

NEW MEXICO
Early Childhood
Education & Care Department

Floreecer

Strategic Plan 2022-2027



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Introduction



Dear New Mexicans,

Anyone who has ever started a garden knows how critical the early stages are. You can't just throw seeds in the ground and expect them to grow and thrive. You must work to create the right conditions by enriching the soil, providing water, and ensuring ample light. Once this strong foundation for growth is established, roots sink deep, stalks grow tall, and flowers bloom bright.

All living things need a strong foundation to grow and develop – and that foundation is what the Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) has focused on building in its first two years since the agency's founding in July 2020.

We've accomplished a great deal in that time – we've overseen the single largest investment in early childhood infrastructure in state history, expanded our state's child care assistance program so most New Mexico families now qualify for free child care, expanded Home Visiting services, and established New Mexico as a top-tier early intervention state.

Having built this strong foundation, we now plan ahead to the next five years to map out how ECECD will ensure New Mexico children and families continue to grow strong and flourish – or in the Spanish language, to *florecer*.

***Florecer*, ECECD's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan, has six main components: improving school readiness, building family and community engagement, fostering strong government-to-**

government relationships, aligning the early childhood ecosystem, ensuring organizational excellence, and improved transparency through the visualization and use of actionable data.

This Plan was developed in collaboration with ECECD leadership and their teams over the course of several months, informed by feedback from key constituents and partners, and finalized with input from the entire ECECD staff. I am grateful to the ECECD staff whose passion, knowledge, experience, and expertise were invaluable to creating this Plan.

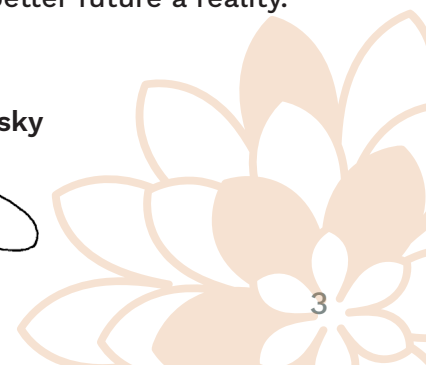
As we laid out the ambitious goals, objectives, and activities contained in this plan, our focus was on building a cohesive, equitable, and responsive prenatal-to-five system that supports families, strengthens communities, and enhances child health, development, and well-being. We understand what an incredible opportunity we have before us here in New Mexico. The first years of a child's development set the stage for a lifetime of growth and learning. By building a system that supports children and families in these critical early years, we will see generations of New Mexico families flourish and thrive.

We owe much **gratitude** to Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, whose leadership and dedication has revolutionized early education and care in New Mexico and made our state a national role model for early childhood innovation and investment. We also are extremely grateful to the New Mexico State Legislature for their ongoing financial support of these vital programs and services and their steadfast commitment to improving the lives of New Mexican families and young children. It has been inspiring to see how New Mexico's leaders, early childhood professionals, advocates, and families across the state have come together united in a vision of a better future for New Mexico children and families.

We are proud to share with you ***Florecer***, our five-year plan for making that better future a reality.

Sincerely,

Secretary Elizabeth Groginsky



Florecer

Spanish for **Flourish**

Synonyms: grow · thrive · prosper · do well · develop · bloom

1. (of a person, animal, or other living organism) grow or develop in a healthy or vigorous way, especially as the result of a particularly favorable environment.

Our Commitment

Our commitment to New Mexicans is to create a cohesive, equitable, and responsive prenatal to five early childhood system that supports families, strengthens communities, and enhances child health, development, education, and wellbeing.

Vision:

All New Mexican families and young children are thriving.

Mission:

Optimize the health, development, education, and well-being of babies, toddlers, and preschoolers through a family driven, equitable, community-based system of high quality prenatal and early childhood programs and services.





Core Values

Family Driven

We recognize and value all types of family structures and strive to design, develop, and implement multilingual and multicultural programs that are informed and led by families, and meet their unique and diverse needs.

Organizational Excellence

We act with a sense of urgency and hold ourselves and each other accountable to providing high-quality, equitable programs, and services. We are transparent in our actions and focus on delivering excellent customer service and getting the details of our core work right.

Integrity

We value the trust and respect of our community and coworkers, and we work diligently to support and inspire each other. We commit to being consistent and to use data to make decisions and to improve our systems and processes.

Teamwork and Collaboration

We value diversity in many forms and believe that it strengthens our team and our work. Guided by mutual trust, compassion, and respect, we will operate with a generosity of spirit and inspire, challenge, and support each other to be our best.

Partnership

We value relationships and work intentionally to build strong communities and deepen connections for families; always valuing and promoting the rich culture, language, and geographic diversity of New Mexico.



Strategic Plan Impact



By 2027, ECECD aims to impact families, children, communities, and early childhood professionals through our **ambitious goals**.

- **5,000** additional children enrolled in high-quality NM PreK
- **20,000** more families receive affordable high-quality early care and education
- **33** counties in New Mexico supported by an active and engaged local early childhood coalition
- **5** regional equity councils are established
- **23** Tribes, Pueblos and Nations have improved early childhood facilities supported by a dedicated funding source and technical assistance
- **80** percent of families and babies with Plans of Care will be supported
- **2,000** additional infants and toddlers will have access to high-quality, inclusive child care
- **500** indigenous early childhood educators are supported in achieving higher credentials
- **5,000** additional families engage in evidence-based home visiting

As we move forward over the next **five years**, these four pillars will guide and help focus the work of the Department

Pillar 1

Equity

Develop and implement internal and external policies, procedures, and programs that reflect the diverse needs of staff, facilities, and the families and young children we serve.



Pillar 2

Partner Engagement

Engage partners, families, and the communities we serve throughout the policymaking and implementation process in meaningful ways that allow for authentic and actionable feedback.



Pillar 3

Early Childhood Program Supports

Improve the quality of early childhood programs through the development and implementation of capacity building programs that support continuous improvement.



Pillar 4

Systems of Accountability

Meaningful and transparent data is shared with stakeholders regularly, through the development and improvement of data collection and reporting mechanisms.





GOAL 1: School Readiness

ECECD will create and implement equitable, culturally responsive policies, programs, and services that will ensure all children have the skills and knowledge needed to enter kindergarten ready to succeed.



Objective 1.1

All early childhood professionals are supported by a fully implemented equitable career and compensation system

Activity

1.1.1 Complete the design of the career and compensation lattice in collaboration with providers, advocates, and policymakers

1.1.2 Identify and support accelerated, and supported pathways to credentials and degrees for early childhood professionals

1.1.3 Complete the full implementation plan, including communications, cost model update, information technology, and infrastructure needs

1.1.4 Secure the resources and implement

Objective 1.2

Support for the social and emotional development of children will be enhanced through the Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) initiative

Activity

1.2.1 Develop job description for New Mexico IECMH consultant

1.2.2 Create a Training Institute focused on IECMH consultation, as part of a broader IECMH training system that is closely aligned with the NM Association for Infant Mental Health (NMAIMH) to benefit the broader workforce supporting the Early Childhood System

1.2.3 Develop a model of IECMH consultation that will build capacity in early care and education (ECE) and home visiting providers

1.2.4 Foster collaboration between IECMH consultants and Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) directors, Indian Health and Behavioral Health Services to ensure that ECE, home visiting providers, and families have a referral network

1.2.5 Design and implement an impact evaluation

Objective 1.3

Early care and education services for children are supported through a redesigned FOCUS program that incorporates outcome-based measures of quality and supports diversity, equity and inclusion

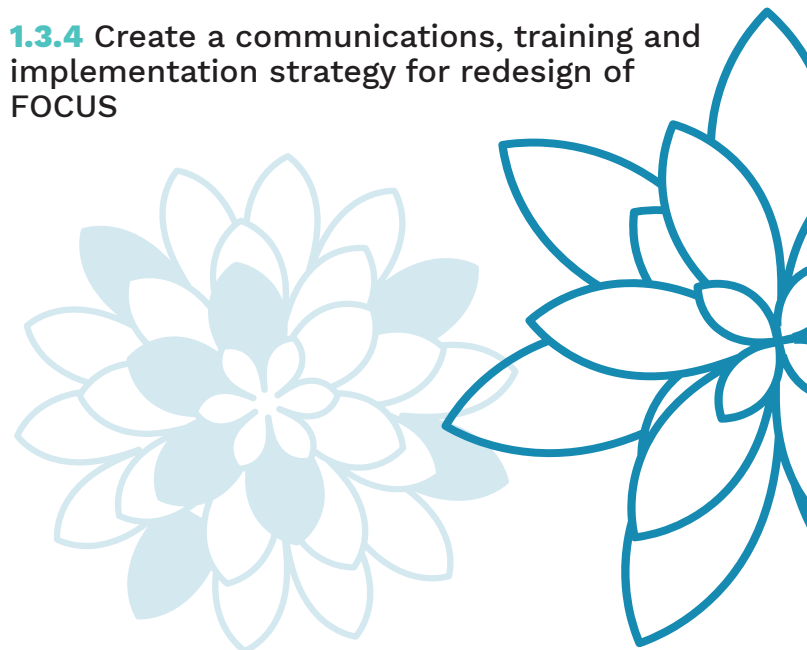
Activity

1.3.1 Establish a draft framework for the redesign of FOCUS

1.3.2 Engage with the early childhood community for listening and feedback on the draft framework

1.3.3 Revise the framework and redesign FOCUS

1.3.4 Create a communications, training and implementation strategy for redesign of FOCUS





Objective 1.4

Knowledge and use of trauma-responsive practice is integrated across all prenatal-to-five services

Activity

1.4.1 Increase knowledge of ECECD staff about understanding and using trauma-informed and trauma-responsive practices

1.4.2 Develop an ECECD implementation plan for incorporating trauma-informed and trauma-responsive practices into the work of ECECD and its professional development and technical assistance partners

1.4.3 Incorporate trauma-responsive practice into the well-established reflective supervision and Continuous Quality Improvement work of ECECD

Objective 1.5

Quality, universal, accessible, and affordable early care and education is available for all families and children

Activity

1.5.1 Conduct a supply and demand study of infant and toddler child care

1.5.2 Sustain funding for families at 400% of the federal poverty level to access child care assistance

1.5.3 Redesign copayment chart to simplify and reduce family financial burden

1.5.4 Expand hours and days of service in NM PreK

1.5.5 Study and propose strategies that decouple family income and work requirements from participation in early care and education services





GOAL 2:
**Family and
Community
Engagement**



ECECD commits to effective, transparent, and trust-based engagement with New Mexico's diverse families and communities to increase family leadership and voice in decision making and program and service design.

Objective 2.1

A framework for family engagement and leadership is developed and implemented that is built on mutual trust and respect

Activity

- 2.1.1** Hire a family engagement coordinator to lead
 - 2.1.2** Identify and dedicate recurring funding for family engagement
 - 2.1.3** Develop a family leadership council representative of ECECD programs
 - 2.1.4** Establish family engagement and leadership policies and standards
 - 2.1.5** Convene a family summit on a regular basis
-

Objective 2.2

Collaboration occurs with families, community based organizations, providers, Head Start, and schools that support families to engage and foster their children's learning and development

Activity

- 2.2.1** Identify and implement a framework to foster and facilitate collaboration aimed at family support for children's learning and development
- 2.2.2** Develop and implement a language accessibility and readability/grade level policy for all public facing documents to ensure information accessibility to the general public
- 2.2.3** Work in partnership with school districts, Head Start, PED, families, and community organizations to fully implement federal early childhood coordination requirements

Objective 2.3

Regional Equity Councils are established to advise ECECD on its justice, equity, diversity and inclusion approach

Activity

- 2.3.1** Define ECECD regions and respective partners
 - 2.3.2** Establish and implement the regional Equity Councils
 - 2.3.3** Hire staff to support successful implementation of the Council and advisement of ECECD
-

Objective 2.4

Each New Mexico community is served by an early childhood coalition that ensures stronger state-local coordination and decision making

Activity

- 2.4.1** Identify unserved communities and identify and address obstacles so that all communities have an early childhood coalition
- 2.4.2** Identify actions ECECD can take to ensure long term sustainability and expansion of coalitions
- 2.4.3** Demonstrate the impact and accomplishments of the early childhood coalitions and share widely
- 2.4.4** Develop a toolkit and guidance to assist new coalitions and strengthen existing coalitions



GOAL 3:

Government-to-Government

ECECD will expand and deepen government-to-government relationships and agreements with all Tribes, Pueblos, and Nations with a focus on consultation, culture, language, data sharing, and facility improvements to improve outcomes for Native American families and young children.



Objective 3.1

An active and engaged ECECD Early Childhood Tribal Advisory Coalition works with ECECD to support desired outcomes of the 23 Tribes, Pueblos, and Nations

Activity

3.1.1 Integrate Tribal programs into Enterprise Provider Information and Constituent Services (EPICS) system

3.1.2 Engage in meaningful consultation with Pueblos, Tribes, and Nations to develop a pathway towards a culturally appropriate licensure in order to participate in the New Mexico Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program and leverage state subsidies with Tribal funding

3.1.3 Establish the Early Childhood Tribal Advisory Coalition that will provide policy, budget and advocacy recommendations to the agency

3.1.4 Collaborate with the Early Childhood Tribal Advisory Coalition to conduct a needs assessment of early childhood programs and services Prenatal-to-Five (PN-5) within the Tribes, Pueblos, and Nations and identify the gaps

3.1.5 In collaboration with the Early Childhood Tribal Advisory Coalition, develop an Implementation Plan with action timeline

Objective 3.2

A dedicated fund for facility renovations and expansions that support environments that honor and respect culture and language is created in partnership with the 23 Tribes, Pueblos, and Nations

Activity

3.2.1 Identify sustainable funding sources to support facility renovations

3.2.2 Evaluate New Mexico statutes and regulations to determine how to best make sufficient construction funding available

3.2.3 Establish and implement guidelines for distribution and use of funding and procurement methods, including the role of the Early Childhood Tribal Advisory Coalition





Objective 3.3

Dedicated financial resources to support the defined outcomes of the leadership of the 23 Tribes, Pueblos, and Nations are increased annually

Activity

3.3.1 Identify dedicated options for sustainable funding sources through the Early Childhood Trust Fund and other future funding sources

3.3.2 Conduct individual meaningful consultation with the 23 Tribal Leaders that will be on an ongoing basis to identify and support the vision of each Tribe, Pueblo, and Nation in prenatal-to-age-five services and programs

3.3.3 Establish a tracking system of documenting implementation and progress toward identified outcomes

3.3.4 Evaluate existing legislation and amend if needed

3.3.5 Create ongoing funding opportunity for Tribes, Pueblos, and Nations to apply for as needs arise

Objective 3.4

Funding and implementing an Early Childhood Tribal Capacity Building Cooperative that supports and advances an indigenous workforce and expands culturally and linguistically diverse programs

Activity

3.4.1 Research strategies for establishing a Tribal Education Cooperative that is dedicated to supporting the Tribes, Pueblos, and Nations in early childhood education and care

3.4.2 Collaborate with Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) to support, retain, and advance a well-credentialed Tribal early childhood workforce that supports language and culture in the instruction

3.4.3 Develop and provide culturally sustaining training and consultation including infant and early childhood mental health consultants to support the workforce

3.4.4 Provide education and access to the Professional Development Information System (PDIS) in order to measure growth of the Tribal workforce

3.4.5 Provide equitable access to professional supports (e.g., scholarships, wage supplement, pay parity, internships)

3.4.6 Create a marketing campaign to recruit more indigenous early childhood educators



GOAL 4:

Early Childhood Ecosystem Alignment

ECECD will foster coordination and collaboration within and among the early childhood, health, and child welfare sectors to create a holistic, family centered, culturally responsive, and integrated early childhood ecosystem that supports families, reduces child abuse and neglect, and improves school readiness.



Goals and Objectives



Objective 4.1

The prevention, intervention and promotion of the health and well-being of children, families, and communities is equitably supported through use of early childhood cross-agency resources and expertise

Activity

4.1.1 Coordinate with Children’s Cabinet agencies in mapping current prevention, intervention, and promotion approaches and develop a statewide prevention, intervention, and promotion plan

4.1.2 Collaborate with CYFD and DOH to continue and improve CARA outcomes

4.1.3 Develop cross agency data system and linkages through Family Success and HHS-2020

4.1.4 Identify and implement a shared system for longitudinal data to track social determinants of health and promote health equity

4.1.5 Develop shared impact measures with internal and external stakeholders to measure the impact of prevention, intervention, and promotion of health and well-being of children, families, and communities

Objective 4.2

A comprehensive home visiting and perinatal case management system provides a continuum of services and coordinated referral that meets individual families’ needs

Activity

4.2.1 Research existing case management and coordinated referral systems

4.2.2 Define the business requirements and work with case managers for detail of needs and workflow

4.2.3 Design and implement the comprehensive home visiting and perinatal case management system

Objective 4.3

ECECD’s professional development and technical assistance system builds the capacity of early childhood professionals to support high quality, equitable services that are aligned to the early learning guidelines and meet the geographic, cultural, and linguistic diversity of programs and communities

Activity

4.3.1 Review and identify all of professional development (PD) and technical assistance (TA) content being offered, and evaluate for content gaps in areas such as cultural and language support

4.3.2 Close the gaps by creating new PD courses, training professional development specialists, and TA specialists as needed

4.3.3 Create a trainer approval system for the PD system

4.3.4 Investigate creation of TA credentialing system, and if feasible, design and implement

4.3.5 Open up the PD system so that people in one area (e.g., child care) can take and access PD in another area (e.g., home visiting)

4.3.6 Complete the Professional Development Information System (PIDS) so that early childhood professionals can have full access to all PD that is available



Objective 4.4

All children and families are centered in alignment processes and projects across the early childhood ecosystem

Activity

4.4.1 Increase knowledge of ECECD staff about understanding and using family centered and trauma-informed and trauma-responsive principles and practices

4.4.2 Increase knowledge within the state agencies in the early childhood ecosystem, through cooperative work with the Children’s Cabinet, about understanding and using family centered and trauma-informed and trauma-responsive principles and practices

4.4.3 Develop an ECECD implementation plan for incorporating the family centered, trauma-informed and trauma-responsive principles and practices into the work of ECECD and its professional development and technical assistance partners

Objective 4.5

New Mexico health care agencies partner with ECECD to support early childhood professionals in accessing publicly-supported health care coverage

Activity

4.5.1 Partner with New Mexico health care agencies to ensure early childhood providers are a key constituency for health care coverage

4.5.2 Map out a system of coverage for Early Childhood Education professionals to include Healthcare Exchange, Medicaid, and High Risk Insurance Pool to identify and enroll eligible professionals





GOAL 5:

Organizational Excellence

ECECD will have efficient and effective fiscal, human resource, and constituent service systems and information technology infrastructure to meet critical job functions and duties of the department and ensure high quality customer service for all New Mexicans.

Objective 5.1

A staffed department-wide justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) initiative is fully implemented

Activity

5.1.1 Create ECECD Equity Council and Regional Equity Councils; develop and define roles and responsibilities, determine membership, charter, etc.

5.1.2 Hire an equity officer in the Office of the Secretary to support the Equity Council

5.1.3 Cross-reference recommendations of the Equity Council to make sure they align with state and federal oversight entity rules (SPO, DFA, etc)

5.1.4 Develop ECECD specific equity trainings and supports, starting with recruitment

5.1.5 Design and develop evaluative performance measures

Objective 5.2

The Department will have consistent, high-quality customer service systems, both internal and external

Activity

5.2.1 Develop and implement an agency-wide systems mapping process to identify fiscal support gaps

5.2.2 Design and develop standard operating procedures

5.2.3 Create feedback loops for external entities to engage with ECECD

5.2.4 Ensure adequate staffing resources for external customer service support

5.2.5 Develop a database and/or tracking system to ensure high-quality customer service for tracking and monitoring of constituent concerns

Objective 5.3

The ECECD Advisory Council is active, engaged, inclusive, and accountable as it helps advance equitable and effective policies and practices

Activity

5.3.1 Design, define, and develop a charter for the ECECD Advisory Council that includes families and diverse statewide representation and aligns with federal and state laws

5.3.2 Engage the Advisory Council in long-term strategic planning activities such as the ECECD Strategic Plan and the Four Year Finance Plan

5.3.3 Designate staff to attend, coordinate and support the Advisory Council

Objective 5.4

ECECD is an employer of choice with an equitable, inclusive, happy, healthy, and thriving staff, and a culture of respect, support, and accountability

Activity

5.4.1 Develop and design quarterly refresher courses on organizational structure, policies, procedures, and employee engagement

5.4.2 Offer flexible schedules, fitness leave, group yoga and walking sessions, and telework options

5.4.3 Develop an agency-wide study to review organizational structure and employee classification and present recommendations for changes

5.4.4 Celebrate team members and accomplishments regularly



GOAL 6:

Actionable Data

ECECD will collect and share relevant, reliable, and actionable data to inform policy decisions, empower partners to improve, and enhance community understanding of the importance of the prenatal to age five period of development.



Objective 6.1

The integration of ECECD programs into Health and Human Services 2020 (MMISR) improves constituents' experience in accessing services

Activity

6.1.1 Establish a team representing each division to develop business requirements for integration into MMISR

6.1.2 Establish an enterprise level service requirements matrix for the ECECD

6.1.3 Develop and design data dictionaries and application integration for ECECD services

6.1.4 Partner with pediatricians and hospitals to disseminate information on services provided by ECECD linking them back to HH2020

Objective 6.2

The NM Longitudinal Data System (NMLDS) is collaboratively developed with the Higher Education Department, Public Education Department, and the Department of Workforce Solutions and tracks outcomes for children and educators and supports data-driven decision making

Activity

6.2.1 Engage with the project agencies in development of data structures and files

6.2.2 Work within ECECD divisions to develop reporting requirements and visualization matrix

6.2.3 Hire staff that will work with HED as liaisons between the two agencies

6.2.4 Coordinate and develop cross agency recurring training on the NMLDS

Objective 6.3

Cost modeling and data tools are available for local communities and programs to inform decision making and support the long-term sustainability of early childhood programs and services

Activity

6.3.1 Develop an enterprise level cost modeling tool that can be applied for all service areas

6.3.2 Develop and implement online training on cost modeling and data tools for internal and external users

6.3.3 Work directly with community providers to develop program-specific cost modeling tools

6.3.4 Define long term sustainability in order to ensure that cost modeling and data tools are effective for the department and for service providers

Goals and Objectives



Objective 6.4

The New Mexico Roadmap to School Readiness is finalized and disseminated

Activity

6.4.1 Conduct community and tribal engagement prior to finalizing the Roadmap

6.4.2 Incorporate the feedback received from community and tribal engagement activities

6.4.3 Develop and implement a dissemination plan that includes marketing and communication strategy, and ensures all relevant community partners are equipped to provide information and education to families on school readiness

6.4.4 Organize a summit to launch the New Mexico Roadmap to School Readiness

Objective 6.5

External and internal data dashboards show ECECD impact and drive fiscal and programmatic decision making

Activity

6.5.1 Develop a team, representative of all divisions, to gather information on the type of data currently collected

6.5.2 Design business requirements and visualization components for the internal and external dashboards

6.5.3 Determine key performance indicators for fiscal and programmatic success



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