



# Early Childhood Services

With substantial evidence that early childhood experiences influence long-term health and brain development, New Mexico has steadily increased its investment in early childhood services – 10-fold between FY12 and FY21 – in an effort to improve the long-term economic and educational success of every child. These services range from supports for first-time mothers to extended school-year programs at low-income schools. New Mexico’s early childhood services are supplemented with federal nutrition and early education programs.

## Programs

**Home Visiting**, operated by the Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) and the Human Services Department (HSD), is an intensive parent education program with demonstrated success in reducing child maltreatment and improving child health. The voluntary program provides basic supports and guidance in parenting skills through home visits. LFC analysis emphasizes some New Mexico home-visiting programs are not based on successful programs elsewhere and results are uncertain.

Target: Children prenatally through age 3.

Cost: \$4,200 average per family.

**Family, Infant, Toddler**, ECECD, provides early interventions for infants and toddlers with developmental delays, an established medical condition, or at risk for disabilities due to biological, medical, or environmental conditions. The federally funded program is required under Part C of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. (Children with special needs ages 3 to 21 are covered under IDEA Part B.) Most children receiving FIT services show improvement on socio-emotional skills and acquisition and use of knowledge and skills.

Target: Children from birth through age 3.

Cost: \$2,822 average per child.

**Women, Infants, and Children**, federal Food and Nutrition Service, provides supplemental food, healthcare referrals, and nutrition education for pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women, as well as children at nutritional risk. WIC may decrease food insecurity in low-income communities. While WIC attempts to encourage women to breastfeed, the rate of breastfeeding in the program is lower than that in home-visiting programs.

Target: Certain women and children from birth to age 5.

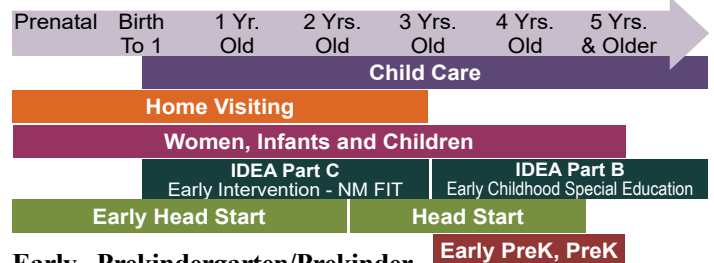
Cost: \$640 average per family.

**Childcare Assistance**, ECECD, subsidizes child care for low-income families by directly paying a set amount to certain department-licensed or -registered childcare providers. LFC analysis indicates, while the program helps working parents with child care, children in low-quality programs do not show educational improvement or reduced risk for abuse.

Target: Children from ages 3 weeks to 13 years.

Cost: \$6,780 average per child.

## NM Early Childhood Care and Education System



**Early Prekindergarten/Prekindergarten**, ECECD and the Public Education Department (PED), provides early education in school districts with low-income schools. While both department’s administer prekindergarten programs, only ECECD funds early prekindergarten. LFC analysis found children who attended prekindergarten had better test scores through 12th grade, had less need for special education, and were less likely to be retained.

K-3 Plus, K-5 Plus, Early Reading Initiative, Education Reforms Across Grades 1, 2 and 3

Target: Children ages 3 and 4.

Cost: Per-child average for full-day programs of \$8,750 for 3-year-olds and \$7,000 for 4-year-olds.

**Early Head Start/Head Start**, federal Administration for Children and Families, supports childhood development through education, health screenings, intervention, and parental supports. While a Brookings Institute study linked Head Start with long-term student improvements, the New Mexico program, with limited ECECD oversight, is ranked lowest in the nation in teacher credential and supports by the National Institute for Early Education Research and has not demonstrated similar results.

Target: Children from birth to age 5.

Cost: \$9,824 average per child.

**K-5 Plus**, PED, extends the school year by 25 days at low-income and low-performing schools. A longitudinal study found the effectiveness of the an earlier iteration of the program depended on whether the program met certain conditions, including keeping students with the same teacher through the year.

Target: Students from the summer before kindergarten through the summer before fifth grade.

Cost: \$1,359 average per student.

### For More Information:

A Finance Facts on childcare assistance is available at [nmlegis.gov/Entity/LFC/Understanding\\_Government\\_Finances](http://nmlegis.gov/Entity/LFC/Understanding_Government_Finances)