

Letter to the Editor: The Time is Now to Expand NM PreK

Written by Gallupsun Staff
Friday, 03 November 2017 10:56

The New Mexico Early Childhood Development Partnership (NMECDP) recently spent the day in Gallup. The day included a visit to Rehoboth Early Childhood Center and a lunch and community conversation at the Gallup Community Service Center.

NMECDP is focusing on a multi-year initiative to expand the state-funded, voluntary state PreK program to every 3-and 4-year-old who wants it. **According to KIDS COUNT, 45.5% of McKinley County's children, ages 0-5, live in poverty. Only 49.6% of McKinley County's 3 and 4-year-olds are enrolled in PreK.** For some children, this means that they are entering kindergarten so far behind that they will never catch up.

The time is NOW to expand NM PreK.

NM PreK provides choices for parents and distributes PreK resources equally between public and private sectors. We know that parents want the best for their children, and by giving them choices, they make the best decisions for their family.

Quality is an important hallmark of NM PreK. The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) evaluated NM PreK, using a set of ten regulatory benchmarks. Based on kindergarten entry assessment scores, NIEER evaluators concluded that NM PreK produced significant impacts in language, literacy and mathematics.

Children who attend a high-quality program earn higher marks in school, are less likely to repeat a grade, are more likely to graduate high school and attend college. They go on to earn better salaries as adults and more likely to stay out of prison and off public assistance.

Together, we can ensure that all children receive a great start! For more information, please visit www.nmecdp.org.

Sincerely,

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Claire Dudley Chavez

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United Way of Santa Fe County