



Success Story: New Mexico Public Education Department

Nurturing Relationships; Coming Full Circle

The Las Cruces High School GRADS team in Las Cruces, NM has long realized the need our teen parents have for additional emotional and mental support. They know that if the teens are not healthy emotionally and mentally, they cannot provide that same support for their children. One of their goals with the GRADS+ grant is to implement one-on-one conferences with their teen parents to address not only personal issues but parenting issues as well. Their Child Development Center Director is participating in training to become endorsed in the area of Infant Mental Health, which offers education about how to conduct these one-on-one conferences in a supportive way that allows the teen parents to identify strengths and problem solve challenges. Along with this training, she has implemented conferences with the teen parents to address personal relationship problems, as well as issues related to being a teen parent (accessing housing, financial assistance, nutrition and breastfeeding support, etc.) and building positive, nurturing relationships with their young children. She has begun offering assessments of children for parents. She first videotapes children as they engage in activities, then reviews the video with the parents so the parents understand the value of play-based learning and positive relationships. Eventually the children will be videotaped interacting with their parents. Conferences will be set up again so conversations about strengths and challenges can be addressed. By utilizing these strategies they have been able to solve serious issues between several of the teen parents, help a parent identify and problem solve some issues with discipline and have increased conversations about issues individual teen parents are facing. Additionally, they have started a tutoring program to help teen parents who are struggling in classes..

Contact Information

Katrina Diaz-Castillo

Title: Child Development Center Director

Organization: New Mexico Public Education Department

Phone: 575-527-9400 Ext. 6771

E-mail: kdcastillo@lcps.k12.nm.us