



Press Release

CONTACT:

Julia Sclafani

Public Relations Specialist

(505) 699-5937 / julia.sclafani@ececd.nm.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 14, 2024

ECECD honors four New Mexico healthcare providers with the inaugural Early Childhood Healthcare Champion Awards

ALBUQUERQUE – On Friday, June 14, the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) presented its inaugural Early Childhood Healthcare Champions of the Year award to four New Mexico healthcare providers in recognition of their above-and-beyond efforts to promote participation in Home Visiting and Family Infant Toddler (FIT) early intervention programs within the communities they serve.

The first-ever recipients of the award were nominated by community members in recognition of their outstanding advocacy on behalf of home visiting and early intervention services, which support the health, development, and well-being of children and their families.

“Healthcare professionals are a vital link to services for families of young children. They are often the first point of knowledge and guidance regarding healthy development during pregnancy and early childhood,” said ECECD Chief Health Officer Dr. Janis Gonzales. “With this award, we are recognizing the tremendous impact that these healthcare professionals have on the health and well-being of children and families in their communities.”

As the state seeks to better align our early childhood system with the healthcare system, our Early Childhood Healthcare Champions serve as powerful examples for other healthcare professionals of how these systems work together to improve outcomes for New Mexico families.

The New Mexico Early Childhood Healthcare Champion of the Year awards were presented to:

- Kimberly Talachy, doula, in recognition of her service in Santa Fe and Espanola
- Dr. Trista Hughes, FMOB, in recognition of her service in Socorro
- Amber-Rose Hawkins, nurse practitioner, in recognition of her service in Silver City
- Siboney Rodriguez, social worker, and lactation consultant, in recognition of her service in Albuquerque

“ECECD encourages all New Mexico healthcare professionals to become strong advocates for early intervention and home visiting services,” said Cabinet Secretary Elizabeth Groginsky. “Sharing information about these free, voluntary programs can have a life-changing impact on the long-term health and well-being of families and children.”

Family Infant Toddler (FIT) and Home Visiting

FIT professionals support children birth to age three who have or are at risk of having developmental delays or disabilities by providing parents and caregivers with appropriate strategies and interventions to help children reach developmental milestones.

Home visiting professionals support families by providing information on well-child checks, developmental milestones, screenings, referrals, parenting advice, and help navigating other programs and services in their community. Home visiting is available to anyone who is pregnant or has a child under five, and families and households will be matched with a home visiting program that best fits what parents and caregivers need.

Learn more about referring to FIT and Home Visiting here: [Early Childhood Education & Care Department \(nmececd.org\)](https://nmececd.org)

[Downloadable Media Assets](#)

###

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](#).