



Fact Sheet for 2007 New Mexico KIDS COUNT data book

Early Care and Education

- During a child's first three years, the brain develops very quickly, forming specific circuits for specific abilities. Over time, these circuits build upon each other as children develop more complex skills, with their first experiences forming the basis for their future mental and physical development.¹
- Children who receive high quality early education are less likely to repeat a grade or require special educational services, and have higher high school graduation rates and fewer brushes with the criminal justice system.²
- A universal pre-k program would provide New Mexico with major economic benefits in as little as eight years.³

The Cost of Dropping Out of High School

- In 2006, the poverty rate for a high school dropout in New Mexico was twice the poverty rate for a high school graduate.⁴
- From the class of 2006 alone, New Mexico will lose at least \$3.3 billion in wages, taxes and productivity from those who did not finish high school. The state will also

¹ *The Science of Early Childhood Development: Closing the Gap Between What We Know and What We Do*, (Cambridge, MA: national Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2007), <http://www.developingchild.net>.

² Robert G. Lynch, *Enriching Children, Enriching the Nation: Public Investment in High-Quality Prekindergarten*, (Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute, 2007), 21-36.

³ Ibid

⁴ American Community Survey

pay more than \$111 million in Medicaid and other health care expenditures over the lifetime of a typical dropout.⁵

- Students in the United States living in poor or low-income families were six times more likely to dropout of high school than students living in upper-income families.⁶
- If graduation rates among New Mexico's Native-American, Hispanic and African-American students increased to that of their white, non-Hispanic peers, their potential earnings could generate almost \$5 billion to the state's economy over their lifetimes.⁷

Barriers to Higher Education

- In the early 1970s, the cost of attending a public four-year college in the U.S. represented 42 percent of a low-income family's budget; in this decade, it constitutes nearly 60 percent. By comparison, the percentage of an upper-income family's budget toward a public four-year college increased from only five percent to six percent during this time.⁸

Press conference speakers:

Lt. Governor Diane Denish (invited)

Sen. Linda Lopez (D-Dist. 11) (invited)

Rep. Rhonda King (D-Dist. 50) (invited)

Eric Griego, Executive Director, New Mexico Voices for Children

Bill Jordan, Policy Director, New Mexico Voices for Children

Lisa Adams-Shafer, KIDS COUNT Program Director, New Mexico Voices for Children

⁵ *Understanding High School Graduation Rates in New Mexico*, (Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education, 2007), http://www.all4ed.org/files/New_Mexico_wc.pdf.

⁶ Jennifer Laird, Gregory Kienzl, Matthew DeBell, and Chris Chapman, *Dropout Rates in the United States: 2005*, (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, 2007), 4.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Haveman and Smeeding, "Higher Education in Social Mobility," 126. See Mark Greenberg, Indivar Dutta-Gupta, and Elisa Minoff, *From Poverty to Prosperity: A National Strategy to Cut Poverty in Half*, (Washington, DC: Center for American Progress, 2007), 40.