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Report: New Mexicans Favor Statewide Increase in Programs that Support Young Children

from New Mexico Voices for Children

ALBUQUERQUE—New Mexicans overwhelmingly agree that universal access to pre-k for all 4-year-olds should be a state priority. That is one of the main conclusions of a report released today by Viewpoint Learning, Inc. The report, “The First Five Years: Choice-Dialogues on Early Childhood in New Mexico,” tracks the results of five 8-hour focus groups recently conducted in New Mexico Communities (Albuquerque, Española, Farmington, Laguna Pueblo, and Las Cruces).

“Participants of the day-long dialogues were surprised by the extent of the challenges young children and their families face and the limited state investment in early childhood,” said Heidi Gantwerk, Vice President of Viewpoint Learning. “Across the board they wanted to see policies that focused on supporting all New Mexico families, not just those most in need.

“What’s even more telling is the sense of urgency people had in addressing the issue, and that all five locations agreed that doing nothing was not an option,” she added.

The five Choice-Dialogues were conducted over the summer with diverse groups of about 40 participants each. The groups all used the same workbook, which laid out several scenarios for improving outcomes for New Mexico’s kids as well as options for funding. Participants could select one scenario, combine different components to create a new scenario, or come up with something completely different. Several funding options were provided—as well as the option to do nothing—and included arguments both for and against each option as well as estimates on how much money each would raise.

Gantwerk and Isabella Furth, also of Viewpoint Learning, will both be in Albuquerque later this week to present the report findings at the statewide convening, **“Transforming Education: From Birth to Success.”**

The Viewpoint Choice-Dialogues were funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. New Mexico Voices for Children is the convening host.

The executive summary or full report can be accessed online at: http://ourvoicesourchildren.org/CG_findingsChoice.html

The Transforming Education: From Birth to Success convening is December 8-9, 2010, at the Hotel Andaluz in Downtown Albuquerque. If you would like to attend all or part of the convening, please contact Sharon Kayne at 505-244-9505, ext. 30, 505-401-8709, or skayne@nmvoices.org.

New Mexico Voices for Children is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization advocating for policies to improve the health and well-being of New Mexico's children, families and communities.

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