The Child Development Program, for which the Legislature began appropriating funds in 1991, supports a variety of service models. The program funds prekindergarten classes as well as family support services, home visiting, and other services for children birth to age 5. There are no state-specified eligibility criteria for children, since the program aims to fill gaps left by other programs that have set eligibility criteria.

New Mexico’s program is characterized by flexibility at the local level, and individual providers set enrollment priorities based on local needs. Projects funded by the initiative include those that target homeless families, children with special emotional and mental health needs, and children of teen parents. The projects can be operated by schools or community-based organizations.

State funding for the Child Development Program was estimated at $1,649,900 for 2002-2003, when approximately 850 children were enrolled.

In addition to New Mexico’s commitment to the Child Development Program, the state devoted $6,000,000 to enhance services to federally-financed Head Start classrooms in fiscal year 2002. The amount of this supplement was reduced to $2,000,000 in fiscal year 2003.