**General Notice of Change in Verification Process**

Members of the New Mexico early childhood education and care community,

The Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) is contracting with the UNM Early Childhood Service Center (UNM ECSC) to conduct FOCUS verifications.

As you are aware FOCUS on young children’s learning includes graduated program standards that are closely tied to the New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines. FOCUS on Young Children’s Learning involves 5 STAR levels that ascend in essential quality elements and continuous quality improvement. To learn more about FOCUS, click on the website: <https://www.newmexicokids.org/home/parents-and-families-3/what-is-quality/>

FOCUS verification is a representation of an early childhood program’s achievement of quality standards in collaboration with UNM ECSC and ECECD. The work of UNM ECSC is grounded in strong collaborative relationships between consultants and programs with a focus on reflective practice for on-going quality improvement. UNM ECSC commits itself to valuing and respecting the diversity in early childhood education and care program structures and configurations and will support the verification journey that is underpinned by the 3 Rs: Respect, Relationships, and Reflective Practice.

The FOCUS verifications will be conducted by the UNM ECSC verification team. This team conducts their work separately from the UNM ECSC training and development consultants.

In partnership with UNM ECSC, ECECD is committed to creating a more cohesive verification plan that ensures access, participation, and support for programs statewide (center-based, family childcare homes, out of school time) while honoring and respecting the individuality of programs.

We thank you for your patience and your continued commitment to families and children during these challenging times.

For support or questions about the FOCUS application or application for verification, please contact the ECECD FOCUS Manager **Casey Lafferty** at 505-629-9483.