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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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# Press Release

## **ECECD launches new partnership to grow high-quality licensed child care in New Mexico**

SANTA FE - In partnership with WESST, Civitas Strategies, and Growing Up New Mexico, the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD), launched **CRECER** (Capacity Resources for Enhancing Care, Excellence, and Resilience), a child care business support initiative for providers that want to grow stronger businesses and increase the quality of their programs.

The CRECER initiative, named after the Spanish verb for 'growth,' provides robust business development resources to increase the supply of high-quality licensed child care in New Mexico, through three strategies: **business training, a grant program, and the CRECER Collaborative.**

"In New Mexico, we are constantly striving to improve the quality of the education we offer to our youngest learners," said ECECD Cabinet Secretary Elizabeth Groginsky. "With the CRECER initiative, we are equipping providers with the tools they need to grow strong, sustainable child care businesses and deliver the high quality care and education that families and children want and deserve."

Made possible through discretionary funds from the American Rescue Plan Act, the **CRECER**

**grant program** will issue an estimated \$1,000,000 total in grant funds to licensed homes and centers that can be used for things like minor renovations or repairs, training to increase staff qualifications, costs related to improving their quality rating, or to purchase safety equipment or other supplies that increase quality and/or capacity. Grants will be paired with **CRECER business training** in both English and Spanish to increase business and financial knowledge and skills.

Qualifying licensed centers can receive up to \$10,000 per classroom, while licensed group homes and licensed family homes can receive up to \$10,000 per home. Registered child care homes are also eligible for the grant if they receive their license on or before May 31, 2024.

The grant portal opened on February 26, with priority consideration given to applications submitted by March 31.

The **CRECER Collaborative**, which will consist of community development financial institutions (CDFIs), business support organizations, local coalitions, and [Elevate NM Child Care](#), is designed to create coordination, alignment, and awareness among key constituents to support and promote resources for child care businesses. The Collaborative will meet quarterly to create linkages across the state with the goal of increasing child care businesses' use and understanding of existing resources.

More information about CRECER, please visit [www.crecernm.org](http://www.crecernm.org) or by contacting 505-819-0111 or [info@crecernm.org](mailto:info@crecernm.org).

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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](#).*