

SILVER STATE STRONG

Nevada's Early Childhood Comprehensive
System Strategic Plan

2014-2017



Acknowledgements

This plan is possible because of individuals across the state that work to ensure that Nevada’s children have what they need to be healthy, growing and learning. They include families, teachers, health care professionals, and providers at businesses and organizations throughout the state that serve young children.

Leadership for this plan came from Nevada’s Early Childhood Advisory Council, managed by the Head Start Collaboration and Early Childhood Systems Office (HSC/ECSO). Funding for this process was provided primarily by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (AARA) and also supported by a grant from Nevada Home Visiting (Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program).

Hundreds of participants helped to shape this plan by completing surveys, participating in key informant interviews and attending meetings. Their assistance is gratefully acknowledged.

Strategic Planning Advisory Team

Amanda Haboush, Ph.D.	Nevada Institute for Children's Research & Policy (UNLV)
Angela Triché	Sunrise Children’s Foundation
Anna Severens	Nevada Department of Education (NDE)
Carrie Paldi	Creative Kids Learning Center
Carol Gilman	Head Start Collaboration and Early Childhood Systems Office
Denise Tanta-Ashby	Children’s Advocacy Alliance
Dolores Hauck	United Way of Southern Nevada
Margot Chappel	Head Start Collaboration and Early Childhood Systems Office
Marty Elquist	The Children’s Cabinet
Patti Oya	Division of Welfare and Supportive Services
Sherry Halley	Nevada Department of Education (NDE)
Erin Hasty	Office of the Governor

This plan was developed with Social Entrepreneurs Inc. (SEI)

6548 South McCarran Blvd. Suite B
Tel. 775.324.4567
Reno, NV 89703
www.socialent.com

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Introduction	6
Background	6
Timeline	7
Overview of Silver State Strong	10
The Framework	11
Values	12
School Readiness and Operational Theory of Change	13
Leadership Structure	14
The Importance of State and Local Initiatives	16
Overview of the Plan	18
Goals and Objectives	19
Targets and Strategic Measures	23
High Level Implementation Plan	25
Final Thoughts and Recommendations	31
Appendix	34
Alignment of Goals and Focus Areas	34
Glossary	37
Acronyms and Abbreviations	37
Resources	43

Executive Summary

SILVER STATE STRONG is a collaboratively developed and comprehensive framework for early childhood that aligns and supports Nevada’s statewide infrastructure to ensure that children enter school ready to learn and families are equipped to be successful. By instilling a “whole child” approach systemically throughout every county and school district, we will build capacity over the next four years to provide evidence-based child assessments, quality learning programs and environments, data-informed policies and community supports that are aligned across all early childhood education settings that serve children and their families.

This plan is built on a shared interest in improving education and health within our state, and an understanding that early learning and development provides the highest return on investment. Helping children to have positive early learning experiences is understood to have lifelong benefits. Starting early to create positive opportunities is starting right on time.

SILVER STATE STRONG (S³) articulates an ambitious, bold and clear plan for Nevada’s early childhood system that is achievable and will build Nevada’s system of early learning and development, resulting in improved school readiness for all children, especially those with high needs. The S³ agenda is driven by three equally important and interrelated goals:

- A. Improve Program Quality and Outcomes for Young Children**
- B. Increase the Number of Children with High Needs Attending High-Quality Early Learning and Development (ELD) Programs**
- C. Close the Achievement Gap between Children with High Needs and their Peers by Supporting Efforts to Increase Kindergarten Readiness**



Underlying Values

- ✓ ***“All” Means All*** – Opportunities and access are needed for children regardless of race, ethnicity, language, ability, or socio-economics; also includes children in home environments.
- ✓ ***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***– Our state’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 outcomes.

SILVER STATE STRONG Goals



Improve Program Quality and Outcomes for Young Children

Rationale

High-quality early learning and development programs have been found to be cost-effective and beneficial because they result in positive long-term educational outcomes and subsequent adult outcomes (Ramey & Ramey, 2004). This understanding has created a sense of urgency related to measuring young children's educational progress and readiness to enter school during their Pre-K years in order to:

- Improve understanding about what parents, educators, and communities can do, beginning at birth, to help children become school-ready;
- Identify students who would benefit from intervention and other services; and
- Inform local and state policy and program improvement decisions.

This goal can be accomplished through actions to:

- a) Improve outcomes for young children in high quality ELD programs.
- b) Improve alignment between Nevada ELD Standards and Nevada Academic Content Standards (NACS) based on the Common Core.
- c) Build awareness and commitment to support a continuum of high-quality early learning opportunities from birth through 3rd grade (referenced throughout this document as P-3).
- d) Increase alignment and implementation of Core Knowledge and Competencies throughout the early childhood professional development system & develop a progression of early childhood credentials.
- e) Provide financial and professional support to increase providers' progression throughout articulated professional development opportunities, and encourage advancement along the articulated pathway, resulting in workforce retention.



Increase the Number Of Children with High Needs Attending High-Quality Early Learning And Development (ELD)

Rationale

Nevada has set ambitious targets to include participation of the majority of ELD programs serving high needs children in Silver State Stars over the next four years. Nevada will promote access to high-quality ELD programs for children with high needs by increasing Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) subsidy reimbursement rates for families with children with special needs and providing additional support and training for ELD programs. Specifically, programs serving children with high needs will be supported to ensure that program staff is equipped to provide early childhood mental health support.

This goal can be accomplished through actions to:

- a) Improve the understanding by legislators, early childhood professionals, parents, and the business community of the importance of quality early childhood programs and school readiness.
- b) Understand what children know and can do at kindergarten entry.
- c) Coordinate data collection and use policies across agencies to align programs.
- d) Enable data-driven decision making.
- e) Improve implementation of effective practices at the state and local levels.



Close the Achievement Gap between Children with High Needs and their Peers by Supporting Efforts to Increase Kindergarten Readiness

Rationale

The achievement gap begins with an opportunity gap. To narrow or close this gap, families must be able to meet basic needs – things like health care, housing, and food are important building blocks that children need to be able to enter school ready to learn. Nevada’s S³ plan will build on existing work to ensure that:

- ELD program environments, curriculum and teaching materials reflect and support diverse populations;
- Screenings, assessments and parent materials/communications are delivered in cultural/language/special needs appropriate formats;
- Training, resources and policies improve access and expand inclusion opportunities for young children with disabilities and young children that are English Language Learners (ELL); and
- Families of children with high needs, including ELL students and children with disabilities, will be provided with culturally reflective materials, instruction and support to reinforce their role in promoting school readiness for their child.

This goal can be accomplished through actions to:

- a) Improve connections between early learning and development programs and health care providers.
- b) Promote use of developmental screenings in Pre-K and other settings.
- c) Improve health outcomes for all children through promotion of healthy eating, nutrition, and physical activity.
- d) Increase the skill level of providers in identifying the need for additional resources to help meet the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of young children in Nevada.

Actions to improve learning outcomes early in life are understood to lay the foundation for lifelong benefits, including success in school, graduation, and success in careers and life. This plan is based on extensive input from stakeholders and builds on the significant work already in progress throughout the state. Specific projects and activities to accomplish these goals are presented beginning on page 10.

Introduction

Background

In May 2013, the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council (NECAC) began a comprehensive strategic planning process to determine priorities for the State's early care and education (ECE) system and develop an explicit course of action for 2014. This plan is based on extensive input from stakeholders and builds on the significant progress already underway in order to improve early learning and development (ELD) outcomes for Nevada's children.

Definition of Early Learning and Development (ELD) Programs

Early Learning and Development Program means any (a) State-licensed or State-regulated program or provider, regardless of setting or funding source, that provides early care and education for children from birth to kindergarten entry, including, but not limited to, any program operated by a child care center or in a family child care home; (b) preschool program funded by the Federal Government or State or local educational agencies (including any IDEA-funded program); (c) Early Head Start and Head Start program; and (d) a non-relative child care provider who is not otherwise regulated by the State and who regularly cares for two or more unrelated children for a fee in a provider setting. This definition includes other programs that deliver early learning and development services in a child's home, such as MIECHV; Early Head Start; and Part C of IDEA. Early Learning and Development Standards means a set of expectations, guidelines, or developmental milestones that—

- (a) Describe what all children from birth to kindergarten entry should know and be able to do and their disposition toward learning;
- (b) Are appropriate for each age group (e.g., infants, toddlers, and preschoolers); for English learners; and for children with disabilities or developmental delays
- (c) Cover all Essential Domains of School Readiness; and
- (d) Are universally designed and developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate.

(Source: U.S. Department of Education, online at <http://www.ed.gov/early-learning/elc-draft-summary/definitions>)

Nevada is advancing an ambitious early childhood agenda that is focused on elevating public and legislative awareness of 1) the importance of universal access to high quality early learning and development experiences for **all** children, and 2) developing a shared understanding of why the early years matter. This agenda has begun to bear fruit in the form of successful legislation that allocates new funding focused on improving school readiness and new policy aimed at raising the bar for ECE programs and professionals so that quality and accountability are improved. This plan is designed to move that agenda forward, guided by a shared vision and organizing framework that coordinate's local and state programs, resources and policies to ensure that goals are met and outcomes are achieved.

Timeline

Context for this plan, including recent developments, are presented in the timeline: ¹

1965	Federal Head Start established as a part of America’s “War on Poverty” ←
1980	Child Care Licensing Standards implemented to establish safe and healthy early care and education settings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Settings that care for more than four children for a fee are required to be licensed (In Washoe Co. must be licensed if provider cares for more than one unrelated child) State & Washoe Co. child care licensing (cannot be less stringent than state)
1990	Child Care and Development Block Grant authorized, creating funding to assist working families with the cost of child care.
1995	First Head Start State Collaboration Grant received , supporting a visible presence for Head Start at the state level and enhancing opportunities for multi-agency and public-private partnerships among Head Start and other stakeholders.
1997	Nevada Association for the Education of Young Children (NevAEYC) established <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chartered to act on behalf of the needs, rights, and wellbeing of all young children, and their families, with special emphasis on developmental and educational services and resources
2001	State Pre-K funded and implemented <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First funded at \$3.5M serving 694 children and creating a statewide infrastructure that meets 7 out of 10 national benchmarks of quality. Office of Early Care and Education established <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administers quality set-aside dollars for the Child Care and Development Fund Many important programs and initiatives developed through this funding
2002	Core Knowledge Areas (CKAs) & Core Competencies Defined <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CKAs define what child care providers should know and understand in order to provide optimal care for young children Based on nationally accepted standards to standardize the expectations of early care and education professionals Career Ladder established, assisting ECE providers in planning their training, education and career development goals.
2004	The Nevada Registry created <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Started as a training approval system, becomes Nevada’s Professional Development and Career Ladder Pre-K Standards & Early Learning Guidelines developed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidelines for teachers to use when developing learning experiences for young children

56 centers served 2,752 children in Nevada (included tribal, Early Head Start and Head Start)

State Pre-K served 694 children in its first year, and built infrastructure for a statewide system

¹ Based on a presentation by Marty Elquist and Denise Tanata-Ashby; 10/22/2013

<p>2005</p>	<p>First Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant awarded to Nevada, to help build and integrate early childhood service systems that better meet the needs of children and families.</p> <p>TEACH Early Childhood Nevada Established</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scholarships available when working towards a Nevada Child Care Apprenticeship Certificate in ECE, Certificate of Achievement in ECE Associate Degree, or a Bachelor’s Degree in ECE
<p>2007</p>	<p>United Way of Southern NV Tuition Assistance Pre-K Scholarships (TAPS) created for Las Vegas Valley</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes Provider Training & Parent Engagement Components
<p>2009</p>	<p>Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council established by Executive Order</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for establishing guidelines to measure the school readiness of children and strengthening state-level coordination among ECE programs • Local councils, including a tribal council also convened <p>The American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA) expanded the number of Head Start and Early Head Start children served</p> <p>Silver State Stars, Nevada’s Tiered Quality Rating & Improvement System (TQRIS) Pilot launched</p> <p>Nevada Registry participation required for those working in a licensed setting</p>
<p>2010</p>	<p>Nevada Selected as one of two states to partner with Technical Assistance Center for Social Emotional Intervention (TACSEI)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced the ability of the ECE workforce to address the social, emotional and behavioral needs of children 0 to 5-years’ <p>Nevada Home Visiting funded through the Affordable Care Act (ACA)</p> <p>Early Head Start and Head Start enrollment increased through ARRA Funding</p> <p>Expanding Opportunities Technical Assistance grant begins</p>
<p>2011</p>	<p>P-3 Reform (supporting a birth to 3rd grade policy agenda) introduced for implementation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nevada Selected as one of 16 states to participate in Harvard P-3 Institute • Began work to align early learning development from Preschool (including prenatally) through 3rd Grade including standards, curriculum, assessment, and instruction. • P-3 approach integrated into competitive grant applications (e.g. Striving Readers), professional development, statewide conference tracks and standards • December 2011 – Pilot at Kate Smith Elementary in Washoe County <p>Nevada submitted an application to the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge.</p>

Early Head Start enrollment statewide by 262 Children and Head Start enrollment increased by 84 (in Clark County only)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While not funded, this application drove many system changes.
<p>2012</p>	<p>Children's Advocacy Alliance founded to advocate for the well-being of Nevada's Children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on School readiness, Children's health, Children's safety, and Publicizing Nevada's child well-being indicators through Nevada Children's Report Card <p>Nevada continues progress in P-3 reform</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of six states to receive NGA Birth-3rd Grade Policy Academy technical assistance grant • One of four states to receive Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) Kindergarten Entry Assessment Technical Assistance grant
<p>2013</p>	<p>A kindergarten entry assessment, Silver State KIDS (Kindergarten Inventory of Development Statewide) piloted using Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG)</p> <p>2013 Sequestration impacts Head Start enrollment</p> <p>Silver State Stars (Nevada's TQRIS) expands statewide</p> <p>Pre-K Standards crosswalk with Nevada Academic Content Standards (NACS) based on the Common Core developed</p> <p>NECAC established in Nevada Revised Statutes (Senate Bill 486)</p> <p>State Pre-K: Funding level at \$3.3M, currently serving 1,353 children (1.6% of the 3 and 4 year old population in Nevada) due to increased blended funding by districts.</p> <p>SB504 was passed to provide expanded services to ELL students P-4, which may be used by districts in part to align and expand State Pre-K programs.</p> <p>Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council begins a Comprehensive Strategic Planning process</p> <p>Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant submitted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nevada Department of Education applied October 2013, working to begin or expand initiatives that improve quality of ELD programs and increase access for children with high needs <p>Executive Order signed by Governor Sandoval established a new Division of Early Learning and Development in NDE's Office of Educational Opportunity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directs NDE and DHHS to transition the Office of Early Care and Education and the Head Start State Collaboration and Early Childhood Systems Office into the new NDE Division to better align ECE resources, programs and policy <p>The Governor signed AB 79 establishing the NECAC in statute.</p>

Enrollment lost for 45 children eligible for Early Head Start and 184 eligible for Head Start (2013 Funded enrollment for Head Start: 3,521 children)



Overview of Silver State Strong

SILVER STATE STRONG (S³) is Nevada’s plan for early childhood system building. This plan prioritizes four major focus areas of an integrated approach to improve quality, data, capacity and supports in order to ensure that Nevada’s young children and their families have access to affordable, high quality programs and supports in order to enter kindergarten ready to learn. These four focus areas are:

1. **Silver State Stars** – Nevada’s Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System;
2. **Silver State KIDS** (Kindergarten Inventory of Development Statewide) – Nevada’s Kindergarten Entry Assessment initiative;
3. **Silver State SKILLS** (Standards, Knowledge and Innovation for Life-Long Success) – Nevada’s system of professional development for early childhood educators; and
4. **Silver State Supports** – Nevada’s cross-system approach to provide culturally competent, community-based supports to families of children with high needs.



These four major projects will be carefully integrated to achieve three overarching, interrelated goals:

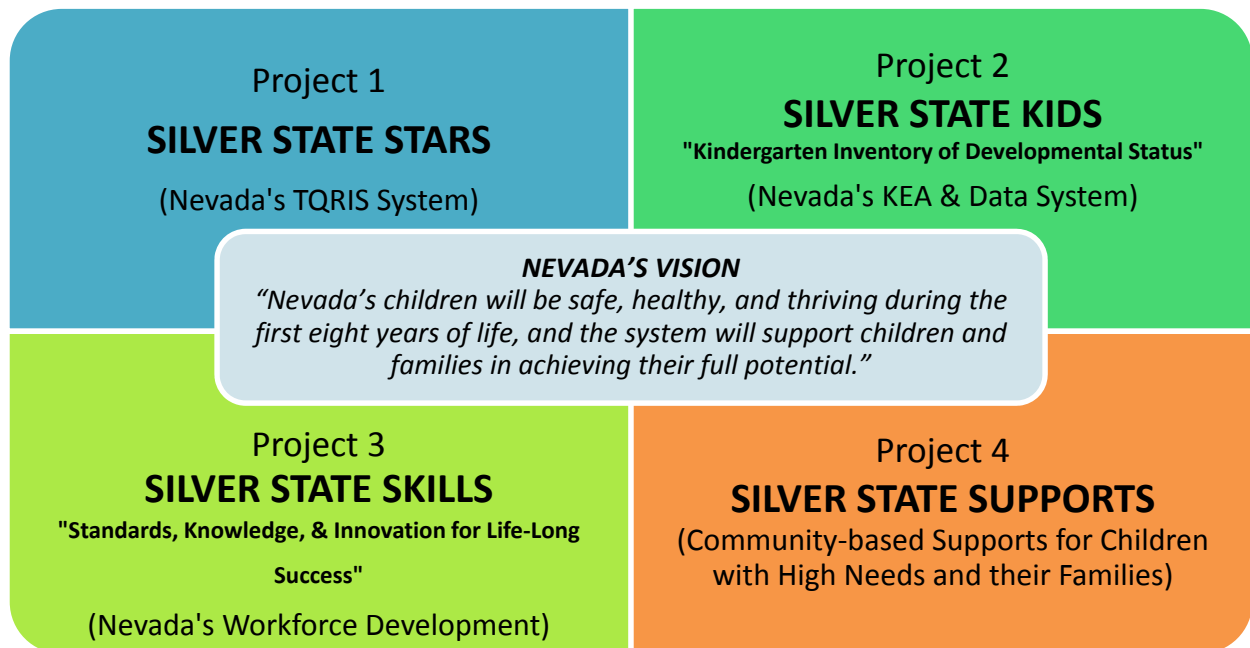
- A. **Improve program quality and outcomes for young children;**
- B. **Increase the number of children with high needs attending high-quality early learning and development programs; and**
- C. **Reduce the achievement gap between children with high needs and their peers.**

These goals are the drivers of the S³ plan. SILVER STATE STRONG is focused on developing an organized and coordinated infrastructure that supports an aligned and integrated system of early learning and development in Nevada. By engaging in systems development, integration of key initiatives, strengthening partnerships between state and local systems, and leveraging existing resources, this collective impact initiative is focused on strengthening the quality of and access to services and supports for families and young children to create an environment in Nevada where individuals, families, schools and workplaces have the capacity and commitment to help children thrive and succeed throughout life. SILVER STATE STRONG provides Nevada’s children with a **strong** start from birth, in conjunction with developing **strong** families that build **strong** communities.



The Framework

The framework for the SILVER STATE STRONG plan centers around a common shared 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.** The S³ agenda aims to streamline activities in Nevada that promote healthy development for infants and young children, as well as incorporate support for families, by establishing formal connections and sustainable partnerships across multiple sectors. The plan intentionally crosses sectors and agency boundaries, seeking to create a focus on results through collaboration. While most of this plan centers on state-level outcomes, the work of local communities and partners is vital to achieving these outcomes.



The resulting comprehensive early childhood system will promote positive cognitive, social and emotional development for young children, especially those with high needs. This will occur through strategies that will engage not only the ECE providers and stakeholders, but also families, private sector "investors" and local communities to understand their role and the value of supporting school readiness. The four major projects are integrally linked, and work together in a complementary way to achieve the goals of the S³ initiative.

This initiative will strengthen the cross-agency and statewide coordination that is critical to achieving collective impact by focusing resources on shared priorities that will achieve jointly identified outcomes to improve the quality and availability of early childhood services across Nevada. The array of early childhood programs and services that support healthy child development will be organized within a cohesive system that is coordinated and aligned across agencies, sectors and communities.

Values

SILVER STATE STRONG is a collaboratively developed and comprehensive framework for early childhood that aligns and supports Nevada’s statewide infrastructure to ensure that children enter school ready to learn and families are equipped to be successful. By instilling a “whole child” approach systemically throughout every county and school district, we will build capacity over the next four years to provide meaningful child assessments, quality learning programs and environments, data-informed policies and community supports that are aligned across all early childhood education settings that serve children and their families.

The S³ plan is guided by the following principles:

1. Everyone who is involved in children’s lives will have a broad awareness of the strengths, needs, and status of Nevada’s children;
2. Information that improves children’s development and learning will be available to inform program development, policy, and decision-making; and
3. All children and families will have access to high quality early learning development programs and knowledge of child development that support readiness for school.

This plan is built on a shared interest in improving education and health within our state, and an understanding that early learning and development provides the highest return on investment. Helping children have positive early learning experiences is understood to have lifelong benefits. In early childhood, starting early to create positive opportunities is starting right on time. In the face of multiple and often competing priorities and needs for limited resources, the importance of establishing a shared values framework to guide decision-making cannot be understated.

Underlying Values

Meaningful change requires reorientation to shared values across systems, with a mutual understanding of terms, definitions and expectations. The following values are informed by stakeholders, and represent a starting point for the development of a shared values statement:

- ✓ **“All” Means All** – Opportunities and access are needed for children regardless of race, ethnicity, language, ability, or socio-economics. Also includes children in home environments.
- ✓ **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**– Our state’s districts, 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 strategies toward shared outcomes.

School Readiness and Operational Theory of Change

In 2012, Nevada adopted the following equation for school readiness, which serves to support achievement of the State’s goals related to all of the essential domains of school readiness:

$$\textit{Ready Families} + \textit{Ready Educators} + \textit{Ready Schools} + \textit{Ready Communities} + \textit{Ready Systems} = \textit{Children are Ready for School.}$$

The elements of the above equation are described as follows:

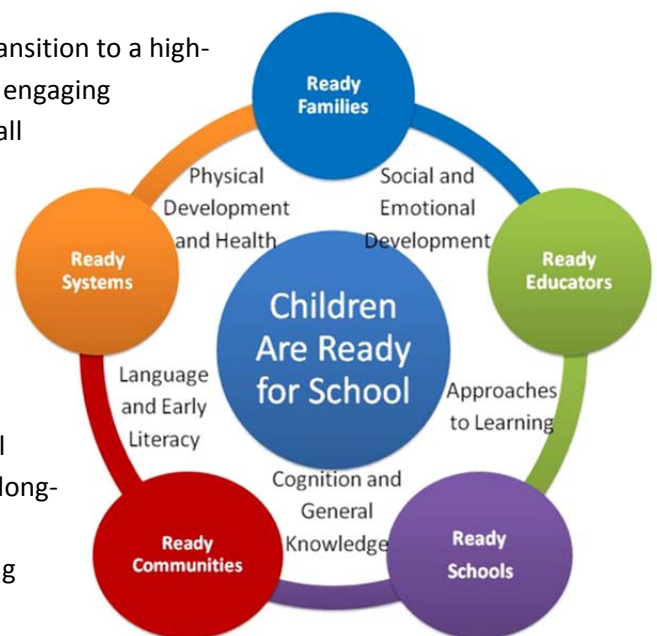
“Ready Families” have adults who understand they are the most important people in the child’s life, understand age appropriate development, and support school readiness. They recognize their role as a child’s first and most important teacher, provide steady, supportive care, ensure safe and consistent environments, promote good health, and foster excitement about learning.

“Ready Educators” are skilled teachers who understand age appropriate development, possess the skills to develop appropriate curriculum based on children’s development, recognize, reinforce, and extend children’s strengths and who are sensitive to cultural values and individual differences, including children with special needs.

“Ready Schools” accept all children and provide a seamless transition to a high-quality developmentally appropriate learning environment by engaging families and the whole community. A ready school welcomes all children and their families with opportunities to enhance and build confidence in their skills, knowledge, and abilities. Children in ready schools are supported by ready educators.

“Ready Communities” provide support for families in their role as primary stewards of children’s readiness. Ready communities, including businesses, faith-based organizations, early childhood service providers, community groups and local governments, work together to support children's school and long-term success by providing families affordable access to information, services, high-quality child care, and early learning opportunities.

“Ready Systems” describes the availability, quality, and affordability of proven programs that influence child development and school readiness. It also includes the degree to which public and private agencies promote policies and practices, including data collection, that enhance access to needed supports, information, and tools that help all other components (family, educators, schools and children) enable children to be ready for school.



Leadership Structure

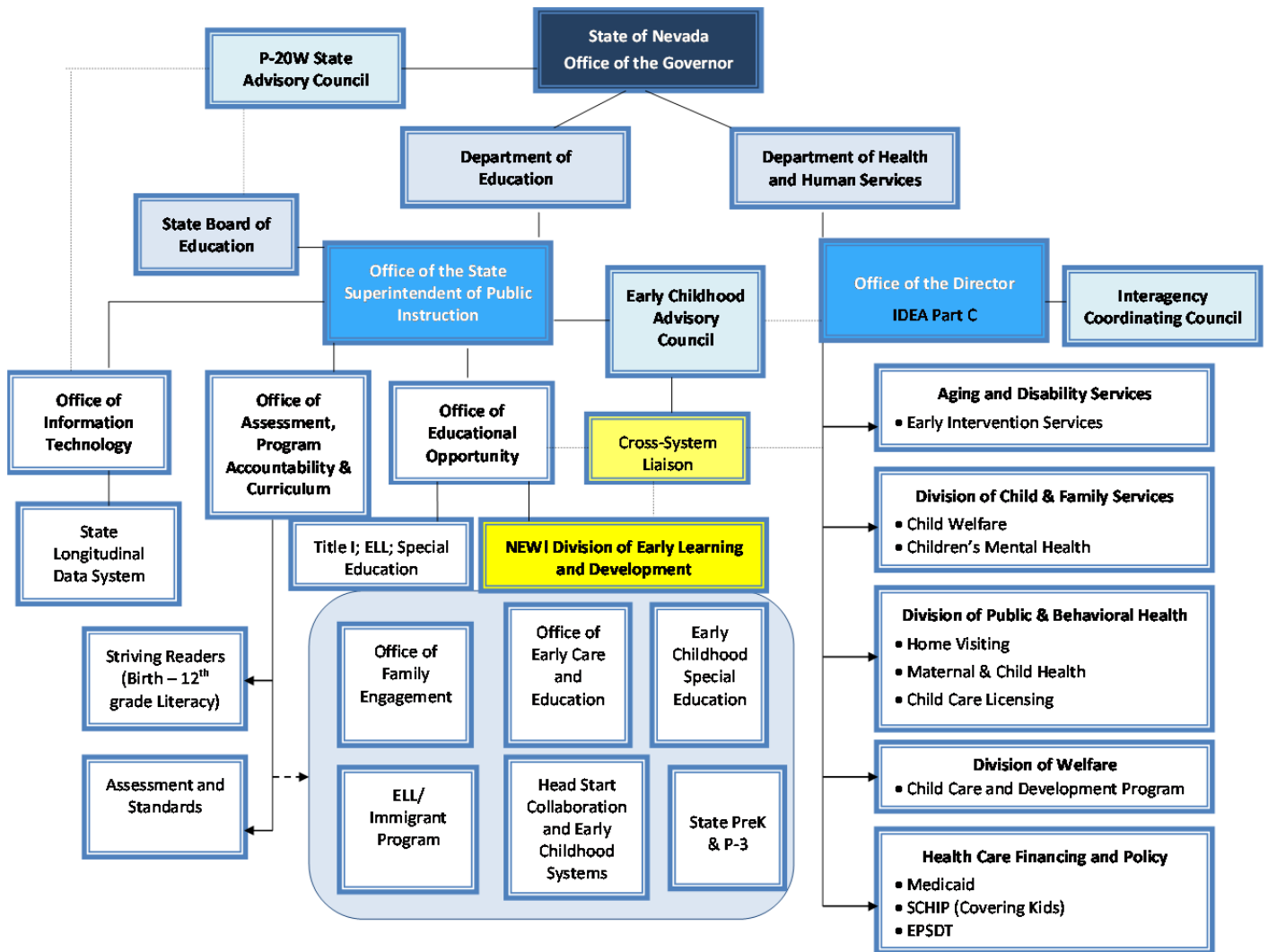
To better align Nevada’s early childhood system across the state and to improve education outcomes for the children served by that system, the leadership structure is being substantively reorganized. Per Governor Sandoval’s Executive Order issued in October 2013, NDE will provide primary leadership and support for SILVER STATE STRONG, in close collaboration with the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). A robust **Division of Early Learning and Development** is being created within the NDE’s Office of Educational Opportunity (OEO) to better align early childhood learning and development programs and services within the state. This new division will encompass all of the agencies responsible for overseeing program quality, interagency coordination, early childhood workforce development, and ELD standards for publicly-funded ELD programs.

This leadership structure elevates early childhood care and education as a true priority in our state, and will support stronger accountability for achieving improved early learning and development outcomes for all children, especially those with high needs. This reorganization is responsive to input from Nevada’s early childhood system stakeholders, providers, educators, intermediaries, private sector partners, and families of Nevada’s young children – who have collectively called for a more coordinated and aligned system of early learning and development.

NDE’s leadership includes oversight of the NECAC, which will maintain direct lines of communication with the Governor’s office via the State Superintendent, who sits on the Governor’s Cabinet. Additional leadership for programs and services will be administered by NDE via the repositioning of several Participating State Agencies to NDE that are currently housed within DHHS, including the Head Start Collaboration and Early Childhood Systems Office and the Office of Early Care and Education, which administers CCDF quality dollars that fund Silver State Stars TQRIS, ELD program accreditation, the Nevada Pre-K Standards, T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood[®] Nevada and the Nevada Registry.

The NECAC will provide monitoring and guidance for the reform agenda, reporting directly to the State Superintendent. The NECAC serves at the Governor’s pleasure, having been established by Executive Order in 2009. Legislation was passed in 2013 that revised the provisions of the statute defining the NECAC’s role and membership, in order to promote better alignment and cross-agency coordination related to Nevada’s early childhood system. The NECAC will serve as the cross-system monitor of the plan and will report to the public on the progress of Nevada’s reform efforts. The NECAC will also establish a more formalized structure to support coordination with local ECACs and other critical entities (e.g. P-20W Advisory Council, NevAEYC) with a role in the implementation of the SILVER STATE STRONG. The organizational chart below represents this leadership and coordination structure, followed by a description of the associated governance-related responsibilities of each entity:

Organizational Chart²



² Organizational chart is current as of 12/31/13.

The Importance of State and Local Initiatives

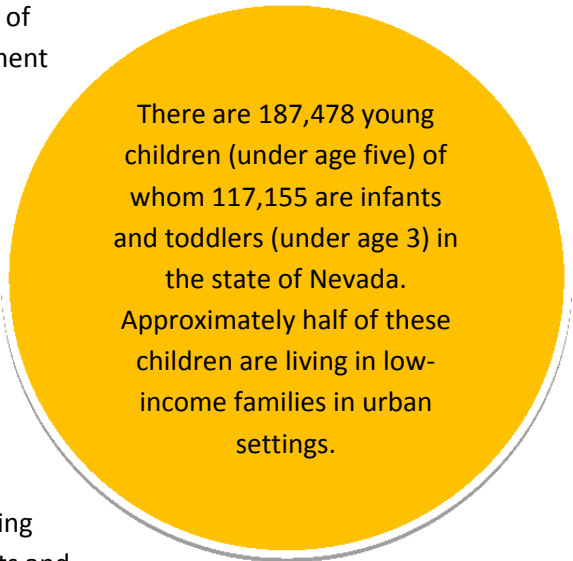
Full implementation of SILVER STATE STRONG (S³) will result in a truly comprehensive early childhood system in Nevada, characterized by a connected infrastructure of effective, integrated services and systems that promote school readiness, support young children with high needs and their families, and strengthen partnerships between state and local systems. At the state level, this reform agenda will:

1. Align Nevada’s cross-system coordination structure and forum for leadership in Nevada’s early childhood system to integrate planning, share resources, reduce redundancies, address policy barriers, and establish shared accountability for jointly defined outcomes;
2. Utilize the restructured leadership model, with the NDE taking the lead, to ensure alignment of policies, programs and funding, along with data-driven decision making to improve program quality and ease of access to services for children and their families;
3. Strengthen the statewide network of local councils that promote and support the education, health and wellness of children and their families in their communities; and
4. Ensure sustainability of the improved early learning and development outcomes achieved through SILVER STATE STRONG by securing ongoing legislative and private sector support through the frequent sharing of information about the research regarding the return on early childhood investments.

At the local level, this reform agenda will:

1. Strengthen the skills and knowledge of the early childhood workforce to provide integrated, family-centered, evidence-based services, including home visiting services and developmental assessments in a range of settings;
2. Increase family, school, provider and community awareness of how to promote and support healthy learning and development in children; and
3. Implement a comprehensive early childhood system of care for each community’s young children and their families to foster positive social and emotional development so that better outcomes are achieved for children.

Stakeholder inclusion and involvement is central to the S³ plan. Nevada’s vision for an integrated state and local approach to building a coordinated early learning data system relies on partnerships and coordination with local school districts, early learning councils and ECE programs. Many organizations, workgroups, parents and caregivers, family advocates and ECE professionals have provided input into this plan, including licensing



There are 187,478 young children (under age five) of whom 117,155 are infants and toddlers (under age 3) in the state of Nevada. Approximately half of these children are living in low-income families in urban settings.

entities, school districts, colleges and universities, councils, and local programs, in an effort to positively impact the quality of life, care, and education for all young children in Nevada.³ These same entities, as well as civic leaders, funders, and policy makers are considered key stakeholders in Nevada’s early childhood education and care system and will be regularly engaged to provide input and feedback as implementation progresses.

³ For more information about stakeholder outreach that informed this plan, please see **Social Entrepreneurs Inc (SEI)**. *Stakeholder Outreach Summary*. s.l. : Head Start Collaboration and Early Childhood Systems Office , 2013. Available online at http://www.nevadaecac.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Comprehensive-Plan_Stakeholder-Outreach-Summary_November.pdf

Overview of the Plan

The SILVER STATE STRONG plan to increase ECE program quality and capacity to support and address the social and emotional development of young children, especially those with high needs, will involve a four-pronged approach.

1. **Coordinated Leadership:** Experts from participating state agencies, Silver State Stars, The Nevada Registry, NSHE and community-based providers will work with NDE, DHHS and the NECAC to inform the development and implementation of child, program, and practitioner standards to ensure they address the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse children and children with special needs. Targeted outreach will be conducted to engage families in developing recommendations for standards, assessments, and activities that support improved school readiness outcomes. Recommendations will be made to the Governor and State Legislature from the NECAC via the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.
2. **Professional Development:** Silver State SKILLS will focus on strengthening the professional development and training system for all ECE practitioners to ensure that ELD Standards are effectively implemented. A coordinated approach in the use of the common standards will ensure integration of standards addressing family leadership, engagement and support across programs, including appropriate training for providers.
3. **Resource Mapping:** Nevada’s ELD programs, including home-visiting and family support programs, will be mapped to identify gaps and opportunities to coordinate place-based services for children with high needs and their families. Additionally, existing funding resources and state plans will be strategically leveraged to address health, social-emotional and mental health development of children. This includes the state Medicaid Plan, child welfare, IDEA Part C, ESEA Title I, home visiting, substance abuse, TANF, etc.
4. **Partnerships:** Partnerships between programs, parents, health providers, developmental specialists, schools, and other community service providers will be supported via local ECACs to more consistently identify and address the developmental needs of young children birth to five.

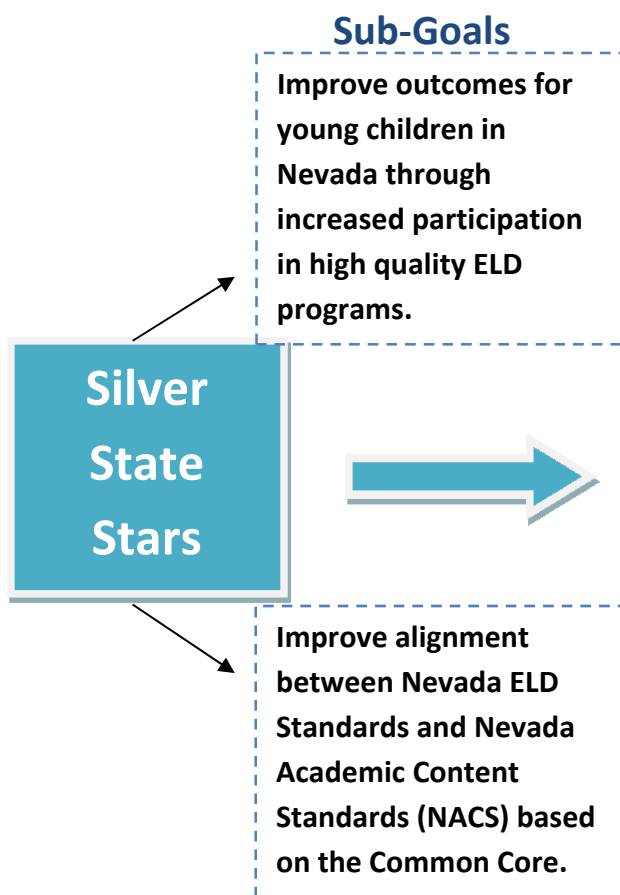
Once implemented, the increased capacity of the early childhood workforce, the improved quality of ELD programs, and the expanded range of community-based supports will result in an integrated and accessible array of educational, social, emotional and environmental supports for young children and their families. The program will build upon and strengthen services that are already in place, and establish new services where gaps exist.

Goals and Objectives

The S³ agenda is driven by three equally important and interrelated goals:

- A. Improve Program Quality And Outcomes For Young Children**
- B. Increase The Number Of Children With High Needs Attending High-Quality Early Learning And Development Programs**
- C. Close The Achievement Gap Between Children With High Needs And Their Peers By Supporting Efforts To Increase Kindergarten Readiness**

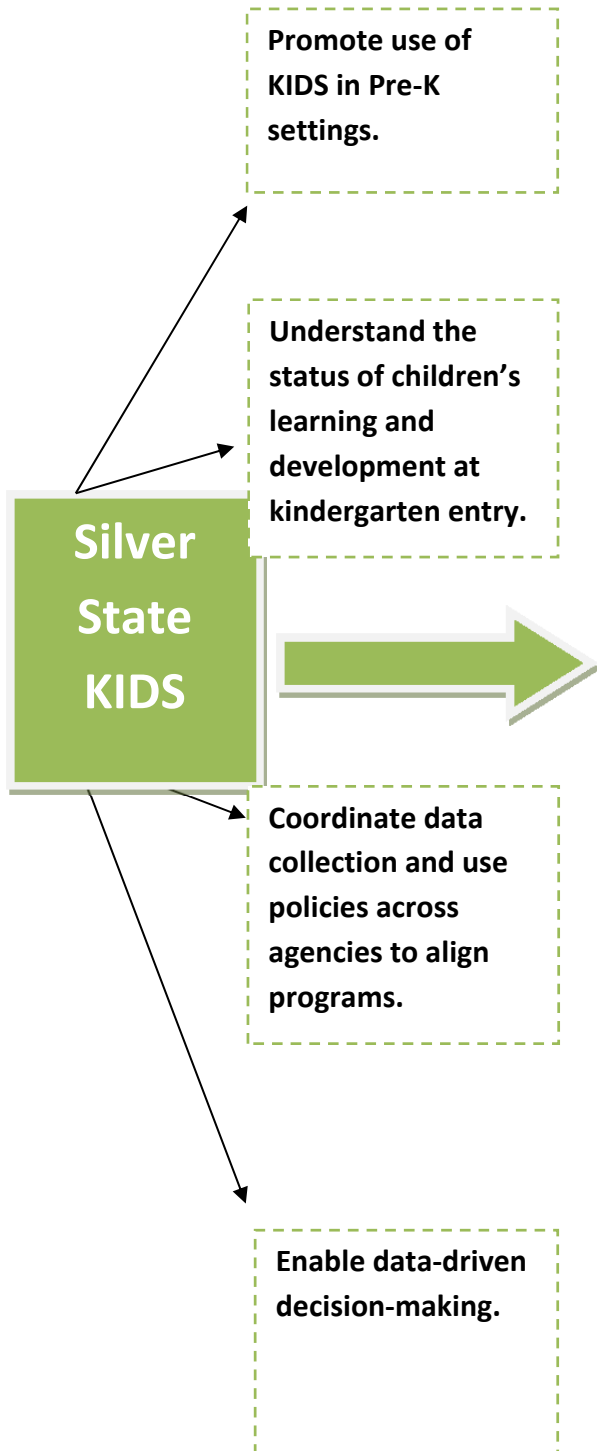
SILVER STATE STRONG’s four major focus areas are structured to align with these goals. The following summary presents a high-level overview of the sub-goals for these focus areas, and the corresponding major objectives of the four-year implementation plan. Note that implementation of the objectives may be prioritized based on resource availability and that successful implementation requires participation and input from community partners.



Major Objectives:

1. All early learning and development (ELD) programs will be required to participate in Silver State Stars
2. 100% of state-funded Pre-K programs will be included in Silver State Stars
3. Publically funded preschool programs located in the same school site as participating state-funded preschool will be required to participate in Silver State Stars
4. All centers participating in *T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Nevada* will participate
5. A provider- and family-friendly website is launched
6. New coaches and assessors to reliability are trained in Environmental Rating Scales to increase capacity of Nevada’s tiered quality rating and improvement system (TQRIS)
7. TQRIS coaches are trained and certified as Classroom Assessment Scoring System™ (CLASS™) CLASS observers
8. A Home Provider model is developed and pilot launched
9. Validation data on all participating programs is collected and analyzed
10. A random sample of child-level data is collected to inform evaluation
11. State Board of Education (SBE) approval of standards is achieved is printed and online
12. Early Learning Guidelines (ELG) and Pre-K Standards are printed and online
13. Assessment data from ECE programs participating in the QRIS is placed into a community-level data mapping tool

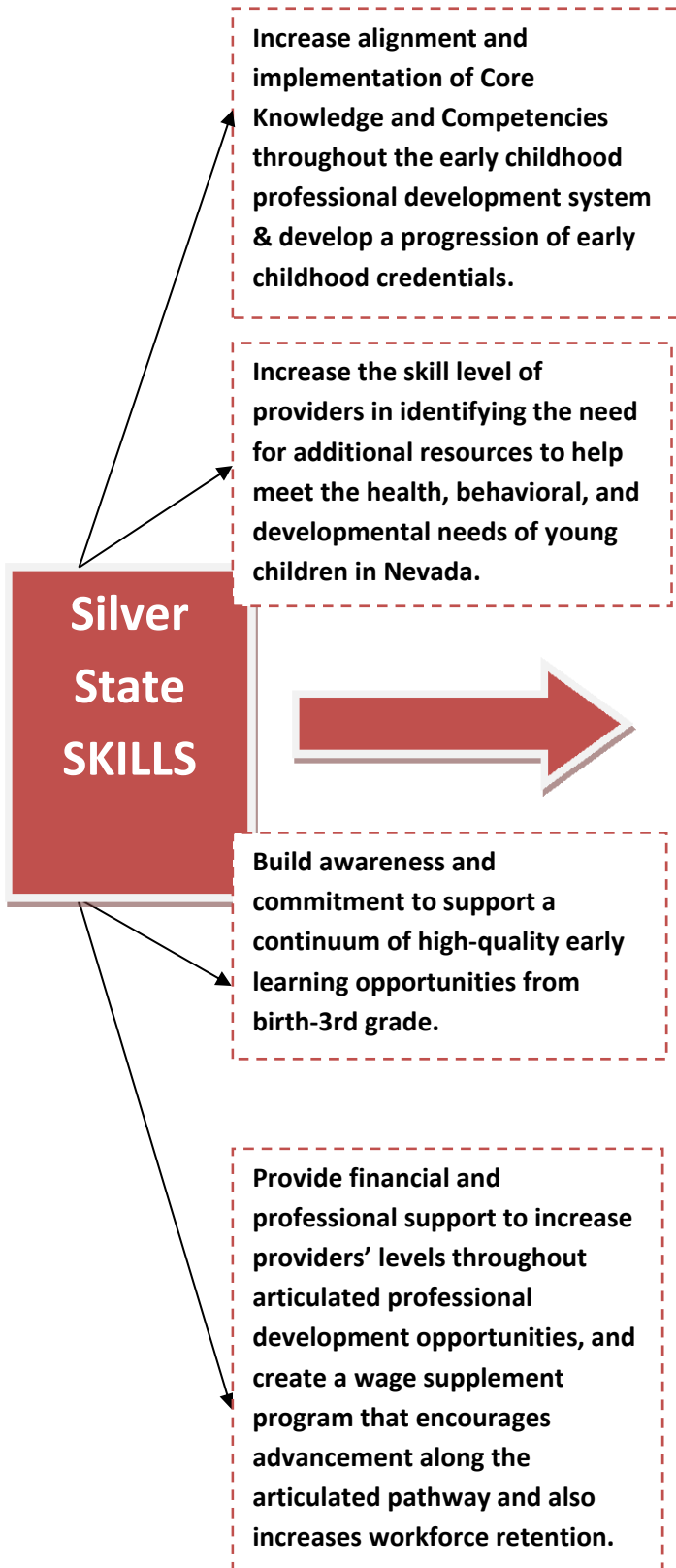
Sub-Goals



Major Objectives:

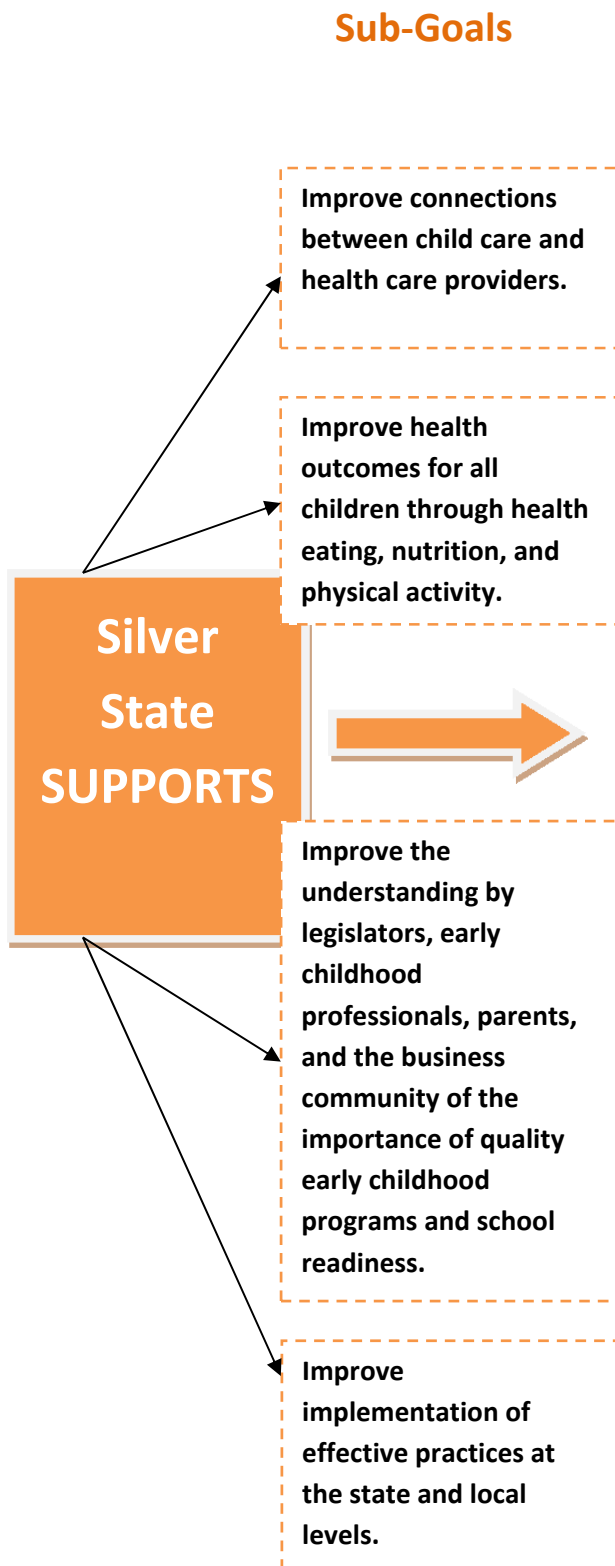
1. Coordinate train the trainer event for communities to prepare teachers of children birth through kindergarten using kindergarten inventory of development statewide (Silver State KIDS)
2. Develop a calendar of scheduled training opportunities to address the needs of young children in Nevada connecting to programs and initiative
3. Provide technical assistance to streamline assessments so that programs and districts can analyze which existing assessment tools and processes can be replaced with Silver State KIDS
4. Work with the P-20W Council to develop through its state data governance workgroup to set and implement state policies that guide data collection, access, and use
5. Establish data-sharing agreements to develop formal documents that define how data would be linked and used
6. Develop user-friendly and efficient reporting and information sharing mechanisms that facilitate data sharing with districts, classrooms, and families about child progress
7. Define how pre-K sites will use the assessment, and, develop data sharing agreements to facilitate integration of the data
8. Use data sharing to support peer mentoring to facilitate improved outcomes
9. Work with assessment vendor to integrate data with local information systems at the district level, via upload into district systems (e.g. Infinite Campus, Power School)
10. Complete inter-rater reliability evaluation and conduct validity study
11. Launch communications plan to share findings from Phase I with parents, agencies, districts, early care and education programs, and other stakeholders
12. Provide an annual report to all stakeholders on outcomes and progress
13. Work with the Nevada Head Start Association to link child-level demographic and developmental data and program site information for all funded programs in the state to the statewide ECE data system

Sub-Goals



Major Objectives:

1. Hire additional position in Office of Early Care and Education to provide training on the early learning guidelines and Pre-K Standards
2. Launch Nevada's Birth-3rd Grade Policy Academy
3. Define core competencies for early childhood and early elementary educators that are aligned with the state's pre-K standards, the Common Core State Standards, and Nevada's Silver State KIDS
4. Create additional scholarship tracks within T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Nevada to support early childhood professionals as they advance along the Articulated Career Pathway
5. Provide trainings and professional development opportunities on **Nevada Early Learning and Development Standards** to early childhood home, community and school based providers statewide including activities, resources, & developmentally appropriate practices (DAPS) using the guidelines and ideas for families and providers
6. Implement a wage supplement program and Education Award program to support early childhood educators increasing proficiency
7. Expand opportunities for districts to engage in birth through 3rd initiatives at both the state and local levels through the regional professional development programs (RDPDs), local early childhood advisory councils, Striving Readers, pre-k standards alignment and training, NV Power of K pilot project, etc.)
8. Hold the Governor's Symposium in June 2014 to inform stakeholders of accomplishments from P-3 reform efforts and to prepare for the 2015 legislative session



Major Objectives:

1. Provide parents/families/caregivers with information about early care and education programs available to them and improve information exchange to support their children’s development
2. Provide programs and services with information about the children they are serving to improve individualized teaching and learning, and to inform and support continuous quality improvement
3. Increase community-based partnerships with state and non-profit agencies to support the screening and services to address health, behavioral, and developmental concerns
4. Convene an Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Workgroup under NECAC to improve and increase access to developmental screening for children birth to 3rd grade
5. Ensure the screening referrals receive follow-up services as appropriate
6. Track the number of developmental/health screenings that take place statewide for children birth to 8 years
7. Expand the use of the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) and ASQ-Social Emotional statewide
8. Expand distribution of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) *Learn The Signs, Act Early Milestone Moment (LTSAE)* booklets to parents, physicians, and other community providers by 25%
9. Crosswalk the early learning guidelines and Pre-K Standards to the CDC LTSAE Milestone Moments. Print, and make available online for parents and providers to reference their child’s development
10. Expand Home Visiting collaboration between Maternal and Child Health (MCH) and Nevada Department of Education, and Parent Advisory council by sharing information, events, and utilizing web sites for dissemination of information between agencies
11. Develop interactive materials for online users on the ELGs
12. Translate ELG and Pre-K Standards into Spanish, print and available online
13. Develop/launch a statewide messaging campaign, in coordination with Strong Start, communicating the value of investing in early learning and development, starting at birth

Targets and Strategic Measures

Targets and strategic measures have been established for each of the three overarching goals and are described below.⁴ The measures will allow Nevada to measure its progress annually to ensure the plan is on course for achieving stated objectives. These targets were created with the understanding that funding must be developed to support programs and activities.

A. IMPROVE PROGRAM QUALITY AND OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Silver State SKILLS will strengthen incentives and supports for 130 early childhood educators to attain early childhood degrees, earn a livable wage, and improve environments for and interactions with children and their families.

Silver State Supports will help working families of children with high needs to access high-quality ELD programs that meet those needs by providing 228 additional full-day, full-year programs, coupled with transportation; meals; and family support services.

B. INCREASE THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN WITH HIGH NEEDS ATTENDING HIGH-QUALITY EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Silver State Stars will expand participation of ELD programs statewide that receive subsidies and serve children with high needs to 100% by 2017.

Silver State KIDS will administer a common, statewide kindergarten entry assessment to 100% of children enrolled in public elementary school that is aligned with early learning standards; covers all essential domains of school readiness; is valid, reliable, and appropriate for all children; and is reported to statewide data systems.

Silver State SKILLS will increase, by 7% per year, the number of early childhood educators who are participating and progressing on the Nevada Career Ladder and Pathways to Proficiency, and integrate mentoring and coaching into degree and non-degree training for early childhood educators.

Silver State Supports will increase by 60% the number of children with high needs that receive developmental screening and are referred for developmentally appropriate services in their community.

⁴ Baseline data is available in Nevada's Race to the Top 2013 Early Learning Challenge Application. Available online at <http://www.nevadaecac.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Nevada-2013-RTT-ELC-Application-Narrative-Final.pdf>

C. CLOSE THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP BETWEEN CHILDREN WITH HIGH NEEDS AND THEIR PEERS BY SUPPORTING EFFORTS TO INCREASE KINDERGARTEN READINESS

Silver State Stars will maintain the supply of high-quality child care in areas with high concentrations of Children with High Needs by increasing the participation in the State Funded Pre-K programs to 100% and providing incentives to high-quality providers by 2017.

Silver State KIDS will conduct formative assessment for all children upon kindergarten entry by Year 4, generating data that will be used to increase Pre-K educators' awareness and documentation of children's development and skills so that achievement gaps are minimized because children receive relevant instruction and supports based on their individual strengths and needs.

Silver State SKILLS will deliver joint training annually for 1,500 early childhood educators, K-3rd teachers, principals and administrators on social-emotional supports and interactions with children and their families, especially those with high needs.

High Level Implementation Plan

PROJECT 1: SILVER STATE STARS (TQRIS)					
Sub-Goals: A) Improve outcomes for young children in high quality ELD programs. B) Enhance alignment between Nevada Early Learning and Development Standards and P-3. C) Build awareness and commitment to support a continuum of high-quality early learning opportunities from birth through 3rd grade. D) Increase alignment and implementation of Core Knowledge and Competencies throughout the early childhood professional development system & develop a progression of early childhood credentials. E) Provide financial and professional support to increase providers' progression throughout articulated professional development opportunities, and encourage advancement along the articulated pathway and also increases workforce retention.					
Responsibility & Resources	Project, Goals and Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4
NDE: Office of Educational Opportunity – Division of Early Learning and Development	All ELD programs with 30% or more children on subsidy required to participate in Silver State Stars			X	X
	100% of state-funded Pre-K programs will be included in Silver State Stars			X	X
	Publically funded preschool programs located in the same school site as participating state-funded preschool will be required to participate			X	X
T.E.A.C.H./Child Care Licensing	Require participation for all centers participating in TEACH	X			
NDE: Office of Educational Opportunity – Division of Early Learning and Development	Launch provider- and family-friendly website	X			
	Begin training coaches and assessors to reliability in ERS in order to substantially increase capacity of TQRIS	X	X		
	CLASS observer training and certification for TQRIS coaches	X	X	X	X
	Develop Home Provider model and launch pilot	X	X	X	
	Continue to collect validation data on all participating programs	X	X	X	X
	Collect random sample of child-level data	X	X	X	X
	SBE approval of Early Learning Guidelines (ELG), print and make available online	X			
NECAC Workgroup, NDE-SBE	Review and revise Pre-K Standards including gaining SBE approval, printing, and making available online	X			
NDE-DELD	Add assessment data from ECE programs participating in the TQRIS into a community-level data mapping tool	X	X	X	X

PROJECT 2: SILVER STATE KIDS (KEA)					
Sub-Goals: A) Promote use of TSG developmental screening in Pre-K settings. B) Understand the status of children’s learning and development at kindergarten entry. C) Coordinate data collection and use policies across agencies to align programs. D) Enable data-driven decision making.					
Responsibility & Resources	Project, Goals and Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4
NECAC/HSSC & ECSO	Convene Developmental Screening workgroup to develop communication plan and identify additional partners. Review work plan. Schedule meetings for the year. Coordinate avenues for increasing parent and caregiver support to ASQ. Update workgroup on pilot using TSG in specified counties	X			
The Nevada Registry	Coordinate Train the trainer event so communities are prepared to train teachers of children birth through kindergarten (or third grade if available) using TSG		X	X	X
NECAC/NDE Public Information Officer DHHS Public Information Officer	Create a communication plan that articulates how stakeholders will receive communication about the project. Incorporate information on Silver State KIDS into existing family engagement activities, such as parent conferences	X			
NECAC/HSSC & ECSO The Nevada Registry	Develop training calendar. The training calendar must include a train the trainer learning institute, two-day initial training for all teachers using the assessment, and training for administrators in understanding and using assessment data	X			
	Schedule and train local teachers. Teachers will train for two-days to become fluent in the assessment. Online modules are available for follow-up questions as well as to address any unanticipated teacher turnover	X	X	X	X
HSSC & ECSO	Define parameters for timing of assessment administration, to include considerations for full day and half-day kindergarten and non-traditional calendars	X			
	Provide TA to streamline assessments so that programs and districts can analyze which existing assessment tools and processes can be replaced with Silver State KIDS, depending on the purposes of the assessment	X	X	X	X
NECAC, P-20W Council NDE Information Technology DHHS PSA’s	Work with the P-20W Council to develop through its state data governance workgroup to set and implement state policies that guide data collection, access, and use	X			
	Establish data-sharing agreements to develop formal documents that define how data would be linked and used.		X	X	
	Develop user-friendly and efficient reporting and information	X	X		

PROJECT 2: SILVER STATE KIDS (KEA)					
Sub-Goals: A) Promote use of TSG developmental screening in Pre-K settings. B) Understand the status of children’s learning and development at kindergarten entry. C) Coordinate data collection and use policies across agencies to align programs. D) Enable data-driven decision making.					
Responsibility & Resources	Project, Goals and Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4
	sharing mechanisms that facilitate data sharing with districts, classrooms, and families about child progress				
	Define how pre-K sites will use the assessment, and, develop data sharing agreements to facilitate integration of the data		X	X	
NDE, RPDPs	Use data sharing to support peer mentoring to facilitate improved outcomes	X	X	X	X
HSSC & ECSO	Work with assessment vendor to integrate data with local information systems at the district level, via upload into district systems (e.g. Infinite Campus, Power School (Progress has been made to link data to NDE State Longitudinal Data System))	X	X	X	X
HSSC & ECSO	Evaluate the results of Phase I implementation, answering to the degree possible the evaluation questions. Evaluation should include recommendations to improve the next phase	X			
	Complete inter-rater reliability evaluation and conduct validity study	X	X	X	X
NDE DHHS	Launch communications plan to share findings from Phase I with parents, agencies, districts, ECE programs, and other stakeholders		X	X	X
The Nevada Registry	Train additional trainers to train teachers and program staff designated for participation in KEA			X	X
HSSC & ECSO	Provide an annual report to all stakeholders on outcomes and progress	X	X	X	X
	Work with the Nevada Head Start Association to link child-level demographic and developmental data and program site information for all funded programs in the state to the statewide ECE data system			X	X

PROJECT 3: SILVER STATE SKILLS

Sub-Goals:

A) Increase alignment and implementation of Core Knowledge and Competencies throughout the early childhood professional development system & develop a progression of early childhood credentials.

B) Increase the skill level of providers in identifying the need for additional resources to help meet the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of young children in Nevada.

C) Build awareness and commitment to support a continuum of high-quality early learning opportunities from birth-3rd grade.

D) Provide financial and professional support to increase providers' levels throughout articulated professional development opportunities, and create a wage supplement program that encourages advancement along the articulated pathway and also increases workforce retention.

Responsibility & Resources	Project, Goals and Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4
NDE	Hire additional position in Office of Early Care and Education to provide training on the ELG and Pre-K Standards	X			
NDE	Launch Nevada's Birth-3rd Grade Policy Academy	X			
The Nevada Registry T.E.A.C.H. NSHE	Develop reciprocity of relevant training opportunities between Nevada Registry and Nevada Department of Education so that relevant CEUs and Registry Training Hours can each count toward teachers' professional development (P-3)		X		
NDE	Develop a calendar of scheduled training opportunities to address the needs of young children in Nevada connecting to TQRIS/TACSEI/PBS/P3	X			
The Nevada Registry T.E.A.C.H. NSHE	Review and crosswalk the Core Knowledge and Competencies with the NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards, verify that Core Knowledge and Competencies reflect all aspects defined in the grant application, and revise the Core Knowledge and Competencies as necessary	X			
The Nevada Registry T.E.A.C.H. NSHE	Define core competencies for early childhood and early elementary educators that are aligned with the state's pre-k standards, the Common Core State Standards, and Nevada's Silver State KIDS	X			
The Nevada Registry T.E.A.C.H. NSHE	Create additional scholarship tracks within T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Nevada to support early childhood professionals as they advance along the Articulated Career Pathway		X		
The Nevada Registry T.E.A.C.H. NSHE	Provide trainings and professional development opportunities on Nevada ELD Standards to EC home, community and school based providers statewide including activities, resources, & DAPS on using the guidelines and ideas for families and providers	X	X	X	X
The Nevada Registry T.E.A.C.H. NSHE	Implement a wage supplement program and Education Award program to support early childhood educators increase proficiency			X	X

PROJECT 3: SILVER STATE SKILLS

Sub-Goals:

A) Increase alignment and implementation of Core Knowledge and Competencies throughout the early childhood professional development system & develop a progression of early childhood credentials.

B) Increase the skill level of providers in identifying the need for additional resources to help meet the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of young children in Nevada.

C) Build awareness and commitment to support a continuum of high-quality early learning opportunities from birth-3rd grade.

D) Provide financial and professional support to increase providers' levels throughout articulated professional development opportunities, and create a wage supplement program that encourages advancement along the articulated pathway and also increases workforce retention.

Responsibility & Resources	Project, Goals and Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4
The Nevada Registry NDE	Crosswalk/Align Pre-K Standards to Common Core (P-3) with SBE approval; Print Crosswalk and make available online (NDE, Registry, etc.)	X			
	Expand opportunities for districts to engage in P-3 initiatives at both the state and local levels through the RPDPs, local early childhood advisory councils, Striving Readers, pre-k standards alignment and training, NV Power of K pilot project, etc.)	X	X	X	X
NDE DHHS	Hold the Governor's Symposium in June 2014 to inform stakeholders of accomplishments from P-3 reform efforts and to prepare for the 2015 legislative session		X		

PROJECT 4: SILVER STATE SUPPORTS (Community-based Child -Family Supports)					
Sub-Goals: A) Improve connections between child care and health care providers. B) Improve health outcomes for all children through health eating, nutrition, and physical activity. C) Improve the understanding by legislators, early childhood professionals, parents, and the business community of the importance of quality early childhood programs and school readiness. D) Improve implementation of effective practices at the state and local levels.					
Responsibility & Resources	Project, Goals and Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4
NECAC Local ECACs NDE	Provide parents/families/caregivers with information about ECE programs available to them and improve information exchange to support their children’s development	X	X	X	X
	Provide programs and services with information about the children they are serving to improve individualized teaching and learning, and to inform and support CQI	X	X	X	X
	Increase community based partnerships with state and non-profit agencies to support the screening and services to address health, behavioral, and developmental concerns	X	X	X	X
	Convene an EC Comprehensive Systems Workgroup under NECAC to improve and increase access to developmental screening for children birth to 3 rd grade	X	X	X	X
NDPBH NECAC NDE	Ensure the screening referrals receive follow-up services as appropriate	X	X	X	X
	Track developmental/health screenings statewide for children birth through kindergarten		X	X	X
	Expand the use of ASQ and ASQ-SE statewide		X	X	X
	Expand distribution of LTSAE Milestone Moment booklets to parents, physicians, and other community providers by 25%	X	X	X	X
	Expand Home Visiting collaboration between MCH and NDE, and Parent Advisory council by sharing information, events, and utilizing web sites for dissemination of information between agencies	X	X	X	X
Nevada Registry	Develop interactive materials for online users on the ELGs	X			
	Translate ELG and Pre-K Standards into Spanish, print and available online		X		
	Crosswalk the ELGs and Pre-K Standards to the CDC Milestone Moments booklet (Learn the Signs Act Early), print, and make available online for parents and providers to reference their child’s development	X			
NDE, DHHS	Develop/launch a statewide messaging campaign, in coordination with Strong Start, communicating the value of investing in ELD, starting at birth		X	X	X

Final Thoughts and Recommendations

Any systems reform initiative is, by definition, complex and involves multiple “moving parts”. This is certainly true for this plan to develop a comprehensive system of early care and education in Nevada. Throughout this planning process, there have been many ideas and recommendations that stakeholders have thoughtfully put forth and should be incorporated into ongoing planning efforts, but are not yet sufficiently developed to be included in this implementation plan. These are captured below so that the necessary steps can be taken to prioritize these ideas for action or further consideration.

Lay the groundwork for sustainability.

- Create a sustainability task force charged with: 1) Mapping existing funding across the state to identify opportunities for leveraging; and 2) Researching and identifying potential funding sources, including public and private, federal, state, and local funding, and innovative models like Social Impact Bonds/Pay for Success Models to address needs and gaps.
- Identify and grow key champions – leaders that are able and willing to speak up for issues and needs. Identify community leaders (elected officials, media, etc.) that have expressed interest in these areas and provide them with talking points on the issues and opportunities to stay involved.
- Create opportunities for fund development within local communities; e.g., offer workshops on sustainability, developing partnerships, attracting in-kind support, etc. for organizations and businesses working to improve situations for young children and their families.

Develop programs that help parents teach their children through positive parenting.

- Examples of evidence-based programs include Adults & Children Together Against Violence program, which provides parenting skills classes through a nationwide research-based program called Parents Raising Safe Kids. The course teaches parents how to avoid violence through anger management, positive child discipline and conflict resolution.⁵
- Healthy Families America, Early Head Start & Other Home Visiting programs also promote positive parenting skills.

Engage broader family and community support.

- Establish a mechanism for two-way communication with parents and families. Consider leveraging existing structures including policy councils, parent action boards, and center newsletters to invite feedback on issues that relate to very young children. Advocate for designated Parent Seats on Advisory Councils (state and local).
- Broaden the network of early childhood supporters. Consider meaningful opportunities to engage librarians, businesses, courts and law enforcement, family resource centers, and others that work

with young children and families to communicate and collaborate around opportunities to support young children and their families and promote school readiness.

- Utilize technology to facilitate dialogue on issues and opportunities related to the strategic plan.
- Create a leadership program – to identify and attract additional voices that can work at the local and state to promote positive outcomes for children and their families. (For example, one model would be to ask partners that work directly with directors, teachers, families to identify individuals that may be willing to contribute; they would be invited to meetings, and should funding be available, be supported in attending conferences etc. that develop knowledge and skills).

Help to unite organizations with different requirements and mandates under one common vision.

- Garner support for Strategic Plan; invite endorsements and develop a mechanism for sharing and mapping activities that are taking place that advance progress in each goal area.
- Revisit plan annually; make course corrections and engage new supporters.
- Build awareness and encourage coordination on projects that relate to young children, including resource and referral, and implementation of the Affordable Care Act, etc. This currently takes place through NECAC meetings and can be continued or expanded.
- Support (existing) data mapping projects – coordinate a process to align mandates across the state with the plan and leverage data.

Leverage tax dollars and existing investments to share learning and expand professional development and site-based learning.

- Develop and expand opportunities to mentor and share professional development throughout the state; invite participation and include home and family care providers.
- Identify new demonstration sites to promote and share examples of quality (e.g. Early Head Start sites; TACSEI demonstration sites; other very high quality programs that can share opportunities for observation and professional development of culturally responsive, family oriented programs). Ensure that demonstration sites exist not only for Pre-K but for infant toddler care.

Expand professional development opportunities and develop interstate reciprocity agreements.

- Plan should allow relevant CEUs and Registry Training Hours can each count toward Birth-3rd Grade teachers' professional development between Nevada Registry and NDE.
- Streamline opportunities for training between licensing and other trainings.
- Develop pathways and reciprocity agreements that are shared not just in-state, but regionally.

- Develop low cost pathways; consider other opportunities for incentives including partnerships with businesses.
- Create linkages to careers in Nevada District High Schools.
- Develop a task force to investigate issues related to the demand for various knowledge and experience levels training and to make recommendations. Create a process that allows training to match need (e.g. annual surveys, evaluations, etc.). Include in this investigation inquiry around methods for training (adequate opportunities for hands-on learning, differentiated learning that is center-based; peer-supported learning, online learning).

Appendix

Alignment of Goals and Focus Areas

This plan prioritizes four major focus areas of an integrated approach to improve quality, data, capacity and supports in order to ensure that Nevada’s young children and their families have access to affordable, high quality programs and supports in order to enter kindergarten ready to learn. These four focus areas are:

1. **Silver State Stars** – Nevada’s Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System;
2. **Silver State KIDS** (Kindergarten Inventory of Development Statewide) – Nevada’s Kindergarten Entry Assessment initiative;
3. **Silver State SKILLS** (Standards, Knowledge and Innovation for Life-Long Success) – Nevada’s system of professional development for early childhood educators; and
4. **Silver State Supports** – Nevada’s cross-system approach to provide culturally competent, community-based supports to families of children with high needs.

Below, each goal is listed by major focus area.

A. Improve Program Quality and Outcomes for Young Children

High-quality early learning and development programs have been found to be cost-effective and beneficial because they result in positive long-term educational outcomes and subsequent adult outcomes (Ramey & Ramey, 2004). This understanding has created a sense of urgency related to measuring young children’s educational progress and readiness to enter school during their Pre-K years in order to:

- Improve understanding about what parents, educators, and communities can do, beginning at birth, to help children become school-ready;
- Identify students who would benefit from intervention and other services; and
- Inform local and state policy and program improvement decisions.

Sub-Goals

- a) Improve outcomes for young children in high quality ELD programs. **(Silver State Stars)**
- b) Improve alignment between Nevada ELD Standards and Nevada Academic Content Standards (NACS) based on the Common Core. **(Silver State Stars)**
- c) Build awareness and commitment to support a continuum of high-quality early learning opportunities from birth through 3rd grade. **(Silver State Stars) (Silver State SKILLS)⁶**
- d) Increase alignment and implementation of Core Knowledge and Competencies throughout the early childhood professional development system & develop a progression of early childhood credentials. **(Silver State SKILLS)**

⁶ In the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge, these sub-goals are listed separately.

- e) Provide financial and professional support to increase providers’ progression throughout articulated professional development opportunities, and encourage advancement along the articulated pathway and also increases workforce retention. **(Silver State SKILLS)**

B. Increase the Number of Children with High Needs Attending High-Quality Programs

Rationale

Nevada has set ambitious targets to include participation of the majority of ELD programs serving high needs children in Silver State Stars over the next four years. Nevada will promote access to high-quality ELD programs for children with high needs by increasing CCDF subsidy reimbursement rates for families with children with special needs and providing additional support and training for ELD programs serving these children. Specifically, programs serving high numbers of children with high needs will be supported to ensure that program staff is equipped to provide early childhood mental health support.

Sub-Goals

- a) Improve the understanding by legislators, early childhood professionals, parents, and the business community of the importance of quality early childhood programs and school readiness. **(Silver State Supports)**
- b) Understand the status of children’s development at kindergarten entry. **(Silver State KIDS)**
- c) Coordinate data collection and use policies across agencies to align programs. **(Silver State KIDS)**
- d) Enable data-driven decision making. **(Silver State KIDS)**
- e) Improve implementation of effective practices at the state and local levels. **(Silver State Supports)**

C. Close the Achievement Gap between Children with High Needs and Their Peers

Rationale

The achievement gap begins with an opportunity gap. To narrow or close this gap, families must be able to meet basic needs – things like health care, housing, and food are important building blocks that children need to be able to enter school ready to learn. Nevada’s **S³** plan will build on existing work to ensure that:

1. ELD program environments, curriculum and teaching materials reflect and support diverse populations;
2. Screenings, assessments and parent materials/communications are delivered in cultural/language/special needs appropriate formats;
3. Training, resources and policies improve access and expand inclusion opportunities for young children with disabilities and young children that are English Language Learners (ELL); and
4. Families of children with high needs, including ELL students and children with disabilities, will be provided with culturally reflective materials, instruction and support to reinforce their role in promoting school readiness for their child.

Sub-Goals

- a) Improve connections between child care and health care providers. **(Silver State Supports)**
- b) Promote use of developmental screening in Pre-K settings. **(Silver State KIDS)**
- c) Improve health outcomes for all children through health eating, nutrition, and physical activity. **(Silver State Supports)**
- d) Increase the skill level of providers in identifying the need for additional resources to help meet the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of young children in Nevada. **(Silver State SKILLS)**



Acronyms and Abbreviations

ARRA	<i>American Recovery and Reinvestment Act</i>
ACA	<i>Affordable Care Act</i>
ASQ	<i>Ages and Stages Questionnaires</i>
ASQ:SE	<i>Ages and Stages Questionnaires: Social-Emotional</i>
CCDF	<i>Child Care and Development Fund</i>
CDC	<i>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention</i>
CEUs	<i>Continuing Education Units</i>
CLASS	<i>The Classroom Assessment Scoring System</i>
CQI	<i>Continuous Quality Improvement</i>
DAP	<i>Developmentally Appropriate Practice</i>
DHHS	<i>Nevada Department of Health and Human Services</i>
PSA	<i>Public Service Announcements</i>
ECCS	<i>Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems</i>
ECE	<i>Early Care and Education</i>
ECSSO	<i>Early Childhood Systems Office</i>
ELD	<i>Early Learning and Development</i>
ELG	<i>Early Learning Guidelines</i>
ELL	<i>English Language Learners</i>
EPSDT	<i>The Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment</i>
HSC	<i>Head Start Collaboration</i>
KEA	<i>Kindergarten Entry Assessment</i>
KIDS	<i>Kindergarten Inventory of Development Statewide</i>
LTSAE	<i>Learn the Signs. Act Early (A project of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)</i>
MCH	<i>Maternal and Child Health, Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health</i>
NDE	<i>Nevada Department of Education</i>
NDE-DELD	<i>Nevada Department of Education Division of Early Learning</i>
NDE-SBE	<i>Nevada Department of Education State Board of Education</i>
NECAC	<i>Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council</i>
NevAEYC	<i>Nevada Association for the Education of Young Children</i>
NSHE	<i>Nevada System of Higher Education</i>
NV	<i>Nevada</i>
OEO	<i>Office of Educational Opportunity</i>
P-20W	<i>Refers to the work of The P-20W Advisory Council</i>
P-3	<i>Preschool through Third Grade (also refers to prenatal through third grade)</i>
PBS	<i>Positive Behavioral Supports</i>
QRIS	<i>Quality Rating and Improvement Systems</i>
RPDPs	<i>Regional Professional Development Programs</i>
S ³	<i>Silver State Strong</i>

TA	<i>Technical Assistance</i>
TACSEI	<i>Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children</i>
TAPS	<i>Tuition Assistance Pre-K Scholarships</i>
TEACH	<i>Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education</i>
TQRIS	<i>Tiered Quality Rating & Improvement System</i>
TSG	<i>Teaching Strategies GOLD</i>

Glossary

Please note that definitions are in most cases direct quotes from the named source.

Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) is a tool for screening infants and young children for developmental delays during the crucial first 5 years of life. (Source: <http://agesandstages.com/what-is-asq/faq/>)

Ages and Stages Questionnaires: Social-Emotional (ASQ: SE) is a tool for screening infants and young children for social-emotional delays during the crucial first 5 years of life. (Source: <http://agesandstages.com/what-is-asq/faq/>)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is the national public health institute for the US. It is a federal agency under the department of Health and Human services, working to protect public health and safety through control and prevention of disease, injury and disability. (Source: Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Centers_for_Disease_Control_and_Prevention)

Child Care and Development Block Grant of 1990 assists working families with the cost of providing child care. The CCDBG is the primary source of federal funding for child care assistance. States use the resources provided by the CCDBG to help low-income families gain access to quality, affordable child care and after-school programs. The CCDBG provides funding to help parents pay for the care of their choice, whether in a family child care home, with a relative or a friend, or in a child care center. (Source: <http://www.childrensdefense.org/policy-priorities/early-childhood-education-care/child-care-development-block-grant.html#sthash.fjctCmwK.dpuf>)

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) is a process-based, data-driven approach to quality management that emphasizes the organization and systems and promotes the need for objective data to analyze and improve processes. It also is a management philosophy which contends that most things can be improved. (Source: Iowa State University, online at <http://www.fpm.iastate.edu/worldclass/cqi.asp>)

Developmentally Appropriate Practice often shortened to DAP, is an approach to teaching grounded in the research on how young children develop and learn and in what is known about effective early education. Its framework is designed to promote young children's optimal learning and development. DAP involves teachers meeting young children where they are (by stage of development), both as individuals and as part of a group; and helping each child meet challenging and achievable learning goals. (Source: Nevada Association for the Education of Young Children online at <http://www.naeyc.org/DAP>)

Early Childhood Educator means any professional working in an Early Learning and Development Program, including but not limited to center-based and family child care providers; infant and toddler specialists; early intervention specialists and early childhood special educators; home visitors; related services providers; administrators such as directors, supervisors, and other early learning and development leaders; Head Start teachers; Early Head Start teachers; preschool and other teachers; teacher assistants; family service staff; and health coordinators. (Source: US Department of Education, online at <http://www.ed.gov/early-learning/elc-draft-summary/definitions>)

Early Learning and Development Program means any (a) State-licensed or State-regulated program or provider, regardless of setting or funding source, that provides early care and education for children from birth to kindergarten entry, including, but not limited to, any program operated by a child care center or in a family child care home; (b) preschool program funded by the Federal Government or State or local educational agencies (including any IDEA-funded program); (c) Early Head Start and Head Start program; and (d) a non-relative child care provider who is not otherwise regulated by the State and who regularly cares for two or more unrelated children for a fee in a provider setting. A State should include in this definition other programs that may deliver early learning and development services in a child’s home, such as the MIECHV; Early Head Start; and Part C of IDEA. (Source: US Department of Education, online at <http://www.ed.gov/early-learning/elc-draft-summary/definitions>)

Early Learning and Development Standards means a set of expectations, guidelines, or developmental milestones that—

- (a) Describe what all children from birth to kindergarten entry should know and be able to do and their disposition toward learning;
- (b) Are appropriate for each age group (e.g., infants, toddlers, and preschoolers); for English learners; and for children with disabilities or developmental delays;
- (c) Cover all Essential Domains of School Readiness; and
- (d) Are universally designed and developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate. (Source: US Department of Education, online at <http://www.ed.gov/early-learning/elc-draft-summary/definitions>)

Public Service Announcement (PSA’s) are messages in the public interest disseminated by the media without charge, with the objective of raising awareness, changing public attitudes and behavior towards a social issue. (Source: Wikipedia online at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public-service_announcement)

Early Care and Education (ECE) is the field of study that focuses on care and services to young children. (Source: Early Care and Education First 5 LA, online at: <http://ecehsr.org/pages.php?pg=5>)

Head Start Collaboration (HSC) and Early Childhood Systems Office ECSSO works through statewide partnerships to enhance relationships, build systems, and promote comprehensive quality services to meet the needs of young children and their families. The office exists through grants from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start and the Health Resources Services Administration, Maternal Child Health Bureau. (Source: Nevada Department of Health and Human Services: <http://dhhs.nv.gov/headstart.htm>)

Kindergarten Inventory of Development Statewide (KIDS) is a system of early childhood services across the state that is being built by the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council, in collaboration with the Nevada Department of Education. (Source: the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council, online at: <http://www.nevadaecac.com/?p=338>)

Learn the Signs. Act Early (LTSAE) is a program of the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention that aims to improve early identification of children with autism and other developmental disabilities. This program has three approaches: Health Education Campaign, Act Early Initiative, and Research and Evaluation. (Source: National Center on Birth Defects

and Developmental Disabilities, online at:
http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/pdf/parents_pdfs/LTSAE-factsheet_508.pdf

Maternal and Child Health (MCH) is part of the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health – Department of Health and Human Services, and promotes healthy Nevada families. (Source: Nevada Department of Health and Human Services, online at: <http://health.nv.gov/MCH.htm>)

State Board of Education (SBE) The State Board of Education is comprised of eleven members. The board seeks to act as an advocate and visionary for all children and sets the policy that allows every child equal access to educational services, provide the vision for a premier educational system and work in partnership with other stakeholders to ensure high levels of success for all in terms of job readiness, graduation, ability to be lifelong learners, problem solvers, citizens able to adapt to a changing world and contributing members of society. (Source: US Department of Education, online at <http://www.ed.gov/early-learning/elc-draft-summary/definitions>).

Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council (NECAC) Established in 2009, The Council works to strengthen state-level coordination and collaboration among the various sectors and settings of early childhood programs. In cooperation with the State Board of Education, the Council is responsible for establishing guidelines to measure the school readiness of children. Membership includes a diverse group of business, community, education, government, non-profit, parent, and provider representatives that are appointed by the Governor and which follow the Head Start Act requirements for State Advisory Councils. (Source: US Department of Education, online at <http://www.ed.gov/early-learning/elc-draft-summary/definitions>).

Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) is the system of universities, colleges, research and public service units administered under the direction of the Board of Regents of the University of Nevada. (Source: US Department of Education, online at <http://www.ed.gov/early-learning/elc-draft-summary/definitions>)

P-3 refers to efforts and initiatives to create a birth through third grade policy agenda. While reforms began to connect preschool through third grade, the reference has been extended to reach children from birth.

P-20W Refers to the work of The P-20W Advisory Council, consisting of 11 voting members. The Council works to coordinate early childhood education programs, K-12 public education, postsecondary education and the workforce in Nevada. (Source: Nevada (Source: US Department of Education, online at <http://www.ed.gov/early-learning/elc-draft-summary/definitions>)

Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS): Positive Behavior Support (PBS) is a process for understanding and resolving the problem behavior of children that is based on values and empirical research. It offers an approach for developing an understanding of why the child engages in problem behavior and strategies for preventing the occurrence of problem behavior while teaching the child new skills. Positive behavior support offers a holistic approach that considers all factors that impact on a child and the child's behavior. It can be used to address problem behaviors that range from aggression, tantrums, and property destruction to social withdrawal. (Source: Fox & Duda, Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children at <http://www.challengingbehavior.org>)

Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) is a unique tool for system reform that has the potential to reach programs that serve a wide range of children and are financed by many sources. A well designed QRIS provides: quality assurances, supply-side intervention, and demand side intervention designed to influence consumer ECE choices. (Source: QRIS National Learning Network, online at <http://grisnetwork.org/our-framework>)

Regional Professional Development Programs (RPDPs) are programs within Northeastern Nevada, Northwestern Nevada and Southern Nevada focus on enhancing student learning. (Source: US Department of Education, online at <http://www.ed.gov/early-learning/elc-draft-summary/definitions>).

Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) is a federal grant program made possible by the Federal Student Aid, an office of the U.S. Department of Education. TEACH provides grants of up to \$4,000 a year to students who are completing or plan to complete course work needed to begin a career in teaching. (Source: Federal Student Aid – Office of the U.S. Department of Education, online at <http://studentaid.ed.gov/types/grants-scholarships/teach>)

Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children (TACSEI), formerly the Center for Evidence-Based Practice: Young Children with Challenging Behavior (CEBP). TACSEI is a five-year grant (#H326B070002) of the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. TACSEI continues and expands CEBP research on effective practices into actual, everyday practice, which allows decision makers, caregivers and service providers to have an enhanced awareness of, understanding of, and ability to use evidence-based practices to improve the social-emotional outcomes for

young children with, or at risk for, delays or disabilities. (Source: US Department of Education, online at <http://www.ed.gov/early-learning/elc-draft-summary/definitions>).

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) is an observational tool based on research from the University of Virginia’s Curry School of Education. This tool provides a common lens and language focused on classroom interactions that boost student learning. (Source: US Department of Education, online at <http://www.ed.gov/early-learning/elc-draft-summary/definitions>)

The Nevada Infant and Toddler Early Learning Guidelines (ELG) is a frame of reference that comprises a set of appropriate developmental guidelines that adults who are caring for infants and toddlers can refer to for information and resources. The guidelines are aligned with the Nevada Pre-K Standards, and have been develop by early childhood professionals and parents. (Source: The Nevada Registry, online at <http://www.nevadaregistry.org/office-of-early-care-and-education/pre-k-standards.html>)

Resources

Many supporting documents were created that that helped to inform this plan. These can be found on the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council website (<http://www.nevadaecac.com/>) or via requested via email.

- A. Nevada’s Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Application (2013)
<http://www.nevadaecac.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Nevada-2013-RTT-ELC-Application-Narrative-Final.pdf>
- B. Issue Brief: Early Care and Education (2013)
http://www.nevadaecac.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Planning_Issue_Brief-Early_Care_and_Education.pdf
- C. Issue Brief: Medical Homes and Health Care (2013)
http://www.nevadaecac.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Planning_Issue_Brief-Medical-Homes.pdf
- D. Issue Brief: Social and Emotional Health (2013)
http://www.nevadaecac.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Planning_Issue_Brief-Social_Emotional_Health.pdf
- E. Issue Brief: Parenting Education (2013)
http://www.nevadaecac.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Planning_Issue_Brief-Parenting-Education.pdf
- F. Issue Brief: Family Support (2013)
http://www.nevadaecac.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Planning_Issue_Brief_Family_Support_Services.pdf
- G. Issue Brief: School Readiness (2013)
http://www.nevadaecac.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Planning_Issue_Brief_School_Readiness.pdf
- H. Stakeholder Outreach Summary (2013)
http://www.nevadaecac.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Comprehensive-Plan_Stakeholder-Outreach-Summary_November.pdf
- I. Stakeholder Outreach Summary (Two Page Version) (2013)
http://www.nevadaecac.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Comprehensive_Plan_Stakeholder-Outreach_2_Page_Version.pdf

Contact:

Division of Health and Human Services, Director’s Office

4126 Technology Way, Suite 100
Carson City, Nevada 89706
775-684-4000
775-684-4010 (fax)