

New Mexico a National Leader in Providing Childcare Assistance

Written by By Henry Varela, Communications Director/PIO NM Children, Youth and Families Department
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Investments in Early Childhood Paying off for Kids, Families

SANTA FE – Gov. Susana Martinez announced that New Mexico is a national leader in providing childcare assistance to kids Feb. 8. According to the first annual New Mexico Child Care Data Report from the University of New Mexico's Center for Education Policy and Research, New Mexico is ranked 10th in the country when it comes to providing childcare assistance to all eligible children and 1st in the country when it comes to providing childcare assistance to eligible Hispanic children in New Mexico.

“Expanding opportunities for early childhood learning is one of our top priorities – because every New Mexico child deserves a chance to succeed,” Governor Martinez said. “Our goal is to make New Mexico the best place to be a kid. And though we still have a lot of work to do, we’re making progress and we won’t quit fighting for our children.”

Governor Martinez and her administration have steadily increased investment in early childhood spending by more than \$55 million, serving more than 27,000 kids a year. Additionally, CYFD through various community and federal partnerships invested more than \$97 million in the last fiscal year in childcare alone. New Mexico is also a national leader in outreach to bring childcare and early childhood opportunities to Hispanic families.

Among other highlights of the report, nearly 90 percent of families receiving childcare assistance reported that it enabled them to work. Seven percent reported they were able to enroll in school, and six percent that it enabled both. Across the board, New Mexico's investments in early childhood opportunities are making life better for New Mexico's kids and families.

“Childcare plays a major role in our effort to improve the quality of life for our children, as well as in preventing child abuse and neglect,” said Children, Youth, and Families Department Secretary Monique Jacobson. “This report is a result of the successful collaboration between CYFD and many of our state and community partners, providers and advocates who all have the same goal to improve the quality of life for all New Mexico children.”

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This ranking comes on the heels of the National Institute for Early Education Research's May 2016 ranking showing New Mexico improved ten spots in funding for early childhood education, moving to 18th in the country. In the fall of 2015, CYFD convened a working group to look for ways to improve the quality of and access to childcare assistance, early childhood education, and other learning opportunities for New Mexico's kids. The childcare data report was produced by the working group, consisting of childcare providers and professional associations, children's advocates, state and local leaders and other stakeholders.

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