

For New Mexico's Future : The Early Childhood Department Act

Summary and Key Details

Bill Title:
Early Childhood Department Act

Bill Sponsor:
Senator Michael Padilla

Overview:

The bill **creates the Early Childhood Department (ECD)** in order to ensure that every child in New Mexico has the best opportunity to succeed in school, work, and life; and it **streamlines operations** to provide a continuum of care for young children. It **aligns programs and leadership** in early childhood by transferring into the department existing programs which serve children and families **from birth until five years old** (when children enter kindergarten).

The programs that transfer into ECD are currently spread across the Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD), the Department of Health (DOH), and the Public Education Department (PED); there will also be oversight of Medicaid for home-visiting programs which is currently in the Human Services Department.

Together these programs have a **total budget of more than \$325 million in FY19**. This budget includes both Federal and State funding.





new mexico **early childhood development** partnership



‘A Business Plan for Early Childhood in New Mexico’
proposes a vision for early childhood and a strategic,
systems-based approach to achieving it.

STATEWIDE VISION:

All New Mexico children receive high-quality and
affordable early learning and development services to
prepare them for success in school and life.

Lever 1 focuses on establishing leadership and infrastructure at the state level to achieve **strong coordination across agencies and with tribal governments** to improve the system's ability to meet the needs of New Mexico families.

- Cultivate leadership and support for coordinated EC systems
- Establish an executive level EC leadership position with authority to coordinate across program agencies and with tribes
- Build and support an integrated data system that facilitates streamlined interactions with families and improvement among providers (feedback loop between local and state organizations)

Lever 2 focuses on the need for local coordination and capacity to **match provider and service offerings to local needs** and to help families access information, resources, and services to best support their children.



- Assess local needs and assets to inform coordinated funding requests to the state
- Coordinate funding to ensure efficient resource allocation through local lead agencies
- Implement family engagement plans tailored to local needs and communities
- Coordinate local provider networks and communities of practice to support quality and aligned vision

Lever 3 considers that **skilled early childhood workers** are essential to the quality of early childhood programs, and program expansion requires **increased workforce capacity**.

- Adopt state-wide goals and priorities, and align annual investments to those goals
- Align state training requirements and professional development with one another and with higher education
- Expand scholarships and compensation
- Alignment of scholarships and compensation for quality and credentials

Lever 4 recognizes that **parents** need to understand the importance of early development and the strategies that can **support their children's learning**, plus be able to navigate and access available services.

- Create flexible and adaptable materials and resources that can be customized locally to build awareness around early childhood development and support
- Support outreach through local coordination agencies and common touchpoints for families like birth centers, hospitals, clinics, etc.
- Streamline enrollment processes for families with multiple entry points to a range of services



Lever 5 recognizes that currently, state-funded early childhood programs serve only a fraction of the intended population. **Expanding programs incrementally** with **quality and fidelity** will scale impact to serve more children and families.

- Build system capacity for quality childcare
- Flexibly expand PreK for three- and four-year-olds across high-quality settings
- Expand home visiting while addressing quality and fidelity
- Strategically allocate future increases in childcare funding via contracted slots
- Prioritize community members with the highest need





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