



Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council

December 1, 2022

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 (Nevada ECAC) 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. On behalf of the Nevada ECAC, we are pleased to provide this report for 2022.

Executive Summary of the ECAC 2022 Annual Report

Key Activities and Accomplishments:

- Finalized and approved the 2022-2024 Nevada ECAC Strategic Plan
- Established five work groups (subcommittees) to implement the goals and activities outlined in the Strategic Plan
- Completed and/or started analyses of Nevada's Early Childhood System Structure, Early Childhood Systems Structures in Other States, Early Childhood Data Systems, and Fiscal Mapping of the Early Childhood System
- Established the Nevada Early Childhood Family Leadership Council to support family engagement, leadership and decision-making in the early childhood system

Summary Recommendations:

- Establish a Nevada Governor's Office for Early Childhood to support systems level coordination and alignment across sectors in early childhood.
- Revise NRS 432A.076 to expand membership and duties of the NV ECAC to reflect the comprehensive early childhood system.

- Increase state level investment in high-quality early childhood programs and services, including child care subsidy, home-visiting, early intervention services, early childhood mental health programs and related support services.
- 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.

ECAC 2022-2024 Strategic Plan

On November 8-9, 2021, the Nevada ECAC and numerous community partners throughout the state met for our new Strategic Plan Retreat. On January 19, 2022 the Nevada ECAC approved the [2022-2024 Strategic Plan](#) which will focus on improving our state's Early Childhood System. The Early Childhood System goals and objectives included in the plan are:

Goal 1: Create a Coordinated Early Childhood Leadership Infrastructure

Objectives:

- Establish a 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 the 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

- 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

- 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

- 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

- 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 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.

To accomplish the goals and objectives outlined in the 2022-2024 Strategic Plan, five workgroups were established which include appointed members of the Nevada ECAC as well as a broad range of over 40 key stakeholders from across the State of Nevada, including both provider and parent representatives. Significant progress has been made in the first year of this new Strategic Plan and we are eager to continue this work in 2023 and beyond to improve Nevada's early childhood infrastructure to support improved outcomes for young children and their families.

A key component of the Nevada ECAC and the 2022-2024 Strategic Plan is coordination and alignment of the early childhood system across sectors and existing initiatives. As such, the goals, activities and key accomplishments outlined below reflect the collective efforts of multiple state agencies and programs, nonprofit partners and other key stakeholders. Significant efforts have been made to coordinate and leverage existing initiatives and resources to support our collective work. Below is a list of some of the entities and organizations who are leading efforts and/or partnering with the Nevada ECAC:

- Department of Education
 - Office of Early Learning & Development
 - Early Childhood Special Education
 - Office of Student & School Supports
- Department of Health and Human Services

- Division of Welfare and Supportive Services, Child Care Development Program
- Division of Child and Family Services, Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health
- Department of Public and Behavioral Health, Child Care Licensing
- Department of Public and Behavioral Health, Maternal, Child & Adolescent Health
- Director's Office, Aging and Disability Services, Part C and NEIS
- Local Early Childhood Advisory Councils:
 - Carson/Douglas Counties ECAC
 - Northeastern Nevada (Elko) ECAC
 - Southern Nevada (Clark) ECAC
 - Tribal ECAC
 - Tri-County (Lyon, Storey, Mineral) ECAC
 - Washoe County ECAC
- University of Nevada, Reno
- University of Nevada, Las Vegas
- Nevada Association for the Education of Young Children
- Nevada Registry
- Nevada Child Care Provider Action Committee
- Children's Advocacy Alliance – Nevada Strong Start Pritzker PN3 Initiative
- The Children's Cabinet
 - HRSA Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Health Integration Grant
 - Nevada Early Childhood Family Leadership Council
 - Nevada Child Care Provider Action Committee
- Las Vegas Urban League

Select 2022 Key Accomplishments and Activities:

- Nevada's Early Childhood System Analysis – Completed a matrix of state agencies, departments, divisions and programs that comprise the early childhood system in Nevada inclusive of early childhood education, maternal and child health, maternal and child mental health, nutrition, child safety, economic security and social supports.
- Early Childhood System Structure Analysis – Compiled and analyzed a list of early childhood system structures from other states, including states that have established an executive level entity to align and coordinate cross-sector programs and services for the comprehensive early childhood system.
- Nevada Early Childhood Family Leadership Council (NECFLC) – The Council was established in 2022 to provide training, technical assistance and mentoring support for family leaders to become engaged in state level leadership and decision-making roles, beginning with the Nevada ECAC.
- Nevada Early Childhood System Asset and Gap Analysis (SAGA) – Completed the NV SAGA as a key component of the HRSA Early Childhood Comprehensive System (ECCS) Health

Integration grant, focused on identifying opportunities to integrate systems level approaches and structures to align and coordinate early learning and health systems.

- Nevada Early Childhood Data System Analysis – The Nevada ECAC has started this analysis which includes a matrix of all key performance indicators for the early childhood programs identified in the Systems Analysis to support the development of an early childhood integrated data system (ECIDS).
- Fiscal Mapping Project – Nevada ECAC partners have combined resources to work with The Children’s Funding Project to conduct a comprehensive analysis of federal, state and local funding sources for the early childhood system, which will result in an interactive, digital fiscal map for Nevada.

Recommendations

Based on the work accomplished by the Nevada ECAC in 2022, in collaboration with our collective partners, the Nevada ECAC have approved 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 is currently available through the HRSA ECCS grant (currently led by The Children’s Cabinet in collaboration with multiple state agencies and private partners) to support this recommendation through July 2026.
 - The proposed structure of the Nevada Governor’s Office of Early Childhood will allow the Governor to make informed decisions regarding early childhood policy, practice and financing by:
 - i. Improving coordination and efficiency across state departments and local levels of government;
 - ii. Mobilizing resources around the Governor’s priorities for children and families;
 - iii. Facilitating a holistic approach to serving children and families who utilize a cross sector of programs and supports;
 - iv. Strengthening partnerships with non-profit and private sector entities serving these populations; and
 - v. Increasing equitable access to programs and services in the early years to prevent or reduce the need for more costly remediation or services in later years.
2. Revise NRS 432A.076 to expand membership and duties of the NV ECAC to reflect the comprehensive early childhood system.

- Add a definition of early childhood: *“early childhood” means the prenatal period to age eight, which encompasses access to nutrition, health care, mental and behavioral health, protection, play and early learning to stimulate children’s physical, cognitive, linguistic and social-emotional development.*
 - Add the following representatives as appointed members of the Nevada ECAC:
 - i. *One member who is a representative of the Division of Public and Behavioral Health of the Department whose duties include responsibility for maternal, child and adolescent health;*
 - ii. *One member who is a representative of the Division of Welfare and Supportive Services, Child Care Development Program;*
 - iii. *One member who is a representative of a tribal entity;*
 - iv. *One member who is a parent or guardian of a child between the ages of 0 and 8 who has participated in one or more state or federal early childhood programs, including, but not limited to the Child Care Development Program, Head Start or Early Head Start, MIECHV Home-Visiting program*
 - Replace “early childhood education programs” with “early childhood programs” throughout the statute to reflect the comprehensive and holistic needs of the early childhood population and the cross-sector work of the Nevada ECAC.
3. 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 Early Childhood Community Health Worker Program.
 4. 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 2022-2024 Strategic Plan. We welcome any questions you might have regarding this 2022 annual 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., Chair
 NV Early Childhood Comprehensive
 Systems Director
 The Children’s Cabinet

Patrice Gardner

Patrice Gardner, Vice Chair
 Nevada Head Start State Collaboration Director
 Nevada Dept. of Education, Office of Early
 Learning and Development