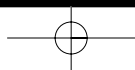
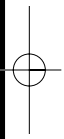
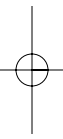


**Increasing  
Student  
Achievement  
in New  
Mexico:  
the Need  
for Universal  
Access to  
Full-Day  
Kindergarten**

*Think  
New  
Mexico  
Fall,  
1999*



## Why a Think Tank for New Mexico?

*"Thank G-d for Mississippi!"* That used to be the refrain in New Mexico when national organizations released their rankings of the states on key quality of life measures. Mississippi was always a safe bet to be at the bottom. But that is not such a safe bet anymore. Witness:

- The U.S. Census Bureau reports that for the years 1995 to 1997 (the last year for which data is available) New Mexico had the highest state poverty rate: 24%.
- Last month the Children's Rights Council ranked New Mexico as the 49th best state to raise a child based on our poor performance rates in ten categories: prenatal care, infant mortality, immunizations under age 2, children in poverty, child abuse and neglect, child deaths, total juvenile crime, teen birth, dropouts and divorce. (Louisiana was 50th).
- Recently released FBI statistics show that New Mexico is the second highest state per capita in both reported rapes and drunk driving rates and fourth in homicides.
- The National Education Goals Panel, a bipartisan and intergovernmental body of Federal and state officials created to assess progress in education, reports that New Mexico trails the national average in 18 of 19 educational categories.

**Think New Mexico** was founded with the idea that an independent, solution-oriented think tank serving the citizens of New Mexico could help to advance New Mexico in these areas. After all, **New Mexico is already the envy of many states for the quality of its people, its beautiful landscapes and its rich cultures. That is why so many people choose to live in the Land of Enchantment.** We believe that New Mexico, with all of its potential, should be leading the parade rather than following it.

Our mission is to educate the public, the media and policymakers about the serious problems facing New Mexico and to inform the public dialogue by developing comprehensive, long-term solutions to those problems.

Our approach is to perform and publish sound, non-partisan research. Unlike many think tanks, we do not subscribe to any particular ideology. Instead our focus is to develop effective and pragmatic solutions.

Consistent with this approach, **Think New Mexico's** Board is comprised of Democrats, Independents and Republicans. They are the brain trust of this think tank. They are also statesmen and stateswomen, who have no agenda other than to see New Mexico succeed.

As a solution-oriented think tank we will measure our success based on changes in law or policy that we are able to help achieve and which make New Mexico an even better place to live. We will use advocacy and, as a last resort, legal action but only within the constraints of Federal tax law.

Our inaugural publication, which is in your hands, looks at how New Mexico can increase student achievement by making full-day kindergarten universally accessible. Our second report, which will be published later this year, will outline how specific State programs and agencies can be cut back or eliminated in order to pay the recurring operational costs of implementing full-day kindergarten.

We hope to help make some positive changes so that the good people of Mississippi will never be able to say, "thank G-d for New Mexico!"

*Fred Nathan*

Fred Nathan  
*Founder and Executive Director*

*P.S. We welcome your comments, suggestions and, naturally, any tax-deductible financial contributions that you may wish to make. ☺*



*Photo Credit: Kathleen Dudley*

### **Think New Mexico's Staff**

Fred Nathan, Founder and Executive Director, Carol Romero-Wirth, Assistant Director and Susan R. Fleischmann, CPA, Chief Financial Officer, in front of the Headquarters of **Think New Mexico** in the Digneo-Moore House, across the street from the New Mexico State Capitol in Santa Fe.

## Think New Mexico's Board of Directors



**Edward Archuleta** is the Director of the Santa Fe office of 1000 Friends of New Mexico, a not-for-profit organization that advocates responsible land-use planning, growth management and sustainable development. Edward previously served as the top assistant to New Mexico Secretary of State Stephanie Gonzales.



**Paul Bardacke** served as Attorney General of New Mexico from 1983-1986. Paul is a member of the American College of Trial Lawyers. He currently handles complex commercial litigation with the firm of Eaves, Bardacke, Baugh, Kierst & Kiernan.



**David Buchholtz** has served on a long list of New Mexico boards and commissions and has advised several New Mexico governors on fiscal matters. David recently served as Chairman of the Association of Commerce and Industry. He is a senior shareholder and former President of Sutin, Thayer & Browne.



**Garrey Carruthers** served as Governor of New Mexico from 1987-1990. Currently, Garrey is President and CEO of Cimarron Health Plan. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Association of Commerce and Industry, the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, and the New Mexico Foundation for Educational Excellence.



**Elizabeth Gutierrez** is an organizational development consultant who is pursuing a doctoral degree in public policy. Liz was a marketing executive with IBM for nearly two decades. She has also served as Director of Administrative Services Department for the city of Santa Fe.



**LaDonna Harris** is an enrolled member of the Comanche Nation. LaDonna is President and Founder of Americans for Indian Opportunity, a national not-for-profit organization that serves as a catalyst for new concepts and opportunities for Native peoples. She was a leader in the effort to return the Taos Blue Lake to Taos Pueblo.

**Rebecca Koch** is the owner of Rebecca Koch & Associates which provides management consulting services in the areas of development and strategic planning to local and national not-for-profits. Rebecca was the organizational development consultant for the Santa Fe Business Incubator, Inc. She is a former President of the Board of New Mexico Literary Arts.



**Fred Nathan** founded Think New Mexico and is its Executive Director. Fred served as Special Counsel to New Mexico Attorney General Tom Udall from 1991 to 1998. In that capacity, he was the architect of several successful legislative initiatives and was in charge of New Mexico's lawsuit against the tobacco industry that settled for approximately \$1.25 billion.



**Frank Ortiz**, a career Foreign Service Officer of the United States, has served as United States Ambassador to several countries, including Argentina, Guatemala and Peru. Frank serves on many other boards throughout New Mexico.



**Roberta Cooper Ramo** is the first woman elected President of the American Bar Association. Roberta is a former President of the Board of Regents of the University of New Mexico. She is a shareholder with the Modrall law firm and serves on many national boards.



**Stewart Udall** served as Secretary of the Interior under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. Prior to that, Stewart served three terms in Congress. He is the author of *The Quiet Crisis* (1963) that tells the story of humankind's stewardship over the planet's resources, and *To the Inland Empire: Coronado and Our Spanish Legacy* (1987) which celebrates Hispanic contributions to our history.



*Photo Credit for Mr. Archuleta, Ms. Gutierrez and Ms. Koch: Kathleen Dudley*

# THE BACKGROUND

## Where Does New Mexico Rank in Student Achievement?

Full-day kindergarten has consistently resulted in higher student achievement for those who can attend, as this report will demonstrate. It is also a foundation on which New Mexico can build further education reforms.

The New Mexico of the twenty-first century will need dramatic improvements in student achievement in order to ensure its future prosperity.

New Mexico now ranks below the national average in virtually every category tracked by the National Education Goals Panel, a bipartisan and intergovernmental body of Federal and state officials created to assess and report national progress in education.

### The Status of Young Children in New Mexico

*Three national organizations recently ranked the states on the status of their children. Unfortunately, each independently reached the same conclusion: the status of New Mexico's young children is not as good as it should be. For example, New Mexico has declined from 36th best state to raise a child in 1995 to 49th in 1998, according to the Children's Rights Council, an organization that supports traditional families. New Mexico ranks slightly better as the 48th best state to raise a child according to the Kids Count Data Book (May 1999), a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Finally, the National Center for Children in Poverty ("NCCP") ranks New Mexico below the national average in the most important indicators of young child and family well-being.*

<b>Poverty Rates:</b>	U.S.	N.M.
young children in extreme poverty	11.7	18.3
young children in poverty	24.7	34.0
<b>Family Structure:</b>		
young children in single parent families	27.9	34.4
young children in two parent families	69.8	63.3
<b>Socioeconomic Status:</b>		
young children whose more educated parent did not finish high school	14.6	16.5

*All figures in percentages. Source: National Center for Children in Poverty (1998)*

For example, only 21% of New Mexico 4th graders met the Education Goals Panel's performance standard in reading, significantly below the national average of 30%. Only California, Hawaii, Louisiana, Mississippi and South Carolina scored below New Mexico in this category. (Maine led the nation at 41%, nearly twice New Mexico's rate.)

Likewise, only 13% of New Mexico 4th graders met the Education Goals Panel's performance standard in mathematics, which was significantly below the national average of 21%. Only Alabama, California, Louisiana, Mississippi and South Carolina scored below New Mexico in this category. (Connecticut led the nation at 31%, more than twice New Mexico's rate.)

As many have noted, more and more of our children will not only be competing with their neighbors down the street and in the next state, but also with their peers internationally. They will be competing in a world considerably more complex than that encountered by previous generations.

Unfortunately, based on international comparisons of academic achievement, New Mexico will be at a severe disadvantage in this competition. For example, in a 1995 comparison to 8th grade students in 40 foreign countries on a mathematics assessment, New Mexico 8th graders scored significantly below 8th graders in 27 nations. New Mexico 8th graders scored about the same as 8th graders in eight nations and significantly better than 8th graders in only five nations, according to the Education Goals Panel.

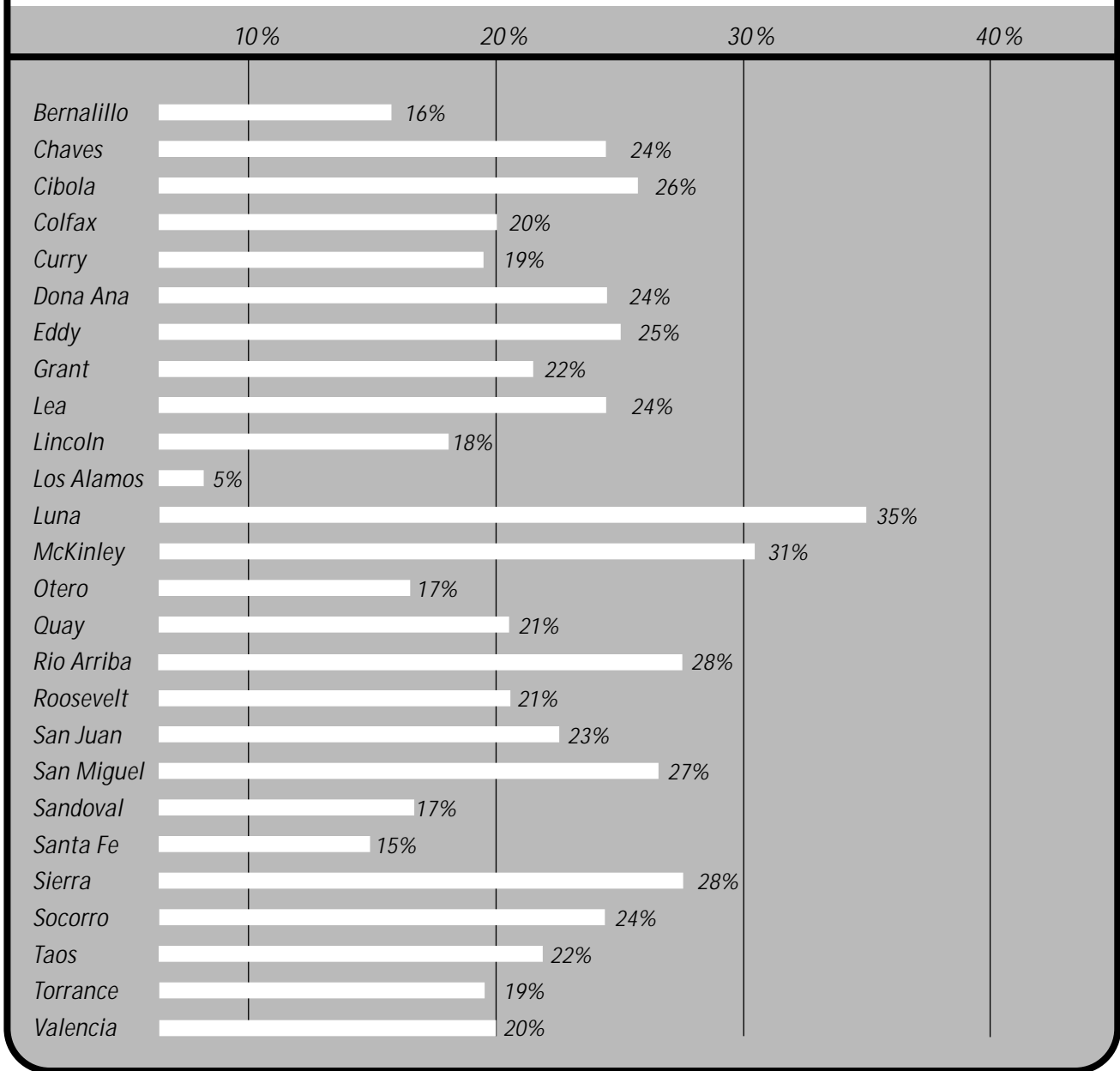
Our low educational rankings are not limited to the current generation in school. One in four New Mexico adults, age 25 or older, has not completed

high school, according to the 1990 U.S. Census. Moreover, 46%, or nearly half of all New Mexicans, possess literacy skills in the two lowest levels of the National Adult Literacy Survey. (This means that, while these New Mexicans have some reading and writing skills, they lack the skills needed to understand a bus schedule or to write a letter explaining an error on a credit card bill.)

**Clearly, all New Mexicans can agree on the need for education reform. The question is: where to begin? Think New Mexico believes that we should begin at the beginning with early childhood education. And the single most effective way to improve early childhood education in New Mexico is to make full-day kindergarten universally accessible to all New Mexico families. 🐣**

## Functional Illiteracy in New Mexico by County

About one in five New Mexico adults are at the lowest level of the National Adult Literacy Survey, known as Level 1 Literacy. Most of these adults are not illiterate. They can sign their own name and can locate the expiration date information on a driver's license, but they generally cannot locate an intersection on a street map or identify and enter background information on a social security card application. Nationally, 43% of adults at Level 1 Literacy were living in poverty. Below is a chart showing the percentage of the New Mexico adult population at Level 1 Literacy in counties with adult populations of at least 5,000.



Source: New Mexico Coalition for Literacy

# THE HISTORY

## **A Short History of Kindergarten in the United States and in New Mexico**

The concept of full-day kindergarten is not new. In fact, the first kindergarten in the United States was full day. Margaretha Schurz established it in Wisconsin in 1856. It was, however, a private program.

Half-day kindergarten is more the result of an accident of history - World War II - than it is the result of any theory of child development. Until World War II, most kindergarten programs in the United States tended to be full day. However, many became half day because of the shortage of teachers caused by the war. Then, with the rise in the birth rate after the soldiers returned from the War, there was a lack of classroom space and kindergarten generally continued as a half-day program.

In the 1960s and 1970s, as more child development research became available about the benefits of early childhood education, many states and communities began to implement publicly funded kindergarten programs for the first time. The trend toward publicly funded kindergarten accelerated as more mothers began to work out of the home, either by choice or by necessity.

Meanwhile, in 1965 the United States Congress created Head Start as an anti-poverty program, serving children between the ages of three and five. The idea was to give children from economically disadvantaged families the developmental experiences and skills to succeed in school with children from more advantaged circumstances.

In 1967 the New Mexico Legislature gave the State Board of Education the authority to adopt regulations for those local public school districts which wanted to offer kindergarten with local funding. In 1973, the Legislature provided funding to phase in voluntary half-day kindergarten (defined as two and a half hours per day) programs by 1977. Then in 1977 the Legislature provided full funding for voluntary, half-day kindergarten for five year olds. In the Public School Reform Act of 1986, the Legislature made half-day kindergarten mandatory for five year olds.

**It is worth noting that all four of these measures to increase the availability of kindergarten passed with strong, bipartisan support.**

## Kindergarten Timeline

- 1850 **1856** *First Kindergarten Program in U.S.*
- 1860
- 1870
- 1880
- 1890
- 1900
- 1910 **1912** *New Mexico Statehood*
- 1920
- 1930
- 1940
- 1950
- 1960 **1965** *Head Start begins in U.S. and in New Mexico*  
**1967** *N.M. Legislature permits kindergarten with local funding*
- 1970 **1973** *N.M. Legislature passes funding to phase in half-day kindergarten*  
**1977** *N.M. Legislature fully funds voluntary half-day kindergarten*
- 1980 **1986** *N.M. Legislature mandates half-day kindergarten*
- 1990

Source: Think New Mexico

**All four laws received a comfortable majority of Democrats and Republicans from both chambers of the Legislature.** Democratic Senator R.C. ("Ike") Morgan, of Portales, sponsored the 1967 legislation. Marvin Watts, a Republican Senator from Carlsbad sponsored The Public School Reform Act. Two House Democrats from Albuquerque, Lenton Mallory and David Rusk, sponsored the 1973 and 1977 kindergarten measures, respectively.

In 1993, the Perry Pre-School Study attracted national attention to the benefits of early childhood education. The study began in 1962 and followed 123 economically disadvantaged African American students living in the neighborhood of the Perry Elementary School in Ypsilanti, Michigan. The children were randomly divided into two groups: one experimental group that received a high quality, developmentally appropriate pre-school program and a control group that did not receive any pre-school program. **More than three decades later, the researchers found that those who received early childhood education had significantly higher monthly earnings, significantly higher rates of home ownership, significantly lower welfare dependency and significantly fewer arrests.**

In his last year as Governor in 1994, Bruce King recommended spending increases in his budget proposal to the Legislature that would have phased in full-day kindergarten programs over three years. That proposal died in the Legislature.

Separate attempts to implement full-day kindergarten by Senators Carlos Cisneros of Taos and Roman Maes of Santa Fe in 1995 and by Ben Altamirano of Silver City in 1998 all died in committee. 🐉

# THE CONTEXT

## How Some New Mexico Public Schools are Able to Provide Full-Day Kindergarten

Some kindergarten students in New Mexico already have access to publicly funded full-day kindergarten. During the 1998-1999 school year 4,068 of the projected child count for kindergarten of 27,632 attended publicly funded full-day kindergarten, according to figures from the Legislative Education Study Committee and the New Mexico Department of Education. That is approximately 14.7% of New Mexico kindergartners.

Nationally, the percentage of five year olds attending full-day Kindergarten was 54.7 in 1997 (the last year for which data is available), according to the National Center for Education Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education. In fact, the percentage of 5 year olds attending full-day kindergarten nationally has been greater than New Mexico's current level of 14.7% since at least 1975, nearly a quarter of a century ago.

During the 1998-1999 school year 38 of New Mexico's 89 school districts were unable to offer full-day kindergarten. Another 18 districts were only able to provide full-day kindergarten in some of their schools rather than on a district-wide basis. These tended to be the larger districts like Albuquerque, Las Cruces, Santa Fe and Farmington.

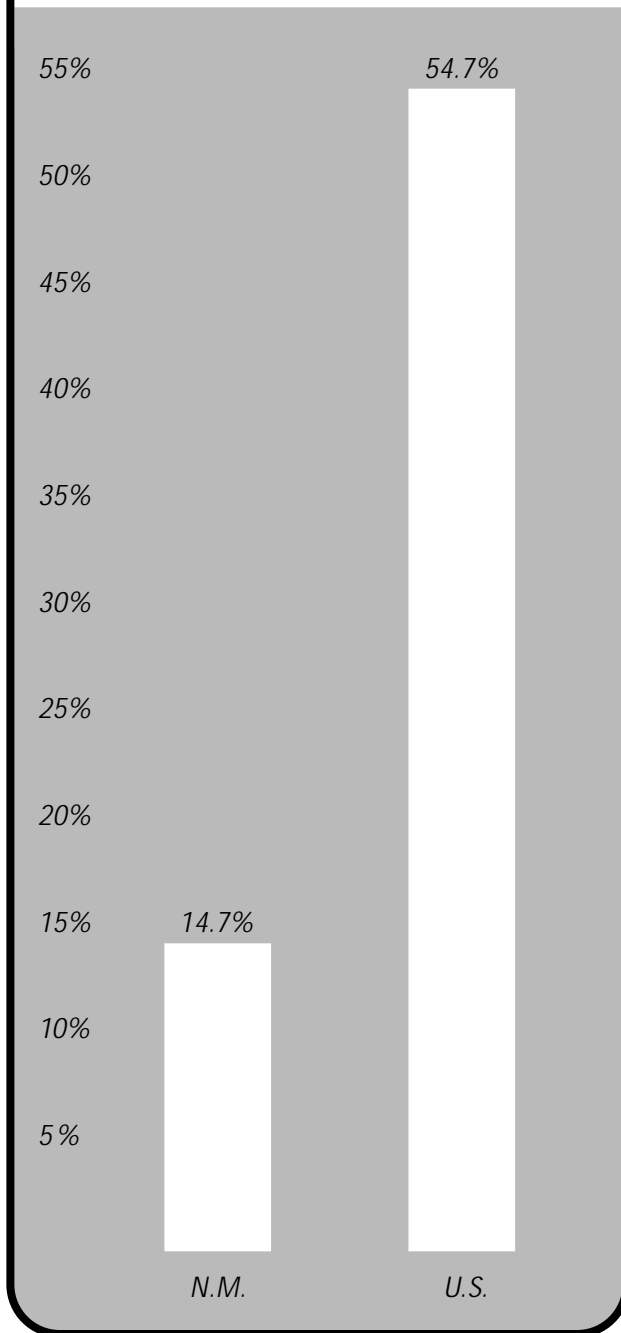
Full-day kindergarten was, however, offered on a district-wide basis by 33 school districts. These districts, which range from Animas to Loving to Dulce to Wagon Mound, tended to be smaller and more rural than the rest of the State. (Parents in rural school districts may be more in need of full-day kindergarten because of the lack of child-care programs in their communities.)

The State does not appropriate any money for full-day kindergarten - just half-day which under New Mexico law means two and a half hours per day. So how are these school districts able to fund full-day kindergarten? The answer lies mainly with the complex maze of Federal laws that bring Federal education dollars into New Mexico and which can be used, at least in part, for discretionary purposes.

For example, Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act provides financial assistance to close the achievement gap between poor and affluent

## Full-Day Kindergarten

Percentage of 5 year olds attending full-day kindergarten in New Mexico and in the United States



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics and U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census; N.M. Department of Education and the Legislative Education Study Committee

children. Impact Aid provides financial assistance to school districts which experience an adverse financial impact due to Federal activity or presence (e.g. districts that have schools on Indian lands, military bases or schools with children residing in Federal low rent housing projects).

Of course, New Mexico school districts, which do not qualify for these Federal programs or receive only a small amount of funding, are placed at a disadvantage when attempting to provide full-day kindergarten.

Some New Mexico school districts have been able to creatively re-allocate some of their State operational funding, but that is a zero-sum game that means shortchanging other educational priorities, like art and advanced placement classes.

Other school districts like the Gallup and Pecos School Districts, have requested class load waivers. In effect, Gallup and Pecos are increasing class sizes for some students in order to free up operating funds to pay for full-day kindergarten.

Finally, some individual public schools have even used private funding to supplement State funds as a way to meet the demand for full-day kindergarten. For example, Alvord Community School in the Santa Fe School District has used grant monies from the Frost Foundation, a private foundation, to pay for full-day kindergarten. The vast majority of New Mexico school districts, however, do not have access to the amount of private funding necessary to pay for full-day kindergarten. 🐣

## Half - Day and Full - Day Public Kindergarten in New Mexico

### 33 School Districts with Full - Day Kindergarten District - Wide

<i>Animas</i>	<i>Dulce</i>	<i>House</i>	<i>Mora</i>	<i>Santa Rosa</i>
<i>Capitan</i>	<i>Elida</i>	<i>Las Vegas West</i>	<i>Mosquero</i>	<i>Tularosa</i>
<i>Carrizozo</i>	<i>Floyd</i>	<i>Logan</i>	<i>Mountainair</i>	<i>Vaughn</i>
<i>Central</i>	<i>Gallup - McKinley</i>	<i>Loving</i>	<i>Pecos</i>	<i>Wagon Mound</i>
<i>Cloudcroft</i>	<i>Grady</i>	<i>Magdalena</i>	<i>Penasco</i>	<i>Zuni</i>
<i>Corona</i>	<i>Hatch Valley</i>	<i>Melrose</i>	<i>Quemado</i>	
<i>Cuba</i>	<i>Hondo Valley</i>	<i>Mesa Vista</i>	<i>Roy</i>	

### 18 School Districts with Full - Day Kindergarten in Some Schools

<i>District</i>	<i>Number of Schools with Full - Day Kindergarten Program</i>		
<i>Alamogordo</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>Grants Cibola</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Albuquerque</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>Las Cruces</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Belen</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>Las Vegas City</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Clayton</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>Lovington</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Cobre</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>Portales</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Deming</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>Santa Fe</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Dexter</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>Silver City</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Espanola</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>Socorro</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Farmington</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>Texico</i>	<i>1</i>

### 38 School Districts with Half - Day Kindergarten District - Wide

<i>Artesia</i>	<i>Des Moines</i>	<i>Jal</i>	<i>Moriarty</i>	<i>San Jon</i>
<i>Aztec</i>	<i>Dora</i>	<i>Jemez Mountain</i>	<i>Pojoaque Valley</i>	<i>Springer</i>
<i>Bernalillo</i>	<i>Estancia</i>	<i>Jemez Valley</i>	<i>Questa</i>	<i>Taos</i>
<i>Bloomfield</i>	<i>Eunice</i>	<i>Lake Arthur</i>	<i>Raton</i>	<i>Tatum</i>
<i>Carlsbad</i>	<i>Fort Sumner</i>	<i>Lordsburg</i>	<i>Reserve</i>	<i>Truth or</i>
<i>Chama Valley</i>	<i>Gadsden</i>	<i>Los Alamos</i>	<i>Rio Rancho</i>	<i>Consequences</i>
<i>Cimarron</i>	<i>Hagerman</i>	<i>Los Lunas</i>	<i>Roswell</i>	<i>Tucumcari</i>
<i>Clovis</i>	<i>Hobbs</i>	<i>Maxwell</i>	<i>Ruidoso</i>	

**School Year 1998 - 1999**

*Source: New Mexico Department of Education (September 9, 1998)*

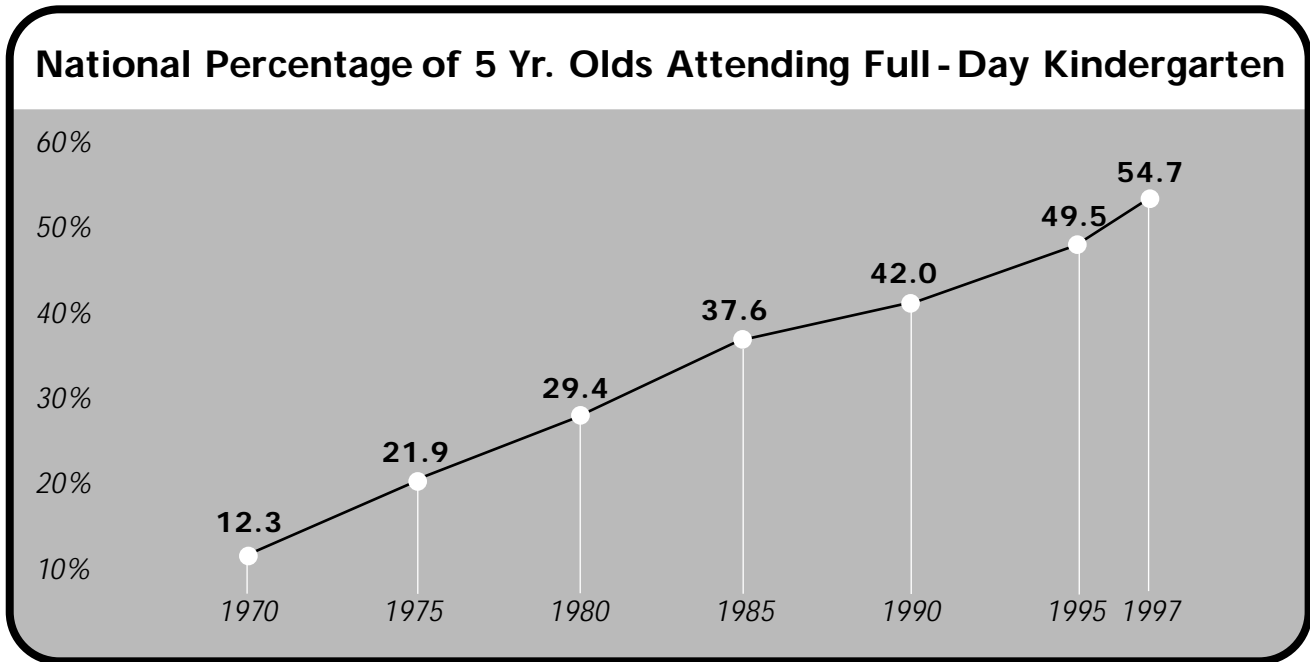
# THE CHILDREN

## The Experiment at Albuquerque's Lowell Elementary School

As the chart below from the National Center for Education Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education demonstrates, the national trend for educating 5 year olds is clearly in the direction of full-day kindergarten.

Why is full-day kindergarten growing in popularity nationally? As we describe later in this report, national experts attribute it partly to societal changes. These changes include the increase in the number of single parent families and dual employment households, the lack of affordable child-care and the success of Head Start, private nursery school and day care in preparing children earlier for school.

More importantly, however, there are, however, strong educational reasons for implementing full-day kindergarten in New Mexico stemming from what we already know about the advantages of full-day kindergarten to children. We summarize those advantages on the following pages:



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Primary Enrollment*, various years; and U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Survey*, unpublished data. (September 1998)

### *Full-Day Kindergarten Students Consistently Outperform Half-Day Kindergarten Students on Learning Achievement Measures*

In the Fall of 1989, the Lowell Elementary School in Albuquerque was given permission to embark on a project to offer two full-day and two half-day kindergarten classes for three years.

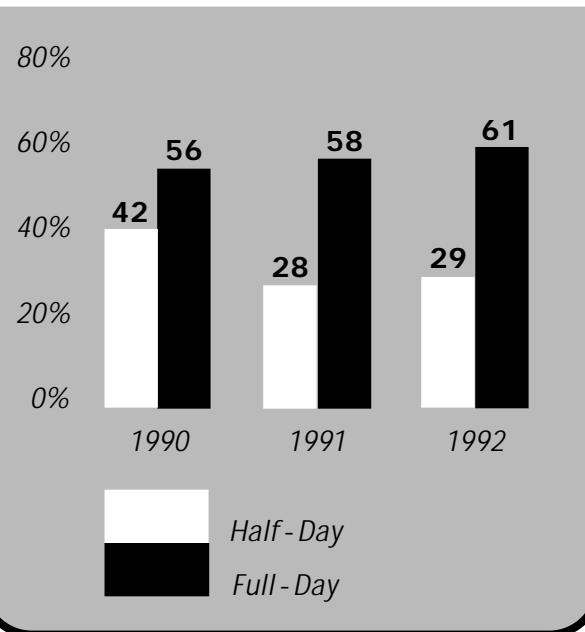
Lowell kindergarten teacher Sandra M. Warrick said that previously Lowell children "were being sent on to first grade without the tools necessary for dealing with academic issues and [the faculty staff] felt this had a rippling effect on their future education. The staff wanted to provide more educational opportunities in their first year of education to see if we could reverse this trend." According to Warrick, the average kindergarten child entering Lowell in 1989 was already 22 months below grade level.

By the end of the 1989-1990 school year, the children in half-day kindergarten had made an average gain of 5.4 months during the previous nine months compared to an average 16-month gain during the same nine-month period by students in the experimental full-day kindergarten classes, according to Warrick.

The pattern of increased achievement for full-day kindergartners continued in the following two years of the project. By the end of the 1990-1991 school year, the children in the half-day kindergarten classes had an average gain of 5.4 months during the previous nine months versus an average 17 month gain for students in the full-day classes. By the end of the 1991-1992 school year, the children in the half-day kindergarten classes gained an average of

### **Full-Day Kindergarteners Scored Consistently Higher at Lowell Elementary School**

*Half-day and full-day kindergarten percentile ranks at Lowell Elementary School, Spring 1990 through Spring 1992 (Metropolitan Readiness Test, 1976 edition).*



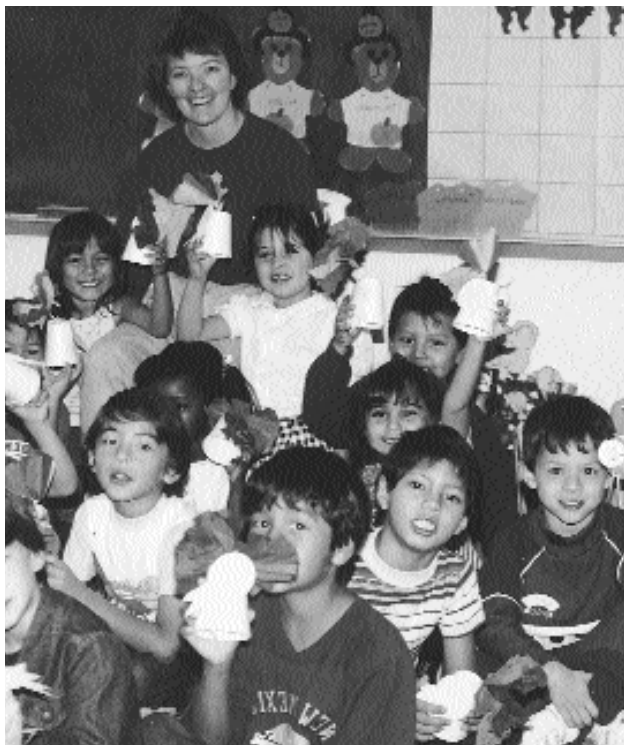
*Source: Sandra Warrick, "A Three Year Study of the Effectiveness of Full-Day Kindergarten at Lowell Elementary School." (Oct. 1993)*

six months compared to an average of 19.4 months for students in the full-day kindergarten classes. (The 1991-1992 school year was also the first year of year-round schooling at Lowell.)

To measure the readiness of both half-day and full-day kindergarten students against their peers nationally, Lowell tested children in both the half-day and the full-day kindergarten programs using the Metropolitan Readiness Test, a nationally norm-ref-

erenced test. The full-day kindergartners scored significantly higher than the half-day kindergartners. As the chart on the previous page demonstrates the full-day kindergartners scored above the 50th percentile in each of the three years, while the half-day kindergartners scored below the 50th percentile in each of the three years.

These findings are consistent with what researchers have found in other states. A Council of Chief State School Officers' review of 37 separate studies comparing half-day and full-day kindergarten concluded that, "A substantial majority of studies that reported academic and social differences found in favor of full-day kindergarten. These differences were reportedly due to the uninterrupted time that full-day teachers could devote to teaching skills."



Sandra M. Warrick and her full-day kindergarten class

### *Full-Day Kindergarten Especially Benefits Children from Economically or Educationally Disadvantaged Backgrounds*

The Council of Chief State School Officers' review also determined that full-day kindergarten was particularly advantageous to those children who come from economically or educationally disadvantaged backgrounds.

For example, they found that "seven studies measured the effects of full-day kindergarten on educationally disadvantaged children, and all reported significant differences in favor of full-day programs." Likewise, they determined that, "most studies found full-day kindergarten provides significantly greater benefits for children from low-income or educationally disadvantaged backgrounds."

Full-day kindergarten would be especially beneficial in New Mexico, where more than one in four of New Mexico's students are what the New Mexico Department of Education calls "limited English proficient." Thus, another advantage of full-day kindergarten is that it provides more instruction time in the development of English.

It should be emphasized that the problem of academic underachievement is not just concentrated in families that are economically or educationally disadvantaged. There are also many young children in New Mexico from middle and upper-income families who underachieve academically and who could benefit from full-day kindergarten.

### *The Full-Day Kindergarten Schedule Permits a Broader Curriculum*

Under current New Mexico law, half-day kindergarten is two and one-half hours per day. That does not permit time to take an outdoor field trip. It also means less time for small group activities. In addition, it generally means sacrificing enrichment in the sciences and the fine arts.

By contrast, there is more time for all of those activities in full-day kindergarten, as discussed later in this report. Most importantly, perhaps, there is more time for individual help in areas of special needs that can be extremely beneficial to a child who, for example, is behind in language and learning pattern development.

### *Full-Day Kindergarten Facilitates the Transition to and Readiness for First Grade*

One important function of kindergarten is to prepare students for first grade, which, of course, is a full day in New Mexico, as in other states.

A recent longitudinal study of nearly 800 randomly selected children who began first grade in Baltimore looked at the various effects on the transition from kindergarten to first grade. The authors of the study, Johns Hopkins University Professors Doris Entwisle and Karl Alexander, in an article in the *Elementary School Journal* conclude that this transition constitutes a "critical period" in academic and social development and that children with more kindergarten made the transition more smoothly than did children with less kindergarten.

Indeed, their research raises the question whether, if Johnny was not properly prepared for first grade and

never learned how to read, is it a tenth grade drop out problem or an early childhood education problem? Perhaps, the best way to address New Mexico's relatively high drop out rate is at the front end with better early childhood education than at the back end when it is more costly and less likely to be effective.

There is no question that five is a crucial age when development is proceeding rapidly. **Many researchers have noted that dramatic neurological changes occur at five and with those changes their attention span stretches, their knowledge increases and they become better able to relate their ideas and feelings to their peers. Full-day kindergarten can help nurture this process by ensuring that every child maintains his or her natural curiosity and enthusiasm for learning.**

# THE PARENTS

## What do New Mexico Parents Think About Full-Day Kindergarten?

In addition to the educational reasons for implementing full-day kindergarten, there are societal changes that have taken place in the last half-century, both in New Mexico and nationally, which make full-day kindergarten a better option for most parents than half-day kindergarten.

The chart on the following page vividly illustrates the rise in working mothers in New Mexico with children under six from 1960 to 1990. At the same time, there has also been a dramatic increase in the number of single parent families and dual employment households. These trends have led to a greater demand for affordable and quality child-care. It is expected that with the new of welfare reform laws that the demand for affordable and quality child-care will rise sharply in New Mexico, as parents with children leave the welfare rolls to enter the workforce.

Half-day kindergarten is a nightmare for working parents. Frequently, it means finding day-care both before and after school. Children in full-day kindergarten, of course, require less child-care.

Full-day kindergarten is also less stressful and tiring for 5 year olds than half-day kindergarten accompanied by multiple child-care arrangements and several hurried transitions between child-care and school. Moreover, in some of the rural areas of New Mexico, children attending half-day kindergarten for two and a half hours per day can spend almost as much time on the bus going to and from school as they do in the classroom.

Nevertheless, some parents worry that full-day kindergarten can result in child fatigue. Dominic F. Gullo, Professor of Early Childhood Education at the University of Wisconsin, in his article, "The Changing Family Context: Implications for the Development of All-Day Kindergartens," in the May, 1990 edition of *Young Children*, reached the opposite conclusion. Professor Gullo states that ". . . a consistent experience in one classroom of good quality, in terms of developmental appropriateness, with one teacher has to be viewed as better than multiple daily care arrangements, each with its different cast of characters, behavior standards and policies."

Likewise, a study published in 1996 by David Hough and Suzanne Bryde, entitled "The Effects of Full-Day Kindergarten on Student Achievement and Affect," found "no significant difference in the amount of fatigue experienced by full-day and half-day students."

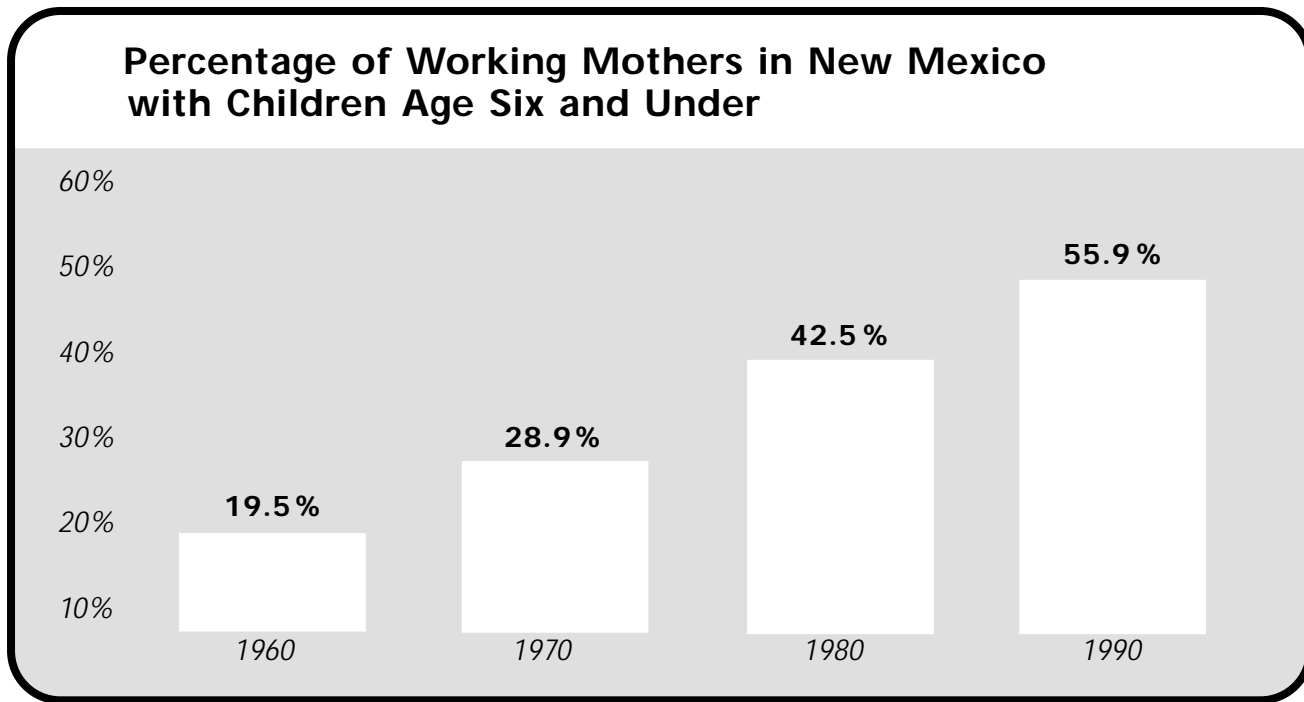
The Early Childhood Interagency Action Team (ECIAT), comprised of early childhood professionals in New Mexico state agencies, has also looked into the question of child fatigue in full-day kindergarten students. Their findings were consistent with the findings of Hough and Bryde. ECIAT concluded simply, "children in full-day programs are not more fatigued than those in half-day programs."

Sandra Warrick, the teacher, who conducted the

three-year study of full-day kindergarten at Lowell Elementary School in Albuquerque found that even, "a six and a half hour day was not too long for the children."

One way to address the concerns over child fatigue is to ease children into full-day kindergarten. A kindergarten program in Minnesota uses an "easing-in" process where children begin the year attending half day, then move to some full day and finally to everyday full-day by the seventh week of the school year. Parents of this Minnesota kindergarten program were very supportive of this process.

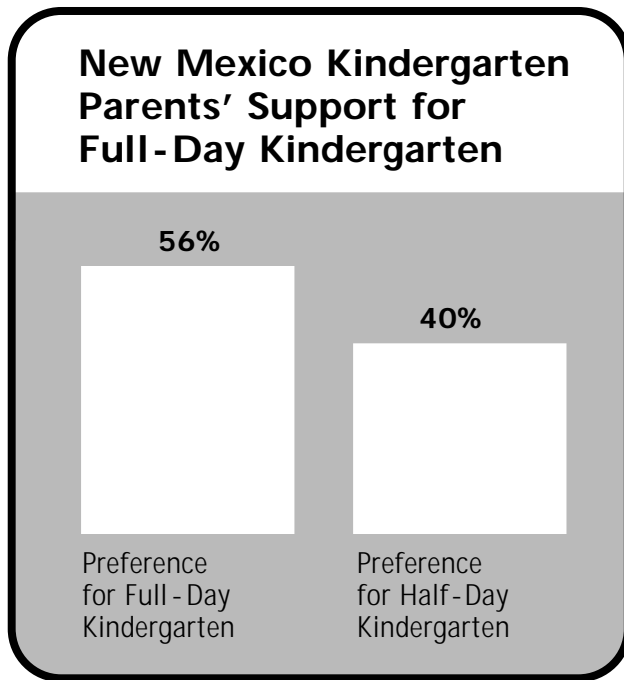
Given the advantages of full-day kindergarten to parents and families, it is not surprising that a mail survey in the Fall of 1993 of New Mexico kindergarten



*Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, General Social and Economic Characteristics, New Mexico 1960, 1970, 1980, and 1990*

parents found considerable support for full-day kindergarten. Of the 7,241 parents who responded, 56% indicated a preference for full-day kindergarten, while 40% preferred a half-day program. It should be noted that 83% of the parents responding to the survey had children who were attending half-day kindergarten programs.

reviewed full-day kindergarten studies in other states and found the research generally justified the conclusion that parents favor a full-day schedule. Parents react favorably to full-day kindergarten, according to Housden and Kam, because "it accommodates the schedules of working parents by eliminating the need for afternoon child care, and parents appreciate their children's more complete preparation for first grade." 🐾



Source: Senate Memorial 77 Task Force (1993)

Parents in the 1993 survey identified several advantages to full-day kindergarten. They believe, for example, that full-day kindergarten provides additional time for skill development, enrichment activities, social interaction with other children, less need for after school child-care and a more convenient transportation schedule. The most frequently cited disadvantage was that children would be too tired.

Nationwide, parents are also highly supportive of full-day kindergarten. Theresa Housden and Rose Kam

# THE TEACHERS

## **What do New Mexico Teachers Think About Full-Day Kindergarten?**

As a result of these societal changes in the home and in the workplace, children enter kindergarten with a broad spectrum of home and pre-school experiences.

At one end of the spectrum, there are children entering kindergarten with very structured pre-school experiences. At the other end of the spectrum, there are children with no pre-school experience. Some children have single parents who work. Others come from dual employment households. Other parents do not work and are able to stay home with their children. Consequently, the developmental range of a typical kindergarten classroom can be quite vast and challenging for the teacher.

Most half-day kindergarten teachers in New Mexico teach two classes a day, one two and a half hour class in the morning and another in the afternoon. New Mexico law requires that kindergarten classes must be no larger than 20 students. Thus, these teachers face the difficult task of meeting the diverse developmental needs of as many as 40 children in two and a half hour segments twice a day.

Full-day kindergarten offers many advantages to teachers. First, of course, it means that teachers are responsible for half as many children with double the amount of time to teach. That means much more time to observe and interact with their students and to individualize the curriculum.

How can a teacher individualize the curriculum? Professor Gullo states that individual differences among students can be accommodated by expanding the curriculum horizontally. Instead of filling a longer day with a more advanced curriculum, he advocates horizontal expansion that exposes children to different experiences across a range of different activities.

A second advantage of full-day kindergarten for the teacher concerns the relationship between teachers and parents. Full-day kindergarten gives the teacher more opportunities to get to know the parents and the unique background of each student. The relationship between teacher and family is critical to a teacher's ability to understand and respond to the particular needs of each child.

A third advantage of full-day kindergarten for the teacher relates to their ability to meet the developmental needs of their students. Specifically, full-day kindergarten provides more time to diagnose and address early learning or behavioral problems. Early diagnoses and appropriate remedial measures will have a positive impact on the long-term costs for special and remedial education as well as positively impact the educational achievement of the children involved.

A survey of New Mexico kindergarten teachers conducted in the Fall of 1993 demonstrated strong support for full-day kindergarten. Sixty percent, or 492 kindergarten teachers, responded from approximately 80% of the school districts in New Mexico. Sixty-two percent of the teachers indicated a pref-

erence for full-day kindergarten, while only 24% preferred half-day kindergarten. Of those teachers responding to the survey, 76% indicated that they were teaching a half-day program, while 17% of those responding were teaching a full-day program. These numbers, among other things, demonstrate a high level of dissatisfaction among those New Mexico teachers in half-day programs.

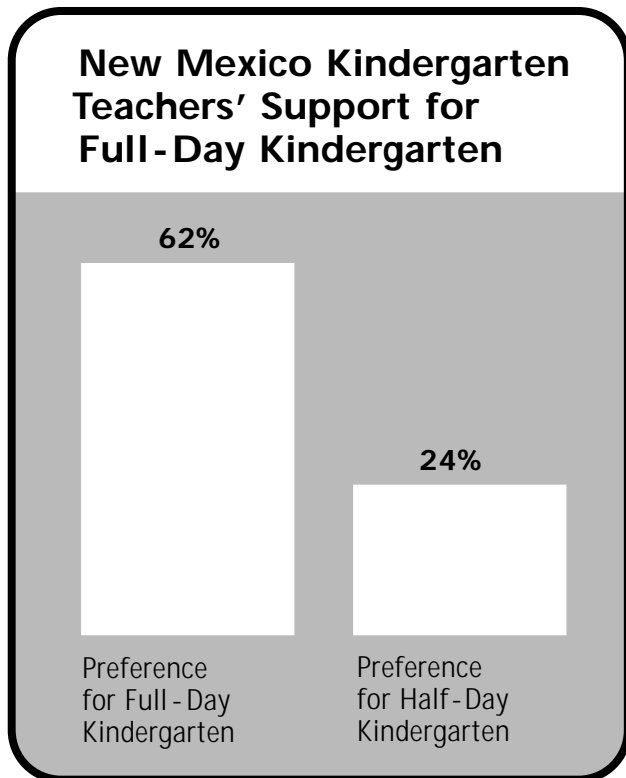
These teachers listed many advantages to full-day kindergarten. They included longer period of instructional time; more opportunity for field trips and making better use of the library, gym and cafeteria; easing transition to first grade and improve readiness for first grade; more time to develop students' social skills; and more time to become better acquainted with parents and more parent involvement.

The teachers also listed disadvantages to a full-day kindergarten program. These included child fatigue, lack of funding, potential to become a baby sitting service and lack of teacher planning time.

It is important to recognize that 76% of the teachers identifying disadvantages to full-day kindergarten actually taught half-day kindergarten. Their collective lack of experience with full-day programs may impact the accuracy of their opinions. Nonetheless, their concerns should be addressed.

With respect to lack of teacher planning time, that is a problem that faces the entire teaching profession. It is not particular to full-day kindergarten. Common sense, however, would suggest that having fewer children and families with which to interact should provide more opportunities for planning.

A 1997 study conducted by James Elicker and Sangeeta Mathur at Purdue University supports this



Source: Senate Memorial 77 Task Force (1993)

conclusion. They found that full-day kindergarten teachers "had *more time for curriculum planning*, they were more able to incorporate a greater number of thematic units in the school year and they felt that they offered more in-depth coverage of each unit." (Emphasis added)

The baby sitting argument is countered in the next section which addresses the full-day curriculum. In our opinion, a well structured full-day kindergarten program does not require any baby sitting.

There is one disadvantage to full-day kindergarten that the teachers in the 1993 survey did not identify. Perhaps, the biggest disadvantage to implementing full-day kindergarten concerns a relatively small number of children who meet the age requirement to enter kindergarten but are just not developmentally, socially or emotionally ready to be in kindergarten full-time.

There may be a number of ways to accommodate these children, if school districts are given some flexibility. For instance, these children might be given the option to attend kindergarten for a shorter period of the day, asked to wait another year before beginning or given an opportunity to nap or rest during the course of the day.

Nationwide, Housden and Kam found that kindergarten teachers are more supportive of full-day than half-day kindergarten. According to Housden and Kam teachers support full-day kindergarten because "it allows them to individualize instruction and devote more time to development of children's academic readiness." 🐦

# THE CURRICULUM

## What Do Full-Day Kindergartners do All Day?

Dianne Rothenberg, Associate Director of the Educational Resources Information Center and an expert on full-day kindergarten, notes that while full-day kindergarten can provide important academic and behavioral benefits for young children, the nature of the curriculum is also a large factor in the success of any kindergarten program.

Like many education experts, Rothenberg favors a "child-centered, developmentally appropriate" approach. Professor Gullo and other education experts describe this approach as one that takes into account the individual needs of the child, involves interaction with objects, other children and adults, and is relevant to the child's real life experiences.

Sandra Warrick's full-day kindergarten class at Lowell Elementary School in Albuquerque is a good example of a child centered, developmentally appropriate class. A typical day in the life of Ms. Warrick's full-day kindergarten classroom is described in the box on the facing page.

Ms. Warrick's full-day kindergarten class schedule should dispel the notion that full-day kindergarten is just taxpayer subsidized babysitting.

Ms. Warrick's schedule also vividly illustrates how full-day kindergarten is more conducive to the child-centered, developmentally appropriate curriculum than the half-day schedule because it allows more time for interaction between teacher and student.

While most education experts believe that kindergarten should be child-centered and developmentally appropriate, they also agree that kindergarten should not be an extension of pre-school, nor should it be early first grade. Indeed, there appears to be a lot of pressure on today's kindergarten curriculum to move away from child-centered and developmentally appropriate activities and to emphasize more purely academic skills.

Professor Gullo cautions that "[t]he all day kindergarten is even more vulnerable to this trend than the half-day kindergarten because some people think that more time means a more formal curriculum like that in the primary grades." Rothenberg asserts that the tone of a full-day program should be intellectually engaging rather than didactic.

## An Example of a Full-Day Kindergarten Schedule

### 9:00 - 9:30 **Large Group Activities**

These activities include taking attendance, reading a story or singing a song while using a large chart to help with reading awareness. It also includes calendar math that involves word, number and pattern recognition as well as sequencing and counting skills. Another activity is weather awareness and graphing which involves addition skills.

### 9:30 - 10:15 **Small Group Activities**

Children are divided into groups and each group does one activity per day like letter and phonic recognition, math, science and language arts concepts.

### 10:15 - 11:00 **Individual Activities**

Children select from a wide variety of learning centers including housekeeping, cooking, sand and water, manipulative, woodworking, blocks, writing center, and even computers.

These activities also teach a variety of skills and concepts. For instance, the manipulative area teaches skills like comparing and contrasting sizes, shapes, colors, patterns, textures and sounds; understanding concepts of hard, soft, rough, smooth; or counting, estimating, ordering by height, size, weight and number; opposites and left to right progression.

The housekeeping center teaches cooperation with others, how to express feelings and to make independent decisions while keeping in mind others' wants and needs. The sand and water

table teaches math concepts. Woodworking teaches hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills. The block center introduces geometrical concepts.

### 11:00 - 11:15 **Story Time**

### 11:15 - 11:45 **Lunch**

### 11:45 - 12:10 **Quiet Activities**

This includes listening to music or reading books.

### 12:10 - 1:15 **Theme Activities**

Theme activities help children to learn more about a particular area of study. If, for example, the theme is apples, then the class will participate in different activities involving apples. This might include stories or songs about apples, tasting and comparing apples, making apple sauce, doing math with apples, and making a chart on the preferences of the class between apple butter or apple jelly.

### 1:15 - 2:00 **Tutoring and Skill Groups**

Sixteen to 20 different activities are offered and completed independently, based on the theme activities. The teacher meets individually or in small groups with children in need of enrichment either because they have skills that are advanced or because they are behind their classmates.

### 2:00 - 2:20 **Outside Activities**

### 2:20 - 3:00 **Story and Activity**

### **Based on a Book**

### 3:00 - 3:30 **Music and Art**

Source: Sandra Warrick, Albuquerque Public Schools kindergarten teacher

The National Association for the Education of Young Children, an organization that focuses on the growth and development of children from birth through age eight, echoes these concerns. The Association warns against several practices often found in academic type kindergartens that are developmentally inappropriate. These include "teacher-directed instructional strategies, reliance on paper-and-pencil tasks, use of workbooks, children working alone on assigned seat work, and a curriculum divided into separate subjects."

That does not mean that kindergarten teachers cannot teach academic concepts—but it should be done in a child-centered, developmentally appropriate way. In the 1993 survey of New Mexico kindergarten teachers, those responding preferred a full-day kindergarten, in part, because it would allow them to enrich the half-day curriculum with more instruction in math, science and language arts concepts as well as fine arts and physical education.

Field trips, which are more plentiful in the full-day curriculum, provide a good opportunity to introduce academic concepts and skills, as Deirdre Carmody, an education reporter, relates in describing a simple field trip to the grocery store:

Good kindergarten teachers try to get the children to draw several lessons from an experience. Before a field trip to the grocery store, for example, the children may draw up a list of what they are going to buy (language); measure the ingredients they have just bought to make cupcakes (math), and talk about what happens when the ingredients are mixed (science).

A full-day schedule also allows more time for extended projects. For instance, a kindergarten teacher in Michigan recently undertook a community service project over several weeks.

The teacher sent home a book of jokes with each student. Each child and their parents "researched" to find the funniest joke and then wrote it down on a card. Each kindergartner illustrated that joke and brought it back to school where a fourth grade class helped to print, laminate and assemble the collection of jokes.

Students and parents then distributed the book to the waiting rooms of local medical offices. The teacher reported positive feedback from area doctors and the parents of sick children who used the book as a distraction. According to the teacher, "[t]he kindergartners are aware that being able to laugh is a powerful medicine and the process of helping others gives the 'helper' a lasting sense of pride and satisfaction." 🐾

# THE FINANCES

## Full - Day Kindergarten: How Much it Will Save and How New Mexico Can Pay for the Rest

The biggest impediment to full-day kindergarten in New Mexico has always been its cost, according to all the experts with whom we spoke.

The cost, however, needs to be placed into perspective. **The Children's Defense Fund states that every dollar spent on quality early childhood education programs saves seven dollars by increasing the likelihood that the participants will be literate, college educated, employed and by making them less likely to be dropouts, dependent on welfare, or arrested for criminal activity or delinquency. These figures are based on the Perry Pre-School Project, described earlier in the History section.)**

### *Annual Operational Expenses to Implement Full-Day Kindergarten*

So what would be the annual, or recurring, cost ( e.g. teacher salaries) to completely implement full-day kindergarten in New Mexico? According to an analysis performed by the New Mexico Department of Education on October, 23, 1998, the annual operational expenses needed to implement full-day kindergarten would be \$37,427,400. The Department simply multiplied the projected number of full-day kindergarten students by the standard cost per pupil (or "unit value"), taking into account the weighting factor included in the School Equalization Funding Formula.

But the Department's calculation failed to take into account several significant areas of savings that would be realized if New Mexico went to full-day kindergarten. **Specifically, these are reduced transportation costs, reduced Special Education costs and reduced State subsidized child-care costs.**

With respect to transportation, the Department's School Transportation Unit estimated that there would be a \$5,773,725 annual savings if New Mexico were to implement full-day kindergarten, according to an internal New Mexico Department of Education memo of November 20, 1997.

The Transportation Unit's figure was based upon eliminating the 651 midday bus trips that take place daily across New Mexico just to transport half-day kindergarten children between school and home. Those trips, generally with only a few kindergartners on board amount to 14,646.5 midday miles traveled daily or 2,612,545.5 miles traveled annually, according to the School Transportation Unit. The savings at \$2.21 per mile would be derived mainly from reduced labor, operation and maintenance, and fuel costs.

There will also be savings at the local level. For example, this year the Albuquerque Police Department budgeted \$435,000 for crossing guards at busy intersections in front of schools. With full-day kindergarten, Ruben Barreras, Albuquerque Police Department's (APD) Supervisor of Crossing Guards, estimates that APD could save nearly \$63,000.

While most full-day kindergarten students can be absorbed on existing school buses, the School Transportation Unit believes that full-day kindergarten may require as many as 25 additional school buses. The cost to rent 25 additional buses would be approximately \$300,000 annually, according to the

School Transportation Unit. Thus, the total annual savings in transportation costs to shift to full-day kindergarten is nearly \$5.5 million, as the box below demonstrates.

Another important area of savings that is missing from the Department's analysis is the reduced cost of Special Education. Because full-day kindergarten teachers have fewer students and more time with them than half-day kindergarten teachers, they are more likely to diagnose learning problems earlier. That translates into less intervention later on when it is generally more costly and often less effective.

Special Education savings are difficult to quantify. However, New Mexico's Early Childhood Interagency Action Team points to a two-year study in the Gallup McKinley County school district's full-day kindergarten program which found that "[t]he referrals to special education are as much as 73% reduced in kindergarten and 64% in first grade when children attend full-day kindergarten."

Likewise, a 1982 statewide study by the New York State Education Department of 1,000 students who participated in New York's pre-kindergarten pro-

<b>Net Annual Transportation Savings From Implementing Full - Day Kindergarten</b>	
Savings from Reduced Labor, Maintenance and Fuel	<b>\$5,773,725</b>
Minus Cost to Rent 25 buses Annually	<b>-\$ 300,000</b>
<b>Net Transportation Savings</b>	<b>\$5,473,725</b>

*Source: School Transportation Unit, New Mexico Department of Education*

gram found that, by the end of third grade, these students were 26% less likely to be held back and 50% less likely to be in Special Education than children of similar backgrounds who had not attended pre-kindergarten.

This has enormous significance for the Governor and the Legislature because New Mexico's Special Education costs have grown dramatically in recent years. In the 1992-1993 school year, The State spent approximately \$173,550,270 on Special Education. By the 1996-1997 school year that figure had increased to \$267,968,658 according to the New Mexico Department of Education. (These figures do not include Federal dollars.)

To gain an understanding of the potential savings in Special Education from implementing full-day kindergarten, we undertook our own calculation. First we added the number of New Mexico Special Education students with speech or language impairments and specific learning disabilities (as opposed to physical impairments) in kindergarten and first, second and third grade. That resulted in a total of 8,968 students as of December 1, 1998 according to the New Mexico Department of Education. Then we multiplied that number by \$4,188 which was the average spent per Special Education student last year. The result is \$37,557,984. Finally, we assumed that only 10% of that figure, or \$3,755,798, would be saved by implementing full-day kindergarten. Maria Landazuri, Pre-School Coordinator, Special Education, New Mexico Department of Education, told us that that was a "very conservative assumption."

A third area of savings is reduced State payments

for child-care. Of course, if 5 year olds are in school for a full day, rather than a half of a day, the State would be able to spend less money on subsidized child-care.

David Martinez, Director of the Prevention and Intervention Division at the New Mexico Children Youth and Families Department (CYFD) estimates that New Mexico could save approximately \$849,900 of the \$15,463,500 that is currently appropriated from the General Fund to subsidize child-care services in New Mexico. (This calculation does not include any savings in the \$46,725,700 of Federal money that will be spent on child-care in New Mexico this year.) With the advent of welfare reform and more New Mexicans leaving the welfare rolls for work, these potential savings are likely to grow substantially in the upcoming years.

Another financial benefit to the State from implementing full-day kindergarten is that it would enable some parents to choose to re-enter the work force. That, in turn, would cause an increase the State's income tax revenue. This is somewhat speculative and for that reason we have not included it in our financial analysis.

The sum of the potential annual transportation savings of \$5,473,725, the Special Education savings of \$3,755,798 and the child-care savings of \$849,900 is \$10,079,423. If that figure is subtracted from the Department's overall operational estimate of \$37,427,400, it yields the net annual operational cost to implement full-day kindergarten: \$27,347,977.

**To place that figure in perspective, it represents less than one percent of New Mexico's**

**General Fund for 1999-2000 of approximately \$3.3 billion.** (It also represents less than one half of one percent of the General Appropriation Act of 1999 that includes New Mexico's General Fund, other state funds plus all Federal funds received by New Mexico of approximately \$6.9 billion.)

The next question is where to find the money to pay for the annual operational expenses that implementing full-day kindergarten would require.

### Net Annual Operational Cost to Implement Full-Day Kindergarten

Annual operational costs (e.g. teachers and supplies)	<b>\$37,427,400</b>
Minus:	
Net Transportation Savings	- \$ 5,473,725
Special Education Savings	- \$ 3,755,798
Child-Care Savings	- \$ 849,900
<b>Net Annual Operational Cost of Full-Day Kindergarten.</b>	<b>= \$27,347,977</b>

Source: *Think New Mexico*

Later this year **Think New Mexico** will release the second part of this study in which we discuss how to pay for full-day kindergarten. **We believe that the operational costs of implementing full-day kindergarten should not come from raising taxes or expanding the size of government. Instead, we will outline specific New Mexico programs and agencies that can be cut back or eliminated in order to pay the recurring operational costs of implementing full-day kindergarten.**

### *One Time Capital Expenses to Implement Full-Day Kindergarten*

The largest cost to implement full-day kindergarten is the up front, one time, capital cost to build the classrooms for full-day kindergarten students. The New Mexico Department of Education's October 1998 analysis estimates this cost at \$66,754,000.

The Department arrived at this figure by simply surveying New Mexico's 89 school districts and asking what their classroom needs would be to implement full-day kindergarten.

The districts replied that they would need a total of

### Cost to Build 570 New Full-Day Kindergarten Classrooms

463 new regular classrooms x \$128,000 =	<b>\$59,264,000</b>
+107 new portable classrooms x \$70,000 =	<b>+ \$ 7,490,000</b>
<b>570 new classrooms requested for full-day kindergarten</b>	<b>\$66,754,000</b>

Source: *N.M. Department of Education*

570 new classrooms statewide to implement full-day kindergarten. Specifically, the districts requested 463 regular bricks and mortar classrooms and 107 portable classrooms. The Capital Outlay Unit of the Department calculated the average cost to build a regular classroom at \$128,000, while it calculated the average cost of a portable at \$70,000 to reach the total estimate of \$66,754,000.

We did not independently verify the number of classrooms that school districts requested in order to implement full-day kindergarten, but we suspect that 570 is higher than what is actually necessary.

**We recommend that the projected number of classrooms needed to implement full-day kindergarten be independently assessed, taking into account the declining enrollment patterns in several New Mexico school districts.**

### New Mexico School Districts Requesting New Classrooms for Full-Day Kindergarten

DISTRICTS	ADDITIONAL CLASSROOMS NEEDED	DISTRICTS	ADDITIONAL CLASSROOMS NEEDED	DISTRICTS	ADDITIONAL CLASSROOMS NEEDED
<i>Alamogordo</i>	14	<i>Eunice</i>	2	<i>Moriarty</i>	12
<i>Albuquerque</i>	162	<i>Farmington</i>	22	<i>Pojoaque</i>	4
<i>Artesia</i>	14	<i>Ft. Sumner</i>	1	<i>Portales</i>	5
<i>Aztec</i>	7	<i>Gadsden</i>	30	<i>Questa</i>	1
<i>Belen</i>	10	<i>Hagerman</i>	4	<i>Raton</i>	3
<i>Bernalillo</i>	5	<i>Hobbs</i>	42	<i>Rio Rancho</i>	20
<i>Cimarron</i>	2	<i>Jal</i>	1	<i>Roswell</i>	14
<i>Clayton</i>	2	<i>Jemez Mtn.</i>	2	<i>Santa Fe</i>	19
<i>Cloudcroft</i>	1	<i>Jemez Valley</i>	1	<i>Silver City</i>	8
<i>Clovis</i>	22	<i>Las Cruces</i>	43	<i>Socorro</i>	4
<i>Cobre</i>	6	<i>Las Vegas City</i>	4	<i>Springer</i>	1
<i>Deming</i>	12	<i>Las Vegas West</i>	8	<i>T or C</i>	4
<i>Dexter</i>	3	<i>Lordsburg</i>	2	<i>Taos</i>	11
<i>Dulce</i>	6	<i>Los Alamos</i>	4	<i>Tatum</i>	1
<i>Elida</i>	1	<i>Los Lunas</i>	9	<i>Texico</i>	1
<i>Espanola</i>	10	<i>Lovington</i>	5	<i>Tucumcari</i>	1
<i>Estancia</i>	2	<i>Maxwell</i>	1	<i>Vaughn</i>	1

Source: New Mexico Department of Education (October 23, 1998)

Indeed, statewide enrollment in New Mexico public schools has declined from 330,522 in 1996-1997 to 328,753 in the 1998-1999 school year, according to the department. Some individual school districts have experienced large enough declines to allow them to absorb full-day kindergarten with their existing stock of classroom space.

How should we pay the one-time capital expense to construct the remaining classrooms needed for full-day kindergarten?

Currently, school construction in New Mexico is paid through a variety of local and state funding sources. These include local school district bonds and tax levies, statewide general obligation bonds, Severance Tax Bonds, 60% of the annual net revenue of the New Mexico Lottery and, on occasion, non-recurring funds from the State's General Fund.

At the local level, some school districts have a difficult time getting voters to pass bond issues to pay for school construction and repair. Moreover, the principal amount of school district bonds is limited to six percent of assessed valuation of property in the district. Further, many school districts have small tax bases because a relatively large percentage of New Mexico land is Indian land or is owned by either the State or Federal government. (The Federal Impact Aid that New Mexico receives to compensate for the lost tax revenue from Federal land is used mostly for operating expenditures, rather than capital costs.)

As a consequence of these scarce resources at the local level, the Legislature and the Governor struggle each year to find money at the state level to help localities pay for school construction and

repair. In the 1998-1999 school year, the Legislature appropriated a record \$34,400,000 to pay for critical school district capital outlay needs for 35 projects.

While that is certainly a large amount of money, it pales against the statewide current need. A recent statewide analysis by MGT of America, a leading educational facilities assessment consulting firm, estimated the amount of money needed to simply repair New Mexico's schools' current infrastructure at nearly \$1.5 billion.

To meet this challenge, the Legislature passed a very intelligent piece of legislation during the 1999 Special Session. It authorizes a series of "supplemental severance tax bonds" with the proceeds earmarked for public school capital outlay. Although it will not meet all of the schools' capital repair needs, it is certainly part of the solution.

Clearly, however, a new revenue source is needed to pay for constructing full-day kindergarten classrooms. **We recommend dedicating approximately two-thirds of the proceeds of the so-called "Christmas Tree Bill" for the 2000 Legislative Session to a Full-Day Kindergarten Classroom Construction Fund. This would be sufficient to pay the entire cost of building all of the classrooms necessary to implement full-day kindergarten.**

The "Christmas Tree Bill" is the legislation that is passed toward the end of each legislative session to pay for public works projects around the State. The available revenue is by political tradition divided into thirds with the Governor receiving a third, the Senate receiving a third and the House receiving a third. The House and Senate then divide their respec-

tive portions among their individual members. Legislators then allocate their portion for projects in their districts like roads, senior citizen centers and ball fields.

The *Albuquerque Journal* has been particularly critical of this process. In a February 18, 1999 editorial, the *Journal* stated "[n]ot only does [the Christmas Tree Bill] divert scarce capital resources from needed infrastructure to pork projects, it denies money to necessary projects – which must either be funded from other sources, or go undone."

The Governor and the Legislature allocated more than \$91 million in the Christmas Tree Bill during the 1999 Special Session. Of that total, approximately \$12.7 million went to the New Mexico Department of Education for capital outlay projects on New Mexico's public schools, according to an analysis by the Legislative Council Service. From a plain reading of the bill, however, it does not appear that any money in the 1999 "Christmas Tree Bill" was allocated to the construction of kindergarten classrooms.

**By jointly making it a priority, the Legislature and the Governor could pay the entire cost of constructing all the classrooms necessary to implement full-day kindergarten in the "Christmas Tree Bill" that they will enact during the 2000 Legislative Session and still have millions of dollars available for other important and necessary projects.**

An overlay of the New Mexico's 89 school districts with New Mexico's 42 State Senate districts and 70 State House districts indicates that virtually every legislative district in New Mexico would receive full-

day kindergarten classrooms, under our proposal.

### *The Bottom Line*

**The bottom line is that full-day kindergarten is a smart investment. For every dollar New Mexico taxpayers spend today to implement full-day kindergarten, they will receive an immediate rebate of approximately 27 cents in savings on transportation, special education and child-care costs.**

**Further, every tax dollar invested today on implementing full-day kindergarten would also return \$7.00 in long-term benefits such as less crime, higher tax revenues and less welfare dependency, based on the results of the Perry Pre-School Project.**

**It is time that New Mexico provided full-day kindergarten for all of our children. 🐾**

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