



NEW MEXICO
LEGISLATIVE
FINANCE
COMMITTEE

New Mexico's Child Welfare System

Legislative Finance Committee
Child Welfare Sub-Committee
June 11, 2024



Road Map

- Current situation: key data and child welfare trends
- Overview of how the child welfare system is organized and funded
- Levers for improving the system: evidence-based prevention and intervention



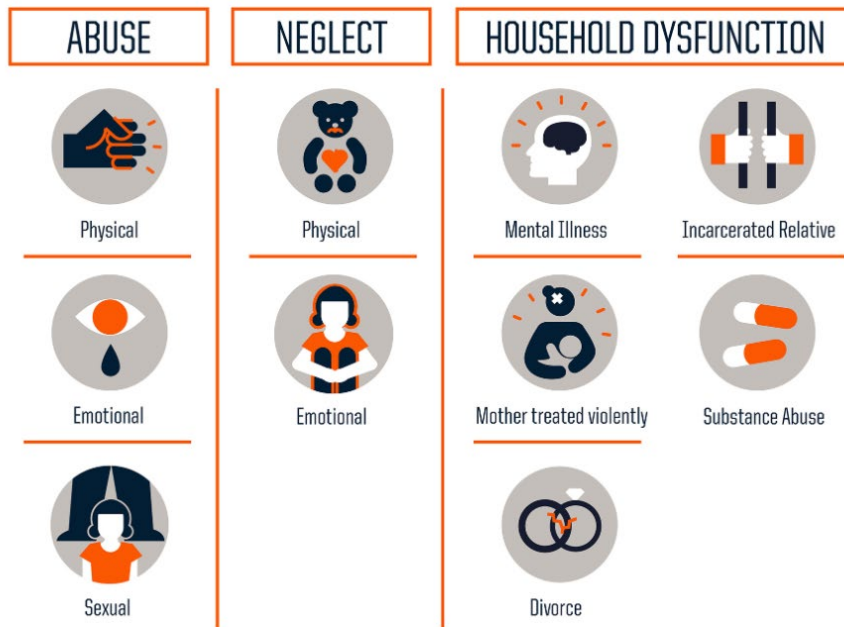


Child Welfare Trends in New Mexico



New Mexico Risk Factors and ACEs

Three Types of ACEs



New Mexico has the highest rate of adults with adverse childhood experiences; nearly 25% have experience 4 or more ACEs.

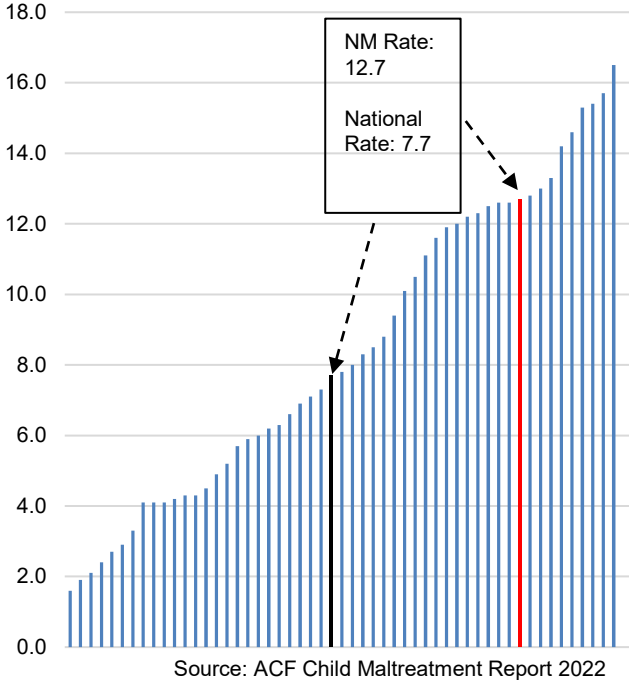
Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Credit: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation



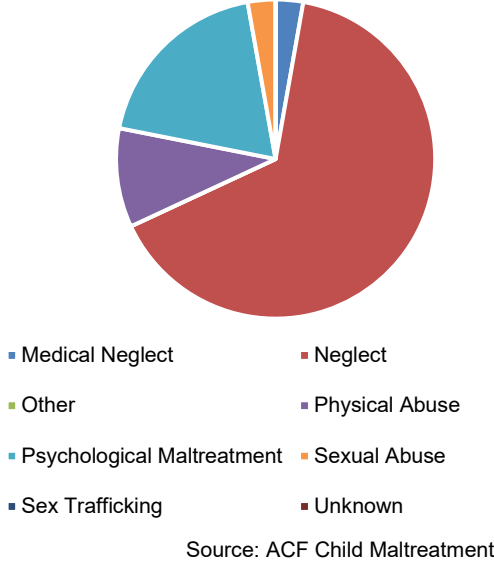
Child Maltreatment in New Mexico

The federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) defines child abuse and neglect (maltreatment) as *"any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caregiver that results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation, or an act or failure to act that presents an imminent risk of serious harm."*

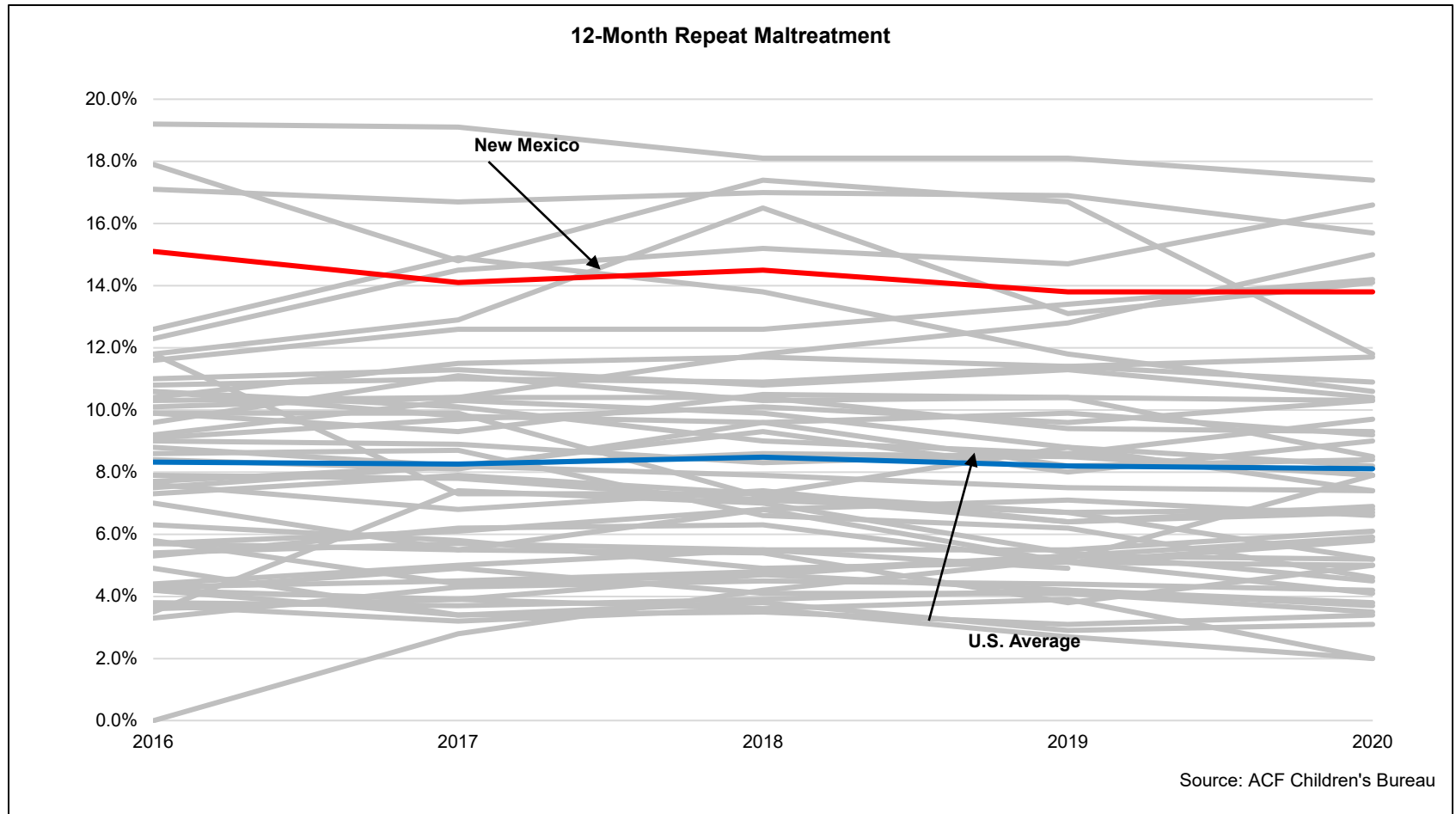
Rate of Child Maltreatment per 1,000 Children 2022



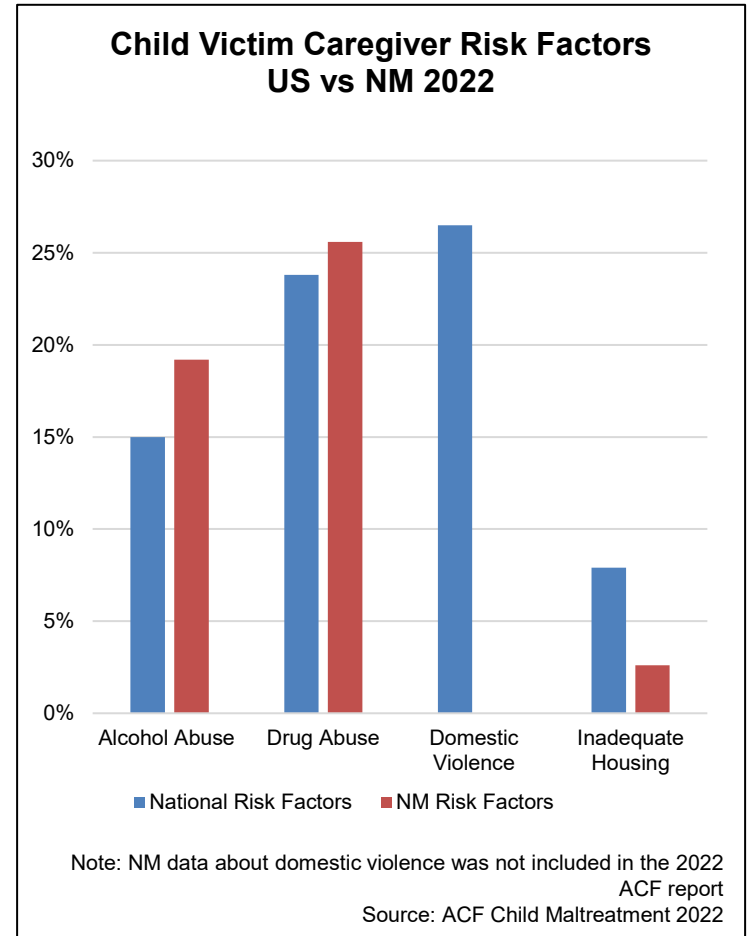
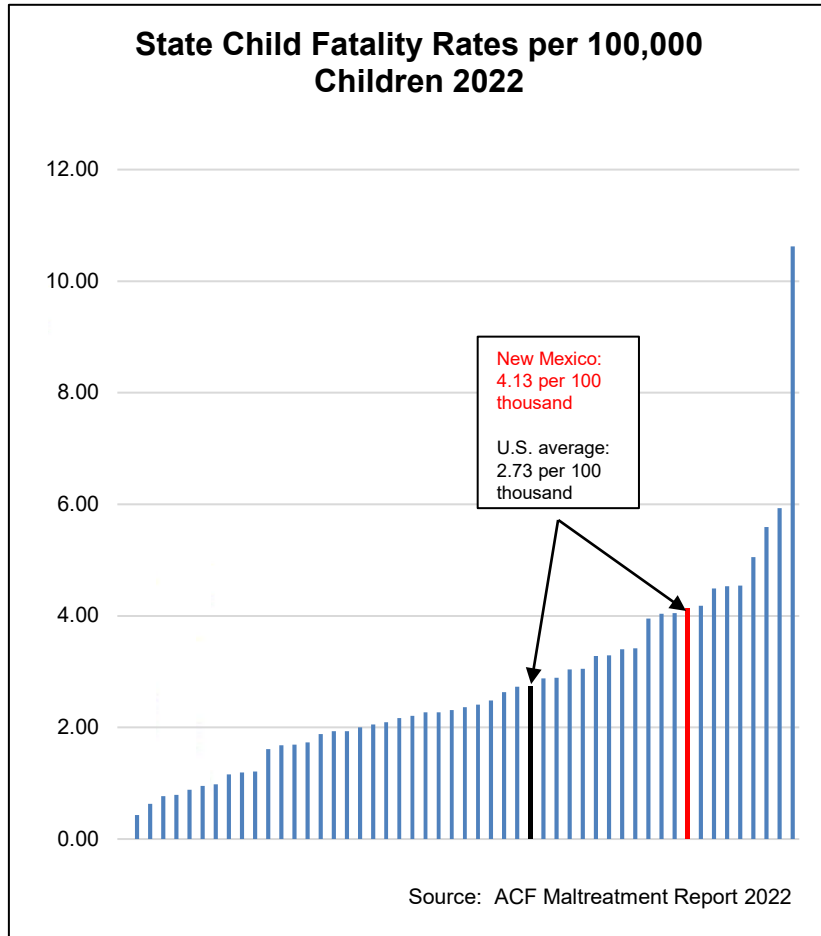
Maltreatment Types Among Child Victims 2022



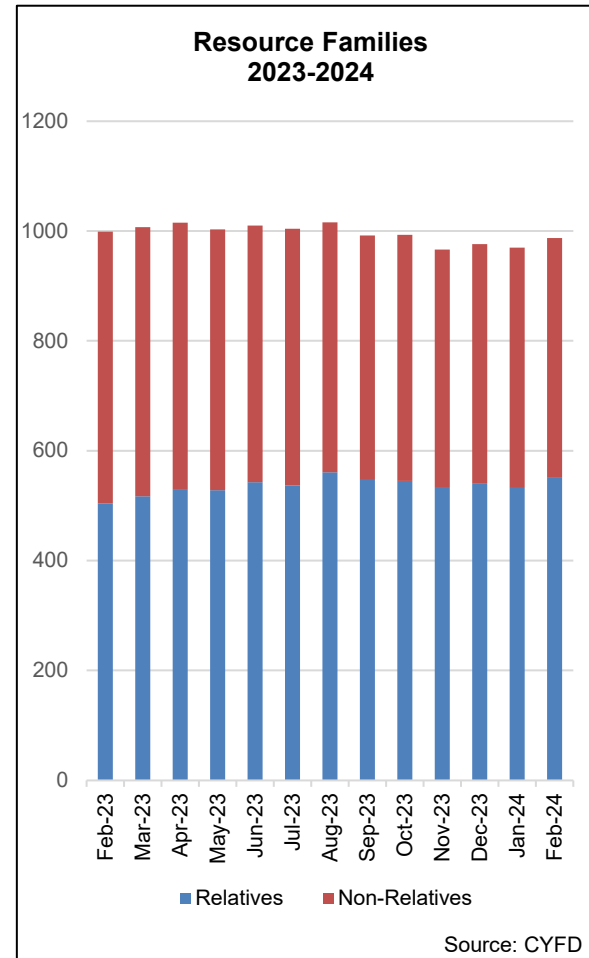
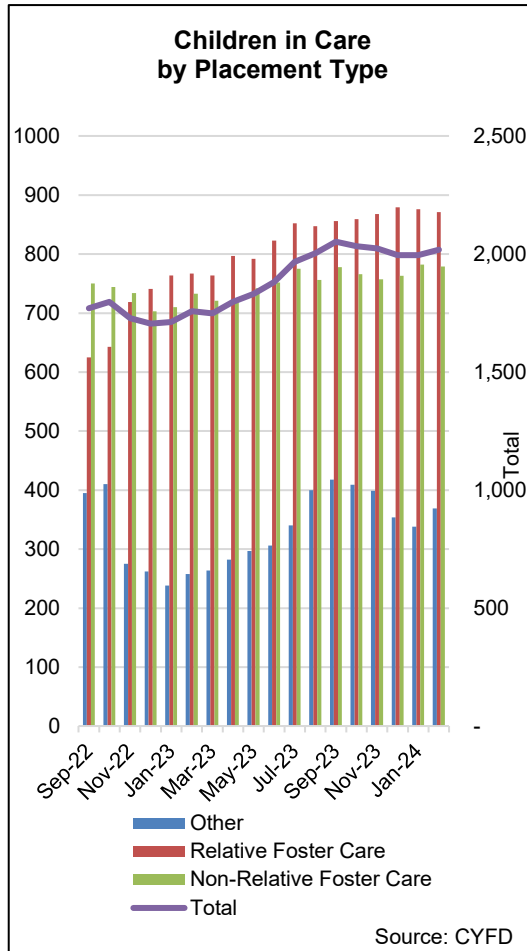
Repeat Child Maltreatment in New Mexico



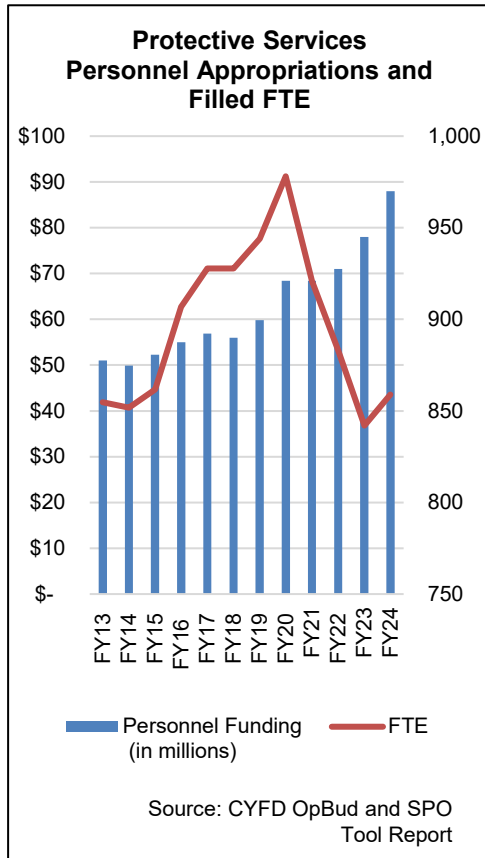
Child Maltreatment in New Mexico



Foster Care Trends



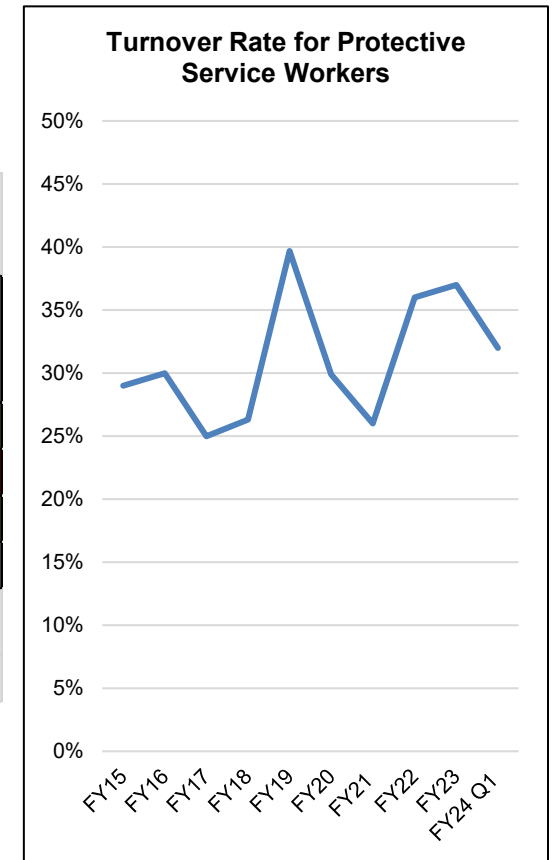
CYFD: Protective Services Workforce



Protective Services Caseload Estimates February 2024

	Benchmark	Average Caseload as of February 2024
Investigations	12 Active Cases	10
Permanency Planning	15 Children	18
Placement	25 Families	16
In-Home Services	8 Active Families	No Estimate

*Caseload estimates reported in the aggregate. Individual caseloads may vary.
Source: CYFD





How is the Child Welfare System Organized?





Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework

Primary

Serves the General Population

State Agency: ECECD, PED, DOH, HCA

Secondary

Serves Families with More Risk Factors

State Agency: ECECD, CYFD, PED, HCA

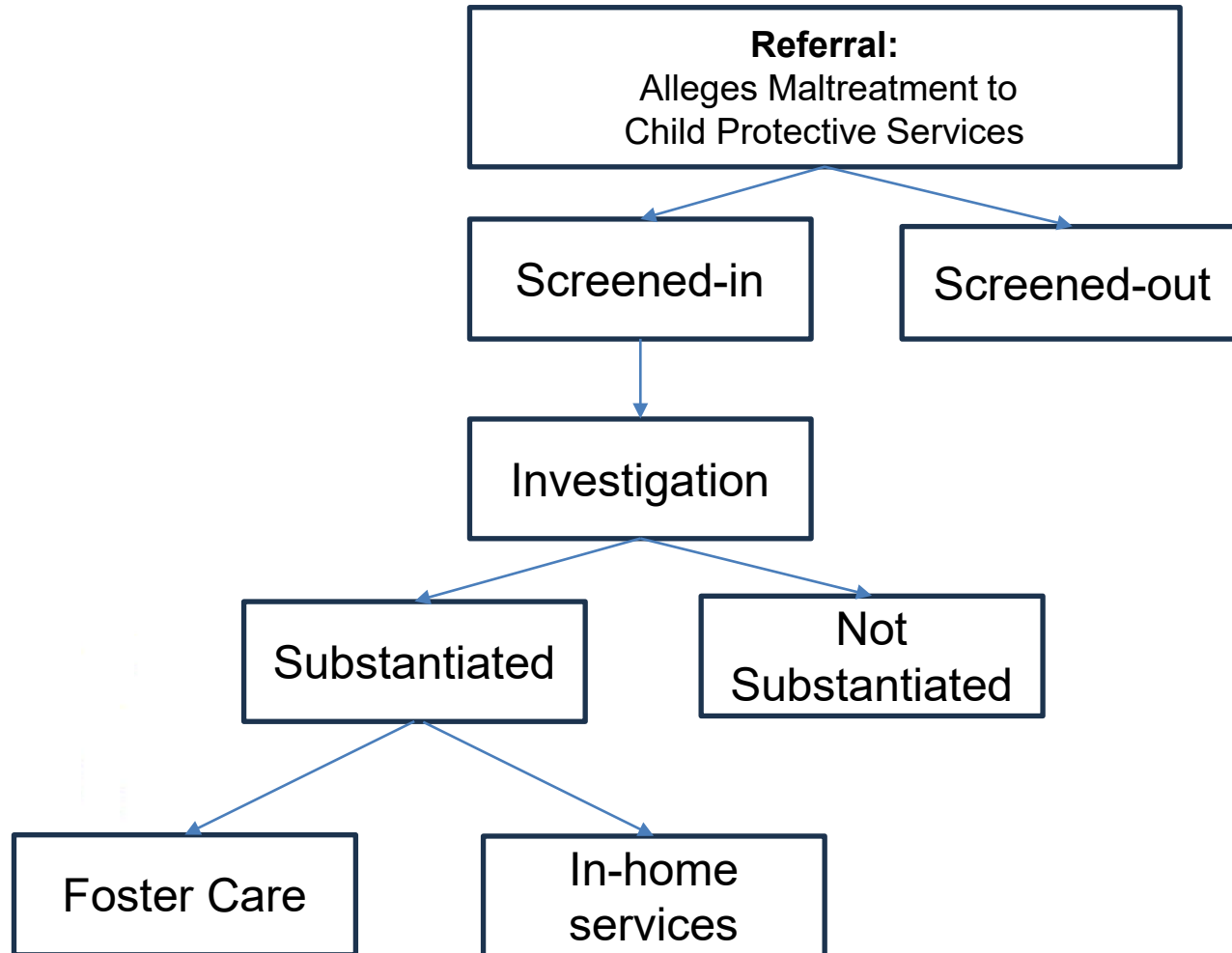
Tertiary

Serves Families Where Maltreatment Already
Occurred

State Agency: CYFD



Child Welfare System: Maltreatment Referrals



Child Welfare System: Maltreatment Has Occurred

Department of Public Safety (DPS)

Has the legal authority to take a child into protective custody

Children's Court

Judges decide if abuse and neglect has occurred and makes determinations about whether children may safely return home.

CYFD

Health Care Authority

Administers the Medicaid program- a primary funding source for children's behavioral health, treatment foster care, and health care for youth in custody

Office of Family Representation and Advocacy (OFRA)

Provides legal representation for children and families whose children are in the custody of CYFD



CYFD Over Time

1991	Governor convened task force to create CYFD, emphasized prevention and early intervention.
1992	Child and adult protective services were transferred from HSD to CYFD
1994	Seven divisions were established- six divisions currently exist in statute: Protective Services, Juvenile Justice, Prevention and Intervention, Financial Services, Employee Support, and IT
2005	Legislation transferred adult protective services to the Aging and Long-Term Services Department and consolidated the seven divisions into four programs, dropping prevention as a focus area
2020	Early childhood programs (child care assistance, home visiting, etc) moved to the newly created Early Childhood Care and Education Department
Today	Current CYFD program and budget structure includes four service areas (programs: Juvenile Justice Facilities, Protective Services, Behavioral Health, and Program Support

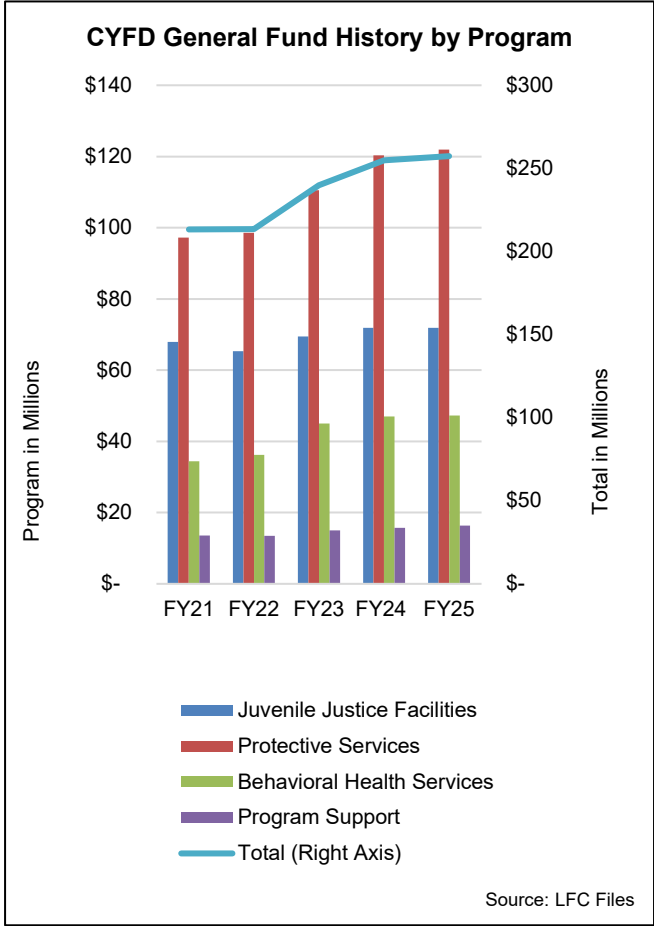
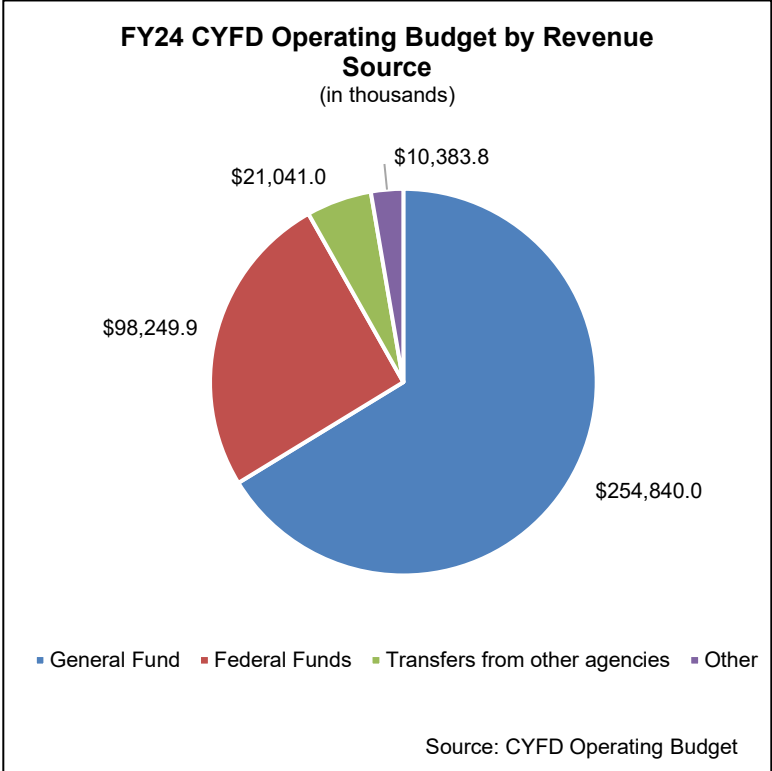




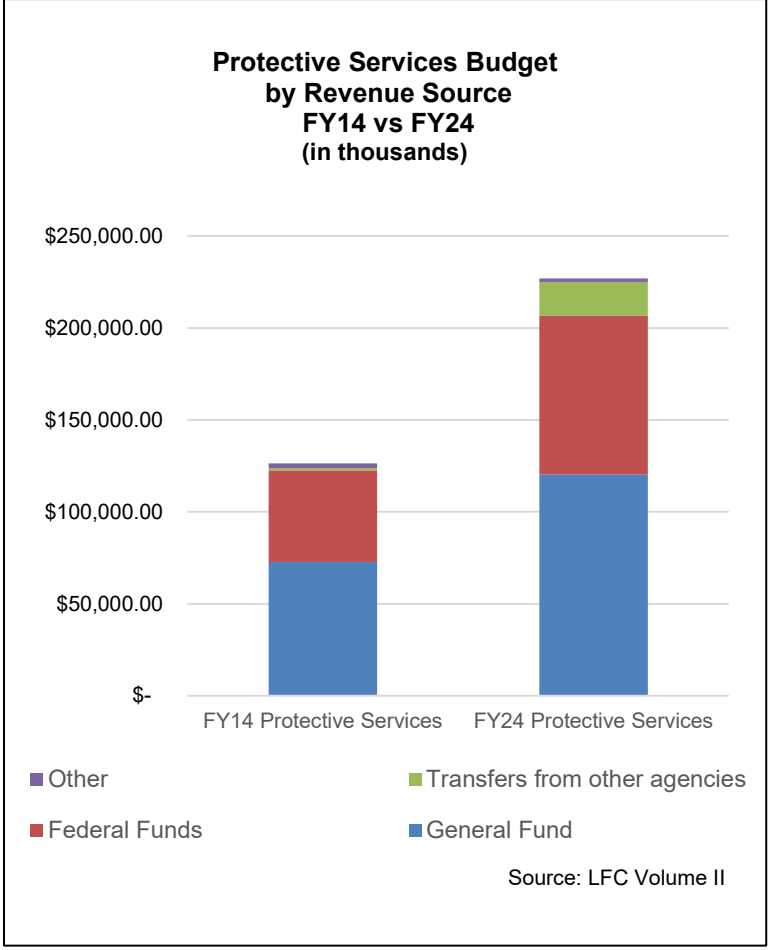
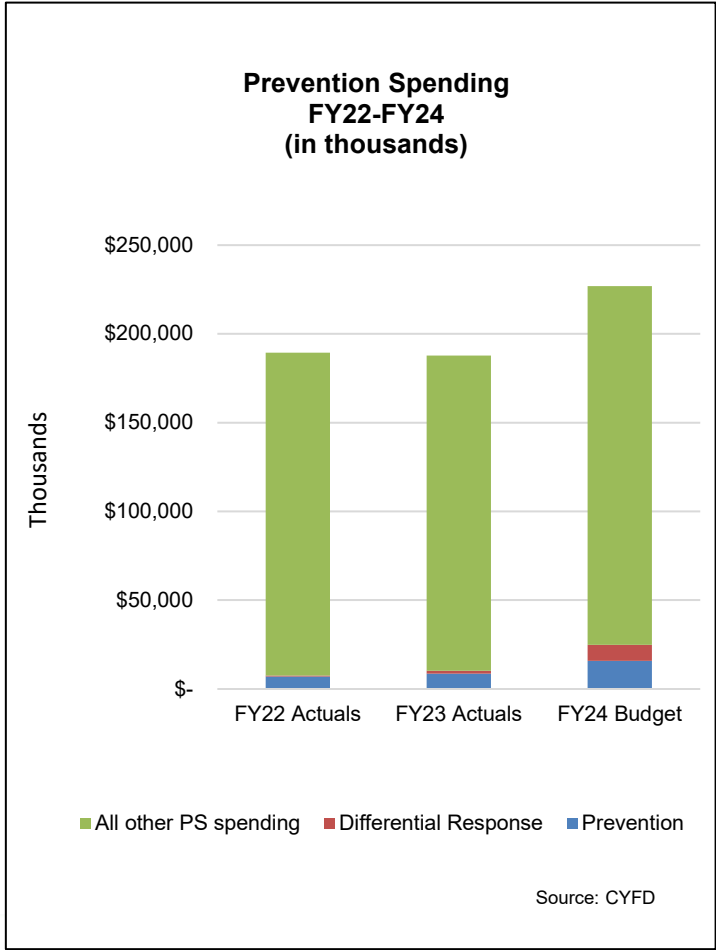
How much do we spend on the
child welfare system?



CYFD Budget



Protective Services Budget





CYFD Special Appropriations 2024

House Bill 2 appropriated a relatively flat operating budget for CYFD, while making targeted investments (one time funding) for three-year pilot projects, totaling \$18.6 million (GRO appropriations):

- \$1.69 million to **incentivize masters-level social work licensure** to develop and retain caseworkers
- \$4.2 million to expand **differential response** statewide, in alignment with research and existing statute
- \$9 million to implement evidence-based community-based **prevention and intervention (CBPIR)**
- \$3.75 million to recruit, support, and retain **resource families** and treatment foster care providers

HB2 also reauthorized unused prior year appropriations, including \$3 million to support **workforce** development and \$20 million to increase **behavioral health** provider capacity.



IT Investments: NM Impact Project (CCWIS)

Project Purpose: CYFD is building a new child welfare information system (CCWIS) to replace the outdated FACTS system and help frontline workers provide effective services, better track family interactions with the system, and meet federal requirements.

- The project is **part of the HHS2020** initiatives, which has experienced delays and increased costs
- Started in 2017 with an initial estimated completion of 2022 and budget of \$36 million
- The project is now estimated to complete in **November 2027 and cost \$82 million**
- **Potential benefits** to the child welfare system include: decreased time to permanency, better safety decisions, sharing of data across agencies, and improvements to case worker workload

LFC Report Card Rating

Measure	FY24 Q2
Budget	Y
Schedule	Y
Risk	Y
Overall Rating	Y





How could the system be improved?





2024 Senate Memorial 5

Bill names following key topics:

- Agency mission values and organization, compared to national best practices
- Implementation of differential or alternative response (to investigations and removals)
- Availability, needs, and gaps in existing services
- Best practices in permanency and well-being, including hard-to-place children
- Workforce
- Leveraging federal funding
- Juvenile justice, including trauma-informed programming and behavioral health
- Equity considerations

The task force [will] make recommendations to the legislature and the governor by November 15, 2024 for consideration during the legislative session.



Recent Evaluation Findings and Recommendations



Though steps taken by the Legislature and CYFD to **promote preventive measures** are promising, prevention should be expanded by continued investments and enhanced piloting efforts and the state may wish to make increased **investments in proven early intervention programs**.



Early childhood services can lead to positive outcomes, and investments have increased over 50 percent since FY23; however, **challenges with program implementation and oversight remain**.





LFC Framework for Child Welfare System Improvement



1. Implement **evidence-based prevention** and **early intervention programs** to support families and divert formal system involvement
2. Recruit, retain, support and develop a professional social work **workforce**
3. Expand **access to behavioral health and other services** for children and adults, particularly evidence-based approaches
4. Strengthen **oversight** and **accountability** mechanisms



Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework

Example Programs

Primary

Serves the General Population

State Agency: ECECD, PED, DOH, HCA

Income support,
Childcare, Family
Connects Home visiting

Secondary

Serves Families with More Risk Factors

State Agency: ECECD, CYFD, PED, HCA

Nurse Family
Partnership, McKinney-
Vento, CARA

Tertiary

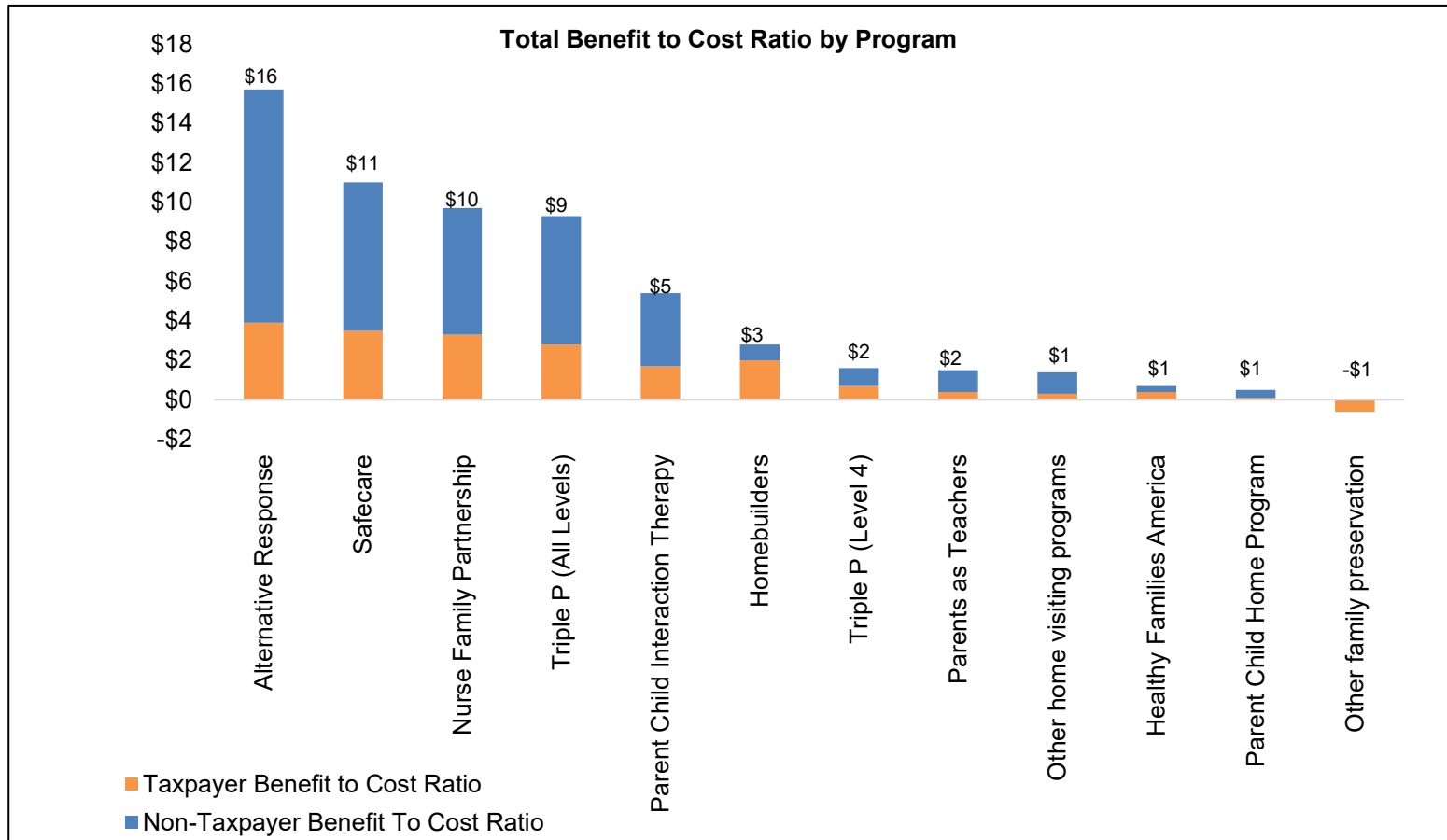
Serves Families Where Maltreatment
Already Occurred

State Agency: CYFD

In-home services, infant
mental health teams,
differential response*



Return on Investment for Family Preservation Programs



Note: ROI is the most recent cost-benefit analysis LFC conducted for these programs

Source: LFC Files





Title IV-E : Families First Prevention Services Act

FFSA of 2018 (Families First) allows states and tribes with approved prevention plans to claim federal reimbursement for certain prevention services for eligible populations.

Eligible Populations:

1. A child who is “**a candidate for foster care**” but can remain safely at home with receipt of evidence-based services or programs (identified in FFSA clearinghouse)
2. A child in foster care who is **pregnant or parenting**

To date, 46 states and tribal governments have submitted plans.

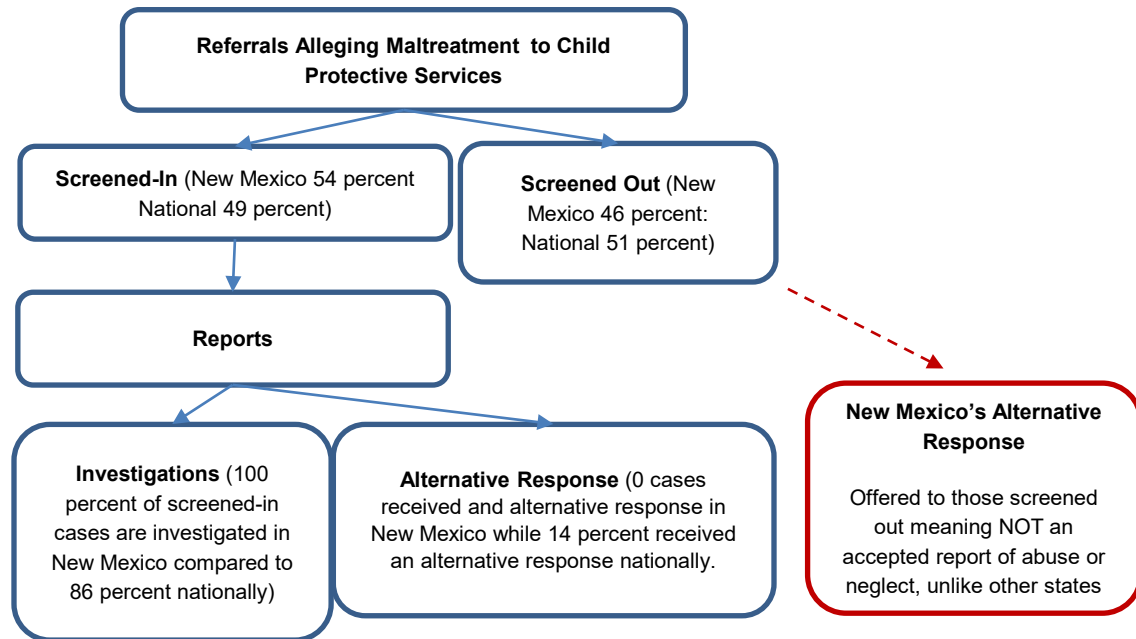
New Mexico is one of 5 submitted plans not yet approved.



Alternative Response/Differential Response

- A response to referrals to Child Protective Services that is an alternative to a traditional investigation.
- If child safety is not an imminent concern, the Alternative Response conducts a family assessment.
- Goal is to engage a family, determine strengths and needs, and a plan, without requiring a determination that maltreatment has occurred or if the child is at risk of maltreatment.

Use of Alternative Response as Intended Can Reduce Protective Services Worker Caseloads and Improve Outcomes



Home Visiting

- Voluntary program that provides family support and helps teach parenting skills critical to improving childhood outcomes during pregnancy and the first few years of a child's life.
- Can positively impact several child and family outcomes, including reducing child maltreatment and improving parent-child interactions.

Estimated ROI from Potential Home Visiting Programs in New Mexico

Program Name	Benefit to Cost Ratio (rounded to nearest dollar)	Effect Size (ES) Cost Matrix
Nurse Family Partnership	\$5-\$10	Large ES/ High Cost
Triple P*	\$9-\$14	Small ES/ Low Cost
Other Home Visiting for At-Risk Families^	\$1-\$4	Medium ES/ High Cost
Parents as Teachers	\$1-\$2	Medium ES/ Moderate Cost
Healthy Families America	\$1	Medium ES/ High Cost
Family Connects	\$1	Small ES/ Low Cost
Early Head Start	\$0	Minimal ES/ High Cost

Source: LFC Analysis Using Pew Results First Analysis with New Mexico Data Where Possible



Nurse Family Partnership and Safecare versus Family Connects

Family Connects

Target population:
Universal

(\$1 ROI)

Nurse Family Partnership

Target population: low-income, first-time parents

(up to \$10 ROI)

SafeCare

Target population:
parents who are either at-risk or have a history of child abuse/neglect

(up to \$11 ROI)



Programs CYFD Could Re-Implement

CYFD	CYFD could re-implement
Operates other family preservation programs with an estimated -\$1 ROI	Operate Home builders , an evidence-based intensive family preservation service with a \$3 ROI
Has yet to serve families with SafeCare citing workforce concerns	Work with REC 9 to begin implementing SafeCare (as was done in ~2019) \$11 ROI
Stopped using Triple P level 4 ~10 years ago and did not replace with an evidence-based program	Use Triple P level 4 as a prevention tool for some at-risk families. Up to \$9 ROI



Thank you

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More LFC Budget and Policy Documents can be found at:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Entity/LFC/Default>

