

A MEMORIAL

CREATING THE YOUNG CHILDREN AND FAMILIES CONTINUUM WORK GROUP.

WHEREAS, thriving children and families make New Mexico strong, and supporting their well-being is key; and

WHEREAS, a robust economy requires an educated workforce and investing in New Mexico's children is investing in New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, school success means higher levels of education, employment and home ownership and further translates to lower incidence of crime, drug abuse, unemployment and poverty; and

WHEREAS, school readiness of young children is a key strategy for ensuring school success and closing the achievement gap to make sure that children start school fully developed, healthy and prepared; and

WHEREAS, the most significant period of a person's brain growth and development occurs in the first five years with major "windows of opportunity" through age six; and

WHEREAS, developmental conditions identified early in life are easier and less costly to address; and

WHEREAS, economists at the federal reserve bank of Minneapolis have determined through research that investment in early childhood programs produces an annual rate of return of sixteen percent;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that a young children and families continuum work group be appointed to develop recommendations to improve access to services for families, improve the lives of their children and set a foundation for school and personal success; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the group be appointed equally by the chair of the children's cabinet and the chair and vice chair of the legislative health and human services committee, with the consent of the speaker of the house of representatives, and include a diverse group of no more than sixteen persons representing the early childhood action network; child health and development, mental health, early care, education and human services community providers; advocates, businesses and faith communities; the media; academia; and child development research fields; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the group include family representatives and members representing the cultural, ethnic, economic and geographic diversity of the state and have knowledge and experience of the health, mental health, education and social needs of young children birth to age eight and their families; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the group make priorities for investment over the next three years to strengthen a comprehensive statewide early childhood system to address the

following areas: family involvement and family support; physical and mental health; early learning; child safety; and transition from early childhood to school; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the group make recommendations on a continuum of services to better coordinate and link components of a comprehensive system; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the group report its recommendations to the legislative health and human services committee by the November 2007 meeting of the committee; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be transmitted to the children's cabinet.