

Ensuring that every New Mexico child is eager to learn and ready to succeed in school

Annual Report & Recommendations

New Mexico Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC)

January 10, 2018

New Mexico Early Learning Advisory Council
Mission Statement

TO CREATE A QUALITY, SUSTAINABLE AND SEAMLESS EARLY CARE AND LEARNING SYSTEM RESPONSIVE TO EACH CHILD BIRTH TO AGE 5 AND THEIR FAMILY ACROSS NEW MEXICO; BY BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS, INTEGRATING SYSTEMS AND MAKING STRATEGIC, RESEARCH-BASED AND DATA-DRIVEN RECOMMENDATIONS TO POLICY MAKERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

New Mexico Early Learning Advisory Council
Vision Statement

TO BE THE COLLECTIVE VOICE TO MOVE FORWARD THE EARLY CARE AND LEARNING SYSTEM IN NEW MEXICO

MEMBERS

Erica Stubbs	Presbyterian Medical Services	Chair
Heather Vaughn	Albuquerque Public Schools	Vice-Chair
Barbara Tedrow	A Gold Star Academy	Executive Committee
Alejandra Rebolledo Rea	Children Youth and Families Department	Designee
Debbie Montoya	Public Education Department	Designee
Andy Gomm	Family Infant Toddler (FIT) Program - Department of Health	
Olga Valenzuela Zavala	CYFD – Head Start Collaborative Office	
Janis Gonzales	Department of Health / Pediatric Society	
Ray Jaramillo	Alpha School for Young Children Inc.	
Michael Weinberg	Thornburg Foundation	
Franz Joaquim	New Mexico PBS	
Elizabeth “Beth” Beers	Socorro General Hospital - Home Visiting	
Larry Langley	Business Roundtable	
Shannon Rivera	Western New Mexico University – Higher Education	

RECOMMENDATIONS

The priority goals presented in the Executive Summary cannot come to fruition without concerted effort. As such, ELAC will make recommendations with the objective of facilitating these long-term priority goals.

Using these guidelines, as well as the needs of communities and the priorities outlined in previous pages, ELAC has come to the following recommendations.

Priority Goal 1 High Quality Early Childhood Workforce: Recommendations

- 1 ELAC recommends to the Higher Education Taskforce, Business Roundtable the State School Board Association and the Public Education Department (PED) that efforts need to be made to encourage New Mexico High School Graduates to consider the field of Early Childhood Education to support the continued growth of the field in order to meet the education needs of staff that work within the Early Childhood System.
- 2 ELAC continues to recommend to the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) and the Governor of New Mexico that funding for provider training and education be sustained/expanded to support obtaining degrees and incentives to help with staff retention and quality.
- 3 ELAC recommends to the Higher Education Taskforce and the Public Education Department (PED), Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) and Department of Health (DOH) that a system be developed to acknowledge and apply appropriate credit from prior learning experiences to current educational situations.

Priority Goal 2 Accessibility to High Quality Early Childhood Programs: Recommendations

- 4 ELAC recommends to CYFD and PED that when possible, align the timelines for the release and award process of the New Mexico PreK RFPs/RFAs.
- 5 ELAC recommends that CYFD and PED develop and publish shared, accurate, official, publicly available data for each community. For each community, this data would include demographic information; the number of children (three and four year olds); and number of children served through NM PreK, Head Start, and child care by star rating compared with the number of slots funded. Ideally, this data will be updated at least yearly to coincide with the release of the NM PreK RFP/ RFA.
- 6 ELAC recommends to CYFD and PED in making of awards, consider: 1. Data presented in the community assessment to avoid oversaturation, 2. Community circumstances, and 3. Applicant's proposed catchment area.
- 7 ELAC recommends to CYFD and PED to require each PreK applicant to submit a community assessment using the official data published by CYFD/ PED with the release of the RFP/ RFA.
- 8 ELAC recommends to CYFD that training be provided to Child Protective Services about the expectations and capabilities of the Home Visiting system.
- 9 ELAC recommends to CYFD that the ELAC be included in any revision of the Investment Zones systems.

- 10 ELAC recommends to DOH, CYFD and PED that the Pyramid Framework Partnership be shared across programs as a system to support social emotional development and address the needs of children with challenging behaviors.
- 11 ELAC recommends that CYFD and PED explore opportunities for individual programs to braid federal and state funding including Head Start, PreK, child care, Title I, and preschool special education funds to promote quality and meet the needs of children and families.
- 12 ELAC recommends to the DOH, PED and CYFD that they recognize and sustain a variety of program models within the system of care in early childhood that meets the needs of families.
- 13 ELAC continues to recommend to CYFD, PED and DOH that developmental screening information be shared between service providers to eliminate duplication of effort.
- 14 ELAC recommends to the DOH, CYFD and PED that in order to meet the needs of the underserved and rural communities in New Mexico that the departments meet with community stakeholders to increase their capacity to apply for funding and consider flexible funding models to meet their needs.
- 15 ELAC recommends to the PED that an appointed member of ELAC should be added to the committee that oversees the ECIDS and the data included in the system.
- 16 ELAC recommends to the DOH, CYFD, and PED that all early childhood personnel serving families prenatally through children five years of age shall have training on inclusion within one year of employment.

17 ELAC recommends PED continues to support Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in meeting the needs of children that need intervention services so that they can be served in their typical setting and in the best interest of the child.

Priority Goal 3 Improve School Readiness (now and at 3rd grade): Recommendations

18 ELAC recommends that CYFD, DOH and PED should incorporate a formal cross-agency structure to enable effective collaboration among programs as a part of the RTTT- EL Sustainability Plan.

19 ELAC recommends CYFD continues working with Head Start and Tribal and Migrant Head Start Programs within New Mexico to collect data into the state’s Early Childhood Integrated Data System.

20 ELAC recommends to PED that ELAC receives updates and provides input into the ESSA implementation in New Mexico.

21 ELAC recommends that CYFD crosswalk the FOCUS Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System and Head Start Child Outcomes Framework to establish common platform for early childhood education programs.

22 ELAC recommends to CYFD and PED that ELAC be involved in the determination of KOT criteria/cut scores for determination of school readiness for New Mexico children.

NEXT STEPS

ELAC looks forward to its reauthorization and strengthening of our role in advising various departments and committees around early learning in New Mexico. Our next activities include:

- Exploring the implementation of community level collaboration among early learning providers in each community to foster communication and coordination to include enrollment and transition.
- Formalize the relationship between ELAC and the formal cross agency governance body as an advisory council.
- Continue to explore the relationship between child care, Head Start and PreK.

The ELAC would like to take an opportunity to thank the Children Youth and Families Department, the Public Education Department and the Department of Health for their work in the field of Early Childhood and recognize the huge strides taken toward supporting an Early Childhood system that meets the needs of the diverse children and families in the State of New Mexico.

BACKGROUND OF THE EARLY LEARNING ADVISORY COUNCIL

In 2011, the New Mexico Early Childhood Care and Education Act was enacted to create the Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) as SB120.

New Mexico's SB120 states that an early childhood care and education system is vital in ensuring that every New Mexico child is eager to learn and ready to succeed by the time they enter kindergarten, that high quality early learning experiences have been proven to prepare children for success in school and later in life, and that cost-benefit research demonstrates a high return on investment for money spent on early childhood care and education for at-risk children.

A successful early childhood care and education system should be:

- I. Developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate and include the implementation of program models, standards, and curriculum based on research and best practices
- II. Data-driven, including the identification and prioritization of communities most at risk, while striving to make the system universally available to all who wish to participate
- III. Accountable through developmentally appropriate methods of measuring, reporting, and tracking a child's growth and development and the improvement of the system's programs
- IV. Accessible, especially to those children most at risk of school failure
- V. Of the highest possible quality through the utilization of qualified practitioners who have completed specialized training in early childhood growth, development, and learning that is specific to that practitioner's role in the system and the maintenance of quality rating methods for the programs in the system
- VI. Fully aligned within each community to ensure the most efficient and effective use of resources by combining funding sources and supporting seamless transitions for children within the system and for children transitioning into kindergarten
- VII. Family-centered by recognizing that parents and caregivers are the first and most important teachers of their children and providing the support and referrals necessary for parents and caregivers to assume this critical role in their child's development
- VIII. A partnership between the state and private individuals or institutions with an interest or expertise in early childhood care and education

The purpose of the Early Childhood Care and Education Act is to establish a comprehensive early childhood care and education system through an aligned continuum of state and private programs.

The New Mexico Early Learning Advisory Council was created to ensure implementation of the Early Childhood Care and Education Act.

SUMMARY

ELAC members identified priority goals to achieve the responsibilities set forth for the council by reviewing, analyzing, and prioritizing the 2011 New Mexico SB120, the Head Start Act, and Race to the Top Application. Based on the information reviewed, the following three Priority Goals were identified:

1. High Quality Early Childhood Workforce
2. Accessibility to High Quality Early Childhood Programs
3. Improved School Readiness (now and at 3rd grade)

Priority Goal 1: High Quality Early Childhood Workforce

ELAC has determined that an effective and well-qualified workforce for the New Mexico Early Care and Learning System requires practitioners and educators with appropriate training, education, and credentials. To be successful, the early childhood workforce needs a range of competencies to support children for healthy development and success in school. Ensuring access to higher education and implementing an integrated system of professional development are key strategies to prepare, support staff who work in early care and learning settings

Priority Goal 2: Accessibility to High Quality Early Childhood Programs

The New Mexico ELAC has determined that access to high quality services for all children is critical for improving the wellbeing of New Mexico's children. This includes:

- Funding quality standards and criteria at levels that ensures accessibility for all families, provides program sustainability, and continuity of care, particularly for children whom research shows benefit most from early childhood services.
- Children with disabilities, particularly children with significant or multiple disabilities
- Full participation of children of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, including family composition
- Support for children with challenging behaviors
- Addressing the needs of New Mexico's Early Childhood Investment Zones

The Early Learning Advisory Council agrees that all types of programs including Childcare, PreK and Head Start are important and necessary to meet the needs of New Mexico's children.

Priority Goal 3: Improve School Readiness

According to 45 CFR Chapter XIII Head Start Regulation Part 1307.2 and 1307.3 (b) (1) (i), as amended, school readiness means that children are prepared for school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are able to provide an appropriate learning environment for children. The expectations of children's status and progress across domains of

language and literacy development, cognition and general knowledge, approaches to learning, motor development, physical health and wellbeing, and social-emotional development are that they will improve readiness for kindergarten goals and that they will “appropriately reflect the ages of children, birth to five, participating in the program.” Head Start views school readiness as children possessing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in school and for later learning and life.