

FAMILY INFANT TODDLER (FIT) PROGRAM

New Mexico's Investment in Quality Early Childhood Intervention

What is needed?

- **\$6.9 million** to implement the recommendations of the Department of Health 2003 independent study of reimbursement rates for the early intervention programs providing services for the Family Infant Toddler (FIT) Program.

What is the FIT Program?

- The FIT Program provides a statewide comprehensive system of early intervention services for children ages birth to three years with developmental delays, disabilities and serious medical conditions. **Over 13,000 children (more than 1 in 10 young children) benefit from FIT early intervention services in New Mexico.**
- FIT early intervention services are provided through a network of **33 community provider agencies** who serve families in **all counties and Native American communities** in New Mexico.
- The FIT Program continues to receive referrals from parents, medical providers, social service personnel and child care and has shown **120% growth since 2001**, ensuring that intervention is provided when a child's **developing brain is most capable of change.**
- The FIT Program supports positive early experiences that are essential prerequisites for later success in school and effectively prepares families and children for transition to preschool by **promoting strong family involvement and coordination with all agencies** involved in the child's care.
- The FIT Program benefits New Mexico's economy. The early intervention programs providing FIT services employ or contract with over 1000 individuals throughout the state. Early intervention also reduces the economic burden through a decreased need for special education.
- Intervention is more effective and less costly when it is provided earlier in life rather than later. Cost-benefit analysis shows that every **\$1 invested in quality early childhood programs results in from \$7 to \$17 in benefits** by the time the individual is an adult.

Why Should New Mexico Invest in the FIT Program?

- Since 2003, FIT early intervention providers have continued to provide early intervention services for the same rates found to be insufficient in 2003. Provider costs for gas, utilities, worker's compensation, health insurance, etc. have all risen during this time.
- Early intervention programs are struggling and some early intervention programs have been forced to close.

Information provided by the NM Family Infant Toddler Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC)