



Nevada Early Childhood
Advisory Council

December 1, 2021

The Honorable Governor Steve Sisolak
c/o Boards and Commissions
101 North Carson Street
Carson City, NV 89701

Rick Combs
Legislative Counsel Bureau
Director's Office
401 South Carson Street
Carson City, NV 89701

Dear Governor Sisolak and Mr. Combs,

NRS 432A.076 requires the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council to submit an annual report to the Governor and the Legislature outlining a summary of activities of the Council and recommendations for improvements to the early childhood system in this State. As the chair, vice chair and immediate past chair of the ECAC, we are pleased to provide this report for 2021.

Section 1 of NRS 432A.076 outlines the work of the Council:

- (a) Work to strengthen state-level coordination and collaboration among the various sectors and settings of early childhood education programs.
- (b) Conduct periodic statewide assessments of needs relating to the quality and availability of programs and services for children who are in early childhood education programs.
- (c) Identify opportunities for and barriers to coordination and collaboration among early childhood education programs funded in whole or in part by the Federal Government, the State or a local government.
- (d) Develop recommendations for:
 - (1) Increasing the participation of children in early childhood education programs funded in whole or in part by the Federal Government, the State or a local government, including, without limitation, providing information on such programs to underrepresented and special populations;
 - (2) The establishment or improvement of core elements of the early childhood system in this State, including, without limitation, a statewide unified system for collecting data relating to early childhood education programs;
 - (3) A statewide professional development system for teachers engaged in early childhood education; and

- (4) The establishment of statewide standards for early childhood education programs in this State.
- (e) Assess the capacity and effectiveness of institutions of higher education in this State in developing teachers in the field of early childhood education.
- (f) Establish, in cooperation with the State Board of Education, guidelines for evaluating the school readiness of children. The guidelines must:
- (1) Be based on national school readiness indicators;
 - (2) Address the following components of school readiness:
 - (I) Physical and developmental health;
 - (II) Social and emotional development;
 - (III) Approaches to learning;
 - (IV) Language and early literacy development; and
 - (V) Cognition and general knowledge.
- (g) Develop recommendations for increasing parental involvement and family engagement in early childhood education programs.
- (h) Perform such other duties relating to early childhood education programs as designated by the Governor.

ECAC 2018-2021 Strategic Plan

The 2018-2021 Early Childhood Strategic Plan (funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation) has served as a road map to address the scope of work for the NECAC as outlined in NRS 432A. This plan was aligned to the Nevada Department of Education's State Improvement Plan, the Pritzker Prenatal to Age Three planning grant, and the unfunded Nevada Department of Education Birth to Five systems grant. A summary of the goals, objectives and key performance indicators for the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan is provided below. Major accomplishments include:

- 122% increase in state investment for the Nevada Ready! PreK Program
- Increase in the number of QRIS participating providers, despite closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Legislation (AB194, 2019) to include healthcare provider to NECAC membership roster
- HRSA Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Health Integration grant secured for a five year grant period beginning August 2021
- Establishment of the NV Community Health Worker Early Childhood Endorsement (CHW-ECE) and funding allocated through ARP-CCDP to pilot the CHW-ECE Project statewide

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the activities of the NECAC were suspended in 2020 and a portion of 2021. 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. The NECAC has worked collaboratively with multiple state agencies to support the deployment of COVID-19 relief funds that not only assist providers and families in their recovery, but also support an improved infrastructure to improve quality and accessibility of programs and services. In addition, the Nevada ECAC and its partners have secured significant new grant funding to expand and strengthen services, including the HRSA Early Childhood Comprehensive Services Health Integration grant, which will provide some staff support to the NECAC. The Council is using this unparalleled opportunity to reimagine its future, structuring a plan that builds a sustainable system that will support children from birth to 8 and their families now and in years to come.

ECAC 2022-2024 Strategic Plan

On November 8-9, 2021, the Council and numerous community partners throughout the state met for our new Strategic Plan Retreat. On December 15, 2021, the Council will approve the 2022-2024 Strategic Plan which will focus on improving our state's Early Childhood System. The five proposed goals include:

1. Create a Coordinated Early Childhood Leadership Infrastructure
2. Increase Coordination and Alignment Between Systems of Care for Young Children and Families
3. Increase Capacity to Equitably Connect Families with the Early Childhood System Continuum of Care and Community at Large
4. Identify Budget and Finance Strategies to Drive Policy Goals and Objectives
5. Execute Data Collection and Integrated Systems to Increase Equity and Accountability

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. The goals and objectives build on a strong foundation 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 are 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.

Recommendations

Based on the work of the Council and in consideration of the current and future impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Nevada's most vulnerable population, the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council submits the following recommendations for consideration by the Nevada Legislature and the Governor:

1. Establish a Governor's Office for Early Childhood (often referred to as a Children's Commission or Cabinet) to provide coordination, efficiency and collaboration across state agencies that impact children's issues and to coordinate with the numerous boards, taskforces, commissions, local governmental entities and nonprofit organizations that provide direct services and supports. **Funding currently available through the HRSA ECCS grant to support this recommendation through July 2026.**
2. Ensure sufficient funding is available and dedicated to support high quality early education and development programs including, but not limited to: Nevada child care subsidy program; Nevada Ready! PreK Program; Silver State Stars Quality Rating and Improvement System; Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants program; Nevada Home Visiting programs; and the new Community Health Worker Early Childhood Endorsement Program.
3. Support workforce development opportunities to increase the pool of highly trained early childhood professionals in the areas of early learning, development and health to diversify employment opportunities and to support workers in the availability of safe, high quality programs as they return to work.

We would respectfully request the opportunity to present these recommendations to the appropriate legislative committee(s) and to meet with the Governor to discuss implementation of the 2021-2024 Strategic Plan. We welcome any questions you might have regarding this 2021 progress report. On behalf of the entire NECAC, it is our honor to serve the Governor and the people of the great state of Nevada.

Sincerely,

Denise Tanata

Denise Tanata, J.D.
NECAC Chair
NV Early Childhood Comprehensive
Systems Director
The Children's Cabinet

Marty Elquist

Marty Elquist
NECAC Past-Chair, 2015 to 2021
Supporting Early Education & Development
Department Director
The Children's Cabinet

Patrice Gardner

Patrice Gardner
NECAC Vice Chair
Nevada Head Start State Collaboration Director
Nevada Department of Education

NECAC 2018-2021 STRATEGIC PLAN ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY



OUR PURPOSE STATEMENT

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

OUR 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.

OUR FUNDAMENTAL VALUES

"All" means all. Opportunities and access are needed for children regardless of race, ethnicity, language, ability, or socio-economics; also includes children in all environments including those with disabilities.

Accountability is important. Programs supported by public dollars must be responsive to those they serve and accountable for delivering high quality services.

Allow for local solutions. Nevada's local communities and businesses share many of the same goals, and have specialized and innovative ways to deliver. A focus on results, not process, allows for innovation and strategy toward shared outcome.

Align Birth to Third Grade. This plan includes intentional strategies devoted to the developmental continuum of children birth to third grade to work together strategically to support children's progression through the system. In order to change child outcomes by third grade, we must change adult and organizational behaviors.

OUR GOALS

EARLY LEARNING: Strengthen the complex system of early learning to provide every child and family with high quality early childhood education and development.

FAMILY SUPPORT & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Ensure families have the support they want and need to nurture their children's early learning and development.

CHILD AND FAMILY HEALTH: Promote and support increased access to and the delivery of high quality, evidence-based health (dental, physical, mental/behavioral health) services for families with young children.

2018-2021 STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY

GOAL 1 - EARLY LEARNING: Strengthen the complex system of early learning to provide every child and family with high quality early childhood education and development.

G1 Key Performance Indicators	Baseline Measure	Current Status
KPI 1.1 – Increase investment in early childhood education (birth to age 8) <i>Metrics: State PreK & HS Funding (NIEER State of Preschool Yearbook)</i>	State PreK (2018): \$8,738,875 (\$4,025 per child) State Head Start (2018): \$0	State PreK (2020): \$19,732,461 (\$6,428 per child) State Head Start (2020): \$0
KPI 1.2 – Percentage of children that meet or exceed kindergarten entry assessment	<i>Statewide data not available</i>	<i>Statewide data not available</i>
KPI 1.3 – Increase the number of programs participating in QRIS	272 Programs (January 2019) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 192 Centers • 9 Family Child Care • 3 Group Family Child Care • 68 District PreK 	294 Programs (September 2021) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 220 Centers • 9 Family Child Care • 5 Group Family Child Care • 60 District PreK <p><i>*Note – 39 participating programs closed during the COVID-19 pandemic and 32 district PreK programs are inactive and are not included in the totals for 2021.</i></p>
KPI 1.4 – Decrease in number of suspensions/expulsions in kindergarten	<i>Statewide data not available</i>	Addressed through Legislation (AB168, year).
KPI 1.5 – Increase total licensed capacity (including State PreK)	45,918 Licensed Capacity (2018)	41,515 Licensed Capacity (2021) <i>*While NV did see an increase in licensed capacity during this period, closures due to the pandemic have resulted in a decline in total licensed capacity</i>
KPI 1.6 – Increase the number of early childhood students being included and receiving services in the regular education environment (PreK and K)	30% - PreK (3-5 year olds) 39% - 5 year olds in Kindergarten	44% - All 3-5 year olds <i>*Data no longer available broken out by PreK and K</i>
G1 Objectives	Key Activities	Progress To Goal
OBJ 1.1 – Describe Early Childhood Education (ECE) in terms of Workforce Development and Economic Development for federal, state and county policy makers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Messaging incorporated into ECE presentations and documentation • Alignment with Workforce and Economic Development for EC expansion and system alignment through ARP-CCDP • Partnership with Fed Reserve Bank of San Francisco, Investing in the Future of Child Care initiative 	Significant Progress - Ongoing
OBJ 1.2 – Revise and align child, program and workforce standards for all programs and personnel in the B-3 field.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PreK-K Transition Document Developed by NDE w/Ed Counsel 	Some Progress – Not Complete

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEAD Summit – Incorporation of B-3 Track for Professional Development Contract with SRI to develop leadership competencies and related trainings QRIS alignment between center and LEA, including CLASS training for coaches 	
OBJ 1.3 – Unify the early childhood and early elementary workforce from birth through third grade.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local ECACs inclusion of B-3 representatives to support alignment and successful transitions 	Some Progress - Ongoing
OBJ 1.4 – Review the placement and alignment of state offices including child care licensure and Part C IDEA with other B-3 entities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion of moving licensing to DWSS/CCDP 	Some Progress – Not Complete
OBJ 1.5 – Advocate for greater investment in wage and incentive programs that reward increased education levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wages and Compensation Taskforce established Inclusion of wage incentive program through ARP-CCDP funds as pilot 	Some Progress – Not Complete
OBJ 1.6 – Allocate personnel and financial resources to integrate ECE data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included in NDE PDG Grant, grant not awarded Proposal submitted for inclusion in ARP CCDP plan, pending approval Alignment between DWSS/CCDP and NDE/OELD 	Some Progress – Not Complete
GOAL 2 - FAMILY SUPPORT & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Ensure families have the support they want and need to nurture their children's early learning and development.		
G2 Key Performance Indicators	Baseline Measure	Current Status
KPI 2.1 – Increase attendance rates in K-3 rd Grade	<i>Statewide data by grade level not available.</i>	<i>Statewide data by grade level not available.</i>
G1 Objectives	Key Activities	Progress To Goal
OBJ 2.1 – Expand opportunities for families to gain knowledge on and support their children’s development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Mind in the Making Trainings in Community Settings Vroom Program Implementation Established partnership with Bezos Foundation to support MITM and Vroom initiatives Established partnerships with LVCCLD, Raising Las Vegas initiative; Early Head Start; NV 	Significant Progress - Ongoing

	WIC; Northern NV Coalition for Grade Level Reading; Vegas PBS	
OBJ 2.2 – Provide family guidance in health settings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reach Out and Read initiative explored with multiple health partners expressing interest; funding not secured to implement program 	Limited Progress – Not Complete
OBJ 2.3 – Expand individualized support for families that may benefit most.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mind in the Making and Vroom implemented in Early Head Start (Clark County) 	Limited Progress – Not Complete
OBJ 2.4 – Expand community based learning opportunities for young children and their families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported partnership between Northern NV Coalition for Grade Level Reading and 211 to support K-3 attendance 	Limited Progress – Not Complete
OBJ 2.5 – Strengthen family partnership throughout early grade education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration of activities with NDE Office of Parental Involvement and Family Engagement 	Some Progress – Not Complete
GOAL 3 - CHILD AND FAMILY HEALTH: Promote and support increased access to and the delivery of high quality, evidence-based health (dental, physical, mental/behavioral health) services for families with young children.		
G2 Key Performance Indicators	Baseline Measure	Current Status
KPI 3.1 – Increased ratio of pediatricians to population	10.9 per 100,000 population (2015)	16 per 100,000 population (2019)
KPI 3.2 – Increased number of OBGYNs, Pediatricians, Dentists and Mental Health professionals who accept Medicaid	<i>Statewide data by provider type not available.</i>	<i>Statewide data by provider type not available.</i>
KPI 3.3 – Increase number of community health workers with early childhood certification/specialization	None – certification/endorsement not yet established	0 <i>Note: Endorsement established in 2021; Anticipate approximately 10 CHW-ECEs in 2022</i>
G2 Objectives	Key Activities	Progress To Goal
OBJ 3.1 – Advocate for increasing access to appropriate health providers in the state, particularly in underserved urban and rural communities, with special attention paid to obstetrics, pediatrics, dentistry and children’s mental health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NV Head Start Association is currently working on a partnership with Roseman University to place students at HS/EHS locations. 	Some Progress – Not Complete
OBJ 3.2 – Support the effective deployment of well-trained community health workers across the state to connect families with young children with insurers (e.g. Connecting Kids to Coverage), physicians and other health care professionals and other community support services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership with NV Community Health Worker Association to establish CHW-ECE endorsement program Funding through ARP CCDP to establish CHW-ECE pilot project to place CHW-ECEs in early childhood settings throughout NV 	Significant Progress - Ongoing

<p>OBJ 3.3 – Raise awareness of mobile health and health fair opportunities to assist in the coordination and expansion of these services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community calendar established and deployed on 4 sites to share information with public and community partners 	<p>Significant Progress - Ongoing</p>
<p>OBJ 3.4 – Promote high quality programs that are implemented with fidelity to produce positive health outcomes for parents, infants and children (e.g., Well Child Visits; Home-Visiting; Early Head Start).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment and collection of related needs assessments, action plans and related documents • Analysis started to compile list of evidence-based (high quality) programs for the Birth-Grade 8 population 	<p>Some Progress – Not Complete</p>
<p>OBJ 3.5 – Expand ECAC to include representation from health field.</p>	<p>AB194 (2019) - Health Representative Added to ECAC effective 7.1.2019</p>	<p>Significant Progress - Complete</p>