



# PRESS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

July 17, 2023

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## **ECECD finalizes child care regulations to make child care affordable for most New Mexico families**

SANTA FE, NM – This week the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) announced updated regulations that will ensure that qualifying New Mexico families will continue to receive free child care through its child care assistance (CCA) program and child care providers will receive increased rates to achieve and maintain quality care and learning environments, including sufficient funding to pay competitive wages to their early childhood professionals.

“We are thrilled to announce that, under these new regulations, our state will continue to lead the nation in child care affordability and quality,” said ECECD Cabinet Secretary Elizabeth Groginsky. “We continue to build on Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham’s vision for universal, affordable, high-quality early care and education by removing cost barriers for low- and middle-income families and supporting the state’s child care industry with subsidy rates that reflect the cost of providing quality care.”

“It has been a long-term dream of mine to go to nursing school and become an RN. Up until we enrolled in the child care assistance program, there wasn’t a way for me to financially afford going to school because of the cost of child care and the time commitment nursing school requires. Because of the CCA program, I am now working towards my dream job. It’s helping my dream come true all while providing the best quality of care for my children,” said parent Lauren Frazier of Albuquerque.

In May 2023, ECECD proposed changes to its Child Care Assistance (CCA) program regulations. The changes adopted are outlined below and will be effective August 1, 2023:

- Maintain income eligibility for CCA to 400 percent Federal Poverty Level (FPL)
- Increase monthly per-child reimbursement rates
- Require a three-month notice if the department decides to reinstate CCA copays
- Establish a more equitable copay schedule in regulations

The final rules are posted on the ECECD website at [Regulation Changes](#) and in the [New Mexico Register](#).

The new CCA rates, informed by a [cost model](#), will increase the average per-child rate by 20-30 percent. These rates account for increased compensation for all child care staff and rising inflationary costs for non-personnel items.

Future Generations Director Ashleigh Tackitt said, “The increased revenues provided by these new rates will help our center better serve children and families, our employees, and our community. With this additional support, we can invest in improved learning environments, hire more staff to lower student-teacher ratios, and provide more individualized care and education for the children we serve.”

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*Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham launched the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) in 2020, making New Mexico among the first states to consolidate all early childhood programs and services under a single cabinet-level agency. Under this administration, ECECD has led the nation by expanding access to free New Mexico PreK, overseeing the largest investment in early childhood infrastructure in state history, and implementing cost-free child care for a majority of New Mexico families. Learn more about how ECECD supports children, families, and the early childhood professionals that serve our communities at [nmececd.org](http://nmececd.org). On Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram as [@NewMexicoECECD](#).*