



For Immediate Release

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**\*Press Release\***

## **ONE THOUSAND YELLOW UMBRELLAS FOR RAINY DAY FUND Supporters of Early Childhood Education Make a Splash at Roundhouse**

**Santa Fe, NM (January 24, 2011)** - St. Joseph Community Health and other coalition partners kicked-off the *Invest In Kids Now* initiative today in Santa Fe. Supporters rallied on the east steps of the Roundhouse displaying 1,000 yellow umbrellas in support of early childhood education.

*Invest in Kids Now* alongside Attorney General Gary King and other speakers announced their plans for a New Mexico constitutional amendment to expand the scope of education, focusing on the importance of early childhood education. The initiative will redefine public education placing emphasis on ages 0-5 and continuing through grade 12.

Studies show that a child who starts behind stays behind. Children deserve to be put on the right trajectory. Empirical evidence demonstrates that the best preparation for school is quality, early childhood education and parental involvement. By increasing student successes, it decreases crime, teen pregnancy and other problems facing our children today.

"We now know that quality early learning can save \$80 million a year on corrections costs in New Mexico," said Attorney General Gary King. "By focusing resources on children early, when it matters most the *Invest in Kids Now* initiative will change not just New Mexico's educational outcomes but will also fight crime."

Currently, K-12 education receives 5.8 percent of the interest from the permanent fund. Raising the allotment from 5.8 percent to 7 percent will allow funding for early childhood education programs, without increasing taxes or touching the corpus of the permanent or "rainy day" fund.

"We have the second largest permanent fund in the nation, but we're 49<sup>th</sup> in all categories when it comes to New Mexico's children," said Allen Sánchez, CEO, St. Joseph Community Health. "That's not right, the fund was set up for a rainy day. It's pouring right now when it comes to providing for the future of our state and that's our children."

### **About *Invest In Kids Now***

*Invest in Kids Now* represents an innovative public-private partnership seeking to change state policy and make early childhood care and education funding a priority for New Mexico's legislators.

For more information visit [www.InvestInKidsNow.org](http://www.InvestInKidsNow.org)

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