Code 924 and 690

Ms. Hanna Skandera, Secretary-Designate, PED
Ms. Yolanda Deines, Secretary, CYFD

ISSUES FOR HEARING

Race to the Top: Early Learning Challenge Grant Implementation Update

Background Information

- The federal Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant supports building statewide systems that raise the quality of early learning and child development and increase access to high-quality programs.

- In 2012, New Mexico was awarded a $37.5 million multi-year grant during the second phase of the RTT-ELC.

- The Public Education Department (PED) is the lead agency for the grant, and the Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) and the Department of Health (DOH) are participating agencies.

New Mexico RTT-ELC Grant Goal

- Four goals constitute New Mexico's RTT-ELC reform agenda:
  - Implementing FOCUS, a tiered quality rating and improvement system (TQRIS);
  - Implementing a kindergarten readiness assessment;
  - Establishing early childhood investment zones; and
  - Building an early learning data system.

RTT-ELC Grant Implementation Update

FOCUS: Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS)

- FOCUS is New Mexico's third-generation TQRIS. Essential elements of the system include observational child assessment, curriculum planning and support, family engagement strategies, health and safety practices, comprehensive program assessment and continuous improvement, and early childhood educator workforce qualifications support.
- The FOCUS project is 66 percent, or $24.6 million, the of the RTT-ELC grant budget.

- In first year of the grant, CYFD developed and published the essential elements and program guidelines.

Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA)

- The New Mexico PreK Observational Assessment is being validated for use as the New Mexico KEA.

- The KEA will evaluate the essential domains of a child's school readiness including language and literacy development, cognition and general knowledge approaches toward learning, physical well-being and development, and social and emotional development

- The KEA pilot implementation will occur during September 2014, with state-wide implementation in the fall of 2015.

Early Childhood Investment Zones (ECIZ)

- In 2013, CYFD conducted a needs assessment that included socio-ecological risks to identify investment zones throughout the state.

- CYFD invited five communities to participate in the creation of a plan for an early learning system plan as investment zone.

Early Childhood Development Data Systems

- The early childhood development data system will provide a unique identifier for any child accessing the state's early childhood system, and track children as they move through public education, higher education, and the workforce.

- Currently, the PED data implementation team is discussing the inventory and capacity of local databases to determine common data elements, and privacy policies for each program.

LFC HEARING BRIEF

AGENCY: Public Education Department, Children, Youth and Families Department, and Department of Health

DATE: August 25, 2014

PURPOSE OF HEARING: Race to the Top: Early Learning Challenge Grant Implementation Update

WITNESS: Hanna Skandera, Secretary-Designate, PED and Yolanda Deines, Secretary, CYFD

PREPARED BY: Kelly Klundt, Senior Fiscal Analyst

EXPECTED OUTCOME: Understanding the implementation of the federal Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge discretionary grant and implementation in New Mexico.

"The science of child development is a powerful but largely untapped resource for transforming the lives of young children and their families. This science can be used to drive innovation and create new interventions that address the roots of socioeconomic disparities in lifelong health and learning, thereby strengthening the economy and the social foundation of our communities."- Harvard Center on the Developing Child

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In 2011, the U.S. departments of Education and Health and Human Services announced the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge discretionary grant (RTT-ELC). The purpose of the grant is to help states to focus birth through five early learning and development systems and build unified approaches to supporting young children and families. Nine states received funding in the initial award phase; New Mexico was not among the first nine. In 2012, New Mexico was awarded $37.5 million during the second phase of the RTT-ELC federal grant. The New Mexico RTT-ELC grant focuses on improving early childhood care quality and staff professional development programs. The state will receive the total over four years to implement the grant goals. The Public Education Department (PED) is the lead agency for the grant, and the Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) and the Department of Health (DOH) are participating agencies.

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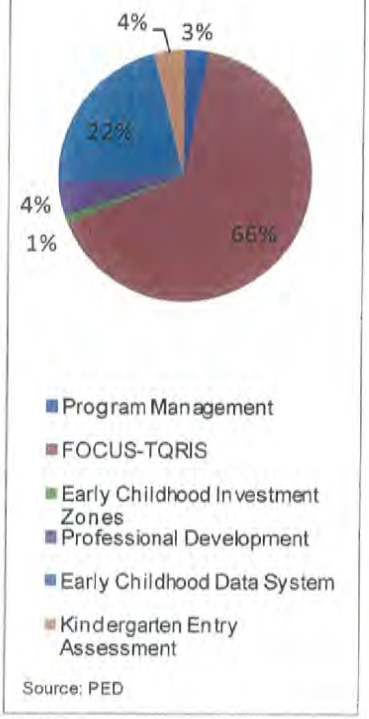
The four goals that constitute New Mexico's RTT-ELC reform agenda include the following:

- Implementing FOCUS, a tiered quality rating and improvement system (TQRIS) to observe and document early childhood provider curriculum planning based on the New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines, establish common program standards, and utilize a common comprehensive assessment system for continuous quality improvement.
- Implementing a kindergarten readiness assessment using kindergarten rubrics in the New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines.
- Establishing early childhood investment zones (ECIZ) by identifying and prioritizing at-risk communities, based on aggregated socio-economical risk indicators, and communities with the greatest will and capacity for creating a continuum of high-quality early learning programs.
- Building an early learning data system to provide current information to teachers and families, tracking school readiness, measuring quality improvement of providers, and following children as they enter the early childhood system and transition to higher education or enter the workforce.

RTT-ELC Grant Budget and Implementation Update.

FOCUS: Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS). The state's existing quality rating system, AIM HIGH, was implemented in 2000 but is transitioning to FOCUS. FOCUS is New Mexico's third-generation TQRIS. The purpose of improving quality in child care is to improve health and well-being of children and promote school success. To achieve this, the state's early childhood development system is transitioning from a workforce support to a care oriented, system focused on early development and education. Currently, child care providers may volunteer to participate in the FOCUS pilot. Currently, 150 providers are participating in the pilot program statewide. Providers who apply to participate in FOCUS enter



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as a 2-STAR provider, but are reimbursed at the 3-STAR rate, and have two years to meet the 3-STAR quality rating. Additionally, CYFD proposed increased reimbursement rates for pilot participants to reimburse providers for higher operating costs associated with meeting FOCUS quality criteria.

The essential elements of FOCUS include observational child assessment, curriculum planning and support, family engagement strategies, health and safety practices, comprehensive program assessment and continuous improvement, and early childhood educator workforce qualifications support. These essential elements are predictive indicators of high-quality early childhood programs and practices. The FOCUS project is 66 percent, or $24.6 million, the of the RTT-ELC grant budget. In first year of the grant, CYFD developed and published the essential elements and program guidelines. However, as FOCUS remains a pilot until 2017, the elements and guidelines are continually being evaluated and developed. Child Trends was hired by CYFD to validate that FOCUS is based on sound research and to provide consultation. Key additions to FOCUS include reduced teacher to child ratios, increased provider site director professional and teacher qualifications and additional child health and developmental screenings.

RTT-ELC Budget Summary by Initiative (In thousands)

PROJECT	PED	DOH	CYFD	Total
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FOCUS-TQRIS	$ 1,740	$ 4,082	$ 18,790	$ 24,611
Early Childhood Investment Zones	$ -	$ -	$ 400	$ 400
Professional Development	$ -	$ -	$ 1,650	$ 1,650
Early Childhood Data System	$ 1,286	$ 1,395	$ 5,500	$ 8,181
Kindergarten Entry Assessment	$ 1,503	$ -	$ -	$ 1,503
Total	**$ 4,887**	**$ 5,476**	**$ 27,137**	**$ 37,500**

Source: PED

Kindergarten Entry Assessment. In 2013, the Public Education Department (PED) issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to validate the current New Mexico PreK Observational Assessment for use as the New Mexico Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA), and the nonprofit WestED was selected. The KEA will evaluate the essential domains of a child's school readiness including:

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- Approaches toward learning
- Physical well-being and development
- Social and emotional development

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Teacher to Child Ratios by Provider STAR Level

	2-STAR	3-STAR	4-STAR	5-STAR
0 to 24 months	1:6	1:6	1:4	1:4
2 years	1:10	1:10	1:7	1:6
3 years	1:12	1:12	1:9	1:8
4 years	1:12	1:12	1:10	1:9
5+ years	1:15	1:15	1:12	1:11

Source: CYFD

*Ratios are currently being evaluated by CYFD

COUNTY	Investment Zone Rank	Population age 0-4 2010
Quay	1	518
Luna	2	1,822
Sierra	3	566
Rio Arriba	4	2,711
McKinley	5	6,149
Torrance	6	924
Guadalupe	7	266
Harding	8	28
Colfax	9	722
Cibola	10	1,888
Lea	11	5,948
Source: CYFD		

The KEA pilot implementation will occur during September 2014, with state-wide implementation in the fall of 2015.

Early Childhood Investment Zones. In 2013, CYFD conducted a needs assessment that included socio-ecological risks to identify investment zones throughout the state. The assessment included births to females between the ages of 15 through 19 years, and the percent of pre-term births, birth weight, residents under 100 percent of the federal poverty line (FPL), juvenile arrest rates, and infant mortality rates. By ranking the assessment data, the agency identified the counties with the highest risks and designated them as early childhood investment zones. Thirty-five school districts were identified as investment zones, and another five communities were invited to participate in the creation of a plan for an early learning system plan. Additionally, CYFD's prekindergarten and home visiting services RFP awards additional points for programs proposing to serve families in the investment zones.

Early Childhood Development Data Systems. The goal of the early childhood development data system is to:

- Provide current information for educators to support education success;
- Provide families with the information to make informed choices about which programs are best for their young children;
- Track children's developmental and educational progress;
- Measure the quality and improvement of New Mexico's early childhood system;
- Assess the status of young children as they enter kindergarten;
- Track children from their earliest enrollment in early childhood programs through entrance into elementary, middle and high school, higher education and the workforce.

The data system will provide a unique identifier for any child accessing the state's early childhood system, including programs such as FIT, home visiting, child care assistance, and prekindergarten. The data system will then track children as they move through public education, higher education, and the workforce. Currently, the PED data implementation team is discussing the inventory and capacity of local databases to determine common data elements, and privacy policies for each program.

Early Learning Advisory Council. The New Mexico Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) was established to lead the development of a high quality, comprehensive system of early childhood education and care that ensures statewide coordination and collaboration. Progress with the RTT-ELC grant is discussed with ELAC at least quarterly as part of the council's standing agenda. ELAC advises and assists the agencies in the implementation, management, monitoring, and assessing of the grant.

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

Performance Overview: The Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) struggled to meet performance measures in the Protective Services Program. Of concern in FY14, 11 percent of children who have been subjected to substantiated maltreatment experience a recurrence within six months, compared with the national average of 7 percent in 2012. Research indicates maltreatment of children, including neglect and abuse, can result in negative developmental consequences. In New Mexico, 25 percent of the victims of maltreatment are ages 0-4, and are at the greatest risk of adverse childhood experiences. A recent Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) evaluation reported New Mexico could obtain favorable outcomes, such as a reduction of cases of maltreatment and out-of-home placement through preventative evidence-based programs. A few programs highlighted in the LFC report which achieve favorable outcomes include Alternative Response (also called Family Assessment Response or Differential Response), Healthy Families America, and Safecare. The agency should consider increasing proven early prevention programs to reduce the recurrence of maltreatment.

In addition, the caseload for child care assistance has decreased in FY14. Child care assistance is available to families with children up to the age of 13 and an income below 150 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL). In FY14, the Legislature appropriated $95.6 million from all sources for child care assistance to serve an estimated 22,000 children; however, as of April 2014, only 17,535 children were participating, resulting in significant projected carryover. The agency attributed the decline in caseload to a requirement established in FY13 for families to register with the Child Support Enforcement program. As discussed below, the Early Childhood Services Program will be implementing a number of initiatives to address funding and enhance the quality of care of the child care assistance program.

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%	92.5%	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%	2.7%	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%	11.2%	Y
4	Percent of juvenile justice division facility clients age eighteen and older who enter adult corrections within two years after discharge from a juvenile justice facility*			new	baseline	8.0%	8.2%	9.6%	9.8%	R
5	Number of physical assaults in juvenile justice facilities*			new	baseline	<260	48	92	168	Y
6	Percent of clients re-adjudicated within two years of previous adjudication			6.6%	5.8%	6.0%	5.7%	5.0%	5.5%	G
Program Rating				Y	G					Y

Comments: The Juvenile Justice Services (JJS) program reported an increased number of incidents in facilities requiring use of force resulting in injury and physical assaults during the third quarter of FY14. The agency has reported action plan items to effectively de-escalate incidents and behaviors to avoid injuries that result from the use of force, including researching best practice policies in other states. Additionally, the agency stated that current data collection methods are antiquated and require redundant documentation for each client involved in a single incident which makes tracking of incidents and use of force difficult. The department is developing a new incident reporting system in EPICS which will support incident reporting by FY16. The number of youth entering adult facilities continued to miss target performance during the third quarter. The agency reported that due to a two-year system-wide implementation process, the first Cambiar cohort will not be included in performance outcomes until the end of FY14.

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%	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%	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%	99.9%	G

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

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%	59.1%	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%	76.8%	Y
12	Percent of children adopted within 24 months from entry into foster care	35.2%	31.3%	26.8%	34.8%	33.2%	33.6%	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%	86.2%	R
Program Rating		Y	Y					Y

Comments: Overall, in FY15, PS will receive an additional $6 million from all sources, or an increase of 4.7 percent, to provide improved services to at-risk children and families. The continued decrease in the number of children reunified with their natural families in less than 12 months remains a concern. The agency reported that until a few years ago, PS used a state-based calculation approach for their measure which included reunification for all children in foster care. Under that approach, PS was able to meet the annual strategic plan target. However, in 2011 CYFD adopted the federal calculation approach which excludes children reunified in less than eight days. Approximately 40 percent of children entering foster care in New Mexico are reunified in less than eight days. The level of effort required for PS to meet the safety needs of children in the foster care system for fewer than eight days is therefore, not represented in the federal measure, which the agency believes is contributing to lower performance reporting. Additionally, this performance outcome 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*		new	39.5%	25.0%	40.2%	40.8%	41.5%	G
15	Percent of licensed childcare providers participating in Stars/Aim High programs levels three through five or with national accreditation*		new	32.3%	25.0%	31.7%	31.5%	31.6%	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%	37.2%	35.8%	G
Program Rating			Y	Y					G

Comments: Early Childhood Services (ECS) exceeded FY14 targets for the third quarter. The program is in the process of implementing a number of initiatives to enhance and support the quality of care for children in early childhood programs. Letters have been prepared and mailed to child care providers to amend the current child care assistance and licensing regulations and increase infant and toddler monthly reimbursement rates for licensed child care; modify part time 1, part time 2 and part time 3 "units of service"; change the "national accreditation status" definition to identify current CYFD-approved accrediting bodies; add a 2+ star level; increase differential rates paid to FOCUS providers for 2+, 3, 4, and 5-star quality level achievement; and add language explaining the transition from AIM HIGH to the new Tiered Quality Rating Improvement System (TQRIS) called FOCUS. Additionally, the performance measures for ECS should be expanded to better measure performance outcomes of the many early childhood development programs, which encompass a division budget of $176 million annually. For example, the PEW Charitable Trusts is developing key initiatives which could supplement home visiting outcomes performance measures.

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%	5.7%	G
18	Turnover rate for protective services workers*		20.4%	19.2%	25.0%	6.8%	6.0%	6.0%	G
Program Rating			Y	Y					G

Comments: The continued support to recruit, train, and retain positions providing direct services is essential to improving services for children, one of New Mexico's most vulnerable populations.

* Denotes House Bill 2 measure

Children, Youth and Families Department Capital Outlay Summary

Overview: Projects are generally on schedule. Projects are being identified and prioritized for the $2 million received in 2013. Major projects involve buildings and structural improvements for statewide youth commitment centers. The department requested $30 million for FY15 capital improvement, including $27 million to construct a regional Cambiar model youth facility. However, these requests were ultimately not included in the appropriation and will likely remain a priority for future capital project requests.

Projects Greater than $1,000,000

Project Description	Project Status / Milestones Reached	Location	FY	Appropriated Amount	Remaining Amount	Reversion Date	Progress Rating (Red, Yellow, Green)		
							Bond / RFP	*Plan / Design*	*Construction*
For grounds and security improvements at youth diagnostic and development center facilities (Orig 07-3695, Reauth to 11-1171, then 13-1127)	Current projects include YDDC security system - 99% complete ($112,414). Maloof IT room cooling compressor - encumbered ($3,528). $149,495 Unallocated.	Multiple Co.	2007 2011 2013	$1,000,000	$153,241	6/30/2016	G	G	G
Reauthed in 2014 to changed purpose from YDDC Water Line Repairs to infrastructure improvements at YDDC, including Loma cottage renovation & resurfacing of the main parking lot (Orig 08-3007, Reauth to 12-1574, then 14-2264)	YDDC Water Line project complete - in warranty. Balance to be used for 2014 reauth purpose.	Bernalillo	2008 2012 2014	$1,000,000	$344,129	6/30/2016	G	G	G
JP Taylor Center Gym, Weight & Vocational Rooms (Orig 08-3009, Reauth to 11-1145, then 12-1588, then 14-2270)	Out of warranty as of June 1st - remaining funds are for designing and building additional vocational shop/classroom by ITB procurement.	Dona Ana	2008 2011 2012 2014	$3,200,000	$626,716	6/30/2015	G	G	G
YDDC and JP Taylor Center improvements (Proj 11-1283)	Completed JP Taylor & YDDC Security Upgrades & YDDC Admin HVAC Totaling $1,568,054. YDDC Gym Restroom Remodel in process ($150,000), Roof Repair in process ($100,000), Loma Control Remodel - allocated ($75,000), Ceiling Repair - allocate ($24,000). $31,761 Unallocated.	Bernalillo, Dona Ana	2011	$2,000,000	$392,402	6/30/2016	G	G	G
Infrastructure improvements to juvenile detention facilities statewide (Proj 13-1230)	Funds allocated for YDDC Main Power Upgrade ($8000), Camino HVAC Replacement ($347,284), Ed. Bldg Re-Roof ($219,044). Continue to identify projects for $1,401,882 Unallocated Balance.	Bernalillo	2013	$2,000,000	$2,000,000	6/30/2017	G	G	

Deficiencies / Unfunded Priorities

Location	Description	Requested Amount	2014 Appropriate	ICIP Ranking
Southeast Region	Design and Plan Regional Cambiar Youth Center	$1,655,154	$0	1
Bernalillo	YDDC Visitor Center and Warehouse	$1,404,000	$0	2
Bernalillo	YDDC Campus Infrastructure Improvements	$310,000	$343,199	3
Bernalillo	YDDC Camino Nuevo Emergency Access Drive	$500,000	$0	4
Southeast Region	Regional Cambiar model youth facility	$27,000,000	$0	5

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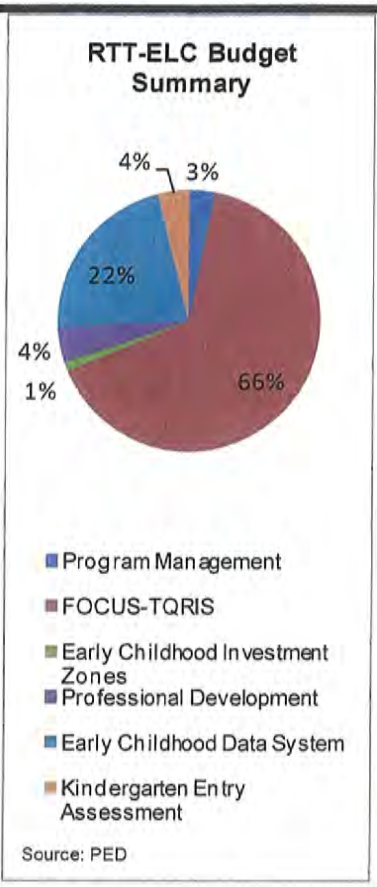

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Source: CYFD		

The KEA pilot implementation will occur during September 2014, with state-wide implementation in the fall of 2015.

Early Childhood Investment Zones. In 2013, CYFD conducted a needs assessment that included socio-ecological risks to identify investment zones throughout the state. The assessment included births to females between the ages of 15 through 19 years, and the percent of pre-term births, birth weight, residents under 100 percent of the federal poverty line (FPL), juvenile arrest rates, and infant mortality rates. By ranking the assessment data, the agency identified the counties with the highest risks and designated them as early childhood investment zones. Thirty-five school districts were identified as investment zones, and another five communities were invited to participate in the creation of a plan for an early learning system plan. Additionally, CYFD's prekindergarten and home visiting services RFP awards additional points for programs proposing to serve families in the investment zones.

Early Childhood Development Data Systems. The goal of the early childhood development data system is to:

- Provide current information for educators to support education success;
- Provide families with the information to make informed choices about which programs are best for their young children;
- Track children's developmental and educational progress;
- Measure the quality and improvement of New Mexico's early childhood system;
- Assess the status of young children as they enter kindergarten;
- Track children from their earliest enrollment in early childhood programs through entrance into elementary, middle and high school, higher education and the workforce.

The data system will provide a unique identifier for any child accessing the state's early childhood system, including programs such as FIT, home visiting, child care assistance, and prekindergarten. The data system will then track children as they move through public education, higher education, and the workforce. Currently, the PED data implementation team is discussing the inventory and capacity of local databases to determine common data elements, and privacy policies for each program.

Early Learning Advisory Council. The New Mexico Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) was established to lead the development of a high quality, comprehensive system of early childhood education and care that ensures statewide coordination and collaboration. Progress with the RTT-ELC grant is discussed with ELAC at least quarterly as part of the council's standing agenda. ELAC advises and assists the agencies in the implementation, management, monitoring, and assessing of the grant.