



Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council

NEVADA EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL (ECAC) SYSTEMS ALIGNMENT SUBCOMMITTEE PUBLIC MEETING WEDNESDAY, MAY 31, 2023 1:00PM

“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.”

Meeting Location:

The meeting was held via Zoom videoconference.

MINUTES

1. Welcome, Call to order, and roll call- Meeting called to order at 1:03 PM

Julie Houchins, Jenna Weglarz-Ward, Subcommittee Co-Chairs

Members in attendance:

- Julie Houchins, Co-Chair
- Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward, Co-Chair
- Dr. Diane Nicolet, WCSD Trustee
- Patrice Gardner, NDE OELD, Head Start Collaboration Office
- Denise Tanata, ECCS Director, The Children’s Cabinet
- Rachel Stepina, NDE OELD, B3
- Ashley Dines, Parent Leadership Coordinator, The Children’s Cabinet
- Anna Marie Binder, Parent Representative

Members not in attendance:

- Cynthia Magana, DWSS CCDP Chief
- Anna Severens, NDE OELD, Education Programs Specialist, PreK
- Tina Springmeyer, Washoe County School District

Guests:

- Anna Villatoro, The Children’s Cabinet
- Mary Regan, Las Vegas Urban League
- Rosie Wolterbeek, Nevada Department of Agriculture

2. Review and approval of Minutes

Materials: Minutes for March 22, 2023

- Denise Tanata noted that her name needs to be corrected on the minutes.
- Dr. Diane Nicolet motioned to approve minutes with revisions.



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- Denise Tanata seconded the minutes with approved changes.
- Julie Houchins approved minutes with approved revisions. No opposition.

3. Public comment #1

- Denise Tanata stated that AB 113 will not move forward in Nevada's 2023 legislative session.
- Denise Tanata added that AB 114 is on the way to the Governor's office for signature.

4. Systems Alignment Subcommittee Focus

(Discussion: Saga Review & Master List; Better align all EC systems w/ focus for family perspective)

Rachel Stepina & Denise Tanata, Subcommittee Members

Materials: [2022 SAGA Summary Table](#); [2022 SAGA Report](#)

- Julie Houchins asked Denise Tanata to guide the subcommittee through the 2022 SAGA Report. This report will help the subcommittee create an outline for the goals.
- Denise Tanata asked the subcommittee if they had access to the 2022 SAGA Report and 2022 SAGA Summary Table. Denise Tanata explained the summary document is 17 pages and that it is the document she will primarily be referencing. The 2022 SAGA Report is longer and has more narrative.
- Denise Tanata shared the background of the System Asset and Gap Analysis report known as the SAGA. Denise worked on this report for many months with other individuals as a requirement for The Health Resources and Services Administration grant (HRSA). The intent was to look at Nevada's Early Childhood system and identify where the strengths and gaps exist. It meant identifying what needs to be included in a unified strategic plan focused on the prenatal to three sectors, which is the primary focus of the HRSA's Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Grant. Putting the report together was a long process. There were multiple components of looking at the Comprehensive Early Childhood system. These components helped identify four categories that match the ECAC strategic plan. The evaluation revealed that Nevada is meeting some goals, but there is no area in which it has achieved 100% success without needing to do more work. Denise Tanata added that this is not a bad thing. In her opinion, no state has figured everything out or is perfect. However, Nevada has three categories that have not yet started implementation and development. Denise acknowledges that they are working on strategies to advance in these areas but either be in the process of implementing them or have yet to begin implementing them. Denise paused and asked the subcommittee if they had any questions.
- Denise Tanata mentioned the first component looked at was the infrastructure development under the ECAC strategic plan and the HRSA project. Goal one is increasing state-level infrastructure and capacity to develop for strengthening statewide maternal and early childhood systems of care. They looked into three assessment areas. These included leadership capacity and existing structures to advance workforce development goals. Two sections have been identified as "under development," indicating that strategies and projects are being explored in these areas. There is another section in the report that focuses on workforce development. At the time, the group had not made much progress on it. This section is labeled as "not started" because the workforce framework sector focused specifically on childcare.
- During the discussion, Denise Tanata highlighted key takeaways in that the leadership capacity in the early childhood field does not have a formal structure. Specifically, there are no established systems in place for developing early childhood leaders, especially at the systems level. Denise proposed prioritizing cross-sector leadership thinking to effectively integrate and the support early learning sector, maternal child health, safety, and mental health services.
- Denise asked how they can cultivate strong leaders who can effectively collaborate across different sectors to advance the work in the early childhood field. The network analysis revealed that Nevada's system is relationship based rather than institutions or organizations. So, changes in personnel and their movements within positions can affect the alignment and coordination of sectors within the system. Denise proposed that the Systems Alignment subcommittee concentrate on institutionalizing specific aspects to avoid them being solely reliant on individual relationships but rather on systems and entities. However, it is not an easy task.



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- Denise Tanata emphasized the importance of addressing diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice in addition to other work. Despite many discussions on DEI, it is not always integrated into the work. Denise observed a lack of specific conversations on diversity, equity, and inclusion in the early childhood system when examining various entities.
- During the discussion, Denise Tanata also referred to identifying Early Childhood champions. However, there were difficulties in pinpointing who these champions are, whether in administrative agencies at the state or local level, or among elected officials. There are a lot of early childhood supporters, but there is a limited number of champions. Denise said that there are also engagement opportunities. This means looking at that unified vision across sectors this need led to the HRSA ECCS grant to develop the ECCS leadership team where we're trying to identify individuals across all those early childhood sectors and bring everybody together. This would allow having common conversations to develop a unified vision and move into the development phase. Denise said they may have entered the development phase, but during the time of the report, there wasn't much progress made. They are still in the middle of it. Denise is trying to think through how to work together and what is that unified vision.
- The final section pertains to family leadership. The group is actively engaged in the family leadership work, has identified strategies, and is effectively implementing them in the area.
- Dr. Diane Nicolet has worked in Nevada's System of Higher Education for 25 years, gaining experience in both the university and community college systems. She acknowledged that the state has a well-developed professional development pathway including a new early childhood profession tier. However, she believes they should analyze the system's support for those in child care who are already doing rigorous work. Dr. Diane Nicolet suggested exploring ways to enhance and expand the support available to those working as childcare providers, including workers in levels 1, 2, and early childhood professionals.
- Rachel Stepina mentioned that in their PDG work, the primary activity is the needs assessment, with the first step being the "Systems needs assessment" update. To achieve this, they are conducting an ongoing study to capture changes that occur during the three-year grant cycle, providing a more comprehensive and accurate picture of the needs. One of the studies will focus on the early childhood pathways in the Nevada System of Higher Education, which is being developed alongside the early childhood workforce framework. By examining these two initiatives through the lens of systems alignment and have a deeper understanding. Rachel Stepina added that the SRI in 2019 did a small portion of looking at early childhood pathways and competencies within Nevada. They also looked at components that were outside of the state's NSHE system.
- Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward suggests that the subcommittee should concentrate on NSHE institutions rather than individuals. She notes that there has been substantial turnover in the past 7 years within NSHE. In addition, the subcommittee should aim to examine the NSHE system. Dr. Weglarz-Ward points out that there is a grant currently under review, which, if approved, could provide the means to review the NSHE system. Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward suggested adding this item to the workplan.
- Denise Tanata encouraged the subcommittee to review the NSHE system and wondered if there is cross-sector alignment. Is there a crossover between healthcare providers, counseling services, and early childhood education? She added looking at the workforce support systems of what the state has in place. Another example is analyzing the recent development of the Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Association. The purpose of the association is to create a certified workforce and infant early childhood mental health system. Denise wants to reiterate that the subcommittee needs to look at the system alignment piece of the sectors within the early childhood system.
- Rachel Stepina thanked Denise for ensuring there needs to be a collective view and not excluding anyone.
- Anna Binder informed the subcommittee that The Autism Council is meeting for the first time in a long time at 3:30 PM. The council received data on Part C. Anna said the subcommittee would be shocked at the data they received because it's speculative of what providers have given feedback into to informal process. Anna wanted to know if Part 303 (Part C) of the Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities could be part of the system alignment work.
- Denise Tanata responded to Anna's comment that Part C is a part of the Early Childhood System. Denise is preparing a presentation for the Early Childhood Family Leadership Council in Nevada to discuss the state's early



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childhood system. Denise will assist family leaders who may not be familiar with the ECE sector and will simplify the information. She wants to ensure they comprehend the various sectors, such as Part C, Part B, or Section 619.

- Denise Tanata has created a chart that breaks down the different ECE sectors. She will share it with the group.
- Denise Tanata suggested that ECAC and the subcommittee need to prioritize opportunities for system alignment. The early childhood system is large, and they should start by looking at systems that are closer to being aligned. The SAGA report could help with looking at what work is being done at a local level and scaling up. Denise included that she would like more individuals to look at the SAGA report.
- Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward mentioned that there are a lot of people doing ECE work in the different sectors, but they are not sure of what everyone is working on. For example, this summer and fall, Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward's research team is doing a survey and gathering data from childcare providers and individuals working in Part C. Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward added that there is no coordination and communication to get a holistic picture. The EC system is complicated and complex. ECAC needs to create that infrastructure of coordination for individuals to see it as a whole.
- According to Dr. Diane Nicolet, she is unsure of how to approach the numerous sectors involved in early childhood. She questions if there are only five or over a hundred sectors and how to properly label them. The term "early childhood" appears overwhelming and suggests that the ECAC should find a way to simplify it without disregarding any children or professionals. Dr. Diane Nicolet emphasizes the importance of putting a face to some of these issues.
- Denise Tanata emphasized the importance of prioritizing their efforts, which may not require everyone or everything. As a team, they should determine their priorities, starting points, and opportunities to initiate the process. To improve communication and information sharing, they need to establish a mechanism for doing so.
- Anna Binder thanked the subcommittee for the information. She will update The Autism Council meeting with the Part C information.
- Denise Tanata asked the subcommittee co-chairs how the group should proceed.
- Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward recommended a quick review of the executive report, with a focus on setting the subcommittee goals for the upcoming year. She emphasized the importance of taking their time and not rushing the process and suggested that the subcommittee can also continue the discussion at their next meeting.
- Rachel Stepina requested the addition of any other tasks or work that should be included in the PDG. This is a chance to take any necessary action steps that are in line with the subcommittee's work plan.
- Denise Tanata moved to goal number two, advancing a common vision, because it closely aligns with the Systems Alignment subcommittee. Denise noted there is a cross-alignment between the subcommittees and the work being done. But it goes into the shared strategic plans, the ECAC structure, and strengthening partnerships. Although it's listed as not started, it's not saying we don't have partnerships across sectors in the early childhood system. The issue is that these partnerships are currently informal and scattered across various projects and activities. This subcommittee can offer guidance in this area to provide more structure and organization.
- Denise Tanata added that the subcommittee should further examine the ECAC and existing structures, particularly in terms of system oversight. They need to consider how the ECAC connects and coordinates with other systems at a higher level. Denise suggested that to strengthen partnerships, it would be beneficial to have a deeper dive into The Network Analysis. This analysis has revealed trusted entities and those who are most connected to the community. One organization that is well-trusted and connected was the Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy, which is involved in multiple areas of work. How does the subcommittee analyze their system?
- During the discussion, Denise Tanata suggested that the subcommittee take a closer look at the health system transformation section. They need to determine if this area is a priority. Based on the Health Resources and Services Administration grant for Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Health Integration, it is a priority. Denise suggested bringing individuals from maternal and child health. They are also waiting for the appointment of Dr. Terrence McAllister with the Nevada Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (Nevada AAP) to serve on the ECAC. We need to bring him in and ask about the priorities of pediatricians in our state and how we can integrate those priorities into our work with early childhood development.



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- Denise Tanata reported that The Children's Cabinet is working with a small team of pediatricians to introduce the Vroom platform in pediatric offices. This is just one example of how the team is working to integrate and align processes. It would be beneficial to review the integration updates to improve coordination. The network analysis highlighted that systems alignment is based on the relationships and trust established across different sectors. As an advisory body, there is a need to prioritize building these connections. How can we accomplish this goal?
- Denise Tanata suggested that the subcommittee use this opportunity to focus on a specific area of the report and have a deeper dive into it. She would like input on what the subcommittee would benefit the most from.
- Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward added that the subcommittee focused on goal two. They can look across the other goals and collaborate across subcommittees, leadership subcommittees, and full ECAC. She asked Denise if there was a complete advisory council. Denise stated that they are waiting for the appointment of Doctor Terence McAllister, but they are complete until 114 passes, and then there will be some vacancies.
- Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward suggested that it would be beneficial to evaluate the current structure of the ECAC. She also said they need to ensure there is participation across all subcommittees in addition to attending the full ECAC meetings. This could help address issues related to representation and appointees not being active. Also, look at the Systems Alignment subcommittee and see who they can bring on to move the work forward.
- Patrice Gardner agreed that although we have all the positions filled, it doesn't necessarily mean that everyone is equally engaged. Simply having someone occupy a seat is not enough; they must contribute meaningfully to the conversation or to the work.
- According to Dr. Diane Nicolet, she now has a better understanding of her role. However, she suggests that ECAC could benefit from a more comprehensive onboarding process to help new members achieve the same level of clarity.
- According to Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward, the early childhood community in Nevada is small, and once members meet, they tend to know each other. Some members have been doing this work for decades. However, it is essential to ensure that new members feel welcomed. To achieve this, they need to cultivate relationships with everyone attending the council meetings and provide clarity about their roles and the meeting's purpose. She added that having clear goals and purposes is helpful. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct an annual revamp to remind both new and returning individuals of their roles, activities, expectations and how they can help facilitate them.
- Rachel Stepina mentioned that the full ECAC and other subcommittees are also having these onboarding conversations. During the discussion, Rachel Stepina said they are looking at ways of utilizing the new PDG ECAC system specialist to facilitate this project. Additionally, this work will be done with Denise Tanata and Anna Villatoro's expertise and experience. The subcommittee will compile all the ideas to develop this further, ensuring that all voices are heard throughout the process. As professionals, it's also critical to understand the workload of peers and colleagues as an additional component. Rachel Stepina added that it's helpful to know what members are involved in. For example, she said Patrice Gardner is part of several other advisory boards. This knowledge allows the members to understand the extent of their workload and avoid overburdening them. The subcommittee can also utilize their strengths effectively without exhausting their resources. She brought up the Family Engagement Advisory Council at the state level, which is a committee under the Department of Education. This presents a chance for ECAC to collaborate and remain involved in other areas of work, as they would expect people to show up to their work, members also need to show up for others' work. This is something useful to look into and learn more from.
- According to Rachel Stepina, there is a lot to learn in the healthcare field. There are various meetings, boards, councils, and events, but it's important to question how much the subcommittee knows about them. When it comes to system alignment and participation, Rachel wants to bring in different perspectives without causing extra pressure on everyone's workload. This is an opportunity to explore how the subcommittee can support others.
- Patrice Gardner agreed that the subcommittee should be willing to step out of their comfort zone to encourage others to participate. She also mentioned that a similar topic came up during a transition meeting with the new chair and Denise. They also discussed the fact that their current strategic plan has a lifespan of only three years. They will need to develop a new strategic plan in 2025. They discussed the possibility of using some of the funding in PDG to improve the



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onboarding process. She thanked Denise for developing something for onboarding, which was very helpful because she was not sure what ECAC was like and why the meeting lasted so long. She believes there may be others who are still figuring things out, as Dr. Diane Nicolet mentioned. As a result, the council may not be seeing as much engagement. It's like coming out of a fog and finally understanding what we're doing. Therefore, she suggested using the strategic planning session to address these issues. She added that this subcommittee could be instrumental in developing that.

- Denise Tanata shared with the group that the Leadership subcommittee will discuss recruitment and orientation strategies for new members at their upcoming meeting. Although it is unclear if the subcommittee will lead the development of the onboarding process, the topic will be discussed, and all subcommittees are encouraged to participate. It is essential for all subcommittees to include this topic in the meeting and collaborate on it. This was on her to-do list but like everyone else, she was at capacity. She was fortunate to get that mini document out for new members. They look forward to the support staff with Rachel Stepina under the PDG grant.
- Rachel Stepina mentioned that the Administrative Assistant Specialist starts on Monday. They are still interviewing for the second position.
- According to Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward, she often considers the distinction between institutions and individuals, particularly concerning membership and participation. This is especially important when considering the workload of individuals. She added that while she enjoys being the representative for higher education in multiple areas, she is not the only person in the higher education field.
- Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward asked the groups for thoughts on the introduction to the SAGA. She invited everyone to look through the SAGA.
- Rachel Stepina added that NDE has budgeted \$75,000 for an updated strategic plan in Y3 (2025) through PDG B-5 funds, in addition to the support from the two personnel dedicated to the ECAC.
- Rachel Stepina asked Denise what is next for the SAGA. What other plans like dissemination are in the books and how can the subcommittee support her?
- Denise Tanata responded to what's next for the SAGA. They will share it with the ECAC, and they have shared it with the Guinn Center, so they can include it in the work that they're doing. They will also share with the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) team. They are not doing marketing outreach because it is meant to be used as a working tool for those utilizing it. The SAGA can be found on the ECAC website.
- Rachel Stepina asked who the point of contact is if individuals have questions about the SAGA.
- Denise Tanata responded that Tiffany Olivas will be the primary point of contact for the HRSA ECCS grant, which the SAGA was created under. She will still be in a consulting role and have the same e-mail address, so members can still connect others to her.

5. Subcommittee membership for representation across different sectors of Nevada ECE system

- Jenna Weglarz-Ward tabled this item number until the next meeting. She hopes to have the new ECAC members and chair.

6. Discuss agenda items for next meeting (Last Wednesday of Month @ 1PM – June 28, 2023)

(Discussion: Review SA Workplan and Objectives)

- Denise Tanata will not be scheduling the remainder of the meetings. Rachel Stepina and the team will take on scheduling the meetings.
- Denise Tanata and Patrice Gardner will not be able to attend the June 28th meeting.
- Rachel Stepina added that she will be attending a PDG webinar on June 28th during the subcommittee meeting time.
- The subcommittee discussed an alternative time for the meeting that worked for everyone's availability.
- The next meeting will be on June 28th at 11:00 AM.
- If there is anything that the group would like to add to the agenda, contact Julie Houchins or Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward. Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward said the next agenda will focus on synthesizing the SAGA into the work plan and membership.
- Rachel Stepina will set up the meeting invites for this subcommittee.



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7. Public comment #2

- Rosie Wolterbeek introduced herself to the Systems Alignment subcommittee. Rosie Wolterbeek is with the Nevada Department of Agriculture working with an outreach grant for the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Rosie hopes to join the group and is new and trying to figure it out and looking at what to accomplish in the next year for this grant. She is working on getting more sponsors under the Nevada Department of Agriculture's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Rosie can be reached at rwolterbeek@agri.nv.gov or 775-462-6802.
- Dr. Jenna Wexler-Ward informed Rosie Wolterbeek that as they restructure this subcommittee, there may be an opportunity to join the committee as a member. The subcommittee membership is different from the full ECAC membership. So, community partners are welcomed.
- Mary Regan shared her email Mary.Regan@LVUL.org and said she would love to chat with Rosie Wolterbeek more on how LVUL-ECC can assist with the outreach project.

8. Adjournment- Meeting was adjourned at 2:10 PM.