



# The Life of a Child in New Mexico

*Policy and Opportunity at Every Age*

KIDS COUNT Conference  
June 26, 2019

NM Voices for Children

[www.nmvoices.org](http://www.nmvoices.org)

# KIDS COUNT



ECONOMIC  
WELL-BEING



EDUCATION



HEALTH



FAMILY AND  
COMMUNITY

A close-up photograph of four young children of diverse backgrounds (two Black, two white) 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 up and to the left with an open mouth. The child next to him is a white boy in a red shirt, looking down at the book. The child next to him is a white boy in a blue shirt, also looking down at the book. The child on the far right is a white boy in a dark green shirt, looking down at the book. The book is open, showing a page with a large, dark, abstract illustration. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

**KIDS COUNT tells a story  
of opportunity**

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# What is your story?

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# Why I'm here

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# Why we're all here

A photograph of a classroom from behind several students. They are all raising their hands, indicating they want to answer a question or participate. The students are wearing various colored shirts: light blue, red, orange, and green. In the background, a chalkboard is visible with some faint, illegible writing on it.

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

**50**



low reading &  
math scores

food insecurity

poverty

child abuse


low access to  
early education  
& care

A close-up, high-contrast photograph of a young child's face. The child has dark, curly hair and large, dark eyes that are looking directly at the camera with a serious, intense expression. The lighting is dramatic, with one side of the face in shadow, emphasizing the contours and the texture of the skin and hair. The background is dark and out of focus.

**Inequities exist in  
nearly every  
indicator**

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 and has his right hand resting on his chin. In front of him is a large white plate. The background shows a white chair and a shelf with various items, including blue and white patterned plates and some golden-brown baked goods.

**Nobody likes to hear  
the bad news**



But there's good  
news too

Policy matters

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higher grad  
rates

better reading  
& math scores

better health outcomes

lower rates of  
food insecurity

lower remedial  
education costs



# Progress is possible!

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# Policy and opportunity for young children

A young child with curly hair, wearing a striped shirt, pointing upwards outdoors. The background is a grassy field with some wooden structures in the distance.

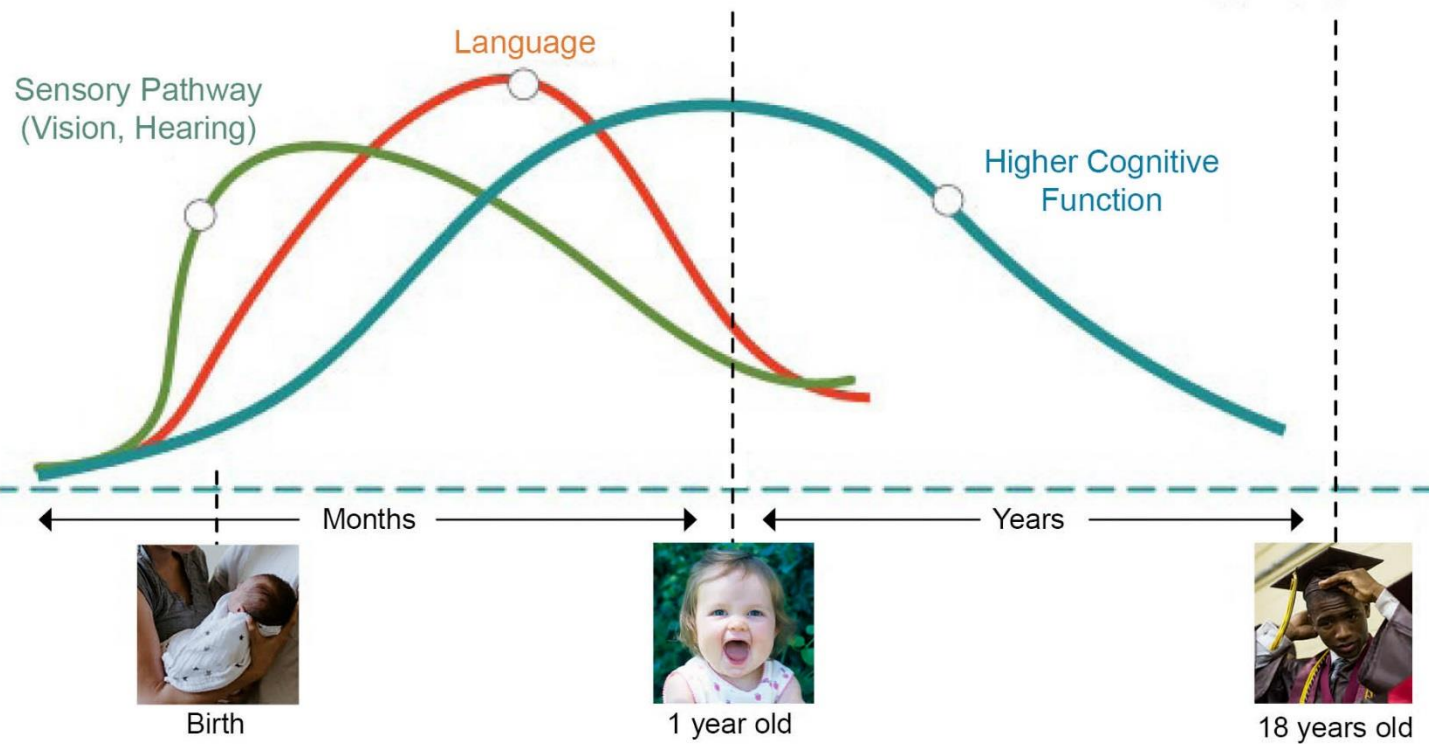
**Jacob Vigil, MSW**  
*Research and Policy Analyst*

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## Human Brain Development



Source: C.A. Nelson, *From Neurons to Neighborhoods*, 2000


# Home visiting supports parents in building strong foundations



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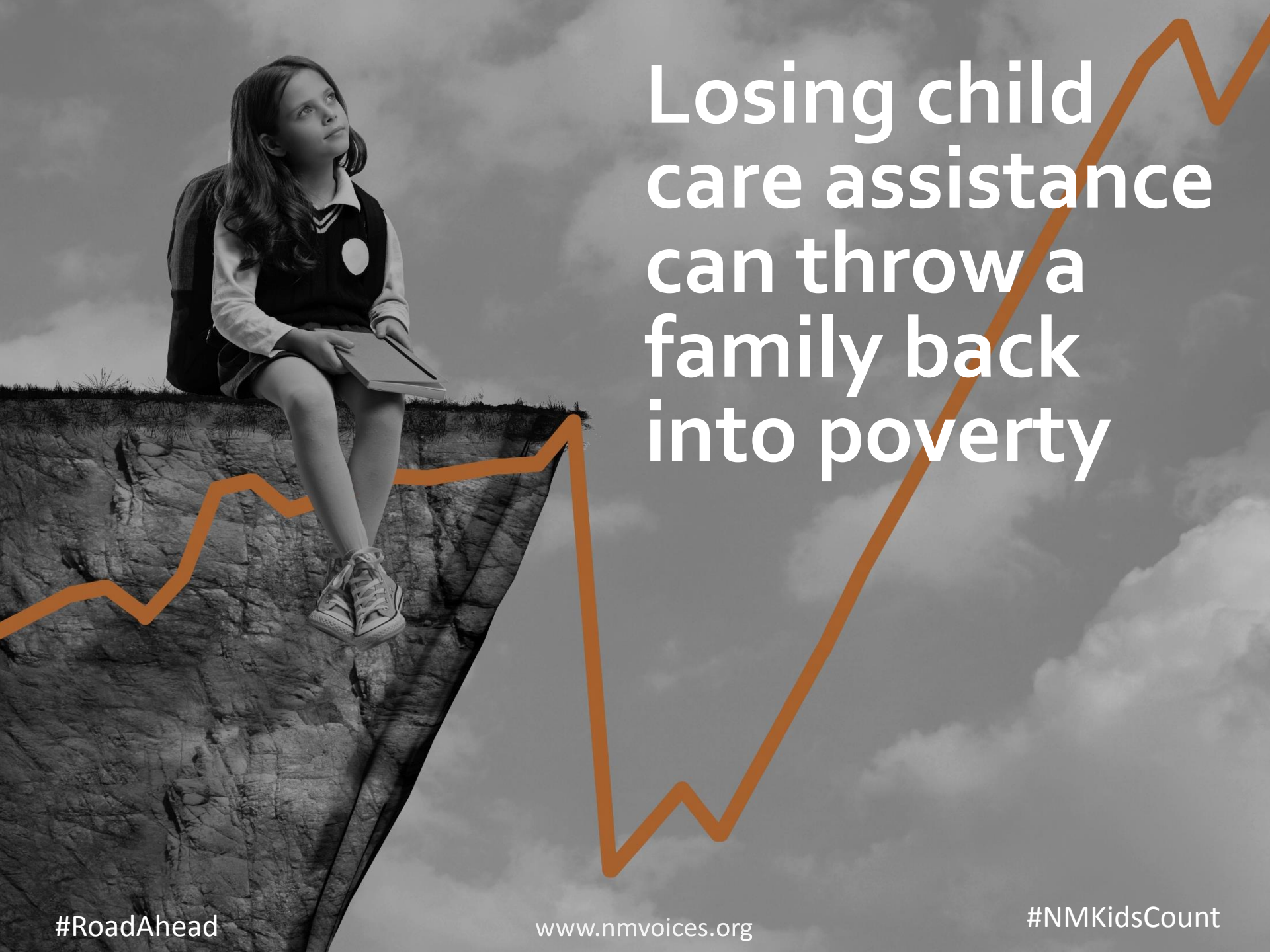
A young child with curly brown hair is focused on painting. They are wearing a white t-shirt and are seated at a table. In their right hand, they hold a yellow paintbrush, applying green paint to a red shape on a white sheet of paper. Their left hand is also on the paper, with green paint on their fingers. The background is a soft, out-of-focus indoor setting.

# High quality early learning prepares kids for school and life

A close-up photograph of three young children of diverse backgrounds, smiling and huddled together. The child on the left is wearing a dark blue sweater, the middle child is wearing a pink and grey striped sweater, and the child on the right is wearing a purple shirt. The background is slightly blurred, showing greenery and a building.

# Great child care allows parents to work while their children grow and learn

- Proposed cut in eligibility
- Providers face low wages, limited opportunities, and inadequate benefits

A young girl with long brown hair, wearing a school uniform (white shirt, dark vest with a white circle, and dark skirt) and a backpack, sits on the edge of a rocky cliff. She is looking up and to the right. The background is a cloudy sky. A jagged orange line graph is overlaid on the image, starting from the bottom left, rising to a peak, falling sharply to a trough, and then rising again towards the top right. The text "Losing child care assistance can throw a family back into poverty" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font on the right side of the image.

Losing child  
care assistance  
can throw a  
family back  
into poverty

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# Policy and opportunity for kids in school

**Bill Jordan, MA**  
*Government Relations Officer*

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# Transforming Education



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# Moonshot or bust!


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A photograph of a group of students in a school cafeteria. They are standing in a line, leaning against a brick wall, and holding plates of food. The lighting is warm and natural, coming from a window on the right. The students are wearing casual clothing, including a baseball cap. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Our kids face  
many challenges,  
but progressive  
policies  
can help

A white rectangular sign lies on a patch of green grass. The sign features the text "FEAR DOES NOT BELONG IN SCHOOLS" in a bold, sans-serif font. "FEAR" and "NOT" are in red, while the other words are in dark blue. A horizontal red line is positioned between "DOES NOT" and "BELONG". Another horizontal red line is at the bottom of the sign, underlining the word "SCHOOLS". To the right of the sign, a black backpack with a white and black plaid pattern is resting on the grass.

**FEAR**  
**DOES NOT**  
**BELONG**  
**IN**  
**SCHOOLS**

# Policy and opportunity for young adults

A close-up photograph of a young woman with dark hair, wearing a black graduation cap and a blue stole over a black gown. She is smiling broadly, showing her teeth, and holding a rolled-up white diploma. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people in graduation attire.

**Estela Guzman, PhD**  
*Research and Policy Analyst*

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# Higher education strengthens New Mexico

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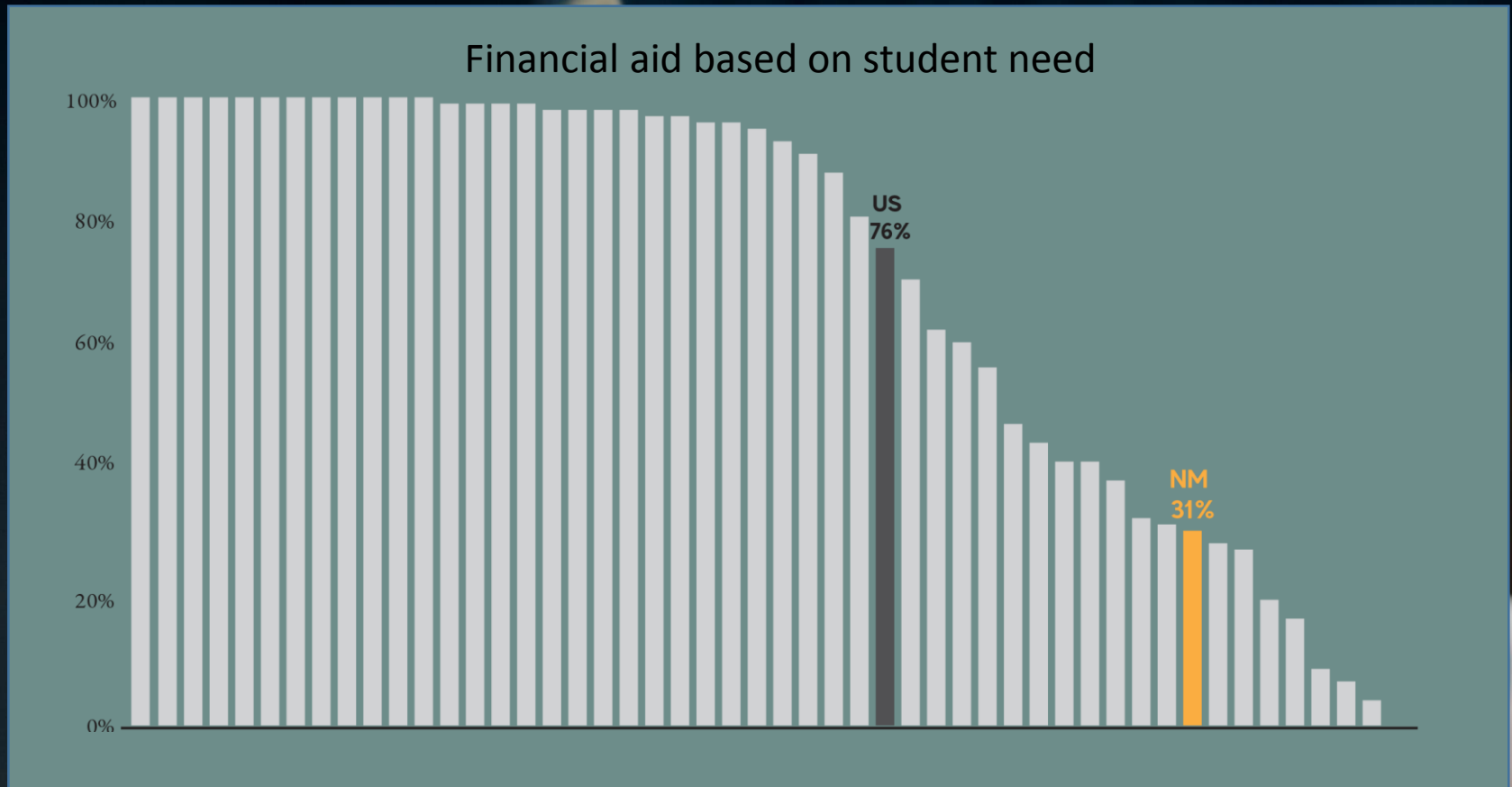
The background of the image is a close-up photograph of a cracked concrete surface. The cracks are deep and irregular, creating a network of polygonal shapes. The color of the concrete is a light tan or beige, with some darker areas where the cracks are deeper or where the surface is more weathered. The lighting is even, highlighting the texture of the concrete.

Too many young adults  
fall through the cracks

A close-up photograph of a person's hand, likely a child, gripping a chain-link fence. The hand is positioned in the center-right of the frame, with fingers wrapped around the metal mesh. The background is blurred, showing green foliage and a light-colored wall. The overall tone is somber and evocative, symbolizing restriction or seeking freedom.

**We can disrupt the school-  
to-prison pipeline through  
policy change**

# When we make college affordable, we all win



# Young adults are our future and have unlimited potential



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# Policy and opportunity for families

**Amber Wallin, MPA**  
*Deputy Director*

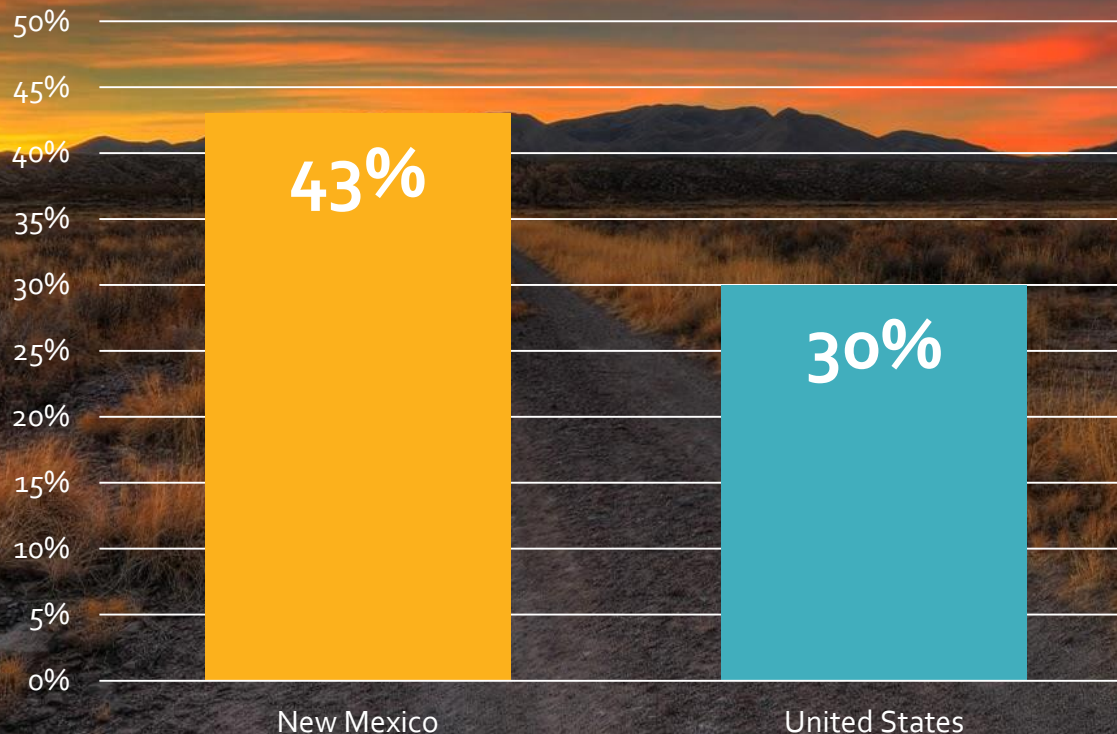
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# Many working families struggle to get ahead

Working families that are low-income



A large group of children, mostly wearing yellow shirts with a logo, are sitting in a circle on a light-colored tiled floor. In the center of the circle is a large, light-colored mosaic of an eagle with its wings spread. The children are of various ethnicities and are wearing colorful costumes, including masks (red, green, purple, orange) and capes (green, purple, red). Some children are waving, and one child is lying on their back in the center of the circle. The text "Opportunities for families = opportunities for kids" is overlaid in large white letters across the top half of the image.

# Opportunities for families = opportunities for kids



# Progress for our families is on the horizon

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# Our state budget shows what we value

A photograph of three young children sitting at a desk. The child in the foreground is a girl with long dark hair, wearing a white and orange striped shirt, smiling at the camera. Behind her are two other children, a boy and a girl, also smiling. The background is blurred, showing a classroom setting.

“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. A woman with dark hair and a blue shirt is in the foreground on the left, smiling. 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, also smiling. On the far right is an older woman with grey hair, wearing a white shirt, looking towards the camera. The background shows wooden kitchen cabinets.

**We're all in this  
together**

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# Thank you!



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