

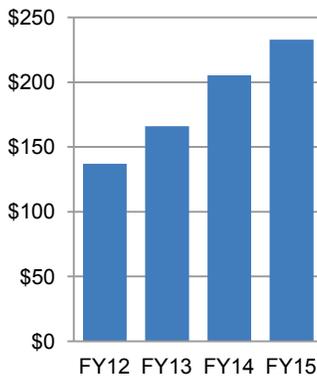


RESULTS OF THE FIRST

Evidence-Based Options To Improve Outcomes

Report Issued:
April 2014

Early Childhood Appropriations
(in millions)



Source: LFC Files

Many students in New Mexico enter kindergarten without pre-literacy skills.

One quarter of New Mexico's students enter kindergarten without being able to read a single letter.

Evidence-Based Early Education Programs to Improve Education Outcomes.

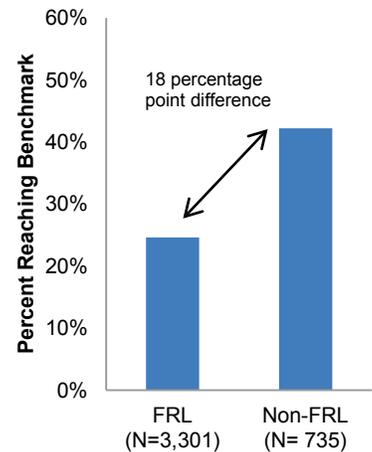
Background. Many New Mexico children enter school far behind their peers. In response, New Mexico has made significant investments in early childhood programs over the past four years. Research shows quality early education and health care, before age five, greatly impacts future success and highlights the need for investments in targeted, evidence-based programs. The research is clear; early reading proficiency is a strong predictor of future educational and employment success, and early experiences are critical for developing a strong foundation for future learning, behavior, and health.

Children living in poverty are exposed to more risk factors, which can impair brain development, than their more affluent peers. The Census Bureau reports that a higher percentage of New Mexican children are living in poverty than any other state with the exception of Mississippi. Poverty contributes significantly to child development and negatively impacts their readiness to learn, leading to a significant number of students entering New Mexico's public education system already behind.

The General Appropriation Act of 2014 increases funding for early childhood initiatives by \$28 million, a 14 percent increase over FY14 appropriations. For FY15, New Mexico made available \$231 million for key early childhood programs. The increased funding includes \$6.5 million more for prekindergarten, \$2.2 million more for childcare assistance, and \$2.5 million more for home visits to families with infants. The early childhood total also includes \$9.4 million the state will receive annually for four years from the Federal Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge federal grant for a childcare quality rating system and professional development. The total does not include the federally administered Head Start program which serves roughly eight thousand children at a cost of \$61 million.

Historical Performance. Many students in New Mexico enter kindergarten without pre-literacy skills; one quarter of New Mexico's students enter kindergarten without being able to read a single letter. In contrast, the median number of letters identified by kindergarteners nationally was 18 in 2010 (Cummings et al, 2011). Over three quarters of New Mexico children from low-income families (as determined by Free/Reduced Price Lunch (FRL) eligibility) and well over half of all other children are behind on the first day of school, unable to reach the benchmark on the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) test, a set of measures for assessing early literacy and reading skills.

DIBELS Benchmark FRL Achievement Gap, SY07 and SY08



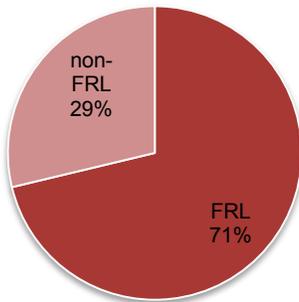


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FY13 Kindergarteners in Poverty as determined by Free/Reduced Price Lunch (FRL)

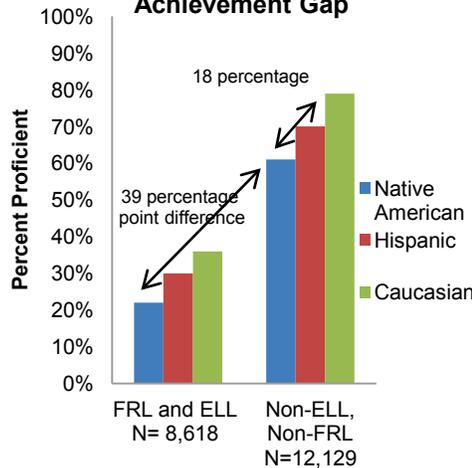
N= 27,662



Source: PED

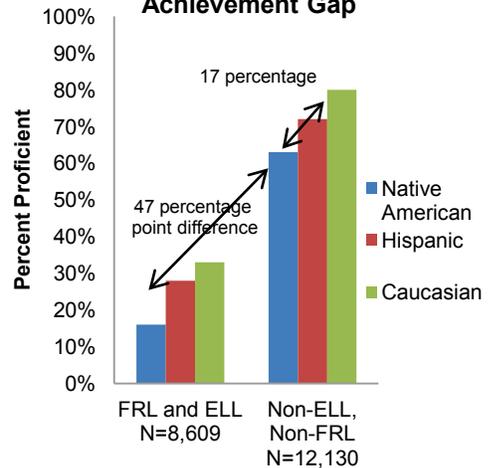
The achievement gap persists through the third grade, with around one third of students who are living in poverty and are English language learners (ELL) testing proficient in math or reading on the state standards-based assessment (SBA).

SY11 and SY12 ELL and FRL Third Grade Math Achievement Gap



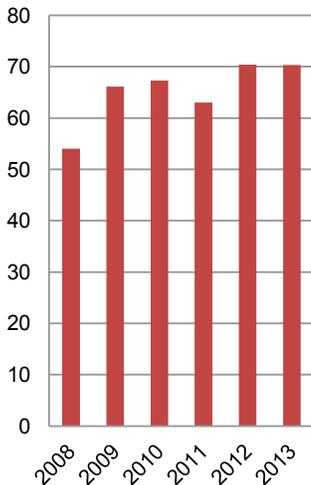
Source: LFC analysis

SY11 and SY12 ELL and FRL Third Grade Math Achievement Gap



Source: LFC analysis

New Mexico High School Graduation Rates 2008-2013



Source: PED

In terms of how New Mexico compares to performance in other states, the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) provides the largest nationally representative assessments of what students know and can do in various subjects. Nationwide, New Mexico fourth grade students rank third from last in NAEP scores, in front of only Alaska and Washington D.C. as shown in Appendix A.

Last year, the U.S. Department of Education reported the 2010 national high school graduation rate as being 78.2 percent, the highest in nearly three decades. The same year, the New Mexico graduation rate was toward the bottom with only Mississippi, Nevada, and Washington D.C ranking lower. The New Mexico graduation rate climbed to its highest level in five years in 2012 to 70.3 percent, then dropped slightly in 2013.

Investments in Early Childhood. To address low educational attainment and close the achievement gap, New Mexico has made considerable investments in early childhood programs. The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) ranked New Mexico among the highest in the nation for increased early childhood funding in FY13. In FY14, the Legislature substantially increased targeted funding to programs such as home visiting, PreK and child care. Rigorous research has demonstrated that evidence-based early childhood programs can improve education outcomes. In many cases, the benefits to taxpayers and society from these programs far outweigh the costs. As a result, strategic investments, along with careful attention to implementation and monitoring performance, could improve the social and cognitive skills of children, with benefits extending throughout a child's life.



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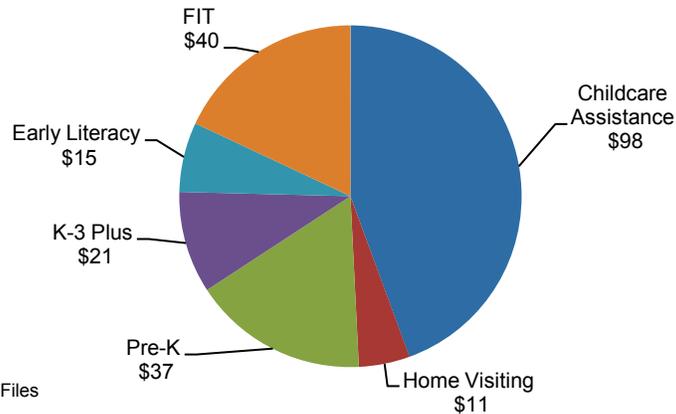
Evidence-Based Options To Improve Outcomes

New Mexico's graduation rate was toward the bottom with only three states ranking lower.

The New Mexico graduation rate climbed to its highest level in five years in 2012 to 70.3 percent, then dropped slightly in 2013.

The largest investments in early childhood programs in FY15 include childcare assistance at \$98 million, FIT at \$40 million, and PreK at \$37 million.

FY15 Selected Early Childhood Program Appropriations (in millions)
Total=\$222 million



Source: LFC Files

What works? Results-driven programs promote healthy early development and lay the foundation for greater achievement, economic productivity, and responsible citizenship. The best early care environments maintain high-quality standards such as highly-skilled teachers and caregivers, low caregiver- and teacher-to-child ratios, language-rich environments, consistent and stable caregivers and teachers, healthy food, calm environments, and consistent participation.

National Evidence-Based Programs. Cost-benefit analysis shows investment in high-quality early childhood programs produces future savings by reducing remediation needs in public and higher education, special education, juvenile rehabilitation, juvenile and adult criminal activity, and welfare assistance. The New Mexico Results First model calculated return on investment along with other key cost-benefit data for programs based on the best national research available. The graph below shows some program benefits far outweigh their cost. The predicted costs, benefits, and return on investment ratios for each program are calculated as accurately as possible but are, like all projections, subject to some level of uncertainty. Accordingly, it is more important to focus on the relative ranking of programs than small differences between them; some programs are predicted to produce large net benefits and may represent 'best buys' for the state, while others are predicted to generate small or even negative net benefits and may represent neutral or poor investment opportunities.

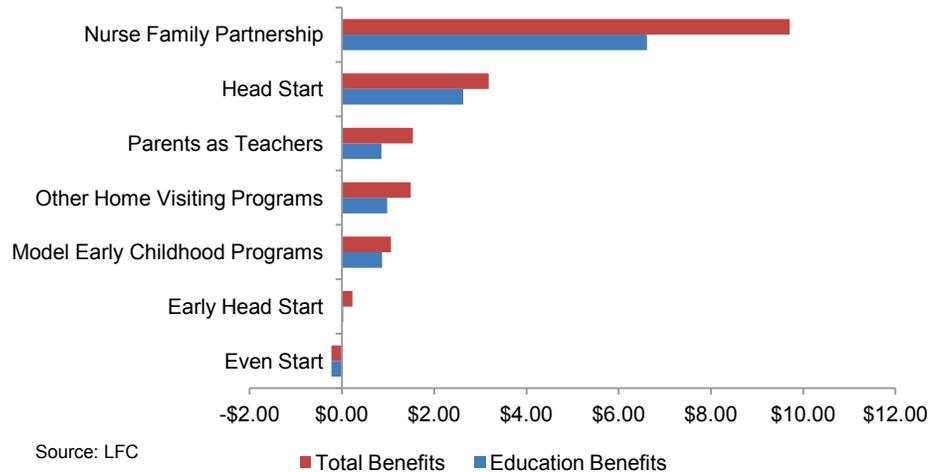


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The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) ranked New Mexico among the highest in the nation for increased early childhood funding in FY13.

Benefit-Cost Ratio National Evidence-Based Programs



Results-driven programs promote healthy early development and lay the foundation for greater achievement, economic productivity, and responsible citizenship.

Model High-Quality Early Childhood Programs (Perry and Abecedarian Programs). The highest quality early education programs often cited in national research include the Perry Preschool Program and the Abecedarian Early Childhood Intervention Project. A similar program not included in the Results First analysis is Educare, a state-of-the-art school open all day and year-round serving at-risk children from birth to five years old. Educare Schools provide high-quality instruction and stimulating learning environments to help students arrive at kindergarten ready to learn at the level of the average five-year-old in the U.S. Currently, none of these early childhood programs exist in New Mexico, and the dramatic benefits often seen from these programs do not necessarily translate to benefits for current early childhood programs run in the state. Programs such as Educare are largely funded from blending and braiding of existing state and federal resources. Many potential resources for funding exist, depending on the structure of such a program along with the ages that are targeted by the program. For example, a braided funding scenario using FY13 resources from existing resources in the state could provide a center with over \$12 thousand dollars per child for a high quality full-day program.



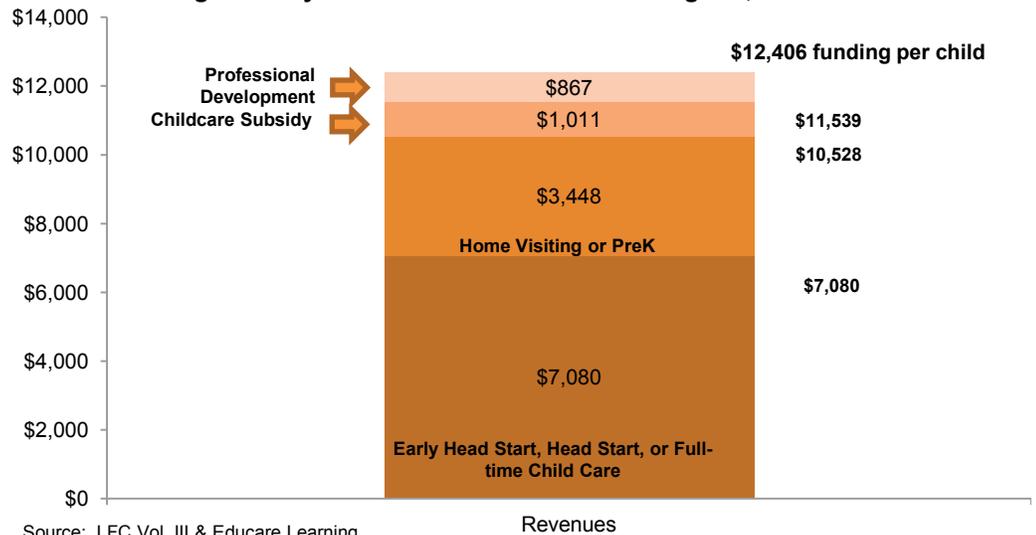
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Evidence-Based Options To Improve Outcomes

Programs such as Educare are largely funded from blending and braiding of existing state and federal resources.

A braided funding scenario using FY13 resources in the state could provide a center with over \$12 thousand dollars for a high quality full day program.

New Mexico Braided Funding Scenario for a High Quality Child Care and Education Program, FY13



Source: LFC Vol. III & Educare Learning
 Note: Non-profit/ private contributions are approximately 10 percent in other states

The fact remains that quality early childhood education centers can greatly enhance a child’s development, improving education performance in later years. Many communities in New Mexico have expressed an interest in implementing high-quality early childhood development centers, and the FY15 appropriation includes \$450 thousand for statewide planning grants. Several statewide grants provide resources for communities so they may begin planning and designing quality early development centers.

Early Head Start/Head Start. Early Head Start and Head Start programs have also been shown to provide benefits to participants in national research. Although Head Start is the largest public preschool program in New Mexico, many agencies have little collaboration with childcare providers, school districts, or PreK sites. A 2013 LFC evaluation found that unnecessary competition and lack of collaboration between Head Start and PreK providers has caused the state to lose roughly \$1 million in federal funds for Head Start. Head Start outcome data shows New Mexico falling behind the nation in key outcomes, and the state does not know which children participate in these programs. In the 2013 evaluation, LFC concluded that overall, Head Start likely was not producing the benefits it should, despite significant investments/costs.

Home Visiting. Effective home visiting services offer intensive support to at-risk pregnant women and new families, reduce adverse childhood experiences such as child abuse and neglect, and reduce health care costs. The services can also lead to improved school readiness. Several models of home visiting exist throughout the



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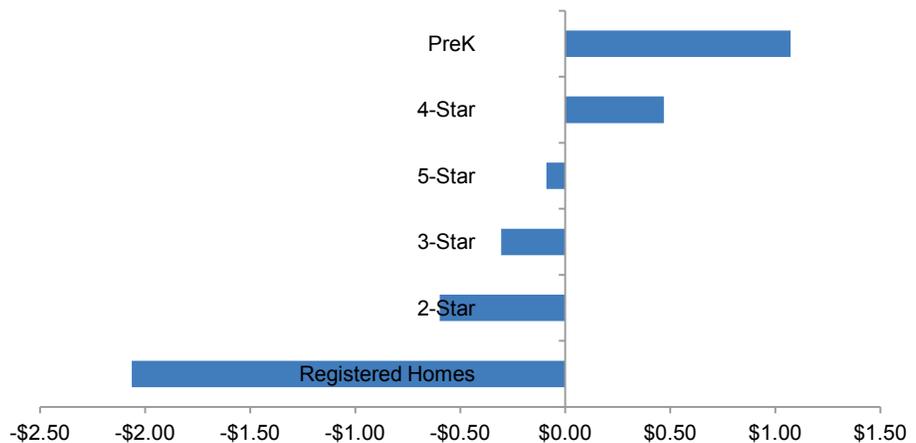
Evidence-Based Options To Improve Outcomes

The FY15 appropriation includes \$450 thousand for statewide planning grants for planning and designing quality early development centers.

state. Only two home visiting programs currently funded by CYFD are evidence-based with rigorous research demonstrating positive outcomes. However, the state’s movement toward standards-based home visiting is intended to require all programs to incorporate practices from multiple evidence-based program models, instead of requiring specific models. CYFD has recently contracted with the UNM Health Sciences Center for implementation of the Nurse-Family Partnership Home Visiting Program (NFP). This program has been adopted by many states and produces evidence of short-term benefits, long-term positive impacts on the health of the family and child, and decreased costs to society as a whole.

New Mexico Early Education Programs. The New Mexico Results First model calculated return on investment along with other key cost-benefit data for programs based on the best state-level research available. The data provided below is based on New Mexico performance data for PreK and childcare programs run in the state. The graph below shows some programs benefits outweigh their cost. The predicted costs, benefits, and return on investment ratios for each program are calculated as accurately as possible but are, like all projections, subject to some level of uncertainty. Accordingly, it is more important to focus on the relative ranking of programs than small differences between them; some programs are predicted to produce large net benefits and may represent ‘best buys’ for the state, while others are predicted to generate small or even negative net benefits and may represent neutral or poor investment opportunities.

Benefit-Cost Ratio Based On NM Program Outcome Data



PreK. New Mexico’s prekindergarten program (PreK) provides roughly three hours of services per day (540 annually) in public schools and nonpublic settings, such as community childcare centers. Both CYFD and PED administer prekindergarten programs to four-year-olds. Both departments prioritize program applicants serving large numbers of at-risk students, and two thirds of enrolled students must live in a Title I elementary school zone. The program costs about \$3,000 per student. Calculated ROI only includes educational benefits from increased test scores.



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Additional monetary and non-monetary benefits were found due to reduction in special education participation by 43 percent and reduction in 3rd grade retention by 100 percent. Previous LFC evaluations found participation in PreK boosts third grade SBA reading scores by 3 scaled score points and that 56 percent of participants read at grade level compared with 44 percent of their peers.

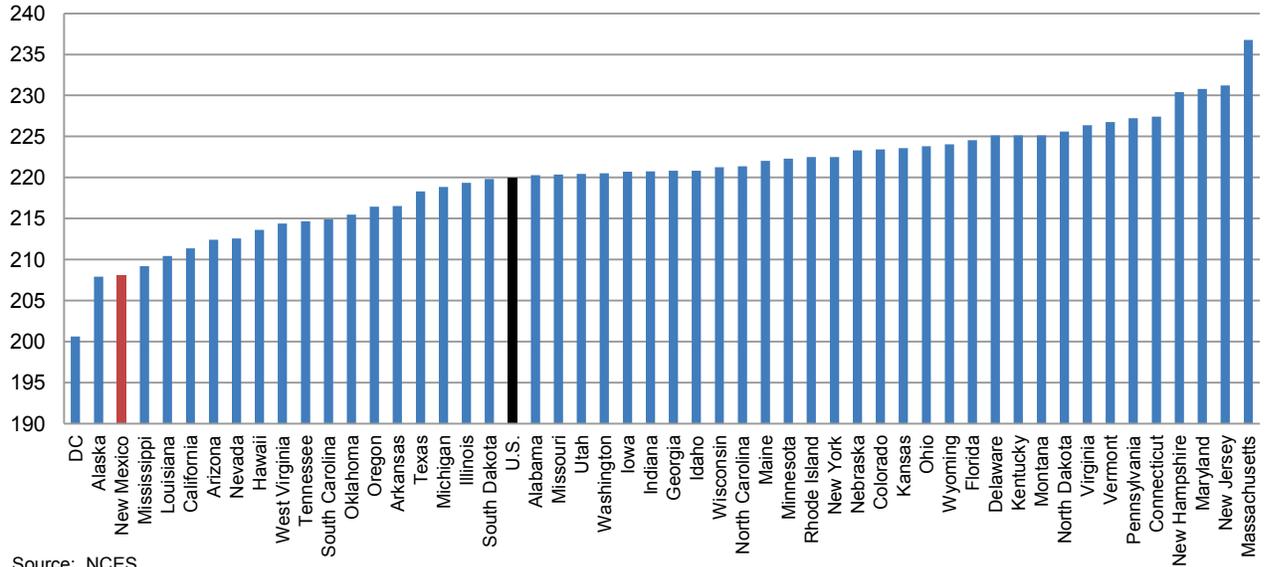
Child Care. Child care is provided through licensed centers and registered homes. All childcare providers who receive childcare assistance reimbursement are required to be licensed or registered by CYFD to receive payment for services. Registered homes receive childcare subsidy payments but are not subject to the same enforcement procedures or regulations as licensed family providers. Registered homes are operated by independent caregivers and are not required to meet minimal state licensing standards. Licensed providers may choose to meet standards of higher quality through the state's 5-star Quality Ratings Improvement System. Participation in child care showed little to no impact on test scores with the exception of 4-star rated programs. Additionally, little to no effect was found on identification for special education or retention.

Next Steps and Available Options. The results of cost-benefit analysis indicate that New Mexico can obtain favorable outcomes, such as improved test scores and higher high school graduation rates, if evidence-based programs are successfully implemented. These estimates are constructed conservatively to reflect the difficulty that can be encountered when implementing programs at scale. Some of these programs are currently implemented in New Mexico, and the results of this study present the outcomes these programs should be producing based on rigorous research. However, as previous program evaluations have found, poor implementation can result in poor outcomes.

Program fidelity refers to how closely program delivery matches its design. Fidelity to program design determines if a program is effective in achieving its intended outcomes. Delivering a program as intended and using research-proven best practices, is critically important to achieving the predicted outcomes. The New Mexico Results First model assesses evidence-based programs that are designed to follow specific treatment models, and failure to operate these programs as prescribed can dramatically reduce their outcomes.

Maintaining program fidelity requires ongoing efforts to assess program delivery, provide training on best practices, and give feedback to service providers. Safeguarding the state's investments in evidence-based programs also requires taking corrective actions to hold managers and service providers accountable for the program's outcomes (e.g. reducing child abuse and neglect in clients served). Responsible parties for carrying out these efforts can vary but some point in the service delivery system should have such quality assurance checks built in at the agency level, the service provider level, or with a third party.

Appendix A. Statewide 4th Grade NAEP Scores, FY10



Source: NCES



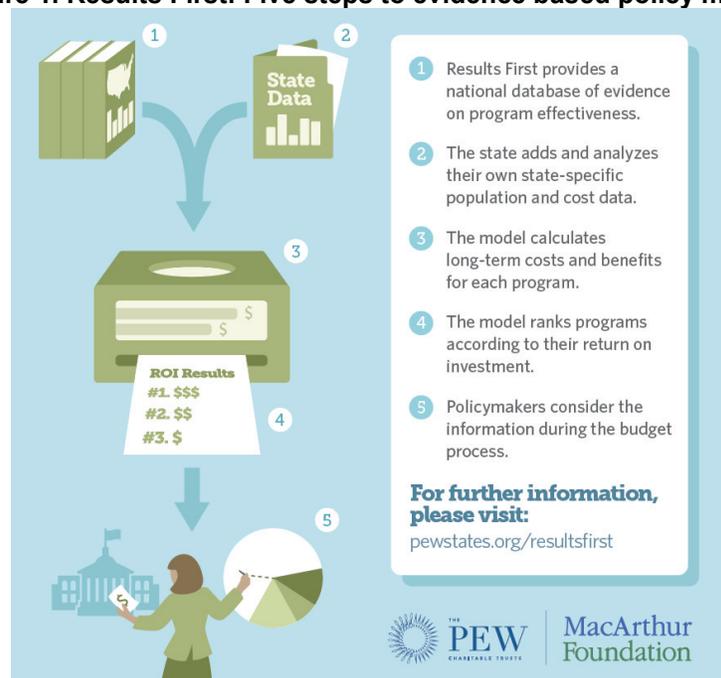
Appendix B. Results First Analysis Detail

Program	Benefits to Participants	Benefits to Taxpayers	Other Beneficiaries	Other Indirect Benefits	Total Benefits	Costs	Benefits-Costs Net Present Value	Benefits/Costs Ratio	Percent of Time Net Present Value is Greater Than Zero
Nurse Family Partnerships	\$9,974	\$9,868	\$8,946	\$0	\$28,789	(\$2,967)	\$25,822	\$9.70	89%
Head Start	\$11,239	\$7,167	\$7,186	(\$3,139)	\$22,452	(\$8,564)	\$13,888	\$2.62	89%
Parents as Teachers	\$2,282	\$1,282	\$997	\$0	\$4,561	(\$2,966)	\$1,595	\$1.54	68%
Other home visiting programs	\$2,210	\$1,035	\$1,173	\$0	\$4,419	(\$2,970)	\$1,449	\$1.49	69%
PreK	\$1,618	\$690	\$801	\$0	\$3,110	(\$2,900)	\$210	\$1.07	48%
Model Early Childhood Programs	\$15,143	\$10,168	\$11,050	\$0	\$36,361	(\$34,332)	\$2,028	\$1.06	53%
4-Star	\$1,602	\$683	\$806	\$0	\$3,092	(\$6,532)	(\$3,441)	\$0.47	30%
Early Head Start	(\$602)	\$2,844	\$132	\$0	\$2,375	(\$12,042)	(\$9,667)	\$0.20	28%
5-Star	(\$351)	(\$150)	(\$172)	\$0	(\$673)	(\$6,864)	\$7,537	(\$0.10)	6%
Even Start	(\$572)	(\$244)	(\$276)	\$0	(\$1,093)	(\$4,061)	(\$5,153)	(\$0.27)	10%
3-Star	(\$973)	(\$415)	(\$479)	\$0	(\$1,868)	(\$6,120)	(\$7,988)	(\$0.31)	17%
2-Star	(\$1,640)	(\$699)	(\$812)	\$0	(\$3,151)	(\$5,269)	(\$8,420)	(\$0.60)	3%
Registered Homes	(\$3,098)	(\$1,322)	(\$1,535)	\$0	(\$5,995)	(\$2,904)	(\$8,859)	(\$2.06)	0%

Appendix C. Results First Approach

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) has utilized a cost-benefit model to inform decisions of policy makers so that they can invest in evidence-based programs that deliver the best results for the lowest cost. WSIPP has attributed a number of positive outcomes to the use of the approach that Results First is based upon including a savings of \$1.3 billion per biennium and lower arrest and crime rates in the state of Washington. The majority of early childhood evidence-based programming research has focused on home visiting models, although models in early childhood education, child welfare, and child mental health are also prevalent.

Figure 1. Results First: Five steps to evidence based policy making



Source: Adapted from the Pew Charitable Trusts

Cost-Benefit Analysis of Evidence-Based Programs. The results of cost-benefit analysis indicate that New Mexico can obtain favorable outcomes, such as increased student achievement, if it successfully implements several evidence-based programs. These estimates are constructed conservatively to reflect the difficulty that can be encountered when implementing programs at scale. Well-run programs will achieve results reported here or better. Poorly run programs will not. Some of these programs are currently implemented in New Mexico and the results of this study present the outcomes these programs should be producing based on rigorous research.

Several factors need to be considered when interpreting findings. Our analysis is based on an extensive and comprehensive review of research on program outcomes as well as an economic analysis of the benefits and costs of investments in evidence-based programs. The results indicate that New Mexico can obtain favorable outcomes if it can substantially and successfully increase its use of several evidence-based programs. The predicted costs, benefits, and return on investment ratios for each program are



calculated as accurately as possible but are, like all projections, subject to some level of uncertainty. Accordingly, it is more important to focus on the relative ranking of programs than small differences between them; some programs are predicted to produce large net benefits and represent ‘best buys’ for the state while others are predicted to generate small or even negative net benefits and represent neutral or poor investment opportunities.

Evidence-Based Program Implementation in Other States through Results First. States have made substantial progress in their implementation of Results First over the past year and their use of the process to inform and strengthen policy and budget decisions. These efforts have resulted in millions of dollars in targeted funding, cost-savings, and cost-avoidance that will improve long-term outcomes for citizens. States have identified many lessons learned that can help all teams maximize the value of their work, and Results First will use this feedback to develop new tools over the coming year to help states collaborate and share these best practices. Results First is also working to expand the scope of the cost-benefit analysis model and bring additional tools to states to support evidence-based policymaking. Collectively, this work can be instrumental in helping states live within their means while improving their ability to achieve critical goals, such as reducing recidivism, strengthening families, and preparing children for the future. The number of states participating in Results First has grown to 14 over the past year. Most states have completed initial implementation of the Results First model’s criminal justice component. Oregon has used the analysis broadly to determine whether a long-standing (10-year) statutory mandate directing agencies to invest in evidence-based programs has been cost-effective. New Mexico, along with a number of other participating states, plans to expand Results First into additional policy areas in addition to integrating the results of the analysis with the state’s performance-based budgeting work.

**Performance Report Card, Children, Youth and Families Department
Second Quarter, Fiscal Year 2014**

Performance Overview: The Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) continued to struggle meeting performance measures in the Protective Services program. The CYFD is implementing several initiatives to improve services for at-risk children and families such as a new mandatory screening of every child in custody to provide additional services if needed. Additionally, the agency is working to re-evaluate the effectiveness of training for frontline direct service employees. The General Appropriation Act (GAA) supported an expansion of \$100 thousand for the department to implement a training academy for this purpose in FY15.

Juvenile Justice Facilities		Budget: \$72,357.5	FTE: 942.3	FY12 Actual	FY13 Actual	FY14 Target	Q1	Q2	Q3	Rating
1	Percent of clients who complete formal probation*			90.7%	92.1%	92.0%	93.2%	93.7%		G
2	Percent of incidents in juvenile justice services facilities requiring use of force resulting in injury*			1.4%	1.8%	1.5%	2.7%	2.6%		R
3	Percent of clients recommitted to a children, youth and families department facility within two years of discharge from facilities*			12.4%	9.0%	10.0%	15.3%	10.7%		Y
4	Percent of juvenile justice division facility clients age eighteen and older who enter adult correction within two years after discharge from a juvenile justice facility*			n/a	n/a	8.0%	8.2%	9.6%		R
5	Number of physical assaults in juvenile justice facilities*			n/a	n/a	<260	48	92		Y
6	Percent of clients re-adjudicated within two years of previous adjudication			6.6%	5.8%	6.0%	5.7%	5.0%		G
Program Rating				Y	G					Y

Comments: The increase in youth recidivism into adult facilities does not reflect the relatively new implementation of the Cambiar model in Juvenile Justice Facilities (JJF). Due to a two year system wide implementation process the first Cambiar cohort will not be measured and reported in performance until the end of FY14. The division's action plan to reduce JJF clients entering adult facilities includes an emphasis on transitional services such as education, housing, employment and behavioral services. Reintegration centers, for example, are being re-utilized as a step-down for clients entering supervised release. The increase in incidents requiring use of force resulting in injury is of concern, especially in light of recent litigation regarding allegations of excessive force towards children in custody of JJF.

Protective Services		Budget: \$126,417.7	FTE: 851.8	FY12 Actual	FY13 Actual	FY14 Target	Q1	Q2	Q3	Rating
7	Percent of adult victims or survivors receiving domestic violence services who have an individualized safety plan*			92.8%	92.3%	93.0%	91.5%	92.1%		Y
8	Percent of children who are not the subject of substantiated maltreatment within six months if a prior determination of substantiated maltreatment*			92.3%	91.3%	93.0%	89.3%	88.6%		R
9	Percent of children who are not the subject of substantiated maltreatment while in foster care*			99.5%	99.7%	99.7%	99.8%	99.8%		G
10	Percent of children reunified with their natural families in less than 12 months of entry into care			67.3%	62.4%	65.0%	61.5%	60.5%		R
11	Percent of children in foster care for 12 months with no more than two placements			79.3%	76.6%	82.0%	74.4%	73.7%		R
12	Percent of children adopted within 24 months from entry into foster care			35.2%	31.3%	26.8%	34.8%	33.2%		G
13	Percent of adult victims or survivors receiving domestic violence services who are made aware of other available community services			89.0%	87.7%	90.0%	86.2%	88.8%		Y
Program Rating				Y	Y					Y

Comments: Protective Services continued to struggle to meet FY14 targets. The vacancy rate for caseworkers remains high, impacting timely completion of investigations and the ability to provide intensive work with families. The division is implementing strategies to improve services to children and families, such as mandatory screening of every child in custody for Severe Emotional Disturbances (SED). If the child is determined to meet SED an additional diagnostic and psycho-social assessment of the child and family will be performed to provide additional services. In FY15 the division will receive significant additional resources for the care and support of child in custody and foster parents. These additional resources should assist Protective Services to provide improved services to at-risk children and families. However, the continued increase in the first and second quarter of substantiated maltreatment within six months of a prior determination is of concern.

Alternative response programs may be an option for corrective action to decrease recurring substantiated abuse or neglect. Alternative Response (also called Family Assessment Response or Differential Response) is a system of responding to referrals to Protective Services as an alternative to a traditional investigation. If there are no imminent concerns about a child's safety, the Alternative Response method conducts a family assessment, with the goal of engaging a family to determine strengths and needs and plan for the future, without requiring a determination that maltreatment has occurred or that the child is at risk of maltreatment. This system of response is perceived as less intrusive than a traditional investigation. A 2011 LFC Program Evaluation recommended that implementing a differential response system provides better outcomes for children, more positive experiences for families, and long-term cost savings. However, Protective Services did not concur with the recommendation citing a lack of availability in comprehensive community-based services. The agency did not see the implementation of differential response as a viable option at the time. Additionally, the decrease of children reunified with their natural families in less than 12 months is of concern, as it is considered optional for children to remain with their natural families. However, this performance must be balanced to ensure children are only reunified to families in which the environment is safe and the child will not be subjected to recurring abuse, neglect, or maltreatment.

Early Childhood Services		Budget: \$175,737.8	FTE: 151.5	FY12 Actual	FY13 Actual	FY14 Target	Q1	Q2	Q3	Rating
14	Percent of children receiving subsidy in Stars/Aim High programs level three through five or with national accreditation*			n/a	39.5%	25.0%	40.2%	40.8%		G
15	Percent of licensed child care providers participating in Stars/Aim High programs levels three through five or with national accreditation*			n/a	32.3%	25.0%	31.7%	31.5%		G
16	Percent of mothers participating in home visiting who are identified as having symptoms of postpartum depression who were referred to services then received services*			44.5%	36.7%	25.0%	55.2%	39.3%		G
Program Rating				Y	Y					G

Comments: Early Childhood Services (ECS) continued to exceed FY14 targets for the second quarter. However, as reported in quarter one, women receiving home visiting services in some rural communities continue to face challenges regarding available resources to access additional services for postpartum depression. The agency is currently working to align federally-funded home visiting programs and state programs for referrals to additional services for postpartum depression and local municipalities to develop infrastructure and capacity for the neediest communities. Additionally, due to uncertainty regarding the replacement of Tobacco funds appropriated to home visiting programs the agency is projecting about \$900 thousand of the FY14 appropriation will not be expended. While the percent children receiving care from three to five star providers is above target this performance measure may not be the best indicator of quality early childhood development. The agency is currently implementing the FOCUS rating program which will be the newest standard for provider ratings, and is a higher standard of quality than the star system. The performance measures for ECS should be updated and expanded to better measure performance of the many early childhood development programs, which encompass a division budget of \$176 million annually.

Program Support		Budget: \$32,161.9	FTE: 201.0	FY12 Actual	FY13 Actual	FY14 Target	Q1	Q2	Q3	Rating
17	Turnover rate for youth care specialists*			33.2%	15.2%	25.0%	3.8%	1.0%		G
18	Turnover rate for protective services workers*			20.4%	19.2%	25.0%	6.8%	6.0%		G
Program Rating				Y	Y					G

Comments: Program Support continued to exceed FY14 targets for the second quarter. However, the agency is still struggling with significant turnover for youth care specialist in JJF. The continued support to recruit, train, and retain positions which provide direct services is essential to improving services for one of New Mexico's most vulnerable populations, children. The agency recently implemented a 3 percent increase of frontline direct service positions, such as youth care specialist, which was recommended by the LFC in an effort to stabilize the workforce.

* Denotes House Bill 2 measure