



Office of the Governor

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **New Mexico executes historic expansion of New Mexico pre-K partnership with tribes, pueblos, and nations**

As part of the historic expansion of early childhood education services announced last week at the White House, the state is collaborating with four tribal governments to support and expand pre-K programs.

Part of the \$98 million in funding will help create an additional 554 new slots in tribal pre-K programs in the Navajo Nation, the To'Hajiilee Chapter of Navajo Nation, Mescalero Apache Tribe, and Pueblo of Nambé through intergovernmental agreements. Taken together, this constitutes the largest ever partnership between New Mexico pre-K and tribes, pueblos, and nations.

"I want every 3- and 4-year-old child to access high-quality early childhood education no matter where they live, and these partnerships are critical to achieving that goal," said **Gov. Lujan Grisham**. "An essential part of these agreements is also their flexibility, ensuring that tribal sovereignty is respected, and cultures and languages are preserved through these programs."

"Navajo Head Start is excited to begin the extension of service hours this summer with the help of ECECD," said **Roy Tracey, Delegated Assistant Superintendent for Navajo Head Start**. "Twenty-six Navajo Nation-New Mexico Head Start sites will benefit from the pre-k funding and extended hours, which will have a major impact on the young children in our communities. The Navajo Head Start and ECECD partnership will deliver high quality early childhood education and improve access for families and children in New Mexico."

ECECD piloted this collaboration in FY23 with Tesuque Pueblo, who have renewed their agreement for FY24 for 10 slots.

The pre-K partnership with Navajo Nation, To'Hajiilee, Mescalero Apache Tribe, Pueblo of Nambé, and Pueblo of Tesuque was executed via an Intergovernmental Agreement, which allows for greater educational sovereignty in the operation of New Mexico pre-K classrooms within the context of tribal education systems. This added flexibility allows individual tribes, pueblos, and nations to tailor the pre-K curriculum and standards to the unique needs of their communities. Most of these new tribal pre-k classrooms will be embedded within existing Tribal Head Start programs.

The expansion includes:

- **To'Hajiilee Community School** - Continuing pre-K provider located in the APS School District, funded for 20 Extended (1080 hours/year) pre-K Slots. Three-Year Award Amount: \$906,500
- **Navajo Nation Head Start** - 44 mixed (3- and 4-year-olds) extended and 456 dual extended plus, all located at Head Start locations within NM. Three-Year Award Amount: \$8,652,800
- **Pueblo of Tesuque** - Continuing pre-K provider located in the Pueblo of Tesuque. Funded for 10 Mixed Extended slots. Three-Year Award amount: \$532,000
- **Mescalero Apache Tribe** - New pre-K provider located in Mescalero Apache. Funded for 8 Mixed Extend Plus (1380 hours/year) slots. Three-Year Award Amount: \$561,000
- **Nambé Pueblo Head Start** - Located in the Pojoaque Valley School District. Funded for 16 mixed Extended Plus slots. Three-Year Award Amount: \$1,078,000

“We are thrilled to partner with New Mexico’s pueblos, tribes, and nations to bring the benefits of New Mexico pre-K to the families and young children in their communities,” said **Cotillion Sneddy, ECECD Assistant Secretary for Native American Early Education and Care**. “This is a major step forward in the State of New Mexico’s efforts to ensure that young Native American learners have equitable access to high-quality, culturally and linguistically relevant early education that has shown to improve school readiness and outcomes for children.”

The tribal pre-K expansion is part of a larger \$98 million expansion effort creating 3,033 new pre-k slots, significantly expanding instructional hours, improving compensation for pre-K teachers, and achieving universal pre-K access for four-year-olds.

Photos and b-roll from IGA signings with Navajo Nation and Pueblo of Nambé are available for publication courtesy of ECECD: [Tribal pre-K expansion photo and video assets](#).

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