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ECECD highlights historic progress at LFC Accountability Hearin

LAS VEGAS, NM – Today, presenting before the New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee (LFC), the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) highlighted the significant impacts of recent early childhood innovations and investments in FY23 and the improved outcomes that families and young children have enjoyed as a result. Over the last fiscal year, New Mexico has established itself as a national leader in early childhood education and care with historic expansions of Child Care Assistance and New Mexico PreK, one of the top ranked early intervention programs in the country, and a Home Visiting program that is expanding to serve more children across more counties throughout the state.

“Other states now see New Mexico as the roadmap for building a comprehensive prenatal-to-five system that centers the needs of families and children,” said ECECD Cabinet Secretary Elizabeth Groginsky. “ECECD has worked in close partnership with stakeholders, state and local leadership, and sovereign Indigenous nations to fund and develop the early childhood programs and services that help New Mexico families thrive. We have seen tremendous progress over the last year, and the state can expect to see steadily improving outcomes for families and children as these investments continue to bear fruit.”

During the LFC hearing, ECECD presented specifics about how recent investments in the early childhood system is supporting New Mexico families and improving the health, well-being, and development young children. Highlights from Secretary Groginsky's presentation include:

Child Care Successes

- Expanded access for **7,300** more children through the Child Care Assistance program from FY22 to FY23, with the largest increases among infants and toddlers
- Increased licensed child care capacity by **3,000** from FY22 to FY23
- Grew the number of programs achieving the highest levels of quality (4- and 5-star FOCUS rating) by **8 percent** from FY22 to FY23
- Awarded **\$11.5 million** in grants to **38** child care providers, projected to create **2,200** new slots

New Mexico PreK Successes

- Expanded capacity by **3,000** statewide and partnered with Head Start grantees to improve access and quality across **55 sites** statewide
- Raised rates to ensure pay parity for teachers, establishing a **\$50,000 minimum salary**
- Increased number of instructional hours from **900 to 1080** with an extended plus option of **1380** hours
- Funded **7,233** students in the extended plus option
- Evaluated **863** classrooms using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), a research-based measure of quality

Home Visiting Successes

- Delivered five regional professional development sessions on trauma informed care, reaching **290** home visitors
- Served **5,000+** families and **7,300** children in FY23
- Recruited **370+** families through five community baby showers held across the state

Family Infant Toddler (FIT) Program Successes

- Increased the number of children served by **7%** – raising the total number served to **14,800**
- Ranked **Number 1** in the nation by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs for identification and service to children birth to 12 months
- **75% of children made significant progress in the areas of:**
 - Positive Social and Emotional Relationships
 - Acquisition and Use of New Knowledge and Skills
 - Taking Appropriate Action to Meet Needs
- **95%** of families reported that participating in FIT Early Intervention built their capacity to help their child develop and learn

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