Op-Ed: Response to LFC budget recommendation

Written by By James Jimenez Executive Director, N.M. Voices for Children
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On the topic of the budget recommendation released Jan. 7 by the Legislative Finance Committee, James Jimenez, executive director of New Mexico Voices for Children, issued the following statement regarding the budget recommendation released Jan. 7 by the Legislative Finance Committee:

“Once again, some in the Legislature want to continue this slow-drip process for funding early childhood care and education services. Unfortunately, the Legislative Finance Committee budget recommendation is far below the investments needed in the programs that matter most to New Mexico kids and families and far below the responsible recommendations made by Governor Lujan Grisham.

“Despite knowing how important early childhood programs are for children’s healthy

development and success, the LFC proposal continues to short-change the early childhood care and education programs that give all New Mexico children the chance to reach their full potential. Programs like child care assistance help parents afford safe places for their kids to grow and learn while they work, yet the LFC budget continues to put that program out of reach for far too many families struggling to afford the enormous cost of high-quality care for their children.

“We need bold and innovative solutions from our policymakers in order for all New Mexico children to have the opportunity to thrive, and so we were disappointed in the LFC recommendations that continue to take [a] wait-and-see approach, despite having overwhelming evidence that high-quality early childhood care and education services work. Children can’t wait to grow up - the window of opportunity for robust brain development is finite and too many New Mexico kids are still losing out. If we can’t commit to the best possible investment now, when will we?”

By James Jimenez
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