

New Mexico children need your help!

HJR 1 – Constitutional Amendment for Early Childhood Education

Invest in Kids NOW! is dedicated to making early childhood education, health, and development a priority in New Mexico in order to build a stronger economy and a brighter future for all. Investing in the early years is a common-sense way to ensure our children have the best opportunity to succeed in school and life. Evidence has shown that a continuum of high-quality, comprehensive, well-coordinated services for children ages 0 to 5 and their parents can yield a 13% return on investment—meaning they save much more money than they cost.

New Mexico has been ranked **last or near-last in child well-being** for too long. The increased state investments in early childhood education over the last 5 years represent only a first step in a long journey to address the pressing needs of New Mexico children and families. Even with increased funding, New Mexico currently invests just 2% of the total budget on early childhood education. With realistic assumptions regarding uptake rates, **experts estimate that the unmet need in New Mexico for early childhood education is \$413 million per year.** Since current investments in early childhood programs fall far short of the need, we must secure an adequate and sustainable source of funding.

Extending the Common Schools portion of the NM Land Grant Permanent Fund (LGPF) to include early childhood education would assure reliable funding for early childhood education. Phased in over three years, the proposed constitutional amendment will **provide 1% of the Common Schools portion of the LGPF to early childhood education, representing about \$112 million** toward the unmet need. **More than 70% of New Mexico voters support this approach.** Through the NM Public Education Department, local school districts will receive an allocation proportionate to their population of children ages 0 to 5 years. A Center for Early Childhood Education Excellence will be established to assist the school districts in assessing their communities, identifying priorities, developing a plan, and implementing evidence-based programs to meet their communities' early childhood education needs. State-level resources will provide a measurement system and objective evaluation to assess effectiveness and impact at the local and state levels.

Programs included in the range of early childhood education services that are appropriate for funding through the Common Schools portion of the LGPF are: **Home visiting, Enhanced referral services, Child care assistance, Pre-kindergarten, Quality improvement, Accountability and evaluation.**

An increase in funding for early childhood education will create jobs in New Mexico. **The direct impact will be 4,230 jobs.** This will have ripple effects throughout New Mexico's economy because women, who are taking the lead in early childhood careers, typically spend a higher proportion of their earnings on their families and in their communities.