

# New Mexico's Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge Fund Initiative

A partnership between New Mexico's Public Education,  
Health, and Children Youth and Families Departments



Legislative Education Study Committee  
November 17, 2013



We worry about what a child  
will be tomorrow, yet we  
forget that he is already  
someone today.

--Stacia Tauscher

# *“The Past is Prologue”*

1989

- Office of Child Development established in State Department of Education
  - Child Development Board appointed by the Governor
  - “Develop and adopt program criteria for state-funded preschool programs serving children birth to age five”
  - “Work with other state agencies to monitor the implementation of state-funded preschool program criteria”
  - \$500,000 general fund appropriation to SDE/OCD for preschool programs for children birth – age 5
    - Program options based on community
      - School-based
      - Community-based
      - Home-based
      - Combination

1992

- Office of Child Development moved to the newly created Children, Youth and Families Department

# *“The Past is Prologue”*

2003

- HJM 12 & SJM 2 “study the alignment of early care and education programs”

2004

- LESC requests PED , CYFD & DOH to establish Early Learning Plan
  - Learning Outcomes
  - Program Standards

2005

- NM PreK Act passed
  - \$500,000 allocated and divided evenly between PED & CYFD
    - PreK Learning Outcomes
    - PreK Program Standards

# *“The Past is Prologue”*

2008

- 1<sup>st</sup> Early Childhood AA Degree Graduates at Dine’ Community College



# *“The Past is Prologue”*

## **Child Care Quality Improvement**

1997

### **Gold – Silver – Bronze**

- NC, OK and NM were the first states

### **Lessons Learned from Gold – Silver - Bronze**

- Programs serving low income children on subsidy didn't participate
  - Low-income families don't “shop” to select child care based on quality
  - Programs serving high percentages of low-income children can't afford to improve quality without financial support
  - Programs serving high percentages of low-income children are willing to improve quality if provided with support

# *“The Past is Prologue”*

1999

## AIM HIGH

- Differentiated subsidy
- On-site consultation

## Three primary goals of AIM HIGH

1. Systematically improve New Mexico’s Child Care Regulations  
New Mexico’s regulations were consistently rated at or near the bottom of list regarding quality.
2. Increase the number of high quality child-care programs
3. Increase the number of low income children on subsidy in high quality child-care programs

# A Proposal for Achieving High Returns on Early Childhood Development



Art Rolnick and Rob Grunewald  
Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis

# Background

- **Conventional forms of economic development produce a zero public return.**
- **High quality early childhood development produce strong returns. (About 18% total.)**

# **A Proposal for Achieving High Returns on Early Childhood Development**

**Goal: Children enter Kindergarten with  
the life and learning skills needed to  
succeed in school.**

**Approach: Enhance access and quality of  
ECD programs through a market-  
oriented approach.**

# **3 Key Elements of Proposal**

- 1) The program focuses on at-risk children.**

**Reaching at-risk children offers the highest public return.**

- 2) The program represents a long-term commitment to ECD.**

**Short-term and sporadic ECD funding by philanthropy and government can hamper long-term viability of providers.**

# 3 Key Elements of Proposal

- 3) **The program adopts a market-oriented approach that rewards successful outcomes in order to encourage high-quality and innovative practices.**

**“The program adopts a market-oriented approach that rewards successful outcomes in order to encourage high-quality and innovative practices.**

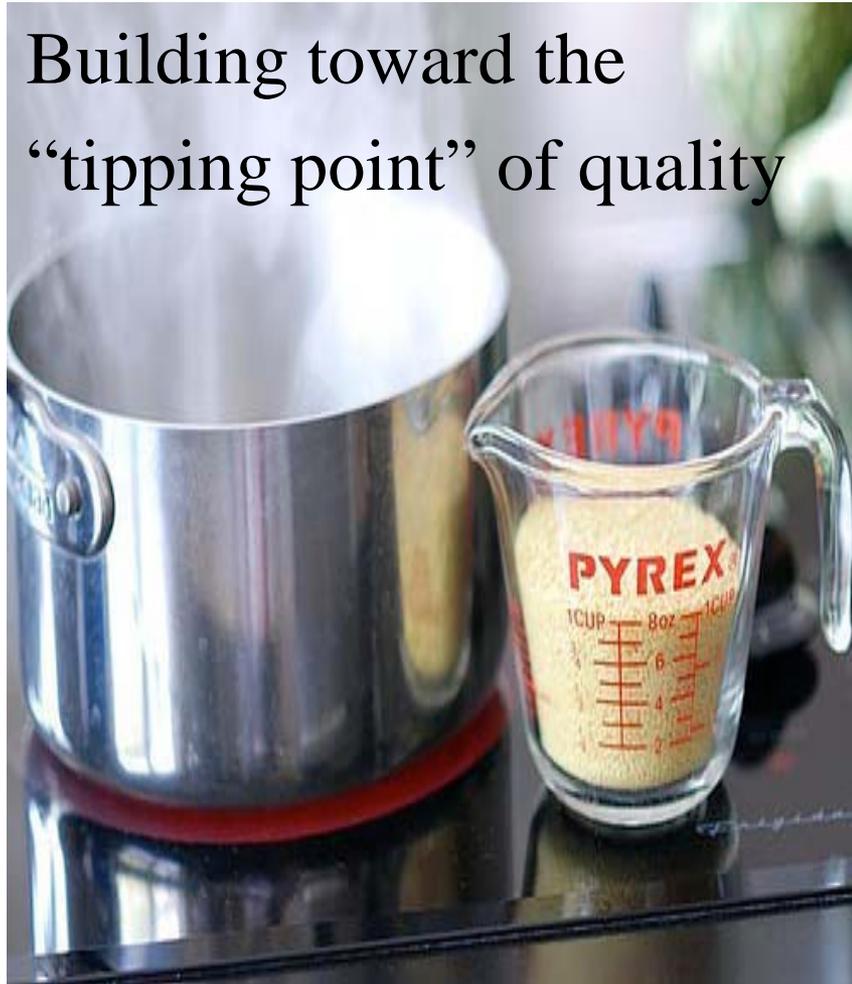
**A permanent commitment sends a market signal to providers that they can expect a consistent demand for their product.**

**We argue that funding a top-down, planned system is unlikely to yield consistently high returns.**

**Instead, we propose a bottom-up, market-oriented system that first and foremost empowers at-risk families.”**

# Long-term benefits of child care for children requires quality

Building toward the “tipping point” of quality



What is reasonable to expect?

- Cooked rice requires that the water has reached the “boiling point.
- Long-term academic outcomes for children in child care requires that programs have reached the “tipping point” of quality

# Working toward the “tipping point” of quality

The success of AIM HIGH since 1999:

Systematically improve New Mexico’s Child Care Regulations

Incorporated AIM HIGH Level 1 Quality Criteria into Child Care Regulations in 2005 and Level 2 Quality Criteria into Child Care Regulations in 2010

New Mexico’s child care regulations are now rated about 25<sup>th</sup>

Increase the number of high quality child-care programs

Today, 32% (332 of 1,028 licensed programs) have achieved quality Levels 3, 4 and 5

Increase the number of low income children on subsidy in high quality child- care programs

Today, 39.5% (7,853 of 19,906 children on subsidy) are in licensed programs that have achieved quality Levels 3, 4 and 5

# 2010:

Creating a new Quality Rating and Improvement System

- Success of the NM PreK Program – especially in child care
- Research regarding quality and the predictors of school success
- “Lessons Learned” from AIM HIGH

# 2011:

Began development of FOCUS (on children’s learning)

- Like NM PreK, FOCUS was to be based on the *New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines: Birth through Kindergarten*

# Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Fund

September, 2012 – Round 1 application released

*This competition represents an unprecedented opportunity for States to focus deeply on their birth through five early learning and development systems and **build a more unified approach to supporting young children and their families — one that increases access and quality and helps ensure that children enter kindergarten with the skills, knowledge, and dispositions they need to be successful.***

*Through the RTT-ELC competition our agencies do not seek to institute another early learning and development program. Nor do we aim to maintain the status quo. Instead, we seek to challenge States to build a **coordinated system of early learning and development** that ensures that many more children from low income families and disadvantaged children, from birth to age five, have access to dramatically improved early learning and development programs and are able to start kindergarten with a strong foundation for future learning.*

# RTT/ELC Priorities

- Priority 1: Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs.
- Priority 2: Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.
- Priority 3: Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry.

# Timeline

## Round 1 (Potential Award - \$50 mil)

- 2011 – August 23 – Application Released
- October 19 – Application Submitted
- December 31 – Denied (by 7 points)

*CYFD reorganizes to proceed with implementation of FOCUS*

## Round 2 (Potential Award - \$25 mil)

- 2012 - September 20 – Application Released
- October 26 – Application Submitted
- December 31 – Notice given of award
- 2013 - May 17 - Scope of Work Negotiated/Submitted
- July 10 – Approval of Scope of Work

## Supplemental Award - \$12.5 mil

- 2013 - July 23 – Notice of Award
- October 22 – Scope of Work Due

# PRIMARY ACTIVITIES

Implement FOCUS (as Early Learning Program Standards) across all early learning systems:

Child Care, Head Start, Early Head Start, IDEA Part B (“619”), NM PreK, Home Visiting & IDEA Part C (FIT Program)

Build capacity and infrastructure in Early Childhood Investment Zones

Establish and align early learning data system with the Public Education Department, Higher Education and Workforce Solutions Data Systems

Assign Unique Identifier to each child in system

Establish Kindergarten Entry Assessment

# KEY PERSONNEL

Lead Agency – Public Education Department  
Leighann Lenti

## Leadership Team

PED - Matt Pahl & Melinda Webster  
CYFD - Dan Haggard & Alejandra Rebolledo-Rea  
DOH - Andy Gomm

## Personnel Included in the Grant

CYFD – Project Coordinator  
PED – Fiscal Coordinator  
Data System Development Coordinator  
Data Programmer

# FOCUS

## Tiered Quality Rating & Improvement System

Two primary components –

Use of the *NM Early Learning Guidelines: Birth through Kindergarten* (as Early Learning Standards) for on-going assessment of children's growth, development and learning - and curriculum planning

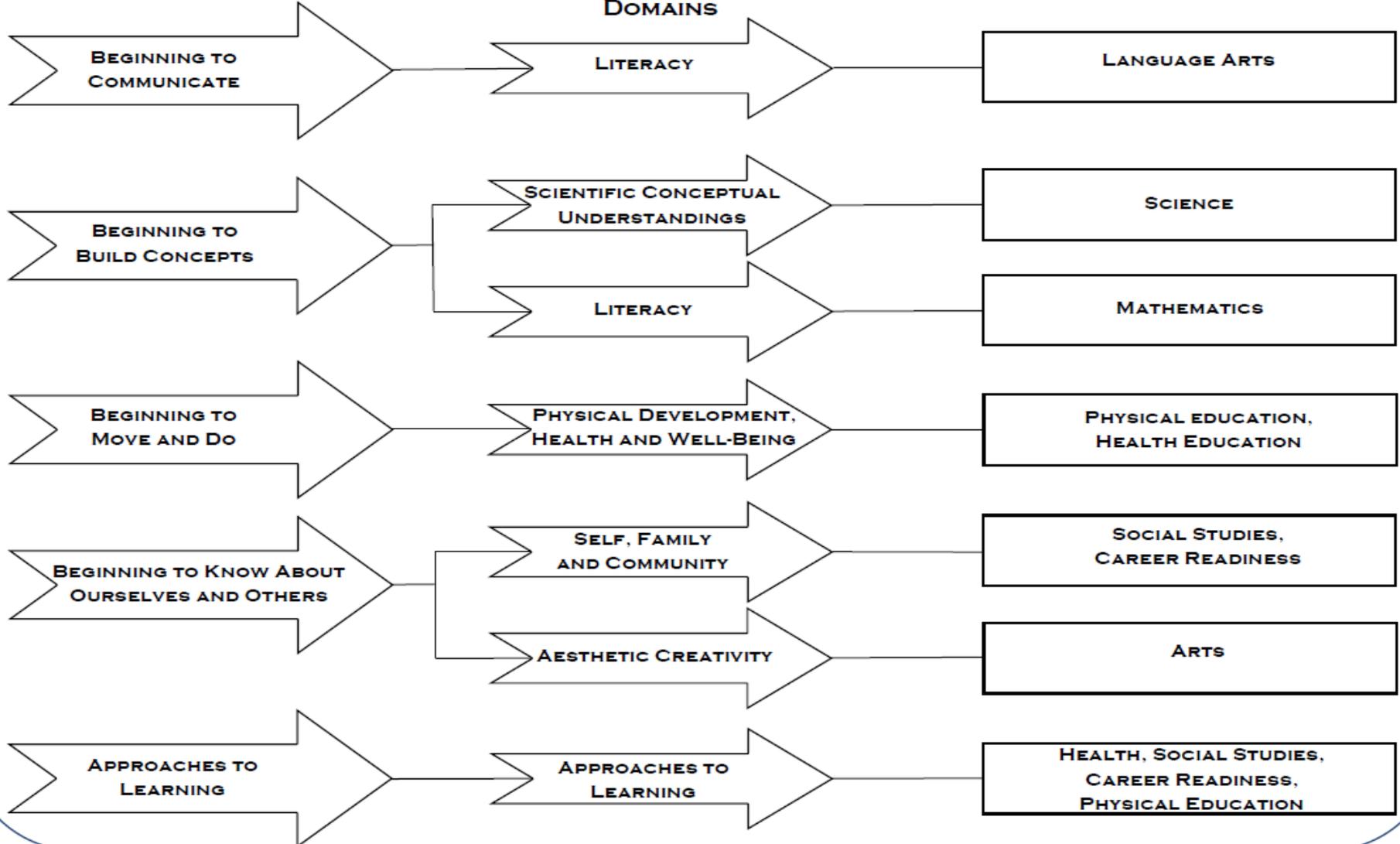
Structured Continuous Quality Improvement Planning  
Leadership Development

# OVERVIEW OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

## INFANT-TODDLER DOMAINS

## PRESCHOOL-KINDERGARTEN DOMAINS

## K-12 CONTENT STANDARDS



# Data Systems

Establish an early learning data system through the alignment of multiple early learning data systems with the Public Education Department,

Higher Education and Workforce Solutions Data Systems

- Assign Unique Identifier that will follow **each child** into public school, higher education and the workforce
- Assign Unique Identifier to **each program**
- Establish workforce registry and assign Unique Identifier to **each educator**

Be able to track each child's growth, development and learning in relationship to quality of programs attended and attributes of educators

Expand early childhood data in the Department of Health's web-based Indicator-Based Information System (IBIS) and build the site's public web-based map-making capability

- Enable public to access multiple health, education, social services and early learning data systems and create complex maps portraying community needs as well as assets

# Kindergarten Entry Assessment

The Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) will:

- Provide a continuum of Early Learning Standards birth – kindergarten and align early learning programs to the public school system
- Provide kindergarten teachers with critical information regarding children’s learning for use in informing curriculum planning and instruction
- Use criteria of the Early Learning Guidelines: Birth through Kindergarten to assess essential domains of a child’s school readiness
  - Language and literacy development
  - Cognition and general knowledge
  - Approaches toward learning
  - Physical well-being and development
  - Social and emotional development

Next Steps:

- Validate the PreK Observational Assessment tool for use as the KEA
  - RFP process in place to secure a vendor to complete validation work
- KEA implementation in the Fall of 2015