



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

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Governor Richardson Announces New CYFD Initiative to Help New Parents Keep Children Healthy, Safe

SANTA FE– Governor Bill Richardson today announced the New Mexico Children, Youth, and Families department will offer a home visiting program for new mothers, giving them easy access to information on social programs and services, as well as appropriate child development.

“New mothers have had to juggle the stress of having a new child with trying to figure out how to get the information that’s so important to them and their children,” Governor Richardson said. “We’re offering this service to reach new parents in the first days of a baby’s life, if not before – laying the foundation for the healthiest possible lifestyle, both mentally and physically.”

The Home Visiting program, funded by the 2005 Legislature, will allow new mothers of all incomes to schedule an appointment with a caseworker within three months of delivering a child. The caseworker comes prepared with information on social services, and works with the family on eligibility issues and the needs of infants and toddlers.

“This voluntary program gives new parents access to those who can provide advice and counseling on prenatal care for the mother, how to care for newborns, and post-natal healthcare for mothers and infants,” Governor Richardson said. “Parents are also educated on other critical resources that are available, such as childcare services, mental health counseling and support groups.”

Long-term studies have shown that successful home visiting programs have helped lower crime rates, reduce abuse and neglect, reduce reliance on welfare and lower the number of subsequent, unwanted pregnancies.

“There is no magic bullet,” said CYFD Cabinet Secretary Mary-Dale Bolson. “But Home Visiting takes a lot of the guess work out of some of the critical issues that face new parents.”

In addition to connecting the family to services, Home Visiting programs can provide information on how parents can monitor their baby’s development, and give answers to any questions or concerns that may arise.

This program compliments the “Families First” program, funded by the Department of Health. However, the new Home Visiting program will be open to new mothers of all income levels.

New Mexico’s Home Visiting program will be in Santa Fe and Dona Ana counties this month. The legislature gave enough funding to the program to provide 1,000 initial visits and more than 300 follow-up visits for this fiscal year.

“We would like to eventually expand the program statewide,” Bolson said.

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