

STATE OF NEW MEXICO

# County of Luna

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## Media Release

Even professionals can use extra help sometimes, and when children are involved, collaborative efforts can often yield the best results.

Luna County’s Family Childcare Visiting Program, under the Parents as Teachers program, works to provide local childcare providers with assistance through education, referrals, and access to other resources. The program is headed by two longtime childcare professionals, Mirna Cordova and Yolanda Ruiz. Their program is one of two pilots across the state — the other is in Albuquerque — using the home visitation model to support childcare providers.

“I feel so happy to help the providers who are taking care of children in our community,” Cordova said. “As a parent, I want to know what kind of care my child has and what resources are available to his childcare provider.”

Because of the success of the Children Youth and Families Department-funded Parents as Teachers program in Luna County, the county was selected to participate in the pilot project, which intends to research the effectiveness of working with childcare providers instead of just parents, who have been the focus of the PAT program.

The duo has a goal of reaching about 12 childcare provider clients each, and they are about halfway there.

“We go into the homes of childcare providers and offer them the support they need to grow as providers to benefit their children,” Ruiz said. “It all comes back to the children, getting them ready, and preparing them for school and life in general.”

Providers who sign up will receive a \$25 gift card and a range of services, including bimonthly visits and a childcare provider’s package worth about \$250. The package includes educational materials and an organizational binder. Further incentives, such as puzzles, crayons, children’s games, and other materials, will be offered throughout participation in the program.

To be eligible, providers must first enroll in the FYI Food Program, and care for at least two children ages birth to five years old who live outside the home in which the childcare is being offered. Providers must also give 20 hours of childcare each week to be eligible. Cordova and Ruiz can help interested providers enroll in the food program. The program is open to individuals and businesses providing childcare.

The program is located in the Luna County Community Health and Well Being Complex, at 205 E. Hemlock St., which is sandwiched between the Deming-Luna-Mimbres Museum and

the Department of Health. You can contact the program, or other programs in the building, at (575) 546-9254.

**PHOTO CAPTION**

From left, Yolanda Ruiz and Mirna Cordova are registering child care providers to receive support services through the Family Childcare Visiting program.

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