



PRESS RELEASE

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Child advocates pleased with progress in special session Legislature addressed several issues of critical importance to kids

ALBUQUERQUE—The just-concluded special session of the New Mexico Legislature resulted in good news for the state's children and low-income working families. That's the conclusion of the child advocacy organization New Mexico Voices for Children.

"The Legislature made kids and working families a priority in this session. Thanks to their hard work and Governor Richardson's leadership, more children will be able to get the health care and quality childcare they need for the best start in life, and more low-income families will be able to pay their heating bills this winter," said Eric Griego, Executive Director of the nonprofit.

The victories for children include:

- An addition of \$20 million to the Medicaid/S-CHIP budget for children's health care, \$10 million for children with developmental disabilities, and \$2.5 million for behavioral health;
- A transfer of \$7.2 million from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program into childcare assistance;
- An increase of the working families tax credit (from 8 percent of the federal credit to 10 percent), which is available to working families that qualify for the federal earned income tax credit (EITC), and;
- An addition of nearly \$2 million to the LIHEAP program that helps low-income families and the elderly pay their heating bills.

"We hope these gains are the building blocks for an even greater investment in the well-being of New Mexico's children and families in the 2009 regular session," Griego said.

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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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