

# Making KIDS COUNT in New Mexico

A systems-based framework for improving  
child well-being through policy

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# KIDS COUNT



ECONOMIC  
WELL-BEING



EDUCATION



HEALTH



FAMILY AND  
COMMUNITY



A close-up photograph of four young children of diverse backgrounds gathered around a table, looking intently at an open book. The child on the far left is a Black boy in a light blue shirt, looking towards the book with an open mouth as if speaking or reading aloud. Next to him is a white boy in a red shirt, looking down at the book with a slight smile. To his right is another white boy in a blue shirt, also looking down at the book. On the far right is a white boy with freckles in a dark green shirt, looking down at the book. The book is open, showing a page with a large, detailed illustration of a landscape. The lighting is warm and natural, highlighting the children's faces and the texture of the book's pages.

**KIDS COUNT tells a story  
of opportunity.**



# What is your story?






# Why I'm here





# Why we're all here



A photograph of a classroom with several children in the foreground and middle ground, all with their hands raised high in the air. They are seen from behind, looking towards a chalkboard in the background. The children are wearing various colored shirts: white, red, orange, and green. The chalkboard is dark and has some faint, illegible writing on it. The overall atmosphere is one of active participation and learning.

All children should have  
the best possible  
opportunities to reach  
their full potential.



**ECONOMIC  
WELL-BEING**

DOMAIN RANK

**49**



**EDUCATION**

DOMAIN RANK

**50**



**HEALTH**

DOMAIN RANK

**48**



**FAMILY AND  
COMMUNITY**

DOMAIN RANK

**49**





low reading &  
math scores

food insecurity

poverty

low access to  
early education  
& care

teen births



# Adverse childhood experiences

Adverse childhood experience (ACE)	NM	US
Family often had difficulty affording basics like housing or food	25%	24%
Parental divorce or separation	32%	25%
Parental death	5%	3%
Parental incarceration	12%	8%
Violence at home	11%	6%
Witnessing or being a victim of neighborhood violence	6%	4%
Living with someone who was mentally ill, depressed or suicidal	12%	8%
Living with someone who misused alcohol or drugs	13%	9%



# ACEs add up.

Prevalence of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)	NM	US
Children who have experienced 0 ACEs	48%	55%
Children who have experienced 1 ACE	25%	24%
Children who have experienced 2 ACEs	9%	11%
Children who have experienced 3 or more ACEs	18%	11%





**Disparities exist in  
nearly every  
indicator.**

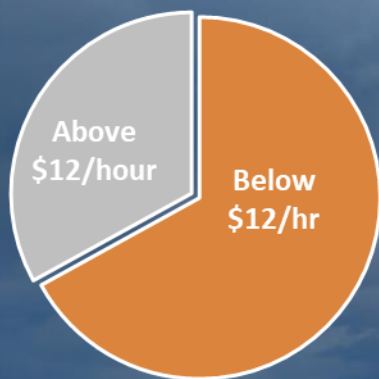
**It's not the people,  
it's the challenges that  
they face.**





# NM's families face big challenges

67% of Jobs in NM Pay Low Wages



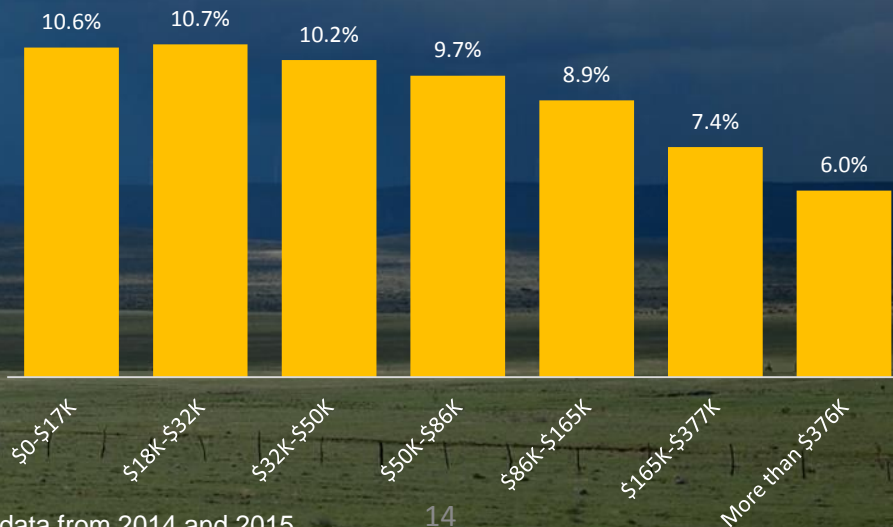
2<sup>nd</sup> Worst Rate of Working Families That are Low-income

42%

NM Has Some of the Highest Rates of Poverty in the U.S. Among:

- the employed
- people who work full-time, year-round
- people with a bachelor's degree or higher

Our tax system is upside down.




# NM's systems are inadequate

- Enrollment in child care assistance down by 20% since 2010
- 5% of NM kids 0-3 receive state-funded home visiting
- Only 7% of mental health care providers speak Spanish
- Only 5 out of 1,000 kids in the child protective system receive preventive services
  - Compared to 43 out of 1,000 in the US
- Chronically understaffed agencies
- 14% cut in per-pupil K-12 spending from 2008-2018\*
- Cut U.I. benefits for unemployed workers with kids
- Underfunded Medicaid
- Dismantled behavioral health system
- Over a billion dollars drained from various targeted funds



A young boy with dark hair and a sad expression is sitting at a wooden table. He is wearing a blue and white striped shirt. His right hand is resting on his chin, and his left arm is crossed on the table. In front of him is a large white plate. The background shows a white chair and a shelf with various items, including a blue and white checkered cloth, a white plate, and some golden-brown food items.

**Nobody likes to hear  
the bad news.**



**But there is good  
news too.**

**Kids are resilient.  
Communities are strong.**



A scenic landscape photograph featuring a small, calm pond in the middle ground, surrounded by lush green grass and yellow wildflowers in the foreground. In the background, a dense forest covers a rolling hill under a soft, hazy sky. The overall tone is peaceful and natural.

**And there's more  
good news.**

**Policy matters.**

A silhouette of a person holding a child against a sunset sky. The person is standing and holding the child up. The sky is a mix of blue, orange, and yellow, with some clouds. The text is overlaid on the image in various colors and sizes.

higher grad  
rates

better reading  
& math scores

better health outcomes

lower rates of  
food insecurity

lower remedial  
education costs



# Policies can prevent ACEs

- Home visiting programs for pregnant women and families with newborns
- Parent coaching programs
- Domestic violence prevention programs
- Social support programs for parents
- Teen pregnancy prevention programs
- Treatment for mental illness and substance abuse
- High quality affordable child care
- Income supports for low-income families



# Policies can interrupt ACEs

- Access to robust health services including mental health and substance abuse services
- Increasing capacity of health care providers to assess ACEs
- Ensuring resources for referrals
- Holding HMOs accountable for sufficient provider networks
- Fully staffing for critical positions
- Investing in evidence-based prevention programming and trauma interventions






The best medicine is a  
healthy budget.



# We are at a crossroads.






A photograph of three young children sitting at a light-colored wooden table. The child in the foreground is a young girl with long dark hair, wearing a white shirt with orange ruffles, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. Behind her are two other children, a boy and a girl, both looking towards the camera. The background is softly blurred, showing an indoor setting with warm lighting.

“The greatest truth must be  
the recognition that in every  
child is the potential for  
greatness.”

*-Robert F. Kennedy*

A photograph of a family of four in a kitchen. On the left is a young woman with dark hair, wearing a blue shirt and a necklace with a pearl pendant. Behind her is an older man with grey hair and a mustache, wearing a light green shirt. To his right is a young girl with dark hair, wearing a black top with a decorative collar. On the far right is an older woman with grey hair, wearing a white shirt. They are all smiling at the camera. The background shows wooden kitchen cabinets.

**We're all in this  
together.**





# Thank you!

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