

NEW MEXICO  
Early Childhood  
Education & Care Department



# Floreecer

Strategic Plan 2022-2027



**Revised August 2024**

The release of this revised strategic plan replaces and supersedes the previously released strategic plan.



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### Icon Key:

The roadrunner checkmark icon indicates a completed activity.





# 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.*

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## **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 children receive affordable high-quality early care and education
- **33** counties in New Mexico supported by an active and engaged local early childhood coalition
- **23** Tribes, Pueblos and Nations have improved early childhood facilities
- **ECECD Advisory Council** is active, engaged, inclusive, and accountable
- **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 co-payment chart to simplify and reduce family financial burden



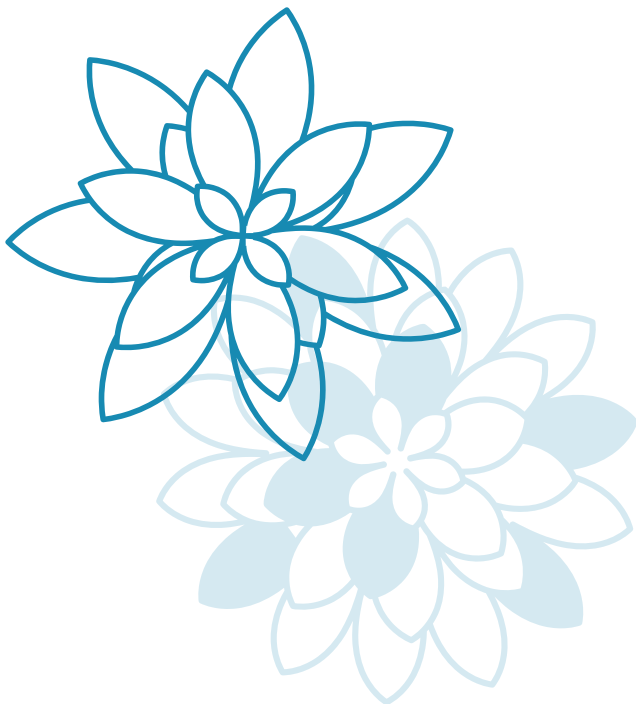
**1.5.4** Expand hours and days of service in NM PreK

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

**1.5.6** Improve access and coordination for children with developmental delays and disabilities in early care and education programs

**1.5.7** Develop an accessible, statewide home visiting system that is cooperatively financed with federal (i.e. Medicaid, Maternal and Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting funds) and state funds

**1.5.8** Develop an approach to provide financial support for all families as part of achieving universal access





**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 that includes family input in ECECD policy and programs

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## Objective 2.2

Family and parent engagement is focused on family well-being and enhanced promotion of children's learning and development

### Activity

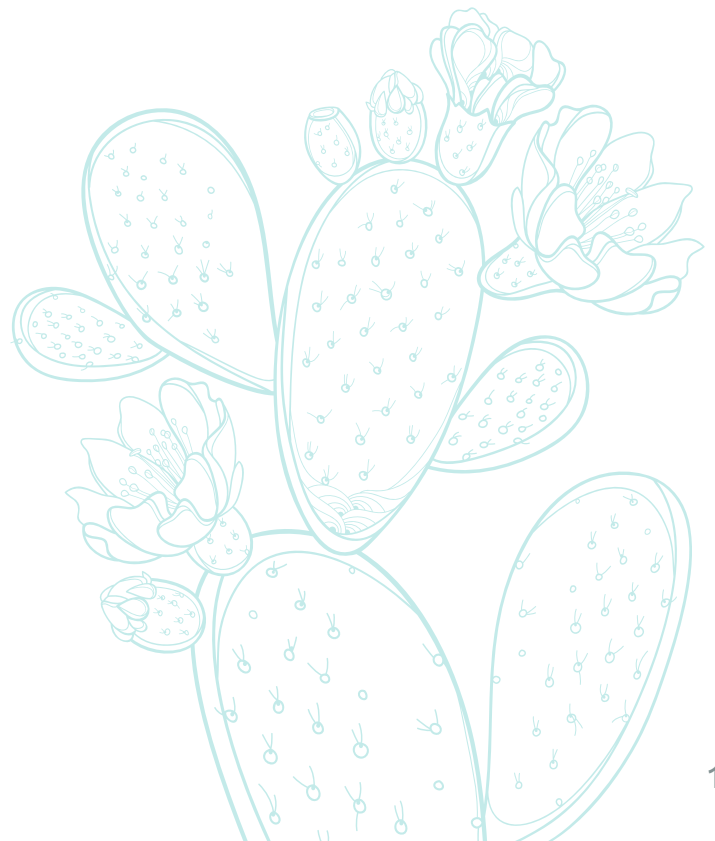
- 2.2.1** Develop a family engagement framework aimed at family support for children's learning and development
- 2.2.2** Implement the framework throughout all ECECD programs and services

## Objective 2.3

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

### Activity

- 2.3.1** Identify unserved communities and identify and address obstacles so that all communities have an early childhood coalition
- 2.3.2** Identify actions ECECD can take to ensure long term sustainability and expansion of coalitions
- 2.3.3** Demonstrate the impact and accomplishments of the early childhood coalitions and share widely
- 2.3.4** 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 each Tribal community

### Activity

-  **3.1.1** Establish the Early Childhood Tribal Advisory Coalition, with each Tribal community represented, to provide policy, budget, legislative, and advocacy recommendations to ECECD
- 3.1.2** Develop and implement the Early Childhood Tribal Advisory work plan with action timeline
- 3.1.3** Ground the Tribal Advisory Coalition through meetings in tribal communities
- 3.1.4** Bring together Tribal Advisory Council with other ECECD advisory groups to ensure mutual communication

## Objective 3.2

Tribal communities are supported by ECECD to address early childhood facilities needs


### Activity

- 3.2.1** Ensure resources are available for facilities assessments by Tribal communities
- 3.2.2** Pursue investment in facility renovation and expansion resources
- 3.2.3** Establish and implement guidelines for distribution and use of funding and procurement methods with mutual agreement between ECECD and Tribal leadership

## Objective 3.3

The Tribal investment strategy grows to support the defined outcomes of Tribal communities

### Activity

- 3.3.1** Continue implementing intergovernmental agreements (IGAs) between ECECD and Tribal communities
- 3.3.2** Conduct ongoing, individual, and meaningful consultation with each Tribal community to identify and support the vision of each Tribal community for its prenatal-to-age-five services and programs
-  **3.3.3** Document implementation and progress through a reporting system
- 3.3.4** Support Tribal communities to research and apply for grant and other funding opportunities





## Objective 3.4

Tribal communities are supported in the development of a culturally and linguistically early childhood workforce

### Activity


**3.4.1** ECECD engages with the Higher Education Department as it establishes technical assistance centers (TAC) to serve Tribal communities, inclusive of early childhood

**3.4.2** ECECD supports the technical assistance centers as they implement early childhood culturally and linguistically relevant instructional materials; career pathways for Tribal educators; professional development in culturally and linguistically relevant pedagogy; and capacity building for early childhood policy development and implementation

## Objective 3.5

Tribal communities and ECECD collaboration is supported

### Activity

 **3.5.1** ECECD designates 11 tribal liaisons representing each program administered by the department

**3.5.2** Make infant and early childhood mental health consultants available in Tribal communities

**3.5.3** Ensure the PDIS is accessible to Tribal early childhood professionals

 **3.5.4** Share information that is relevant to Tribal communities through dedicated webpages





## 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 the Children, Youth, and Families Department (CYFD), New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH), and New Mexico Health Care Association (NMHCA) to continue and improve the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) outcomes

**4.1.3** 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

**4.1.4** Increase participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in support of healthy food for children, affordability for families, and improved provider revenue

## Objective 4.2

A comprehensive home visiting and perinatal case management system provides an inclusive continuum of services and coordinated referrals 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** 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)

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

**4.3.4** Collaborate with education partners to promote certification/licensure for early childhood professionals that is specifically tailored around the needs of young children with developmental delays and disabilities and inclusion

**4.3.5** Support higher education efforts that advance multi-lingual and indigenous professionals and offer credit for prior early childhood learning and experience





## Objective 4.4

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

### Activity

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

**4.4.2** 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** Hire a Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Specialist Coordinator

**5.1.2** Coordinate ECECD equity work and improve performance

**5.1.3** Develop ECECD specific equity trainings and supports, starting with recruitment


**5.1.4** Design and develop evaluative performance measures

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## 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

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## 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 refresher courses on organizational structure, policies, procedures, and employee engagement

 **5.4.2** Offer flexible schedules, and wellness opportunities

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



## 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** Provide initial feedback for Unified Portal data for ECECD Referral

 **6.1.3** Participate in data services tools selection Request for Proposal (RFP)


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

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## 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

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## 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





## 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** Assign team of Business Owners/Data Stewards/Data Technical team for visualization projects/initiatives

 **6.5.3** Procure vendor for implementation of dashboards

**6.5.4** Determine key performance indicators (KPI) for fiscal and programmatic success

 **6.5.5** Procure data visualization tools and platform

**6.5.6** Train data analysts and business subject matter expert team members in using visualization tools

**6.5.7** Develop a process for data analysts to deploy visualizations externally (with considerations to security and PIO reviews) and internally

**6.5.8** Identify requirements and prioritize for internal facing dashboards to share with agency users

**6.5.9** Identify requirements and prioritize work for external facing dashboards to share with public

## Objective 6.6

### ECECD conducts and uses evaluation to understand and improve policy design and program implementation

#### Activity

**6.6.1** Oversee development and execution of an ECECD evaluation plan that includes required and strategic evaluation activities

**6.6.2** Implement key evaluations identified in the ECECD evaluation plan

**6.6.3** Implement required evaluation activities







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Strategic Plan 2022-2027

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