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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 10, 2023



ECECD produces new commercial for early childhood professional recruitment campaign featuring NM Teacher of the Year Tara Hughes

Santa Fe, NM – Today, ECECD's Developing Futures campaign released a [new commercial](#) featuring Tara Hughes, 2023 New Mexico Teacher of the Year, as part of an expanded effort to recruit new professionals to the early childhood education and care field. Tara Hughes serves as a PreK inclusion teacher for four-year-olds at Nye Early Childhood Center in Santa Fe, where she teaches both special and general education students. Tara is the first PreK teacher in New Mexico's history to earn Teacher of the Year.

"We are so excited to feature Tara in our campaign to recruit new professionals into the early education and care field," said ECECD Cabinet Secretary Elizabeth Groginsky. "Tara exemplifies the extraordinary impact that early educators can have on entire generations of young children. As New Mexico continues its historic expansion of early childhood services, we are going to need more passionate, dedicated educators like Tara to help build a strong foundation for our young children. We hope her story inspires others to visit the Developing Futures campaign website and learn more about the diverse career pathways available to support young children and their families."

"The positive, life-changing impact you can have on a child's future is what called me to this profession and why I

continue to advocate for others to join," said Tara Hughes. "I started my career as an education assistant, and now, twenty-three years later, I'm still learning and growing alongside the children. It's an honor to be recognized with the New Mexico Teacher of the Year award and help our state recruit other talented people to this rewarding career."

In response to a statewide shortage of professionals in early care and education, ECECD [launched the Developing Futures](#) campaign in August, 2022. Developing Futures, with the tagline "Develop your future. Develop the future," highlights a varied set of career paths within early childhood education and care through the personal stories of a diverse group of New Mexicans currently serving in those roles. In addition to showcasing the fulfilling careers available in early childhood, ECECD highlights the financial, educational, and professional supports available to New Mexicans in the early childhood profession.

ECECD selected NM PreK teacher Tara Hughes as the first featured educator of the Developing Futures campaign of the fiscal year in conjunction with the [historic expansion of New Mexico PreK](#) underway in FY24. New Mexico has invested \$98 million in expanding PreK, which will increase the number of students served by more than 3,000. The expansion has also significantly increased PreK instructional hours throughout the year and supports higher pay for PreK teachers.

Connect with Developing Futures:

The early childhood profession offers rapidly expanding opportunities. New scholarships, grants, and wage supplements are available. Visit [FuturesNM.org](https://www.futuresnm.org) for more information about how you can start on one of the many exciting career pathways in early childhood care and education.

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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](https://www.nmececd.org). On Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram as [@NewMexicoECECD](https://www.instagram.com/NewMexicoECECD).