



PRESS RELEASE

January 25, 2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Report Highlights Need for Greater Investment in Early Childhood
Poor fourth-grade reading scores, high school graduation rates cited

ALBUQUERQUE— New Mexico Voices for Children released their 2010 New Mexico Kids Count Data Book earlier today at a press conference at the state Capitol as part of the Celebrating New Mexico’s Children and Youth days.

The annual report looks at the well-being of New Mexico’s children and includes an essay about the need for an education continuum that begins at birth and integrates with the first few years of school. The report also presents some data disaggregated by county.

“We took a slightly different approach this year,” said Chris Hollis, Director for Kids Count, a program of New Mexico Voices for Children. “We’re looking at a much wider range of data and at indicators that we don’t usually cover, such as juvenile arrest rates, school graduation rates, and the like,” she added.

“New Mexico has not, for a long time, compared favorably on many indicators of child well-being with the rest of the nation,” said Hollis. “Overall, we believe the best way to improve outcomes for our children and youth is to invest more resources in the early years, when most of the key brain development is occurring.”

Also presented at the press conference was an overview of the results of dialogs that were conducted in five New Mexico communities about early childhood programs. The dialogs were held to find common ground on the need for such programs and potential ways to fund them.

The 2010 New Mexico Kids Count report is available online at: www.nmvoices.org

The report on community conversations is available online at:

http://ourvoicesourchildren.org/CG_findingsChoice.html

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New Mexico Voices for Children is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization advocating for policies to improve the health and well-being of New Mexico's children, families and communities.
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