

2022-2024 STRATEGIC PLAN



Nevada Early Childhood
Advisory Council

December 15, 2021

Who We Are

The Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) is a diverse group of business, community, education, government, nonprofit, parent, and provider representatives that are appointed by Nevada's Governor. Founded in 2009 by an executive order, the Nevada ECAC was later established in statute by the 2013 Nevada Legislative Session and Governor Sandoval.

The Nevada ECAC works to strengthen state-level coordination and collaboration among the various sectors and settings of early childhood programs.

Early childhood is defined by the Nevada ECAC as the period from birth to age eight, while also recognizing the importance of quality prenatal care in early childhood outcomes. Early childhood is a period of rapid and critical development which encompasses access to nutrition, health care, protection, play and early learning to stimulate children's physical, cognitive, linguistic and social-emotional development.

The Early Childhood System in Nevada is administered through four state level departments that administer services through approximately ten different state divisions or offices, in addition to numerous non-governmental entities who support the work. In addition, there are over 20 state-level coalitions, initiatives, and/or commissions that oversee, advise and/or support these entities and programs.

Over the past ten years, there have been over 25 local and state-level needs assessments conducted that address one or more factors related to the early childhood population in Nevada. All highlight the need for a comprehensive, coordinated statewide system to support cross-sector integration of resources and supports.

The Early Childhood Landscape

The Silver State is a land of rich diversity and stark contrasts, and those connected to the early childhood system are no different. Nevada's families and children come from a wide range of racial, cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic, and geographic backgrounds.

This diversity continues to trend upward, as population growth throughout the State increases. From 1990 to 2017, Nevada had the largest child population growth in the country at 117% compared to the US average of just 15% (2019 KIDS COUNT Data Book). This growth, coupled with reliance on state funding streams that are susceptible to economic market fluctuations, has created strains in our infrastructure and social support systems, resulting in poor outcomes for children and families.

Side Bar or Pull Outs

- Almost half (49%) of Nevada's children under the age of six live in households with income less than 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL).

- Nevada ranks 50th for public health funding at \$50 per person compared to the national average of \$91 per person (America's Health Rankings)
- Nevada ranks 42nd in spending per capita for early education at \$103.05 per person compared to the national average of \$1,085 per person.
- Nevada's OB/GYN (MDs and DOs) workforce currently ranks 47th in the nation¹ in terms of number of physicians.
- Nevada ranked 45th in the nation for percentage of children without health insurance at 8%, about 58,000 children.²

The data evidence a need for a comprehensive system that links young children and families to needed -health, education, and social services at the community, state, and federal level. These services are only effective if families know about them, which is why a coordinated system is so important. Without it, service providers can't reliably know what supports exist in their communities and as a result, cannot easily connect families with the resources they urgently need.

The coronavirus pandemic has revealed that the need for a coordinated, comprehensive system is more urgent than ever. Because of COVID-19, key services have been interrupted or drastically altered and vulnerable populations have disproportionately suffered. Inequities in access to care have made it harder for people of color, families with lower income, and children with special needs.

But even as these challenges have been amplified during this tumultuous time, Nevada's early childhood network has responded with unfaltering commitment and a nimble mindset to ensure children and families get the supports they need. Fortunately, Nevada has benefited from an unprecedented investment of federal stimulus funding. It is estimated that Nevada will receive \$2.9 billion through the American Rescue Plan (ARP).

Approximately \$365 million in ARP funds are being allocated to support child care in the Silver State. In August, the state legislative Interim Finance Committee approved spending for approximately \$222 million to support providers, families and system improvements. The majority of funds will be given as stipends for operating costs to help child care providers stay in business and help existing and newly-recruited child care centers achieve sustainable revenue. The funds are expected to save Nevada families more than \$50 million in child care costs, support more than 750 small businesses, and provide more than \$50 million in direct financial support to child care workers, according to the Governor's Office.

"This investment will help stabilize and grow our child care sector by supporting providers and families, as well as ensuring state-level infrastructure is in place to meet continuing needs of parents and employers while giving our children opportunities to learn, grow and succeed," said Gov. Steve Sisolak in a statement.

¹ Northern NV Obstetrics and Gynecology Needs Assessment https://med.unr.edu/Documents/med/statewide/reports/Northern%20Nevada%20OB-GYN%20Needs%20Assessment%20October%202017_ADA%20compliant.pdf

² Children's Advocacy Alliance 2020 Children's Report Card. <https://www.caanv.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/CAA-070-2020-Childrens-Report-Card-Single-Pages-v3.pdf>

Given the influx of new funding and the potential for additional federal resources for early childhood through the Build Back Better Plan, the Nevada ECAC is facing a period of significant opportunity and challenge that will require nimble, quick movement to build the infrastructure and systems to support the additional resources being invested in our state during this unprecedented season of our history. It also will be incumbent upon the Nevada ECAC to coordinate an early childhood system that performs well—most importantly, for the future of Nevada’s children and families, and secondarily, positioning the state to continue attracting resources that can be invested in early childhood in the coming years. With renewed hope and fervor, the Nevada ECAC is using this unparalleled opportunity to reimagine its future, structuring a plan that builds a sustainable system that will support children from prenatal to age eight and their families.

Investing in Young Children = A Lifelong Return

Years of research on early childhood development confirms that providing quality early care and education from prenatal through age eight is essential for the healthy development of our children and families as well as the economic vitality of our communities, our state, and our nation. However, in communities across Nevada, many families lack awareness of and access to quality early childhood services that will support their varied needs.

The science is clear. Children’s brains develop at their fastest pace during the early years when synapses form at a rate of 1 million new neural connections per second. This intense period of learning and development means that the youngest brains are highly flexible and responsive to the environment as their fundamental architecture is established. Ongoing advances in neuroscientific research reinforce what we now know—the early years are the most effective time to influence brain development and put children on a path to healthy development and life-long well-being and achievement.

A Dynamic Plan by and for Nevadans

As Nevadans, we seek to close the gap between what we know is good for our children, families, and communities and what we currently provide. We set forth to do this through our 2022-2024 Nevada Early Childhood Strategic Plan with a focus on developing a strong system of support that works across the fields of health, early learning and development, and family support. This coordinated and aligned network will result in positive outcomes for young children and families so that everyone—regardless of race, socioeconomic background, geography, and ability—can reach their full potential. The very system we are looking to develop will impact Nevada children, prenatal through age eight, and their families now and in years to come.

The Nevada ECAC Strategic Plan framework focuses on alignment and strategic coordination of agencies, offices, commissions, councils and initiatives at the systems level that support a unified and coordinated infrastructure to achieve positive outcomes for children and families. It is aligned with:

- NV Maternal and Child Health Needs Assessment (2020)

- NV Department of Education PDG B-5 Needs Assessment (2019)
- Nevada Early Childhood Care and Education Fiscal Feasibility Study (2020)
- Pritzker Prenatal to Three Implementation Plan (2020)
- NV HRSA Early Childhood Comprehensive System Health Integration Project (2021)

In carrying out this plan, the Nevada ECAC is committed to laying a solid foundation for systems work that will build upon existing strengths while also innovating and transforming those areas that are not performing optimally. Our work will be grounded in equity, authentic partnerships, and responsive, two-way communication that will lead our path forward.

We invite all Nevadans to learn more and become involved in this growing effort to support young children and families. Learn more at <http://nvecac.com/>.

Side Bar

This plan was informed by:

- A document review of the prior strategic plan, the most recent asset maps, funding map, needs assessments, a fiscal feasibility study, Nevada ECAC Bylaws and minutes, and Nevada ECAC Subcommittee minutes
- Tools developed by the Early Childhood Systems Working Group
- Survey respondents representing geographic regions throughout the state; respondents included childcare facility staff, parents, educators, and individuals with multiple roles in the early childhood system
- Survey results that captured perceptions of progress made since the last strategic plan along with perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the early childhood system
- Focus groups with Nevada ECAC subcommittees
- Individual interviews
- Meetings of the Nevada ECAC and the Nevada ECAC Strategic Planning Subcommittee

Strategic Framework

Vision

Nevada’s children will be safe, healthy, and thriving during the first eight years of life, and the system will support children and families in achieving their full potential.

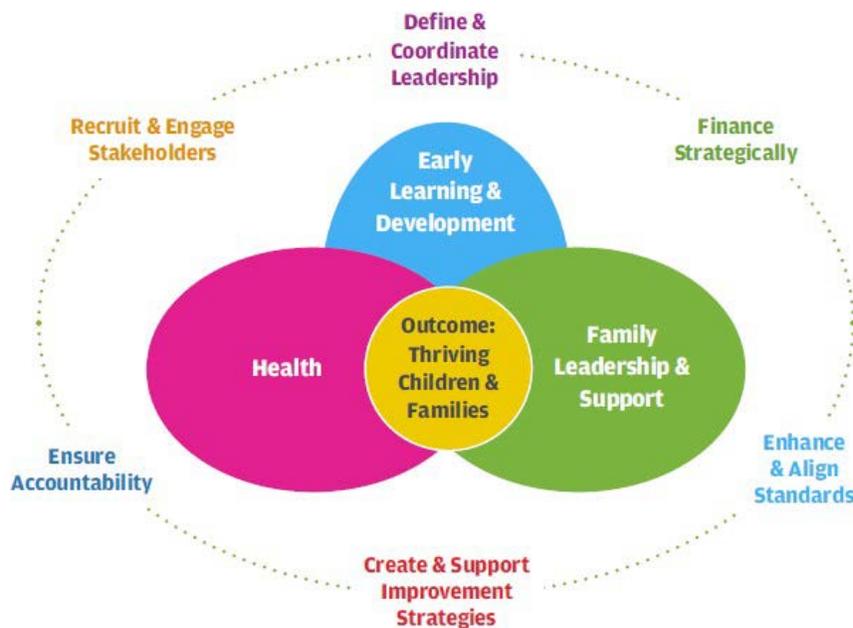
Purpose

The Nevada ECAC shall work to strengthen state-level coordination and collaboration among the various sectors and settings of early childhood education programs in Nevada.

Values and Principles

Every child in Nevada is our child, and is worthy of our commitment to their care, learning, and well-being. The following values and principles lay the foundation for this plan and the important work to follow.

- Reach all children and families, and as early as possible, with needed services and supports
- Genuinely include and effectively accommodate children with special needs
- Reflect and respect the strengths, needs, values, languages, cultures and communities of children and families
- Ensure stability and continuity of services along a continuum from prenatal into school entry and beyond
- Ease access for families and transitions for children
- Value parents as decision makers and leaders
- Catalyze and maximize investment and foster innovation



Goal 1: Create a Coordinated Early Childhood Leadership Infrastructure

Define, Develop, and Coordinate Leadership

- Establish Governor's Office for Early Childhood (prenatal to age eight) to align policy and fiscal decision-making for the early childhood system across relevant agencies.
- Restructure the Nevada ECAC to establish program and community level advisory support to Governor's Office.
- Establish supports and resources to ensure equitable engagement of parents/families in leadership and decision-making at state and local levels.

Goal 2: Increase Coordination and Alignment Between Systems of Care for Young Children and Families

Enhance and Align Standards

Create and Support Improvement Strategies

- Conduct assessment of the strengths, disparities, inequities, strategic priorities and goals among programs and agencies within the early childhood system.
- Produce and disseminate an early childhood system assets and gaps analysis.
- Integrate cross-sector priorities, goals, and initiatives into the Nevada ECAC work plan to better coordinate and align services and improve access and outcomes.
- Establish workplan to update and align early childhood system standards, administrative rules and program practices.

Goal 3: Increase Capacity to Equitably Connect Families with the Early Childhood System Continuum of Care and Community at Large

Recruit and Engage Stakeholders

- Implement a strategic two-way communications plan to engage and connect providers, families, and stakeholders.
- Expand engagement, training, and leadership opportunities for underrepresented and underserved populations.
- Expand engagement, alignment, and coordination of services among all early childhood system providers.
- Select and implement a centralized intake and referral system to streamline access and utilization of services.

Goal 4: Identify Budget and Finance Strategies to Drive Policy Goals and Objectives

Finance Strategically

- Perform fiscal analysis of early childhood funding streams and program development needs.
- Identify funding pathways and policy changes needed to meet program and system goals.

Goal 5: Execute data collection and integrated systems to increase equity and accountability

Ensure Accountability

- Improve data collection by fostering understanding and collaboration with providers, families, policy makers, and other stakeholders.
- Increase availability of, access to, and use of data that can be disaggregated to drive informed decision making.
- Implement Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) to improve service delivery.

The Charge Ahead

The Nevada Early Childhood Strategic Plan is designed to create a more integrated system of early childhood services and to ensure that, no matter where a family lives or what challenges they face, each child in Nevada has access to quality early childhood services. As Governor Sisolak has shared, every child deserves the opportunity to succeed. The Nevada ECAC believes the same. The Every Nevadan Recovery Framework developed by Governor Sisolak, along with Treasurer Conine, Senate Majority Leader Cannizzaro, and Assembly Speaker Frierson, outlines a plan to address the immediate impacts of the pandemic while looking to the future with a longer-term focus to build a strong and stable foundation for a post-pandemic child-and-family-centered Nevada. The Nevada ECAC is eager to become a partner in this effort.

With over 95% of funding for early childhood programs in Nevada coming from the federal government, the Nevada ECAC also recognizes the importance of leveraging federal, state, and local government resources wisely while building a pipeline of support beyond public funding, one that is rooted in community ownership of positive outcomes for children and their families.

The goals and objectives of this plan build on a strong footing of existing and expanding collaborative relationships and ongoing initiatives across the state, providing a clear framework and targets for the shared work ahead. At the same time, the goals and objectives have been intentionally designed to be broad enough to allow stakeholders across Nevada to define, implement, and refine strategies and action plans that respond to the strengths and needs of specific communities and populations.

In Nevada and across the world, we know that when children can develop to their fullest potential, communities can as well. It is in that spirit that we view the Nevada Early Childhood Strategic Plan as a dynamic plan by and for Nevadans.

As we develop detailed implementation strategies, we need the continued input and participation of people from all sectors across the state who share the Nevada ECAC's commitment to providing equitable access to quality early childhood services that support children's healthy development from prenatal through age eight.

Learn more about how you can get involved at <http://nvecac.com/>. View the full plan at [\[redacted\]](#).

APPENDIX A: Data Report

Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council Strategic Planning Process: Data Report

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the following individuals and organizations noted in Appendix C that participated in this strategic planning data collection process. Data collected represent one individual's thoughts and opinions, and do not reflect official viewpoints of these organizations. In addition to those noted in Appendix C, many other participants dedicated time and effort to this process anonymously. Your time and voices were invaluable to this process.

Survey Summary

Survey Respondent Demographics

Survey respondents were asked about both their roles relative to the early childhood system as well as the geography they represent, with geography being categorized as rural and/or urban, statewide, or “other.” Chart 1 displays the number of survey respondents by both role and geography.

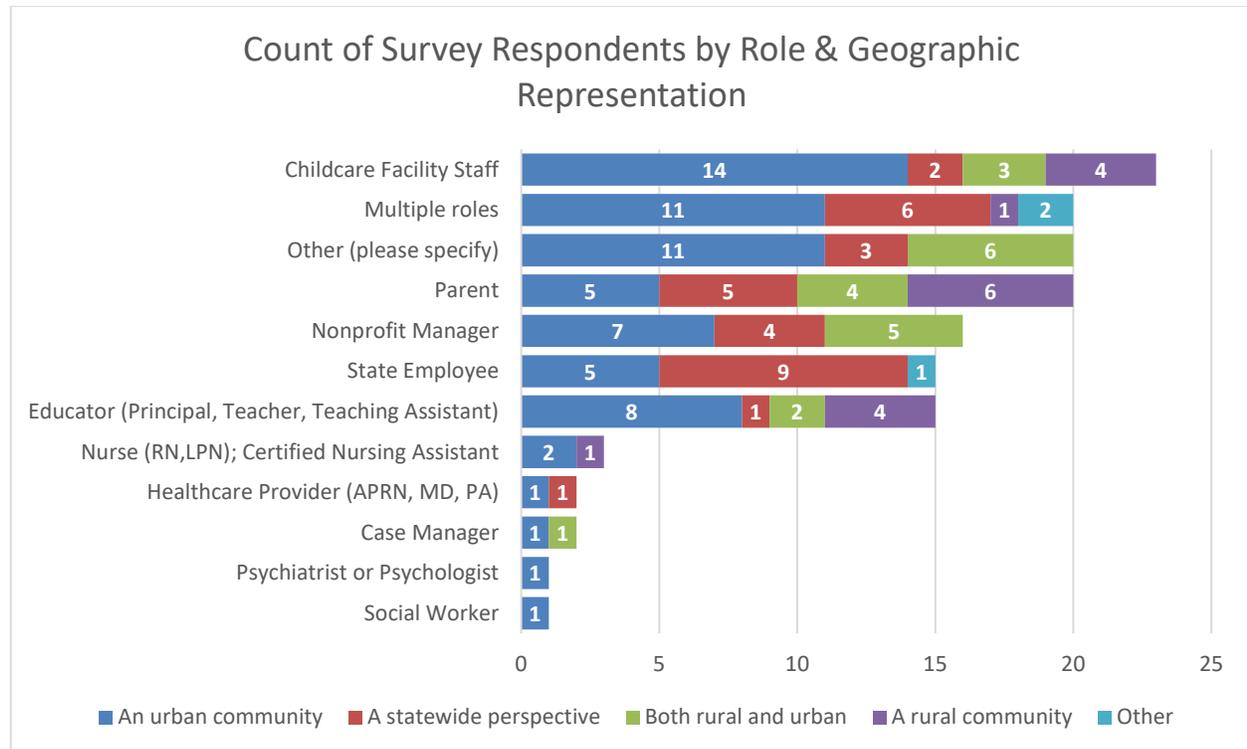


Chart 1. Count of survey respondents by role and geographic representation

There were 138 respondents to the survey. Those respondents identified their roles as follows:

- 17% (n = 23) identified as childcare facility staff.
- 14% (n = 20) identified as parents.
- 11% (n = 15) identified as educators.
- 29% (n = 40) identified as individuals with multiple roles in the early childhood system or had a role other than the options made available through the survey.

Those respondents identified their geographic representation as follows:

- 49% (n = 67) identified as representatives of urban communities only.
- 12% (n = 16) identified as representatives of rural communities only.
- 15% (n = 21) identified as representatives of both urban and rural communities.
- 22% (n = 31) identified as having a statewide perspective.

Progress in Achieving Strategic Goals

Survey respondents were asked to rank progress on achieving the three strategic goals on a five-point scale from “no progress” to “excellent progress.” The three goals were: provide excellent learning systems, ensure strong family partnerships, and support family and child health. The responses reflected respondents’ perception of progress on these goals over the past three years. A summary of responses for each of the three goals is available in Table 1.

Goal	Percentage of Responses					
	<i>Unsure of what progress has been made</i>	<i>No progress</i>	<i>Below average progress</i>	<i>Average progress</i>	<i>Above average progress</i>	<i>Excellent progress</i>
Providing Excellent Learning Systems	17%	2%	13%	43%	18%	7%
Ensuring Strong Family Partnerships	14%	2%	15%	40%	20%	9%
Supporting Family and Child Health	15%	3%	11%	38%	26%	7%

Table 1. Progress on Nevada ECAC strategic goals over the past three years

Each of the three goals had nearly 70% of responses rated as “average progress” or better. However, there were also approximately 15% of respondents who stated that they were “unsure of what progress had been made” for each of the three goals.

Progress in Achieving Goals from an Urban Perspective

The progress on goals for respondents who represent urban communities only is available in Table 2.

Goal	Percentage of Responses					
	<i>Unsure of what progress has been made</i>	<i>No progress</i>	<i>Below average progress</i>	<i>Average progress</i>	<i>Above average progress</i>	<i>Excellent progress</i>
Providing Excellent Learning Systems	15%	3%	15%	46%	15%	6%
Ensuring Strong Family Partnerships	10%	3%	19%	40%	18%	9%
Supporting Family and Child Health	10%	4%	12%	46%	19%	7%

Table 2. Progress on Nevada ECAC strategic goals over the past three years from those respondents who represent urban communities only

Progress on the three goals from those respondents who represent urban communities only largely mirrors the responses from all respondents. This should be expected, given that respondents representing urban communities only comprised about half of the total survey responses.

Compared to all respondents, a slightly lower proportion of respondents who represent urban communities only stated they were “unsure of what progress has been made” on each goal. There were also a slightly higher proportion of respondents who represent urban communities only who stated that “average progress” had been made on each goal and a slightly lower proportion of respondents who stated that “above average progress” had been made on each goal.

Progress in Achieving Goals from a Statewide Perspective

The progress on goals for respondents who represent a statewide perspective is available in Table 3.

Goal	Percentage of Responses					
	<i>Unsure of what progress has been made</i>	<i>No progress</i>	<i>Below average progress</i>	<i>Average progress</i>	<i>Above average progress</i>	<i>Excellent progress</i>
Providing Excellent Learning Systems	6%	0%	10%	39%	32%	13%
Ensuring Strong Family Partnerships	10%	0%	10%	42%	26%	13%
Supporting Family and Child Health	16%	0%	6%	29%	35%	13%

Table 3. Progress on Nevada ECAC strategic goals over the past three years from those respondents who represent a statewide perspective

Compared to all respondents, a lower proportion of respondents who represent a statewide perspective stated they were “unsure of what progress has been made” on each goal. There were also a slightly lower proportion of respondents who represent a statewide perspective who stated that “average progress” had been made on each goal and a higher proportion of respondents who stated that “above average progress” or “excellent progress” had been made on each goal.

Progress in Achieving Goals from Other Perspectives

Other perspectives are difficult to interpret due to the low number of respondents representing those other perspectives. Consequently, those results are not summarized in this report.

- **Opportunities to strengthen Nevada’s Early Childhood System**
 - To improve communication among families and network
 - To improve training and professional development of staff
 - To increase funding for continued opportunities and long-term change
 - To increase resources to support students and families

- **Strengths of Nevada’s Early Childhood System**
 - Connection to community programs and partners
 - QRIS
 - Family involvement

- **Weaknesses of Nevada’s Early Childhood System**
 - Lack of qualifications and quality pay for teachers/staff
 - Lack of funding
 - Lack of consistency of best practices for all students such as assessments

- **Barriers and threats facing Nevada’s Early Childhood System**
 - Funding: Federal, state and county budgets; not affordable for all families; cost of childcare is a huge barrier; creates equity issues
 - Legislation: Who is the champion for this in the Legislature? In local governments? Legislators not understanding the importance of ECE
 - Awareness: Lack of knowledge about ECE in the community, lack of local ECE coaches, lack of sound business practices in childcare provider administration
 - Staffing: COVID absences of staff-not enough staff for the duration, lack of employees wanting to work in the ECE field, high turnover, poorly educated teachers are majority of hiring pool

Focus Groups

Focus Group #1: Child & Family Health Subcommittee

The members of the Child & Family Health Subcommittee identified several strengths of the group and its work. Relationships were the unifying theme behind all these strengths. The collaboration within the group and with stakeholders was noted several times throughout the discussion. Community support from families and local government as well as improving relationships with state-level government were cited as critical inputs for the progress that has been made in early childhood efforts as well as a factor in pushing for more progress in the future. Through these relationships, Nevada ECAC has been able to secure two grants to support the execution of their goals. The group reported feeling empowered to make decisions about what to do to advance the goals of Nevada ECAC.

While the relationships among committee members and stakeholders have been instrumental in making progress towards early childhood goals, the Child & Family Health Subcommittee also noted several weaknesses in efforts to improve early childhood outcomes. Two primary weaknesses were mentioned during the focus group: short-term funding and operational silos. Short-term funding has made it difficult for the Nevada ECAC to make any progress on building an early childhood system that will be accessible and equitable. Short-term funding also plays a role in developing operational silos, as having several funding-based programs has led to targeted interventions towards and reporting on numerous goals across the early childhood system, resulting in a disjointed effort to contribute to a smaller, more unified set of goals. Members of the subcommittee identified the need for this smaller and more unified set of goals to work towards. A third weakness that was mentioned was engagement. While the relationships among the subcommittee and their stakeholders has been strong, members agreed that engagement could be better in a few ways, including limiting the number of agenda items at each meeting to allow more time to focus on a few things, identifying those who are missing from the conversations and inviting them to have a seat at the table, and finding ways to more easily connect people who are doing similar work so that they can collaborate rather than continue working in their respective silos.

- Strengths
 - Relationships
- Weaknesses
 - Short-term funding and operational silos
- Engagement
 - Limit the number of agenda items at meeting to allow more time to focus
 - Invite missing parties to have a seat at the table
 - Connect and collaborate with those doing similar work

Recommendations

Design the Nevada ECAC website to be the go-to source for information about early childhood projects, service providers, early childhood resources for parents, etc.

Leverage the momentum of the American Rescue Plan Act community engagement to establish a grassroots advocacy approach for future legislative efforts, including policy and regulatory changes as well as funding.

- “We are in unique time right now where we have an infusion of federal resources through multiple channels to make some changes to infrastructure.”
- “I hope that the current focus on children is not the ‘flavor of the month’ and after everything goes back to normal, that the children will be on the back burner again.”
- “I attended many of the community meetings talking about the (\$770 million of pandemic funding), and I know this sounds like a one-shot deal. And I heard somebody talk about sustainability... I was so impressed with the community and how they felt about funding for early childhood development with that pandemic money.”

Focus Group #2: Family Support & Community Engagement

Set strategic plan goals that are agreed upon by the majority of stakeholders and reasonably within the Nevada ECAC’s control that would logically contribute to improvements in early childhood (e.g., “get a state legislator to sponsor a bill to increase childcare worker pay” rather than “increase childcare worker pay”).

- Previous strategic plan too large and members feel disconnected, little gets accomplished
- Funding is a threat and a barrier, not sustainable
- Create cross-sector partnerships
- Silos
- Need for systems-level thinking

It is possible that COVID has had an impact on strategic planning efforts due the changes in communication, meeting structure, and immediate attention needed in specific areas, which has caused people to not reach their goals. Members are not feeling empowered or connected to the previous strategic plan. Therefore, there are some feeling of being disconnected. The previous strategic plan is so large to where very little gets accomplished since there is not enough focus on individual goals or objectives. In addition, the plan was not written with realistic outcomes in mind. Furthermore, funding has been both a threat and a barrier due the amount of funding available yet little guidance of how to manage grant funding. In addition, there is a growing concern of how to maintain sustainable programming once the funds are exhausted. With the lack of coordination and collaboration, there is the potential for missed opportunities to develop partnerships that could lead to future funding opportunities. Therefore, it is important to create cross-sector partnerships to help with the various issues that early education faces such as homelessness. Unfortunately, silos do exist. This creates a barrier in developing partnerships as members are unaware of what other groups do. There is a need for systems level thinking in order to create a no wrong door approach with a trusted one stop shop for all resources. Ultimately, outcomes for early childhood development could improve if resources were accessible and inclusive for all families.

Recommendations

Find effective strategies, provide tools, or develop skills of board members to empower them to fulfill their roles.

- *“Tell me what I can do if I'm not the director of anything. And I never got this answer at all. I'm very willing to do something, but there was nothing that I was being guided with.”*
- *“If I was given more of a better framework, then, even though I may not be directly over a specific program or strategy, I could probably be more informed in terms of how I can impact it.”*

Develop a strategic plan with SMART goals for sustainable programming.

- *“And there's just so much in the plan that it makes it very hard, basically doing 5% attention on every little thing, instead of giving your full focus on one goal or objective that you have control over, or you have influence over.”*
- *“One thing I worry about in terms of what are we building that's sustainable after these funds go away.”*

Develop an asset map or similar document to showcase all available programs to reduce duplicated efforts while bringing all stakeholders together to discuss future programs.

- *“If we don't have the comprehensive conversation, then we're missing a huge piece of what could be if we do find sustainable funds.”*

Structure future strategic plans around inclusive, accessible resources for families.

Restructure Nevada ECAC meetings to promote discussion of ideas.

Individual Interviews

Individual interviews were conducted via phone or Zoom during September and October 2021. Nineteen participants were asked ten questions and interviews lasted 30-60 minutes in duration. Interviews were transcribed in real time.

- **Highlights of what is working well**
 - “People are dedicated, committed, play nicely together and enjoy each other.”
 - “Awareness. Everyone in the system knows it is fractured. Everyone shares the desire to address the problems and improve the system. We all know we need to work together to support children and families.”
 - “Impressed with the work that has been done with minimal resources.”
 - Themes: Connectedness, collaboration, solidarity
- **Barriers or needs improvement**
 - “Ultimately it comes down to there isn’t a system - hugest barrier. Not coordinated, not planned. It’s piece meal service delivery. The ECAC is supposed to be the hub and provide direction, but that isn’t coming to fruition in that way.”
 - “Often times the conversations are more about admiring the problem rather than solving the problem.”
 - “Need a focused, coordinated, solid effort to get a system in place, develop it, ensure it is working well, show outcomes, and then think about scaling up and expansion. Better to go deep vs wide.”
 - “We need to find new ways to reach out/involve new people; cultivate generations of leadership (need a pipeline of people to fill in when people retire, etc.). People are tired and stretched thin.”
 - Themes: Lack of a system, poor engagement beyond traditional stakeholders, no succession planning

Participants were read the following preamble: “The next strategic plan covers a 3-year period. The following five questions will address ideas you have for specific and achievable strategies to be considered for this plan. Most importantly, these action items should be within your control or Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council’s control within the 3-year strategic plan.”

- **Funding**
 - “Be strategic from the beginning to collect the right data components to ensure our investment is paying off.”
 - “Independent, professional cost analysis to draw a precise picture of how much funding we’ll need to move forward on the key components of our plan”
 - “Focusing on communities that need it most - childcare deserts”
 - Themes: Increase wages, subsidies, legislation, sustainable funding

- **Advocacy/policy**

- “We can promote individual needs and talk about how that improves the community as a whole (rising tide lifts all boats); we all improve when we help each other and help each other out—legislatively, that’s the type of message to talk about.”
- “More explicit and upfront about core values is something ECAC could do – we’re going to stay in line with our value to promote XYZ; perhaps moving forward, the ECAC could be more obvious or explicit about it so that connection is made for everyone, including in the general community (not just the field).”
- “Standing meet and greet forums to accomplish check-ins, not just a focus on problems.”
- “We actually do some good work in these areas, but we could do a lot better if our meetings were not taken up with updates and reports. We need that time for targeted thinking on issues and opportunities. We’re supposed to be an advisory council, but there doesn’t seem to be much advising going on.”
- “We are split into too many agencies. Need a combined agency/voice for Early Childhood Leadership that can negotiate the politics and keep an eye on maintaining quality in the system. Create an ongoing outreach campaign. The HRSA grant is a good start.”
- “Need a common system of data and communications. Other states are moving on this, and it works.”
- “If we see early childhood as birth-eight and policies/programs are Pre-K, what do we do with the system around it to make it more robust and balance out?”
- Themes: Communication, messaging, strong agenda

- **Partnerships/Collaboration**

- “For the ECAC, that would probably be a valuable visual to show some of the steps being taken to get us toward longer-term vision. Better evaluation loops might make sense and communicating those (we’re reviewing xyz quarterly, etc.). More of an ongoing action planning revising as needed based on evidence we have and are collecting.”
- “We share common priorities, but we don’t work together on them enough.”
- “Build partnerships between training and delivery systems. Increase linkages with higher education.”
- “The landscape right now has to do with social determinants of health and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)—all entwined. You can’t separate health and education. Thinking of it that way, have we partnered with nonprofits and community-based orgs that deal with pregnant moms and babies who can give us insights...talk to orgs who are talking to the end user every day? Have we engaged on the food insecurity piece? Are we creating those cross-linkage? Those community-based organizations that are meeting social needs are engaging families, so we need to talk to them to make sure we’re solving for those needs and not the needs we think should be solved for.”
- Themes: Silos, paid positions

- **Increasing Engagement**
 - “We could consider encouraging idea of partnership/collaboration across sectors....is there a way to incentivize? Trying to encourage people’s flexibility in their thinking about that starting at the State-level. Why are we breaking up this age group from birth-2 to 3-5?”
 - “ECAC is engaged. COVID has made it much harder, just as we were starting to work on the last plan. And everybody is trying to drink out of a firehose right now. With new resources and new focus, we’re ready to go forward together.”
 - Theme: Communication

- **Improving ECE Workforce**
 - “Could the State potentially supplement to promote teachers with more experience and skill? Create that type of pathway that helps them get into other areas.....good pre-school teacher who goes to work for School District or early intervention or Head Start. Combo of pay commensurate with education and experience and then making sure we provide quality education.”
 - “We ask a lot of these people. The pay, benefits and working conditions all need to be upgraded substantially. Minimize unnecessary credentialing barriers. Use system changes like going remote to build capacity with frontline program staff.”
 - Themes: Funding, living wages, subsidies, education, recruitment, credentialing

The following key themes were identified during this data collection process as specific and actionable items to be considered in future strategic planning. While many other themes were identified, not all items are appropriate nor actionable for a three-year strategic plan:

- Advocacy, including a strong connection to the Governor and other decision makers
- Sustainable funding
- Mental health
- Data systems
- Training and technical assistance
- Rural areas
- Creating a common agenda
- Communication strategies
- Workforce development

APPENDIX B: Statewide Outreach & Engagement

To further the goals and objectives set forth in this plan, the Nevada ECAC plans to invite and engage a variety of individuals, sectors, and entities to join in the important work surrounding early childhood. We recognize that without deeper involvement from a diverse pool of stakeholders, this plan will be challenged to succeed.

Below is a partial listing of some of the groups the Nevada ECAC brainstormed as part of its outreach efforts. The Nevada ECAC recognizes this list is not comprehensive and will continue to develop this further. We also invite your suggestions and interest in joining with us to imagine and build a system that will support children and families in reaching their full potential.

Italics below indicate ideas that came up multiple times by multiple groups:

- Parents/Caregivers
 - *Young Children (prenatal-eight)*
 - *Disabilities*
 - *Special HC needs*
 - Homelessness
 - *Rural/Urban*
 - *PTA/Parent Group (local and national PTA)*
 - SES
 - *Race/Ethnicity*
 - *Language*
 - *Families beyond the nuclear families (kith and kin, foster care)*
- State Agency Leadership
 - DWSS/CCDP
 - NDE/OELD and UMORE
 - CDFS/ECMHS
 - DPBH (MCH/Licensing/A???) – Rural Children’s M/H
 - DAG – DACFP
 - ADSD
 - *Tribes (ITCN, etc)*
 - *Economic Development/Workforce Development*
 - DCFS/CW
- National stakeholders - technical assistance through Division for Early Childhood, National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Zero to Three
- Early Childhood Personnel Center
- Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children
- School Districts
 - NV Association of Superintendents

- School Admin Group (State)
- School Counselors
- *Teachers*
- *Principals*
- More K-3 representation: Kindergarten teachers, principals, P-3 cohort leadership member, Education Council, members of kindergarten transition team, local education agencies
- *Local Government*
 - City Manager's Office
 - Mayor Roundtable Group
 - Child Welfare
 - County GNA
 - Local education agencies
 - Local Department Fiscal Analysts
 - Law Enforcement
 - Sheriff's & Chief's Association
- *Service Providers (NGOs)*
 - Child Care Providers (all types)
 - *Healthcare Providers*
 - *Mental Health Providers*
 - Early Intervention
 - *Social Service Providers (i.e., Nevada PEP)*
 - Head Starts (ENS)(HSA)
 - Libraries
- *Community Gathering Spaces*
 - Community centers
 - Neighborhood Associations
 - *African American men – barbers (2)*
 - *Faith Communities*
 - Stylists
 - Gyms
- *Governor's Office*
- *Legislative Leadership/Champions/Policy Makers – City, Local, State, Federal*
- *People who have trust from the communities in which they reside*
- *Business Sector*
 - *Chambers of Commerce*
 - *Large companies/gaming entities (release time for parents to participate in family engagement and leadership opportunities)*
 - Employers, bosses, managers, decision makers
- *Indigenous populations and tribal programs, tribal leaders, sovereign nations*
- Local ECACs

APPENDIX C: Individuals and Groups Consulted

Thank you to the following individuals who informed this strategic plan through telephone interviews, focus groups, guidance, and their service on the Strategic Planning Subcommittee and/or Nevada ECAC:

Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council:

Thank you to the Nevada ECAC for your leadership and oversight of this process.

Name	Agency
Alberto Quintero	NV Department of Education, Office of Early Learning & Development
Carrie Paldi	Learning Care Group (Private Provider)
Cathleen Rexing	NV Department of Education, Part B
Christell Askew	Division of Welfare and Supportive Service, Child Care Development Program
Denise Tanata	The Children's Cabinet
Diane Nicolet	Washoe County School District, Board of Trustees
Dr. Rebecca Meyers	UNLV School of Medicine, Department of Pediatrics
Heike Ruedenauer-Plummer	NV Department of Health and Human Services, Aging and Disability Services
Jenna Weglarz-Ward	NV System of Higher Education, UNLV
Jocelyn Pereira	NV Department of Health and Human Services, Aging and Disability Services
Julie Houchins	United Way of Southern Nevada
Latisha Brown	NV Department of Health and Human Services, Child Care Licensing
Linda Young	Community member
Lori Ann Malina Lovell	NV Department of Health and Human Services, Aging and Disability Services
Lori Cox	Head Start of Northeastern Nevada
Maggie Salas Crespo	Governor's Office of New Americans
Marty Elquist	The Children's Cabinet
Patrice Gardner	NV Department of Education, Office of Early Learning & Development
Stephanie Wyatt	NV Department of Health and Human Services, Aging and Disability Services
Tina Springmeyer	Washoe County School District

Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Subcommittee:

Thank you to the Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Subcommittee for serving as the steering committee throughout this process.

Name	Agency
Amanda Haboush-Deloye	NV Institute for Children's Research and Policy, UNLV
Annette Dawson-Owens	Children's Advocacy Alliance
Denise Tanata	The Children's Cabinet
Emily Champlin	NV Department of Education, Office of Early Learning and Development
Jocelyn Pereira	NV Department of Health and Human Services, Aging and Disability Services
Kathy Yoder-Bass	Sunrise Children's Foundation
Lori Ann Malina-Lovell	NV Department of Health and Human Services, Aging and Disability Services
Lori Cox	Head Start of Northeastern Nevada
Marty Elquist	The Children's Cabinet
Patrice Gardner	NV Department of Education, Office of Early Learning & Development
Stacey Joyner	NV Department of Education, Office of Early Learning & Development
Tina Springmeyer	Washoe County School District

Focus Groups:

Thank you to the two Nevada ECAC Subcommittees who served as focus groups for this process.

Family Support and Community Engagement:

Name	Agency
Alberto Quintero	NV Department of Education, Office of Early Learning & Development
Amanda Haboush-Deloye	NV Institute for Children's Research and Policy, UNLV
Danielle Milam	Las Vegas Clark County Library District
Evelyn Dryer	NV Department of Health and Human Services, Home Visiting Programs
Heike Ruedenauer-Plummer	NV Department of Health and Human Services, Aging and Disability Services
Jessica Russel	Vegas PBS
Lori Cox	Head Start of Northeastern Nevada
Mary Regan	Las Vegas Urban League
Nancy Cummings	Community Member

Child and Family Health Subcommittee:

Name	Agency
Amanda Haboush-Deloye	NV Institute for Children's Research and Policy, UNLV
Andrea Rivers	NV Department of Health and Human Service, WIC Program
Beverly Mathis	NV Public Education Foundation
Denise Tanata	The Children's Cabinet
Evelyn Dryer	NV Department of Health and Human Services, Home Visiting Programs
Linda Lang	Nevada Statewide Coalition Partnership

Lori Ann Molina	NV Department of Health and Human Services, Aging and Disability Services
Patrice Gardner	NV Department of Education, Office of Early Learning & Development
Tara Nerida	Immunize Nevada

Individual Interviews:

Thank you to the following agencies for having representatives participate in individual interviews.

Agencies
NV Institute for Children’s Research and Policy, UNLV
NV Division of Child and Family Services, Childhood Mental Health
NV Department of Education, State PreK
NV Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Welfare and Supportive Services – Child Care
NV Department of Education, Office of Early Learning and Development
Nevada Office of Rural Health, UNR Medical School
UNR College of Education & Human Development, NV Center for Excellence in Disabilities
UNLV College of Education, Department of Early Childhood, Multilingual, and Special Education
Nevada TEACH Early Childhood
Washoe County Child Care Licensing
The Children’s Cabinet
Las Vegas Urban League
UNR College of Education & Human Development
NV Department of Education, Office of Early Learning and Development
United Healthcare Nevada
The Nevada Registry
UNR Child & Family Research Center
NV Department of Education, Nevada Ready! State Pre-K
NV Division of Public and Behavioral Health