

Mission ABQ

Background & Need

Mission ABQ's infant and toddler playground currently operates without overhead shade protection. In Albuquerque's high-altitude, high-UV environment, children playing outdoors face significant sun exposure risk. The photos above document the current unshaded condition alongside a commercial hip shade structure observed at a similar childcare facility in El Paso, TX — the target model for this project.

Key safety facts:

- Shade structures reduce ambient temperature under the canopy by up to 20 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Playground equipment surfaces can reach 130–160°F under direct sun — a burn hazard for infants who cannot verbalize pain.
- UV exposure carries long-term skin cancer risk; infants have thinner, more vulnerable skin.
- Albuquerque's elevation (~5,300 ft) increases UV intensity significantly compared to lower-altitude cities.

Reference Photos: El Paso Hip Shade Structure

These photos show the target hip shade structure at another childcare facility — a rigid steel post-and-beam frame with powder-coated finish, HDPE fabric canopy, and steel cable hardware.



Why a Hip Shade Structure

After evaluating all commercial shade options, the hip shade structure is the recommended solution. The key factor is wind resistance, uniquely critical in Albuquerque.

Wind resistance advantages:

- Rigid steel frame carries all structural loads — the fabric does not need to resist wind on its own.
- Hip (peaked) roof profile deflects wind up and over rather than catching it like a sail shade.
- Steel cable tensioning distributes wind loads evenly across the entire frame.
- Engineer-certified installations designed for 90+ mph wind loads, meeting Albuquerque building codes.
- Shade sails and cantilever canopies are significantly more vulnerable in ABQ spring wind events (40–60+ mph gusts).

Additional benefits:

- Commercial HDPE fabric blocks 90–97% of UV radiation.
- Reduces ambient temperature beneath canopy by up to 20°F.
- Reduces playground equipment surface temperatures by 40–50°F.
- 15–25+ year lifespan with minimal maintenance.
- Engineer-certified installation meets CPSC Playground Safety Standards for licensed childcare facilities.

Important: This structure must be installed by a licensed professional with engineering certification and proper concrete footings. Unlicensed installation creates serious safety risks and will not pass permit inspection.

Local Vendors: Design, Supply & Installation

The following four companies serve Albuquerque and greater New Mexico with commercial shade structure design, fabrication, and installation.

1. Pro Playgrounds / The Shade Experts

National commercial playground and shade specialist with Albuquerque experience. Handles design, permitting, engineering, and installation end-to-end.

Website	proplaygrounds.com — search Albuquerque
Phone	(888) 920-4628
Specialties	Commercial playground and shade structures; ASTM/IPEMA certified; turnkey installation
Free Estimate?	Yes — online or by phone; quotes within 24 hours

2. Pascetti Steel Design, Inc.

Locally owned Albuquerque custom steel fabrication since 1996. Rated 4.9 stars. Designs, engineers, fabricates, and installs in-house. Has completed commercial shade work for the ABQ BioPark.

Address	2114 Claremont Ave NE, Albuquerque, NM 87107
Phone	(505) 341-2900
Email	info@pascettisteel.com
Hours	Monday–Thursday: 7:00 AM – 4:00 PM
Free Estimate?	Yes — call or email for a quote

3. Rader Awning & Upholstering, Inc.

Albuquerque's oldest shade structure company, founded in 1947. Licensed, bonded, insured. A+ BBB rating. Handles permit acquisition.

Address	4100 S. Paseo Del Norte Frontage Rd NE, Albuquerque, NM 87113
Phone	(505) 856-2000 Toll-free: (800) 656-4523
Email	info@raderawning.com
Hours	Mon–Fri: 8:00 AM–5:00 PM Sat (Mar–Sep 15): 9:00 AM–1:00 PM
BBB Rating	A+ Established 1947 Licensed, Bonded & Insured

4. Santa Fe Awning (Albuquerque Awning Co.)

Operating since 1994. Designs, manufactures, and installs commercial shade structures throughout New Mexico. Typically 6–8 weeks from order to installation.

Phone	(505) 474-6460
Address	2954 Rodeo Park Dr W, Santa Fe, NM 87505
Hours	Mon–Fri: 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Installation Lead Time	Typically 6–8 weeks from order
Free Estimate?	Yes — call or visit santafeawning.com

Cost Estimate

The following estimates are for a fully installed, engineer-certified commercial hip shade structure sized for an infant/toddler playground.

Component	Low Estimate	High Estimate
Materials (frame, fabric, cables, hardware)	\$5,000	\$12,000
Installation labor	\$4,000	\$8,000
Engineering, permitting & footings	\$2,000	\$5,000
Total Estimated Project Cost	\$15,000	\$25,000
<i>Obtain a minimum of 3 competitive bids. Confirm each bid includes full turnkey installation, engineering stamp, and CPSC Playground Safety Standards compliance.</i>		

*NM state tax credit for donations to ECECD-licensed childcare facilities; up to \$500,000 per taxpayer per year, \$10M state annual cap

Mission ABQ is a non-profit organization, established in 1999 to bring hope to a community in need, helping people turn the corner from a place of need to a place of service to others.

We do this by 1) Meeting people at their point of need (meeting real and felt needs) 2) Providing education and training in areas of need to bring individuals to a place of health and wholeness, and 3) Empowering people to care for and meet the needs of others.

