



*New Mexico is called the Land of Enchantment because of its stunning natural beauty, and diverse and colorful cultural heritage. But, for many kids, New Mexico can be a difficult place in which to grow up. Here are some of the challenges faced by children in New Mexico.*

### POVERTY

About one-quarter of New Mexico's children live in poverty. New Mexico's poverty is different from national poverty in several important ways. First, the depth of poverty in New Mexico is far more pronounced. Nearly half of the poor (41 percent) in New Mexico are severely poor – that is, they have incomes that are less than half of the poverty threshold.<sup>i</sup> Income disparity (rich versus poor) is more pronounced in New Mexico than in most states.<sup>ii</sup>

### GEOGRAPHY

In much of the U.S., poverty is an urban issue. In New Mexico, more than half of the low-income population lives outside of a

metropolitan area,<sup>iii</sup> with a large percentage living in remote and rural areas. While New Mexico is the fifth largest state in square mileage, it ranks 36th in population, so the state's rural communities are more geographically isolated than in most states. This makes accessing health care, education, and other family supports more difficult. Only Alaska and Montana have a lower population-to-size ratio.

### RACIAL DISPARITIES

New Mexico is a minority-majority state, meaning that racial minorities (Hispanics and Native Americans are the two largest groups) make up the majority of the population.<sup>iv</sup> The disparities that exist for minorities around the country also exist for minorities in New Mexico. While 50 percent of all New Mexicans are minorities, about 70 percent of children ages zero to four are minorities and this population experiences some of the worst poverty. While just 14 percent of all white children under age five live in poverty, the rates are much higher for young minority children: 36 percent for His-

panics, 43 percent for Native Americans, and 42 percent for blacks.<sup>v</sup> Not surprisingly, minority children (with the exception of Asians) have lower rates of reading proficiency once they reach the 4th grade.<sup>vi</sup>

### NATIONAL RANKINGS

When comparing states on typical indicators of child well-being, New Mexico fares poorly, ranking in the bottom ten states in the national KIDS COUNT data book every year since the Annie E. Casey Foundation began publishing the report in 1990. In "Geography Matters," a report by the Every Child Matters Education Fund, New Mexico ranked in the bottom ten states in seven of the ten indicators. The only bright spot in these reports has been New Mexico's better-than-average infant mortality rate.



## PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

Several agencies—from state-level departments to nonprofit advocacy groups—are working toward better outcomes for New Mexico's youngest residents through improvements in direct services and public policies. These agencies, services and policies include:

### CHILDREN'S CABINET

The Children's Cabinet ([www.ltgovernor.state.nm.us/childrenscabinet.php](http://www.ltgovernor.state.nm.us/childrenscabinet.php)) was created by Executive Order in 2003. It is chaired by the lieutenant governor and includes secretaries from 14 state departments. The Children's Cabinet is responsible for intra-agency efforts to improve child well-being, primarily focusing on simplifying access to programs and services. The Cabinet is guided by the principle that all children and young people in our state will be healthy, educated, safe, supported and involved. On an annual basis, the Children's Cabinet publishes the children's report card and budget report.

### ECAN

Supported by the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant, the Early Childhood Action Network (ECAN; [www.earlychildhoodnm.com](http://www.earlychildhoodnm.com)) works to develop comprehensive, coordinated action plans related to the five outcome areas of the Children's Cabinet. This statewide policy forum makes policy recommendations on how to improve the well-being of young children, birth to five, and their families.

### FIRST BORN®/ HOME VISITING PROGRAMS

New Mexico has several voluntary newborn home visitation programs administered by the Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) and the Department of Health (DOH). First Born ([www.firstbornprogram.org](http://www.firstbornprogram.org)), one of the best known, was established in 1997 with funding from the Los Alamos National Laboratory Foundation. First Born staff (registered nurses and other professionals) work with parents to increase their knowledge, skills, and insights into the parenting process, while guiding families through the child's first three years.

### CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Each month, CYFD provides child care assistance to approximately 24,000 children throughout New Mexico.<sup>vii</sup> The child care assistance program ([www.cyfd.org/content/child-care-services](http://www.cyfd.org/content/child-care-services)) helps families pay for child care

while parents are working or in school. In 2001, the eligibility level for child care assistance was decreased from 200 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) to 100 percent of FPL. Over the next six years, eligibility was raised as state funding increased. Finally, in August 2008, eligibility was restored for those earning up to 200 percent of FPL. Starting January 1, 2010, families earning between 200 and 100 percent of the FPL were put on a waiting list due to a budgetary shortfall. The waiting list has since grown to 4,000 children. The parents of another 6,000 children are in jeopardy of losing this assistance if adequate funding isn't secured by the end of FY11.<sup>viii</sup> Child care provider rates have been increased, as has funding for WAGE\$, which pays staff bonuses based on educational level and longevity. CYFD encourages child care programs to focus on the quality of the services they provide and has instituted "Stars," a quality rating system that contains five levels; the higher the Star level, the higher the level of quality. Between 2004 and 2008, the number of child care providers with a 2 to 5 Star rating increased from 14.7 percent of providers to 70 percent.<sup>ix</sup>

### T.E.A.C.H.

T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps, a program of the New Mexico Association for the Education of Young Children ([www.nmaeyc.org/teach](http://www.nmaeyc.org/teach)), was originally funded in 2004. It provides scholarships for child care professionals who want to work on

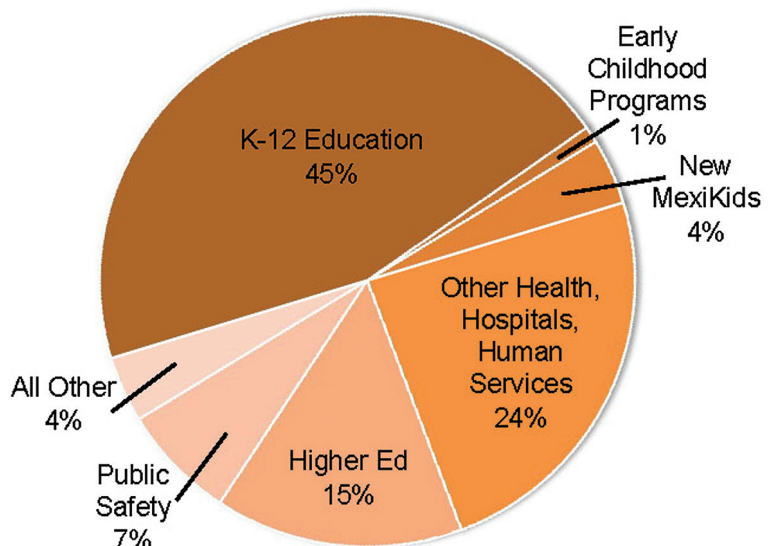
Associate, Bachelor or Graduate Degrees in early childhood education. By 2008, 404 early care educators were receiving scholarships, more than 20 times the original number.<sup>x</sup> It is funded by both private and public sources, but state funds were reduced by half in 2010.<sup>xi</sup>

### PRE-K PROGRAM

New Mexico's Pre-K Program ([www.newmexico.prek.org](http://www.newmexico.prek.org)) for 4-year-olds was launched in 2005 at the urging of Lieutenant Governor Diane Denish. Priority for funding of New Mexico Pre-K sites are given to communities with high percentages of public elementary schools not meeting proficiency requirements for calculating adequate yearly progress (AYP) in either math or reading, and schools that are eligible for federal Title I funding. The state appropriated \$4.95 million to the Pre-K initiative during the 2005-06 school year, its first year. During that school year, New Mexico Pre-K served 1,538 4-year-olds. Funds for the initiative were distributed nearly equally among the Public Education Department (PED) and CYFD. As a result, participating providers include public schools as well as private centers such as Head Start, child care facilities, faith-based centers, and tribal programs. While New Mexico Pre-K enrollment had increased to nearly 5,000 children in 2009-10, funds for the 2010-11 school year were reduced 30 percent to \$5.7 million.<sup>xii</sup> This amounts to a loss of about 500 slots but agencies will work to sustain enrollment as much as possible.<sup>xiii</sup>

### New Mexico's \$5.3 Billion General Fund Budget (FY10)

Less than 1 percent goes to all ECE programs



\*Includes home visits, child care assistance, NM Pre-K, state's portion of Head Start, and training for educators  
Source: Legislative Finance Committee, Post Session Review, 2010

### K-THREE PLUS

K-Three Plus extends the school year for at-risk students. This increased time between kindergarten and the early grades is designed to help disadvantaged students catch up to their peers and improve their skills. The Legislature initially appropriated \$8.5 million for FY10, but a budget shortfall led to a 6.5 percent reduction to \$7.9 million. Appropriations for FY11 were reduced to \$5.5 million.<sup>xiv</sup> Nearly 7,000 students in 25 school districts participated in K-3 plus in the 2009–2010 school year.

### FAMILY, INFANT AND TODDLER PROGRAM

Run by the New Mexico DOH, the FIT Program ([www.nmhealth.org/ddsd/NMFIT/FITIndex.htm](http://www.nmhealth.org/ddsd/NMFIT/FITIndex.htm)) is the lead agency for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part 'C,' which requires a statewide system of early intervention services to be available to eligible children from birth to age three. FIT providers offer early intervention to children with, or at risk for, developmental delays. Total funding in FY10 was \$32 million in state, federal and private funds.

### MEDICAID AND CHIP

Medicaid and CHIP are fairly seamless to the participating families and together are simply known as New MexiKids ([www.insurenw-mexico.state.nm.us/NewMexiKidsandTeens.htm](http://www.insurenw-mexico.state.nm.us/NewMexiKidsandTeens.htm)). Medicaid provides comprehensive health care coverage to children living at up to 135 percent of FPL, while CHIP (Children's Health Insurance Program) provides coverage to children from 136 to 235 percent of FPL. Due to fairly generous income disregards, CHIP is now accessible to more children above the strict 235 percent of FPL.

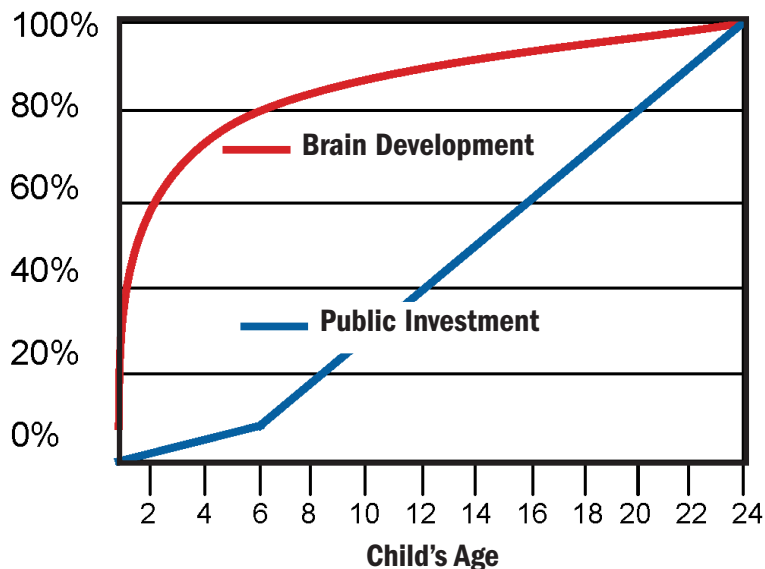
Prior to 2003, children's enrollment in Medicaid grew at a steady pace, but from 2003 to 2008, children's enrollment stagnated as a result of measures undertaken to curtail costs by limiting enrollment. Annual increases in funding were enough to cover inflationary costs, but not enough to fund outreach and enrollment of more eligible children. New Mexico's rate of uninsured children remains 47th in the nation.<sup>xv</sup>

### PREMIUM ASSISTANCE FOR KIDS

Premium Assistance for Kids (PAK; [www.insurenw-mexico.state.nm.us/PAKFAQs.htm](http://www.insurenw-mexico.state.nm.us/PAKFAQs.htm)) provides state funding to cover one-half the cost of health insurance premiums to insure children (ages 0–12) whose families do not meet the income criteria for Medicaid or CHIP.



**New Mexico's investment in education should target the important early years.** Even though 80 percent of brain development occurs before the age of four, the vast majority of the state's public investment in education—98 percent—does not begin until age five.



### 2010 National KIDS COUNT Data Book, HOW NEW MEXICO RANKS

For the following indicators, New Mexico ranks, among all 50 states:

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Percent of low-birth weight babies (2007)</b> .....  | <b>36</b> |
| <b>Infant mortality rate (2007)</b> .....   | <b>13</b> |
| (deaths per 1,000 live births)  |           |
| <b>Child death rate (2007)</b> .....  | <b>42</b> |
| (deaths per 100,000 children ages 1–14)   |           |
| <b>Teen death rate (2007)</b> .....   | <b>48</b> |
| (deaths per 100,000 teens ages 15–19)   |           |
| <b>Teen birth rate (2007)</b> .....   | <b>49</b> |
| (births per 100,000 females ages 15–19)   |           |
| <b>Percent of teens (ages 16–19) who are not in school and not high school graduates (2008)</b> .....           | <b>47</b> |
| <b>Percent of teens (ages 16–19) not attending school and not working (2008)</b> .....                          | <b>39</b> |
| <b>Percent of children living in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment (2008)</b> ..... | <b>38</b> |
| <b>Percent of children in poverty (2008)</b> .....  | <b>47</b> |
| (income below \$21,834 for a family of 2 adults, 2 children in 2008)  |           |
| <b>Percent of children in single-parent families (2008)</b> .....   | <b>48</b> |
| <b>OVERALL RANK</b> .....   | <b>46</b> |

Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation



## NEW MEXICO IN NUMBERS

### POPULATION

Total population – 2,009,671<sup>xvi</sup>

Child population (ages 0-19) – 564,494 (29 percent of total population)<sup>xvii</sup>

Child population (ages 0-4) – 139,300<sup>xviii</sup>

Children (all ages) living in immigrant households – 22 percent (versus 21 percent nationally)<sup>xix</sup>

### ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Children (all ages) living in low-income families (below 200% of FPL) – 52 percent (versus 40 percent nationally)<sup>xx</sup>

Children (ages 0-4) living in extreme poverty (below 50% FPL) – 11 percent (versus 8 percent nationally)<sup>xxi</sup>

Children (ages 0-17) living in households with Supplemental Security Income (SSI), cash public assistance income, or SNAP (Food Stamps) benefits – 26.2 percent<sup>xxii</sup>

Percentage of households with low food security – 10.3 percent<sup>xxiii</sup>

Percentage of households with very low food security – 5.8 percent<sup>xxiv</sup>

Children receiving free and reduced-price lunches at public schools – 62 percent<sup>xxv</sup>

### EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

Children (ages 0-5) in family-based care – 49,000; 31 percent (versus 27 percent nationally)<sup>xxvi</sup>

Children enrolled in nursery school, preschool and kindergarten – 56,810<sup>xxvii</sup>

Children enrolled in grades 1 to 4 – 116,983<sup>xxviii</sup>

Percentage of 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in school – 42 percent<sup>xxix</sup>

Percentage of children (ages 0-5) who are read to daily – 43.5 percent<sup>xxx</sup>

### HEALTH

Children enrolled in Medicaid 81 percent (versus 82 percent nationally)<sup>xxxi</sup>

Children (ages 0-18) without health insurance – 18 percent<sup>xxxii</sup>

Mothers receiving prenatal care in the first trimester – 59.2 percent<sup>xxxiii</sup>

Women who had live birth with all five elements of the Healthy Birth Index (2006) – 32 percent<sup>xxxiv</sup>

Teen birth rate (ages 15-19) – 66 per 1,000 teens<sup>xxxv</sup>

Low-birth weight babies (less than 5.5 pounds at birth) – 9 percent<sup>xxxvi</sup>

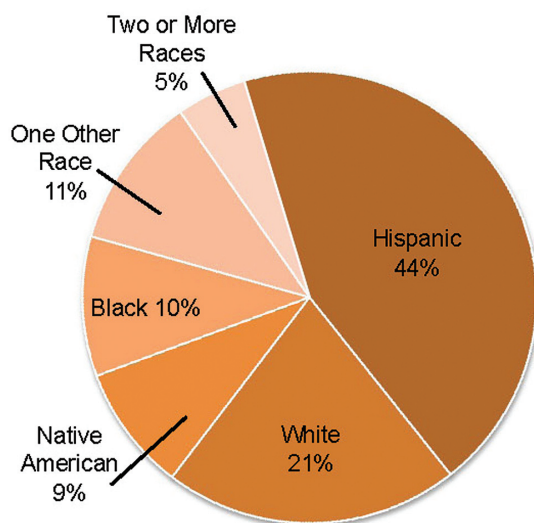
Infant mortality rate – 6.3 per 1,000 infants<sup>xxxvii</sup>

Leading causes of child death (ages 1-4) – (per 100,000 children):

Accidents (unintended injuries) – 17.1; Congenital Malformations – 6; and Assault (homicide) – 4<sup>xxxviii</sup>

Children (ages 19-35 months) with up-to-date immunizations (2007) – 76 percent<sup>xxxix</sup>

### New Mexico Child Population, Ages 0-4, by Race/Ethnicity (2008)



Source: U.S. Census, American Community survey, Table 801001

### ENDNOTES

- <sup>i</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2007 American Community Survey
- <sup>ii</sup> "Pulling Apart: A State by State Analysis of Income Trends," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Washington, DC, 2008
- <sup>iii</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2007 American Community Survey
- <sup>iv</sup> Ibid
- <sup>v</sup> 2008 American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates, U.S. Census, Table B17001
- <sup>vi</sup> "The Nation's Report Card, 2009, New Mexico, Grade 4, Public Schools," National Assessment of Educational Progress, National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences
- <sup>vii</sup> Interview with NM Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) officials, August 10, 2010
- <sup>viii</sup> Interview with CYFD officials, November 2010
- <sup>ix</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>x</sup> 2009 New Mexico Children's Cabinet Report Card & Budget Report: Growing Our Future, Together; <http://nmchildrenscabinet.com/2009Report.pdf>
- <sup>xi</sup> HB2, General Appropriation Act of 2010, New Mexico State Legislature, March 3, 2010; <http://www.nmlegis.gov/Sessions/10%20Special/final/HB0002.pdf>
- <sup>xii</sup> Ibid, pgs 158, 176
- <sup>xiii</sup> Conversations with NM Public Education Department (PED) and CYFD agency officials
- <sup>xiv</sup> HB2, General Appropriation Act of 2010, New Mexico State Legislature, March 3, 2010, pg. 176; <http://www.nmlegis.gov/Sessions/10%20Special/final/HB0002.pdf>
- <sup>xv</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation, State Health Facts (2006-2007)
- <sup>xvi</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, 2009
- <sup>xvii</sup> 2009 New Mexico Children's Cabinet Report Card & Budget Report: Growing Our Future, Together; <http://nmchildrenscabinet.com/2009Report.pdf>
- <sup>xviii</sup> Ibid
- <sup>xix</sup> Ibid
- <sup>xx</sup> Annie E. Casey Foundation 2008 KIDS COUNT Data Book; <http://www.aecf.org/KnowledgeCenter/PublicationsSeries/KCDataBookProds.aspx>
- <sup>xxi</sup> Ibid
- <sup>xxii</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 American Community Survey, Table B09010
- <sup>xxiii</sup> 2009 New Mexico Children's Cabinet Report Card & Budget Report: Growing Our Future, Together; <http://nmchildrenscabinet.com/2009Report.pdf>
- <sup>xxiv</sup> Ibid
- <sup>xxv</sup> New Mexico Voices for Children, 2009 KIDS COUNT in New Mexico Data Book, 2010; [http://www.nmvoices.org/attachments/nmkc\\_databook\\_09.pdf](http://www.nmvoices.org/attachments/nmkc_databook_09.pdf)
- <sup>xxvi</sup> Annie E. Casey Foundation 2006 KIDS COUNT Data Book; <http://www.aecf.org/KnowledgeCenter/PublicationsSeries/KCDataBookProds.aspx>
- <sup>xxvii</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 American Community Survey, Table C14002
- <sup>xxviii</sup> Ibid
- <sup>xxix</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 American Community Survey, Table C14003
- <sup>xxx</sup> 2009 New Mexico Children's Cabinet Report Card & Budget Report: Growing Our Future, Together; <http://nmchildrenscabinet.com/2009Report.pdf>
- <sup>xxxi</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation, statehealthfacts.org
- <sup>xxxii</sup> Ibid
- <sup>xxxiii</sup> New Mexico Selected Health Statistics Annual Report, Volume 1, 2007
- <sup>xxxiv</sup> 2009 New Mexico Children's Cabinet Report Card & Budget Report: Growing Our Future, Together; <http://nmchildrenscabinet.com/2009Report.pdf>
- <sup>xxxv</sup> Annie E. Casey Foundation 2010 KIDS COUNT Data Book
- <sup>xxxvi</sup> Ibid
- <sup>xxxvii</sup> Ibid
- <sup>xxxviii</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System, 2007
- <sup>xxxix</sup> 2009 New Mexico Children's Cabinet Report Card & Budget Report: Growing Our Future, Together; <http://nmchildrenscabinet.com/2009Report.pdf>

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