

LESC bill analyses are available on the New Mexico Legislature website (www.nmlegis.gov). Bill analyses are prepared by LESC staff for standing education committees of the New Mexico Legislature. LESC does not assume any responsibility for the accuracy of these reports if they are used for other purposes.

LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS
56th Legislature, 1st Session, 2023

Bill Number	<u>SB49/aSHPAC</u>	Sponsor	<u>Soules</u>
Tracking Number	<u>.223289.1</u>	Committee Referrals	<u>SHPAC/SFC</u>
Short Title	<u>Reduce Adverse Childhood Experiences</u>		
Analyst	<u>Andrews</u>	Original Date	<u>1/20/2023</u>
		Last Updated	<u>1/31/2023</u>

FOR THE LEGISLATIVE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis of SHPAC Amendment

The Senate Health and Public Affairs Committee amendment to SB49 (SB49/aSHPAC) changes the appropriation amount from \$1.14 million to \$4.14 million.

Synopsis of Original Bill

Senate Bill 49 (SB49) makes an appropriation to Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) to facilitate coordination among providers, improve access to services, and expand the capacity of existing support services for families in Doña Ana County to reduce rates of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).

FISCAL IMPACT

SB49/aSHPAC appropriates \$4.14 million from the general fund to ECECD for expenditure in FY24 through FY27. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY27 shall revert to the general fund.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). ACEs are defined as 10 potentially traumatic experiences that fall into the categories of abuse, neglect, and other household challenges that occur before a child reaches their 18th birthday. [A hallmark 1998 study](#) revealed the connection between four or more ACEs and an increased risk of unhealthy behavior, such as smoking cigarettes, and disease. In the United States, ACEs are unfortunately common. [Nationally, more than half of adults have reported one ACE, and 13 percent of adults have reported four or more ACEs.](#) In New Mexico, the prevalence of children with one or more ACEs significantly outpaces the nation, as data from [the Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative](#) shows 49 percent of children in New Mexico have at least one ACE compared with 39.8 percent of children

nationally. However, survivors of trauma can recover, and [research suggests](#) early interventions like those proposed in SB49/aSHPAC can mitigate long-term consequences of trauma.

The Department of Health (DOH) notes the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended utilizing the following six strategies to prevent ACEs:

- Strengthen economic supports for families;
- Promoting social norms that protect against violence and adversity;
- Ensuring a strong start for children and paving the way for them to reach their full potential;
- Teaching skills to help parents and youth handle stress, manage emotions, and tackle everyday challenges;
- Connecting youth to caring adults and activities; and
- Intervening to lessen immediate and long-term harms.

According to the Human Services Department (HSD), there is a direct connection to health-related issues due to ACEs. Those with four or more ACEs would be more likely to develop poor mental health outcomes and lower life expectancy. Adverse childhood experiences does not mean these things will inevitably happen. Efforts that prevent ACEs could also potentially prevent adult chronic conditions, depression, health risk behaviors, and negative socioeconomic outcomes. States can use comprehensive public health approaches derived from the best available evidence to prevent childhood adversity before it begins. By creating the conditions for healthy communities and focusing on primary prevention, it is possible to reduce the incidence of adverse childhood experiences in the community, while also potentially mitigating consequences for those already affected by these experiences.

Furthermore, HSD notes, Doña Ana County could use the example set by the Children and Youth Commission (CYC) of Santa Fe whereby navigators screen individuals for needs related to the social determinants of health and make referrals to partner agencies. The model is composed of youth and adult health and human service providers brought into alignment, not only by their desire to help clients and patients, but also by local funders ensuring the alignment of funds to support this streamlined, effective strategy. The goal is to provide easy access to safety net or navigation services so children, youth and their families can thrive.

Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD). With the creation of New Mexico’s ECECD in 2019—and the beginning of funding for programs in FY21—the administration of all early childhood programs and services is now overseen by a single state agency with a cabinet-level secretary. The intent of ECECD is to allow for better coordination and alignment in early childhood programming. The department provides a continuum of programs that serve the age range of prenatal to age five including child care services, case management services, family infant toddler (FIT) programs, pre-kindergarten programs, home visiting, and family nutrition.

While it is unclear how the appropriation in SB49/aSHPAC will fit into ECECD’s existing programs or how funds will be used to facilitate coordinator among providers, all of ECECD’s programs are geared toward supporting children and families. Further, the prevention of ACEs fits with ECECD’s [mission](#) to “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.” According to ECECD, the department is working to expand support services for families in Doña Ana County.

RELATED BILLS

Relates to HB112, Public School Wellness Room Pilot Project, which creates a pilot project to demonstrate the positive impacts of wellness rooms for students in need of a calming environment to self-regulate, including students with ACEs.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- LESC Files
- Early Childhood Education and Care Department
- Human Services Department
- Department of Health

MCA/cf/mb/cf/msb