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February 25, 2020

Ms. Ellen Wheatley, Acting Director  
Office of Child Care  
Administration for Children & Families  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
330 C Street, SW – Room 4522  
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Ms. Wheatley:

The New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD), the lead agency for the Child Care and Development Block Grant, is pleased to share our tentative plan for allocating the \$82,158,393 in funding through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRSSA) to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.

#### **Direct Child Care Services (Subsidies)**

ECECD plans to use a portion of the CRSSA funds to provide direct child care services. These plans include waiving parent copayments, providing child care assistance for essential and frontline workers, and contracting with high-quality facilities to provide infant and toddler care.

#### **Implementation of Virus Mitigation Policies and Practices**

ECECD plans to use a portion of these funds to support COVID-specific repair and renovation/reopening grants to facilities. This support will include technical assistance, workshops on facility and financial planning, budgeting, and coaching.

#### **Grants or Assistance (Other than Subsidies) to Stabilize Child Care Providers**

ECECD plans to use a portion of these funds to support child care stabilization and recovery grants to address the increased operational costs for licensed child care facilities related to sanitation/cleaning, staff costs, lower enrollment, and other costs licensed child care providers have incurred because of the Coronavirus.

ECECD plans to use a portion of these funds to directly support the early childhood workforce. Many early childhood educators left the field because of program closures or reductions in child care enrollment, postponed their educational goals to focus on pandemic-related challenges, or diverted their resources to meet more immediate needs. ECECD plans to use a portion of these funds to support a one-time wage incentive for all staff working in licensed and license-exempt facilities and to provide financial support to help early childhood educators achieve their credentials and degrees.

ECECD also plans to use a portion of these funds to create and support family child care networks and shared services across the state.

**Assistance to Providers Not Participating in the Subsidy System Prior to the Pandemic**

ECECD will use CRSSA funds to offer repair/reopening grants to all facilities that remain temporarily closed, including to providers that do not currently participate in the subsidy system. Additionally, child care stabilization and business development grants will be available for all licensed facilities.

**Other: Behavioral Health Supports; Increasing Access and Evaluation**

ECECD will use a portion of the funds to address the social and emotional impacts of COVID on early childhood development. Children and staff have suffered social and emotional challenges related to isolation, fear, and loss, that have increased the need to enhance existing social-emotional frameworks to support young children and educators. ECECD will also use a portion of these funds to strengthen local early childhood systems to ensure all families and young children have access to quality early childhood programming in their communities. Finally, the state will also use a portion of these funds to evaluate the implementation and outcomes of all the aforementioned initiatives.

Thank you for your consideration of this plan. Should you have any questions, please contact Deputy Secretary Dr. Jennifer Sallee at [Jennifer.Sallee@state.nm.us](mailto:Jennifer.Sallee@state.nm.us) or 505-469-9257

Sincerely,

/s/

Alejandra Rebolledo Rea,  
Division Director, Early Care, Education and Nutrition  
CCDF Administrator

Cc. Elizabeth Groginsky, Secretary, New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department  
Gwendolyn Jones, Regional Administrator, OCC Region VI  
Joey Bishop, New Mexico Program Specialist, OCC Region VI