

NM Children, Youth and Families Department
Early Childhood Services
Child Care Assistance Regulation Modifications/Program Enhancements

Program enhancements requiring modifications to 8.15.2 NMAC (Child Care Assistance)

- Increase infant base rate (Estimated cost: \$5,800,000 Annually)
- Increase toddler base rate (Estimated cost: \$2,800,000 Annually)
- Redefine “units of service” for part-time care (Estimated Cost: \$6,300,000 Annually)
 - Part-time 1 (PT1) hours to be 8-29 hours weekly - currently defined as 20-29 hours weekly
 - Part-time 2 (PT2) hours to be 6-19 hours weekly - limited to only split custody or in cases where a child may have 2 providers
 - Part-time 3 (PT3) hours to be less than 7 hours weekly - currently defined as 5 or less Hours Weekly
- Establish FOCUS monthly differentials (Initial Estimated Cost: \$1,100,000 Annually)
 - Star 2 +: \$88.00 per month per child above base rate
 - FOCUS Star 3: \$100.00 per month per child above base rate
 - FOCUS Star 4: \$180.00 per month per child above base rate
 - FOCUS Star 5: \$250.00 per month per child above base rate
- Redefine “National accreditation status” and accrediting bodies recognized by CYFD
 - Providers affected have until December 2017 to either be accredited by a CYFD recognized accrediting body or meet the FOCUS Level 5 quality criteria
 - CYFD continues to work with and receive feedback from providers on the FOCUS quality criteria
 - FOCUS is a voluntary quality improvement program and is not required to be in regulation (NMAC)

Other program enhancements/investments:

- Add additional dollars to Pre-k Extended Day (Cost: \$3,000,000 Annually)
- Increase Training and Technical Assistance Program (TTAP) Support (Cost: \$2,670,000 Annually)

State of New Mexico

CHILDREN, YOUTH and FAMILIES DEPARTMENT

SUSANA MARTINEZ
GOVERNOR

JOHN SANCHEZ
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



YOLANDA BERUMEN-DEINES
CABINET SECRETARY

JENNIFER PADGETT
DEPUTY CABINET SECRETARY

Dear Early Childhood Program Manager,

As you know, since February 2013 we have been piloting the third generation of Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System called FOCUS. By fall 2014 we are scheduled to have 200 programs in the piloting phase of FOCUS.

On June 2, 2014, we held a FOCUS Institute for current FOCUS TQRIS Pilot participants, over 250 participants (Teachers and Administrators) attended the Institute. During the Institute, information was shared regarding program updates and program enhancements. Some of the information shared included news regarding an increase for Infant rates, a one year extension of the 2+ STAR reimbursement, a higher reimbursement for FOCUS 3, 4 and 5 STAR programs, the availability of funding to support floaters for classroom planning, and of course the revised FOCUS Criteria. Participants had the opportunity to explore each one of the Essential Elements of Quality through group discussions facilitated by the FOCUS Consultation Team. The goal as it has been during the Pilot process for FOCUS, is to determine the elements of quality that truly make a positive impact in the lives of children.

We are aware that if programs are not part of the FOCUS TQRIS Pilot, they did not participate in the Institute and may not have received the information shared with attendees, including the FOCUS Criteria and Essential Elements of Quality. For this reason, we are planning a series of FOCUS Community Dialogues throughout the state, with FOCUS participants and programs who may be interested in finding out more about this process. In addition, we will be holding FOCUS Community Dialogues with families receiving early childhood services.

The purpose of these dialogues is to share ideas about the revised criteria, and thoughts regarding strategies and challenges related to the implementation of the Essential Elements of Quality. Particularly Full Participation of Each Child and Ratios and Group Size elements.

The FOCUS Community Dialogues for your area will take place as follows:

Area	Fecha/ Date	FOCUS Participants	Educators Educadores	Families/ Familias	Location/Lugar	Address/ Dirección
Las Cruces Español	7-Jul	4:00 – 6:00	4:00 – 6:00	4:00 – 6:00	Farm and Ranch Museum	4100 Dripping Springs Rd, Las Cruces
Las Cruces	8-Jul	9:30 - 11:30	1:30 - 3:30	4:00 - 6:00	Farm and Ranch Museum	4100 Dripping Springs Rd, Las Cruces
Roswell	9-Jul	9:30 - 11:30	1:30 - 3:30	4:00 - 6:00	La Quinta Inn	200 E 19th St, Roswell, NM
Albuquerque	11-Jul	9:30 - 11:30	1:30 - 3:30	4:00 - 6:00	Sheraton Uptown	2600 Louisiana Blvd NE, Albuquerque
Santa Fe	14-Jul	9:30 - 11:30	1:30 - 3:30	4:00 - 6:00	Santa Fe Courtyard Marriott	3347 Cerrillos Rd, Santa Fe
Farmington	17-Jul	9:30 - 11:30	1:30 - 3:30	4:00 - 6:00	Farmington Civic Center	200 W. Arrington, Farmington

Thank you all for your commitment to provide the highest quality services to our New Mexico children and their families.

Sincerely,
Alejandra Rebolledo Rea,
Office of Child Development Bureau Chief

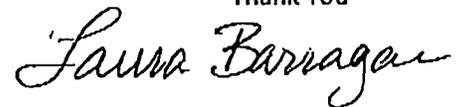
EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES
P.O. DRAWER 5160 • SANTA FE, N.M. • 87502
PHONE: (505) 827-7659 • TOLL FREE: (800) 832-1321 • FAX: (505) 827-9978

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for all your service to the children of New Mexico. I want to thank you for your concern of our children and their safety.

Lower ratios and less maximum group sizes sounds like paradise to any parent; however each and every parent knows that paradise has a cost. My current financial situation will not allow for my children to enjoy this paradise. I am a single mom working two fulltime jobs plus going to school just to make ends meet and provide a better tomorrow for my children. I am thankful for being able to enjoy a 5-star nationally accredited childcare center which is the only center in our county that accepts infants. I ask to please take my case into consideration when making these decisions in regards to ratio and group sizes changes.

Thank You

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laura Barragan".

Laura Barragan

June 19, 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

We would like to thank you for this opportunity to address you in relation to our joint goals in providing the children of New Mexico with the highest quality of education available in our nation.

In relation to our specific goals at Covenant Schools in Rio Rancho, we strive to meet the needs of children from birth to five years of age. As professional educators who have worked at Covenant for 7+ years, we value the following things:

- Safe and caring environment
- Academic opportunities
- Freedom to practice faith
- Parental choice

The things we would like to address at this time include academic curriculum and faith-based curriculum, which are not included in NAEYC or FOCUS. We are also concerned about the capacity limitations for these programs—they will eliminate jobs and put schools out of business.

Please come visit our school and witness our high quality, nurturing care, and fabulous curriculum. We do address the needs of every child and would love for you to see that before forcing us to abide by NAEYC or FOCUS.

Thank you for your time,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bev Justus". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Bev Justus

Prashant & Harkeh Arora
1329 W 21st Street
Roswell, NM 88201

June 19, 2014

Dear Policymaker:

As proud parents of two daughters enrolled in a PreK program here in Roswell, NM, it is my honor and privilege to address this letter to you on the subject of education reform. It is in good faith that we entrust you with our concerns as parents and hope that they will be taken into account when implementing new policies on education reform statewide.

It is no secret that New Mexico's public schools consistently rank at or near the bottom in national surveys and came in dead last in a report card that measures education performance across the nation. The annual Quality Counts Report from the Education Research Center gave New Mexico a D+ when it comes to a student's chance for success. In the light of all this any constructive criticism should be welcome and a sweeping reform earmarked with a healthy funding might be seen as manna from heaven. But as we all know reality is not always an ally. The administrators at our daughters' school have brought to our attention new proposed regulations that might adversely affect their ability to provide the kind of early childhood education that they expect to provide, not to mention increased economical burden as a result of additional regulations.

We trust our children's teachers and appreciate the hard work that policymakers do in providing the best environment and curriculum for our children by using all the necessary tools at their disposal. However, as parents, we constantly worry about their current and future educational needs as fulfilled by a complex network that involves skills and dispositions taught in a structured manner, play, language, outdoor activities, story-telling and role-play that helps in developing cognitive and socio-emotional skills. According to information that we have received from the school, the curriculum that will be taught here in New Mexico will be quite different in that children will decide what they want to do at school and teachers, in addition to supervising and encouraging, will mostly act as facilitators. We think instead of having to choose between a child-centered classroom and an adult-centered classroom curriculum, emphasis should be on finding a concrete solution that would provide a sustainable platform on which the said concepts can converge, and this could only happen with additional training for teachers.

This brings into focus the requirement of credit-bearing college course work required of lead teachers and appropriate course work for associate teachers in order for them to obtain their respective licenses. According to the information that I have, childhood education programs will receive about \$197 million for fiscal 2014, which starts Monday, July 1. Perhaps some of this money can be spent, just like doctors, lawyers, and architects, on continuing education for current teachers so that their performance remains optimal as well. In doing so, there will be less burden on schools in hiring new teachers, which can be a tricky task, especially in a educationally marginalized place like Roswell, NM. Likewise other schools in New Mexico could face a similar dilemma, not to mention

additional financial burden on parents since as per New Mexico's PreK Program Standards for 2014-2015- PreK programs outside the public schools will be required to make efforts to compensate teachers and assistant teachers comparably to educators in local public schools with comparable licensure, education and experience- and we all know that it has not happened yet and schools, if forced to hire more expensive teachers, will have no choice but to pass on the additional cost onto the already struggling parents. This would likely result in the closure of more schools here in Roswell as witnessed in the past.

There are lots of other issues that we would like to talk about such as the ever controversial teacher-student ratio, state intervention etc. but the real issue here are the children. No two kids are alike and in order for them to blossom in their own inimitable way, no two schools and their administration can be alike. They can share the same foundational support but the growth and blossoming of different minds, and personalities conditioned in diverse cultures can only be forthcoming if we make an effort to view schools as engines of creativity and learning that prepares children for later schooling and life and recognize teacher's role in a classroom as that of an active provider of a sequence of tactile, visual, scientific, and auditory experiences that will help their pupils achieve their set goals for the year while maintaining their creative streak. We are not asking for a pressure-cooker type of a sweatshop/school where the 'bottom-line' is the only affirmation and teachers are merely taskmasters. As pointed out in your standards guide- *Support early childhood teachers in their roles as professional decision makers...*- we could not have asked for a better suggestion. Let parents and teachers decide what's best for the children since they touch their lives like no other.

Case in point, my wife and I both are professionals, and between the two of us we have five college degrees and four professional certificates. We never had access to the kind of stimulating educational environment that our children have; we studied in a rigid curriculum that relied heavily on testing and then more testing. It was a grossly imbalanced approach to education and initially our personalities struggled to cope up with the demands of a very organic yet heavily structured world, a part of which required providing professional services of the highest order. In hindsight, we believe that a balance that was missing in our lives was ultimately achieved through personal trials and tribulations. We do not intend to imply that there is anything wrong with that since it is the best catalyst for character development and we wish nothing different for our child. However, now that we are at a crossroads where we can see clearly which path leads where, it would be a misplacement of faith and resources if we do not provide our children with a balanced education that not only helps them develop an intuitive mind but a scientific one as well since competitiveness, for all it's glory and hazards, is never far behind.

Sincerely,

Prashant Arora M Arch, LEED AP

(Father)

Harkesh Arora MD (Endocrinologist)

(Mother)