

# NM KIDS are COUNTing on Us

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Presentation to the New Mexico  
Legislature's **Economic and Rural  
Development Committee**  
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## Introduction

- New Mexico Voices for Children
- Kids Count Data Book and Data Center

## Summary of child wellbeing in NM – 50<sup>th</sup> ranking

- NM is ranked in four policy domains
  - Economic well-being
  - Education
  - Health
  - Family and community

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Balanced economic development policy

- We can't tax cut our way to prosperity
- The two sides of fiscal policy must be appropriately balanced
- Investing in people, particularly very young children, provides an indisputable return
- Tax cuts and special incentives may or may not achieve what we desire

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## Three critical indicators

- Children in poverty
- Children without health insurance
- Children not attending preschool

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Actions that can address our 50<sup>th</sup> ranking

- Children in poverty
  - Raise the minimum wage and index it to inflation – nearly 20 percent of children have at least one parent that would benefit
- Make the personal income tax more progressive
  - Increase the Working Families Tax Credit
  - Increase LICTR
- We need to have a discussion of the regressive nature of our tax system!

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- Children without health insurance
  - Expand outreach to increase Medicaid enrollment
    - In the past five months , enrollment has dropped by 4,000
  - In addition to expanding outreach, we need to streamline the enrollment as some other states have done
  - Approaches such as No Wrong Door can be an effective method
  - It is particularly important to get pregnant women who qualify to enroll

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- Children not attending preschool
  - Currently 62 percent of children ages 3 and 4 are not attending preschool
  - But just attending preschool is not enough, we need to ensure that we are investing in high-quality preschool programs

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Expand the availability of high quality early childhood programs

- Home visiting
- Childcare assistance
- Pre-K programs
- Training, technical assistance and better salaries for providers

Allow the voters to decide on amending the Constitution to provide the funds

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- New Mexico KIDS are COUNTing on Us
  - Many of the problems identified require multiple and coordinated interventions
  - Moving out of last place requires a comprehensive set of solutions enacted over time

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Thus the purpose of the KIDS are COUNTing on Us campaign is to offer a clear set of policy solutions to address different aspects for improving child well-being in New Mexico. We welcome your recommendations and support!