



# NHCSL

THE NATIONAL HISPANIC CAUCUS OF STATE LEGISLATORS

## RESOLUTION

No. 2025-14

### Universal No-Cost Childcare

Reported to the Caucus by the NHCSL  
Government, Social Justice and Taxation Task Force  
Rep. Leonela Felix (RI), Chair

Sponsored by Sen. Antonio Maestas (NM), Rep. Javier Martinez (NM),  
Asmbr. Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas (NY), Sen. Gustavo Rivera (NY),  
Rep. Tara Lujan (NM), Sen. Leo Jaramillo (NM), Rep. Lillian Ortiz Self (WA),  
Rep. Arturo Alonso Sandoval (OK), Rep. Juan Candelaria (CT),  
Del. Joseline Peña Melnyk (MD), Sen. Ada Álvarez-Conde (PR), and  
Rep. Diana Gonzales Worthen (AR)

Unanimously ratified by the Caucus on November 22, 2025

1 **WHEREAS**, access to affordable, high-quality early childhood care and education is a  
2 cornerstone of strong families, thriving communities, and a competitive economy,  
3 enabling parents to work, pursue education, and contribute fully to society while  
4 ensuring their children enter school healthy, prepared, and ready to learn; and,

5 **WHEREAS**, in Resolution 2021-17, [Access to High-Quality Early Childhood Education](#)  
6 [for American Families](#), this caucus underscored that the first six years (0–5) are  
7 critical in the overall development in young children and that low-income children  
8 enrolled in high-quality early childhood education (sometimes referred to as  
9 preschool, including Pre-K) are more likely to achieve success, highlighting  
10 affordability as one of the main barriers to access; and,

11 **WHEREAS**, across the United States, nearly 70 percent of children under age six have  
12 all available parents in the workforce, yet millions face unaffordable child-care costs  
13 that consume a third or more of household income, leading to lost earnings, reduced  
14 productivity, and diminished economic growth estimated at \$122 billion annually;<sup>1</sup>  
15 and,

16 **WHEREAS**, Hispanic and Latino families are disproportionately affected by the  
17 nation’s affordability crises, with over half of Hispanic renters spending more than 30  
18 percent of their income on housing, leaving little room to afford quality childcare, thus  
19 aggravating cycles of economic hardship and limiting opportunity for future  
20 generations;<sup>2</sup> and,

21 **WHEREAS**, this year, New Mexico became the first state in the nation to guarantee  
22 universal, no-cost childcare for all families, regardless of income, marking a historic  
23 step toward equity and opportunity for every child;<sup>3</sup> and,

24 **WHEREAS**, according to the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care  
25 Department (ECECD), families will save an average of \$12,000 annually per child  
26 under the plan which allows families who work or go to school<sup>4</sup> to “choose care  
27 arrangements that fit their needs, not just their work or class schedules,”<sup>5</sup> while the  
28 state directly pays providers and exempts them from the state’s gross receipts tax;<sup>6</sup>  
29 and,

30 **WHEREAS**, under the New Mexico plan, government payments to providers who  
31 enroll in the program vary based on the setting, child’s age and full- or part-time care.<sup>7</sup>  
32 Providers can get increased pay for achieving higher points in the state’s quality

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<sup>1</sup> Center for American Progress, [Fact Sheet: What To Know About the Child Care for Working Families Act](#) (July 16, 2025).

<sup>2</sup> Algernon Austin, [How the Affordable Rental Housing Crisis is Hurting Hispanics](#) (Center for Economic and Policy Research, Oct. 8, 2025)

<sup>3</sup> Madeline Mitchell, [New Mexico is first state to offer free universal child care. Will others follow suit?](#) (USA TODAY, Sept. 16, 2025)

<sup>4</sup> The plan explains that “grandparents raising grandchildren, families caring for babies born substance-exposed, families experiencing housing instability, and families involved with the Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) do not need to meet the work or school requirement. Only the child’s immigration status is considered for child care assistance eligibility; the child must be a U.S. citizen, legal resident, or qualified immigrant.”

<sup>5</sup> The plan explains that “means families can be awarded full-time contracts even if they work or attend school part-time, making it easier for providers to staff and pay for full-time care slots.”

<sup>6</sup> ECECD, [Universal Child Care](#)

<sup>7</sup> Initial payments to providers range from \$213 monthly for part time care of one pre-school child in a registered 2-star unlicensed home (or by a friend, family member or neighbor during a public health emergency), to \$1,325 for full time care of one infant in a licensed 2-star family home. See regulations at, [8.9.3 NMAC](#), Section 6 through 22 effective 11/04/2025.

rating and improvement system,<sup>8</sup> providing services in non-traditional hours, and providing at least 10 hours of care during the day, for at least five days a week, and meeting minimum pay requirements for staff;<sup>9</sup> and,

**WHEREAS**, New Mexico achieved the universal childcare goal by first dedicating a funding stream to early childhood programs with the creation of an Early Childhood Trust Fund, strengthened by a 2022 constitutional amendment directing substantial, steady funding to childcare and early education;<sup>10</sup> and,

**WHEREAS**, universal childcare allows parents, especially women, to remain employed, pursue higher education, and build financial stability while ensuring that children receive the culturally and linguistically responsive care that fit their needs; and,

**WHEREAS**, universal early childhood care is not charity, but *an investment with lifelong dividends* like raising graduation rates, reducing poverty, improving health outcomes and upholding family dignity.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators (NHCSL) calls on all state legislatures to enact universal, no-cost childcare.

IN ITS MEETING OF NOVEMBER 4, 2025, THE NHCSL GOVERNMENT, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND TAXATION TASK FORCE UNANIMOUSLY RECOMMENDED THIS RESOLUTION TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR APPROVAL.

THE NHCSL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THIS RESOLUTION ON NOVEMBER 14, 2025, IN A VIRTUAL MEETING.

THE NATIONAL HISPANIC CAUCUS OF STATE LEGISLATORS UNANIMOUSLY RATIFIED THIS RESOLUTION AT ITS ANNUAL MEETING OF NOVEMBER 22, 2025 IN OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA.

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<sup>8</sup> For example, a 5-star licensed center will be paid \$2,175 monthly for full time care of one infant, instead of the base rate of \$1,200. See regulations at, [8.9.3 NMAC](#), Section 6 through 22 effective 11/04/2025.

<sup>9</sup> Entry-level staff minimum pay requirements range from \$16/hour at the lowest 2-star level to \$19/hour at the highest 5-star level. For example, a 5-star licensed center will be paid \$2,500 monthly for full time care of one infant, instead of \$2,175 if it meets the minimum pay requirements and offers at least 10 hours of daily care. See regulations at, [8.9.3 NMAC](#), Section 6 through 22 effective 11/04/2025.

<sup>10</sup> 2022 Constitutional Amendment 1, [Land Grant Permanent Fund Distribution for Early Childhood Education Amendment](#).