

Santa Fe County

Resolution No. 2005- 86

A Resolution Calling For Santa Fe County To Stand For Children: A Fair Chance For Every Child

WHEREAS, the first three (3) years of life represent a critical opportunity to support, promote, and enrich the health and development of very young children. These opportunities provide lasting benefits not only for children but for the community as well:

- The National Research Council and Institute of Medicine published a report in 2000 which states that “what happens during the first months and years of life matters a lot...because it sets a sturdy or fragile stage for what follows”; and
- As a child grows, experiences the world, and establishes relationships with others, these connections are “hardwired.” Hardwiring connections are responsible for all of a child’s major cognitive and emotional functioning—including vision, hearing, language, social-emotional development, and movement; and
- The process of both discarding and establishing connections in the brain occurs rapidly; by age three, roughly 85% of the brain’s core structure is formed (Bruner, Goldberg, & Kot, 1999); and
- What happens or doesn’t happen in those first few years of life lays the foundation for becoming a productive, contributing member of society, or it can lay the foundation for intergenerational cycles of abuse, neglect, dysfunction and mental illness. Many of these problems can be prevented if social-emotional development during infancy and early childhood...is understood and fostered, and if we have programs and services that support them and their families. (Florida’s Strategic Plan for Infant Mental Health, September 29, 2000).

WHEREAS, the potential for abuse and neglect is further heightened in families experiencing stressors involving substance abuse, domestic violence, poverty and isolation:

- The majority of physical abuse and neglect occurs in children under the age of two, with 45% of deaths from abuse occurring in the first year of life. National statistics indicate that serious risk for child abuse and neglect exists for 10% of children, translating to approximately 491 children under three (3) years of age that are at risk at any one time in Santa Fe County; and

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- The Kids Count Data Book (2001), compiled from census data and other statistics by the Anna E. Casey Foundation, found that in 1999, New Mexico had the highest childhood poverty rate in the country. At the same time, in the State of New Mexico has demonstrated some of the highest rates of domestic violence and alcohol-and drug-related death rates in the nation. Taken as a whole, these statistics prompted the Children's Rights Council in 1998 to rate New Mexico as the worst state in the country for raising a child. (New Mexico's Strategic Plan for Infant Mental Health, January 2003.)

WHEREAS, Nobel Laureate and University of Chicago Economist James Heckman argues that investments in high-quality early childhood development programs have the highest rate of return of any social investment:

- A report from the RAND Corporation estimates that by the time children from high-risk families reach age 15, the cost savings of home visiting programs are four times the original investment because of reductions in crime, welfare expenditures and health care costs and as a result of taxes paid by working parents. (Karloly, L.A., Everingham, S.S., Hoube, J., Kilburn, R., Rydell, C.P., Sanders, M. and Greenwood, P.W., 1998. *Investing in Our Children: What We Know and Don't Know About the Costs and Benefits of Early Childhood Interventions*, The RAND Corporation.)
- According to the 40-year High Scope/Perry Preschool Study, every \$1 invested in high-quality early education saves \$7.16 in future costs (Schweinhart, 2002).
- Economic studies suggest that the overall return on investment for early childhood development is a huge 14% to 15% after adjusting for inflation (Farrell, 2002).

WHEREAS, we must close the gap between what we know and what we do, in order to promote the healthy development of young children.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE SANTA FE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS STANDS FOR CHILDREN AND WILL IMPLEMENT THE FOLLOWING:

1. Santa Fe County recognizes the value of investing in birth-to-three initiatives and will advocate for and work to improve the quality and availability of early childhood programs and services.

SFC CLERK RECORDED 06/29/2005

Page 3-A Resolution Calling For Santa Fe County To Stand for Children: A Fair Chance For Every Child

2. In collaboration with planning efforts of the Santa Fe County Maternal and Child Health Council, Santa Fe County will seek sustainable funding sources in support of its Zero to Three Strategic Plan ("the Plan"), developed in 2002. The Plan includes five priority areas with goals and strategies for implementation. These priorities are home visiting; infant and toddler care; infant and parent mental health; prenatal, infant and toddler health; and opportunities for parents with new children.
3. Since 1999, the Santa Fe County Board of County Commissioners has supported the therapeutic home visiting program--the Santa Fe Community Infant Program. Santa Fe County will continue to fund and seek increased funding for the Community Infant Program in response to the growing need for infant mental health services in Santa Fe County.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED THIS 28 DAY OF JUNE 2005.

SANTA FE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Michael D. Anaya 6-28-05
Michael D. Anaya, Chairman

ATTEST:

Valerie Espinoza 6-28-05
Valerie Espinoza, County Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Stephen C. Ross
Stephen C. Ross, County Attorney



COUNTY OF SANTA FE)
STATE OF NEW MEXICO) ss

BCC RESOLUTIONS
PAGES: 3

I hereby Certify That This Instrument Was Filed for
Record On The 29TH Day Of June A.D. , 2005 at 09 27
And Was Duly Recorded as Instrument # 1386545
Of The Records Of Santa Fe County

Witness My Hand And Seal Of Office
Valerie Espinoza
County Clerk, Santa Fe, NM

Marcella [Signature]

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