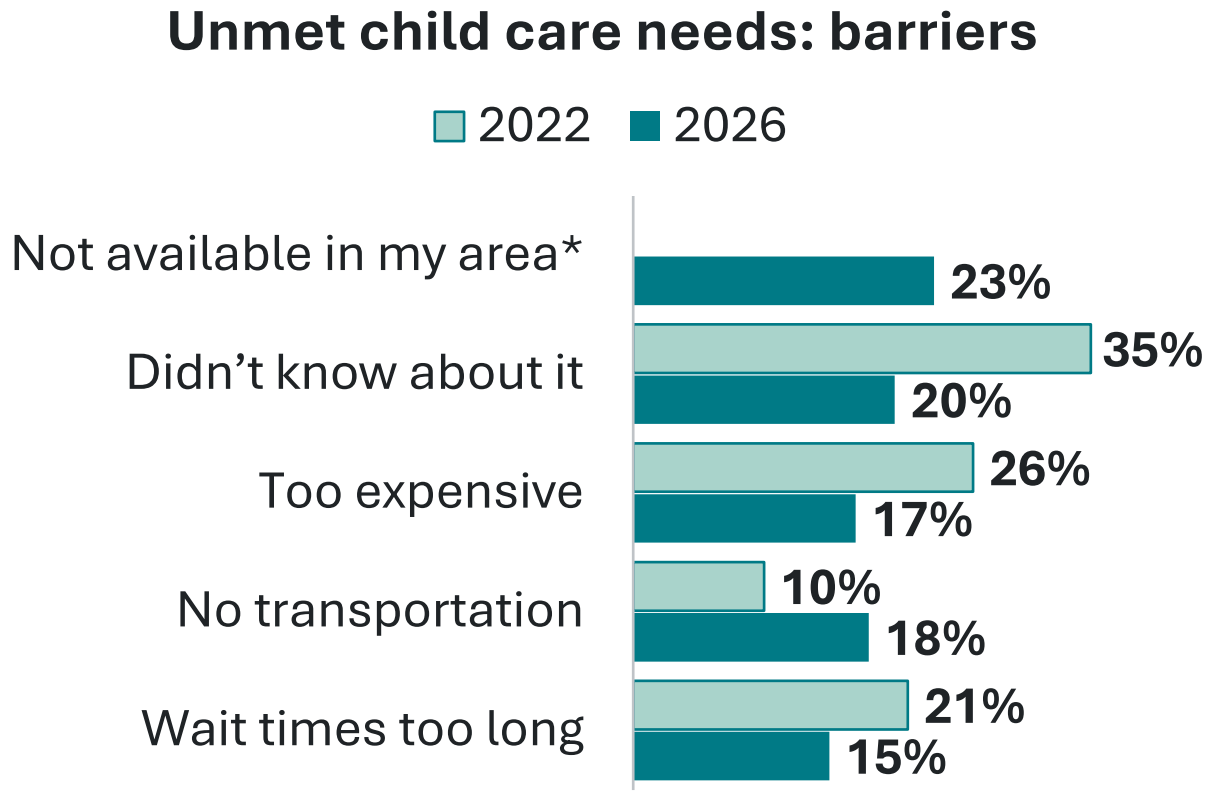


For Families Still Waiting, Supply Is Now the Leading Gap

565 families said they needed child care they could not get.

In 2026, the most common reason was that care was not available in their community, a new option cited by 23%.

Not knowing about services fell to its lowest level in five years.
Transportation rose to its highest.



*New response option in 2026

Families Face Rising Pressure Outside of ECECD Programs

Families who worried often or always about basic needs, 2025 to 2026

18%
Housing
up from 14% in 2025

19%
Health care
up from 17% in 2025

23%
Child care
eased from 25% in 2025

16%
Food
held steady from 2025

Across all four areas, between 58% and 72% of families reported at least some worry during the year.

Where 2026 Moved the Wrong Way

Four findings moved against the trend, 2025 to 2026

–10 pts
Special education
families saying no improvements were needed fell from 43% to 33%

–31 pts
Early Head Start
Net Promoter Score fell from 56 to 25, the steepest drop of any program

–5 pts
CCA/UCC
Net Promoter Score slipped from 58 to 53 during the expansion; 2023 was 31

5-year high
Transportation
as a barrier reached its highest level in every program area

Some of these coincide with sample growth or program change, and we should interpret them as directional, rather than quantitatively.

Where to Find the Reports

Program Snapshots

Two-page summaries for families and community members.

Summary Report

Findings most relevant to policy and program decisions.

Full Findings Report

Complete findings and methodology.

Thank You to the Early Childhood Community

Prepared by Project ECHO Institute at the University of New Mexico in collaboration with the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department with outreach and design support from MediaDesk



UCC Proud and Early Childhood Champions

Deputy Secretary Chavez

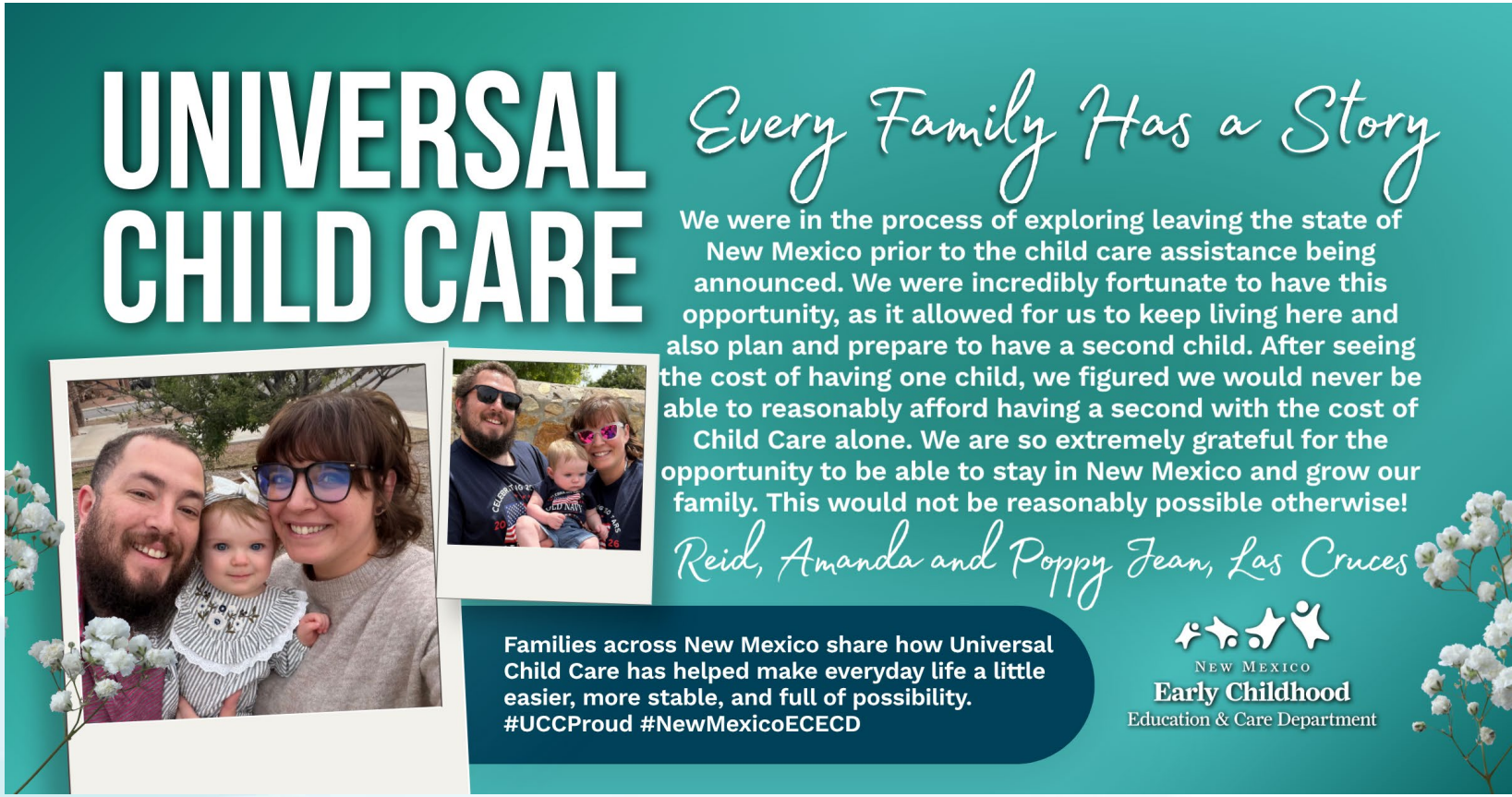


The ‘#UCCProud’ Campaign is Live

Get ready to share what makes you #UCCProud!

Every family has a story. We have launched a campaign celebrating the families and communities behind **Universal Child Care (UCC)**.

Community members are invited to share their experiences and tell their own #UCCProud story.



Be Part of the Story





Turn your audio up to hear Madeline's Story!

Are you #UCCProud?

Early Childhood Champions



Do you know an early childhood champion?

Start thinking about someone whose dedication deserves recognition.

Nominations will open
November 11, 2026
Nominations will close
November 25, 2026

This is your opportunity to submit nominations of early childhood professionals who are making a difference in communities across New Mexico.

Health and Wellness Webinar

ECECD's Family and Community Engagement Team invites you to our next Health and Wellness Webinar, "Strengthening Literacy at Home: Engagement & Family Literacy Initiatives," presented by Amber Gallup from the Higher Education Department.

- Wednesday, November 4, 2026, from 12–1 p.m.
- Via Zoom, with Spanish interpretation available
- No registration required
- Participants may request a certificate of completion



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

NMECECD.org

800-832-1321

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Santa Fe, NM
87502-5619

@NewMexicoECECD

ECECD's bi-weekly newsletter delivers agency announcements, resource, training opportunities, and upcoming events straight to your inbox. Join our monthly Community Call (held the first Tuesday of each month) for updates and engagement.

Sign up at nmececd.org/newsroom or click here.

New Mexico
Early Childhood
Education & Care Department

Next Community Call

Tuesday, December 1, 2026

Questions?

Email: ececd.communications@state.nm.us

Website: nmececd.org

Thank you for your attention!

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