

Senate Bill 120 – Sen. Sapien, Sponsor
Early Childhood Care and Education Act
Business Case

1. Creates the “Early Childhood Care and Education Act”.
2. The purpose of this Bill is to establish a comprehensive early childhood care and education system through an aligned continuum of **state and private** early childhood programs. The bill creates a State Early Learning Advisory Council, attached to CYFD. The Council would lead the development or enhancement of a high-quality, comprehensive system of early childhood development and care that ensures **statewide coordination and collaboration** among the wide range of early childhood programs and services within the state.
3. The Act outlines key components of a successful early care and education **system – aligning existing programs and existing funding**.
4. This Act recognizes that **high-quality** early childhood care and education is vital to ensuring that all of New Mexico’s children can enter kindergarten **ready to learn** and succeed; and that the cost benefit research supports a **return on investment** for money spent on early childhood programs.
5. This bill is endorsed by the NM Business Roundtable and the Association of Commerce and Industry.
6. Aligning early childhood programs would benefit children and families through:
 - A. Better **tracking and integration of data** that allows for the identification of gaps in service, vulnerable populations, and – ultimately – and understanding of whether and how specific programs are benefiting children and families. As a result, funding for programs can be streamlined to match specific need.
 - B. Consistent **consumer education** would increase family’s awareness of services available to them.
 - C. An **aligned professional development** system would result in well-qualified professionals able to make a positive impact on children.
 - D. Consolidating and coordinating resources and public funding streams permits **funding to be maximized**.
 - E. The acknowledgement that **families play a central role** in the planning, operation and evaluation of early childhood programs provides a foundation upon which families are included and considered in decisions that affect them.