



## Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council

### NEVADA EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL (ECAC) POLICY AND FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE **PUBLIC MEETING** **AUGUST 10, 2023** **1:00 PM**

*“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:**

This meeting was held via Zoom Videoconference.

### MINUTES SUMMARY

#### **1. Welcome, Call to Order, and Roll Call**

*Julie Houchins and Elysa Arroyo, Subcommittee Co-Chairs*

- Julie Houchins called the meeting to order at 1:02 PM.
- Members in Attendance:
  - Anna Marie Binder, Council Member, Nevada Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities
  - Ashley Dines, Parent Leadership Coordinator, The Children’s Cabinet
  - Brian Cullen, Fiscal and Data Manager, Division of Welfare and Supportive Services, Childcare & Development Program
  - Brianna Cambra, Quality Manager, The Children's Cabinet
  - Elysa Arroyo, District & School Success Manager, ThinkCERCA
  - Julie Houchins, Senior Director of Early Education, United Way of Southern Nevada
  - Katarina Jackson, Director, Lullaby Nursery
  - Lela Arney, ARP Project Manager, The Children’s Cabinet
  - Nicole Martin, Division of Welfare and Supportive Services, Childcare & Development Program
  - Patti Oya, Office of Early Learning Development Director, Nevada Department of Education
- Members Not in Attendance:
  - Marty Elquist, SEED Director, The Children’s Cabinet
- Public in Attendance:
  - Anna Villatoro, Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Program Specialist, The Children's Cabinet
  - Annette Dawson Owens, School Readiness Policy Director, Children’s Advocacy Alliance
  - Byron Dondoyano, Data Coordinator, Nevada Department of Education, Office of Early Learning & Development
  - Denise Tanata, Early Childhood Systems Advisor, The Children's Cabinet



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- John Giammona Wilber, ECAC Administrative Assistant Nevada Department of Education, Office of Early Learning & Development
- Mary Regan, Child Care Resource & Referral Manager, Las Vegas Urban League Early Childhood Connection
- Nayesdi Badillo, Early Childhood Family Engagement Specialist, Nevada Department of Education, Office of Early Learning & Development
- Rachel Stepina, Preschool Development Grant Manager, Nevada Department of Education, Office of Early Learning & Development
- Sabrina Jones, ECAC Systems Specialist, Nevada Department of Education, Office of Early Learning & Development
- Tiffany Olivas, Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Manager 2, The Children's Cabinet

### 2. Public Comment #1

- No public comment was given.

### 3. Approval of a Flexible Agenda

*(Discussion, For Possible Action)*

*Julie Houchins and Elysa Arroyo, Subcommittee Co-Chairs*

- Anna Marie Binder motioned to approve a flexible agenda.
- Brianna Cambra seconded the motioned.
- All members voted in favor; none opposed.
- The motion passed.

### 4. Approval of Meeting Minutes from July 13, 2023

*(Discussion, For Possible Action)*

*Julie Houchins and Elysa Arroyo, Subcommittee Co-Chairs*

*Materials: [July 13, 2023 Minutes](#)*

- John Giammona Wilber presented the minutes for review and comment. He explained that, going forward from the current meeting, he would be responsible for taking minutes.
- Denise Tanata commented that Marty Elquist's first name had been misspelled in the minutes.
- Nicole Martin commented that Tiffany Olivas' last name had been misspelled on page five.
- Denise Tanata commented that Rachel Stepina's comment should be closer to her name in public comment #2.
- Patti Oya motioned to approve the minutes with the three comments addressed.
- Brianna Cambra seconded the motion.
- Nine members voted in favor of the motion; none opposed; Anna Binder abstained due to her absence from the July meeting. The motion passed.
- Rachel Stepina asked if it would be helpful to have a "members not in attendance" section in future minutes.
- Patti Oya answered yes. She thought that this would be a helpful addition to future minutes.
- John Giammona Wilber confirmed that a "members not in attendance" section would be added.

### 5. Discussion Policy Recommendations for 2024 Interim & 2025 Legislative Session to present in Annual Report by December 1st. Committee will develop a list of potential policy recommendations for the ECAC to review/approve in the September ECAC meeting to include in Annual Report to the Governor.



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*(Discussion, For Possible Action)*

*Julie Houchins and Elysa Arroyo, Subcommittee Co-Chairs*

- Julie Houchins asked members for policy recommendations and reminded members that the annual report was due December 1, 2023.
- Julie Houchins requested that Annette Dawson Owens of the Children's Advocacy Alliance (CAA) recap the recent Summit Meeting for the subcommittee members.
- Annette Dawson Owens shared that the CAA's legislative report had recently been released. She explained that the CAA had a few relevant policy priorities:
  - Priority One: Education, members were reminded that AB114 (new seats on the ECAC) passed, and that AB 113 (establishing an office of early development) would remain a priority next session. She identified connecting with the governor's office for alignment was one of CAA's top priorities.
  - Priority Two: Welfare, CAA was focusing on supporting students turning eighteen and transitioning from foster care. The definition of fetal alcohol syndrome was changed to a spectrum disorder to help more children.
  - Priority Three: Health, Medicaid coverage was expanded from six months to twelve months postpartum. A budget item was passed which expanded Medicaid eligibility to pregnant individuals at 200% of the federal poverty level.
- Annette Dawson Owens mentioned that a CAA priority was addressing the school to prison pipeline. She invited those present to Restorative Justice Day on July 25, 2023.
- Patti Oya commented that the Summit Meeting was a great success and that even non-early childhood related topics were related and fascinating.
- Denise Tanata shared that she had a full list of potential policy priorities for Julie Houchins' review.
- Rachel Stepina asked where a link to the meeting's recording and legislative report could be accessed.
- Annette Dawson Owens answered that she would be sharing the report and that it was also available on CAA's website.
- Meeting Recording: <https://www.caanv.org/2023-legislative-session/>
- Legislative Report: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1aZJ5u1G8Zk9AsfzmiC-Ia8JiIrXCAuv8/view>
- Anna Marie Binder thanked CAA for their hard work in putting together such an extensive report.
- Anna Marie Binder commented that there is a lot of confusion in the Nevada early childhood community about how to access Pre-K funding.
- Patti Oya shared that awards were currently being built for the Early Childhood Innovative Literacy Program, and that the first round of funding had recently been closed, but that it would be followed by the opening of a second round of funding. She clarified that this funding would amount to \$70 million per year (\$140 million for the biennium.) She added that this funding was set to add about 700 new pre-K seats for three and four year olds.
- Patti Oya explained that once pre-K seats were assigned to general funds, it would be a bit easier to maintain as taking away seats would mean taking away services for children.
- Patti Oya expressed concerns that a two-year project cycle would not be a long enough timeline to collect any true outcomes about the program.
- Anna Marie Binder asked when that funding would become available.
- Patti Oya answered the first round of funding was closed. She said that the second round of funding would open within the next couple of weeks with a longer open application window than the first round had.
- Denise Tanata suggested that prior to the next legislative session, the governor's office and the legislature be asked to review recommendations the Guinn Center's early childhood governance structure report. She added that this may or may not be aligned with the establishment of a governor's office for early childhood. She recommended that the ECAC review the report once it becomes available.



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- Denise Tanata suggested a specific policy recommendation addressing common Home Owner's Association barriers for home-based child care providers.
- Denise Tanata shared that she had seen a promising policy brief on presumptive eligibility for childcare subsidies- that is self-assessing for eligibility (some states already had this model in place.)
- Brian Cullen shared that there was a strong push for changes to how Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funds are allowed to be distributed. These changes included presumptive eligibility, the state paying for providers by enrollment, and the waving of co-pays for children with disabilities.
- Brian Cullen commented that these changes aligned with the creation of a "one stop shop" application for families that would assess eligibility for all available childcare programs under federal guidelines.
- Brian Cullen added that he would be sending the information for people to make public comments about these changes to OCC.
- Denise Tanata suggested a policy recommendation to use Medicaid funding to expand home visiting programs. She shared that this would probably involve creating a category for home visitors to be considered eligible service providers.
- Denise Tanata suggested a policy recommendation developing a Medicaid billing hub service to support smaller community-based organizations already providing Medicaid eligible services who lack the internal staffing capacity to complete Medicaid billing.
- Denise Tanata suggested a policy recommendation for continuing funding of the ECAC support positions currently being funded through the Preschool Development Grant.
- Denise Tanata suggested a policy recommendation expanding access to early childhood services broadly, as many early childhood programs serve such a small number of eligible children.
- Denise Tanata commented that the Early Childhood Fiscal Mapping project would help identify gaps in access.
- Denise Tanata suggested looking at some of the PN3 Policy to Impact Center's effective roadmap polices: such as reducing the administrative burden for SNAP, expanding twelve-month recertification intervals, and implementing state paid family leave programs.
- Denise Tanata suggested a policy recommendation the create a general fund investment in home visiting services.
- Rachel Stepina asked Denise Tanata where the Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) fit into her policy suggestions.
- Denise Tanata answered that the ECIDS fit into her technical and data related suggestions and that she would explicitly add it into the policy recommendations.
- Lela Arney commented that The Children's Cabinet's Provider Action Committee had identified extensive nonpractical regulations as barriers for programs trying to provide food and snacks to children. She added that providers also struggled with a lack of financial support to obtain necessary supplies.
- Lela Arney shared the idea of implementing a formal food and health type of early childhood safety board using provider feedback.
- Lela Arney added that due to inflation's impact on food prices, Child and Adult Care Food Program reimbursements had become inadequate, and many providers were reconsidering providing food to children at all in their programs.
- Rachel Stepina asked if there was a policy that aligns to each of the ECAC subcommittees. She suggested aligning the subcommittee's asks, and the annual report, to the goals of the strategic plan (and associated subcommittees).
- Denise Tanata agreed that policy recommendations should align with the strategic workplan, but she added that there may not be too much use in aligning them with individual subcommittee goals.
- Denise Tanata reminded those present that the Finance and Policy subcommittee had been assigned developing a draft list to be presented to the Leadership subcommittee.
- Rachel Stepina suggested an action step to see which of the items on the list align and to point that out in the report.
- Brianna Cambra commented that DWSS was working with partners to have kitchen equipment and refurbishments classified as allowable expenses under future start-up/expansion funding with ARP discretionary.



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- Julie Houchins expressed enthusiasm for Brianna Cambra’s comments, saying that the work described aligned with common provider comments.

### 6. ECAC Funding Opportunity: \$21K to be spent by September 2023

*(Discussion, For Possible Action – Website Updates; Parent Stipends)*

*Julie Houchins and Elysa Arroyo, Subcommittee Co-Chairs*

*Presenter –Rachel Stepina*

- Julie Houchins explained that the ECAC panel was seeking recommendations or thoughts around how \$21,000 in funds would be spent before the end of September. She mentioned that there had been discussion on various swag items that could be made available for in-person events.
- Anna Marie Binder suggested procuring ECAC branded shirts for general ECAC and subcommittee members.
- Annette Dawson Owens asked if it was common for the ECAC to table at events and give out swag.
- Denise Tanata answered that the ECAC had not historically had an in-person tabling presence. Rather, the ECAC as an advisory board had aligned with early childhood partners who were responsible for tabling work.
- Denise Tanata explained that the communications and engagement subcommittee has been discussing having a more deliberate community presence. She suggested that if funding opportunities were conceptualized by subcommittee, something policy and finance could consider was professional graphic design and printing on the suggested one-pager informational.
- Lela Arney mentioned that The Children’s Cabinet would be putting on a birth through third grade educator wellness event on September 16, 2023, that aligns with the ECAC’s goals. She asked if there was funding available to provide drinks for participants.
- Julie Houchins asked Tiffany Olivas if there were any particular parameters around the funding opportunity.
- Tiffany Olivas answered that the primary issue affecting these funds was that they’d have to be spent very quickly. She explained that subcommittee co-chairs were collecting ideas to ECAC Chair, Tiffany Alston, who would ultimately connect with her about spending.
- Tiffany Olivas clarified that anything happening within the ECAC and subcommittee work groups should fit the parameters of allowable expenses for these funds.
- Denise Tanata clarified that the funds were subject to standard state and federal funding regulations and therefore could not generally be spent on things like food.
- Brianna Cambra suggested purchasing developmental screening kits, as the ECAC was advocating for a universal screening policy.
- Sabrina Jones asked Tiffany Olivas if subcommittee co-chairs should communicate funding ideas by email.
- Tiffany Olivas answered that Sabrina Jones should pose that question to the ECAC chair, Tiffany Alston.

### 7. Discuss Subcommittee Workplan

*(Discussion, For Possible Action)*

*Julie Houchins and Elysa Arroyo, Subcommittee Co-Chairs*

*Materials: [Nevada ECAC Workplans Document](#), [PN3 Policy to Impact Center Strategies](#)*

- Julie Houchins requested that the subcommittee review workplan goal 4.1: Perform fiscal analysis of early childhood funding streams and program development needs. She pinpointed an activity to, “identify all projects/analysis currently taking place or needed to estimate the actual or needed costs for all ECS needs.”
- Patti Oya commented that the [Nevada Ready Pre-K WestED report](#) was finished and would be shared with the subcommittee.



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- Rachel Stepina added that the Universal Pre-K report would be on the Board of Examiner's [agenda](#) for approval on September 12, 2023.
- Patti Oya clarified that an extra six months or year had been built into the budget for WestEd travel and give presentations based on their report.
- Brianna Cambra commented that once the report had been reviewed entirely, intersections with other ECAC subcommittees and partners could be identified.
- Julie Houchins explained that a list of policy changes related to Objective 4.2: Identify funding pathways and policy changes needed to meet program and system goals was being developed.
- Denise Tanata clarified that the list was what was discussed in the previous agenda item. She asked Julie Houchins what next steps regarding the list of recommendations would look like.
- Julie Houchins asked Denise Tanata if she had the list of policy recommendations in a sharable document that could be reviewed by the leadership subcommittee.
- Denise Tanata answered yes, and that the document would be shared.
- Brianna Cambra suggested having the Nevada Association for the Education of Young Children (AEYC) Policy Chair, Julie Houchins, and an NDE partner review the list, check for partner alignment, and finalize its form before presenting it.
- Denise Tanata said that she'd take the lead and circulate the list before the next leadership subcommittee meeting.
- Brianna Cambra suggested that the next iteration of the strategic plan have a one-pager informational of relevant policies to be used as talking points.
- Brianna Cambra mentioned a conversation with the operations work group of United Way of Northern Nevada regarding the eligibility portal:
  - She explained that Washoe County Library Systems had launched a babies with library cards initiative to assign all newborns in the county a library card.
  - She added that United Way had fundraised to increase eligibility for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Program that could be widely utilized once Nevada achieves universal eligibility.
- Julie Houchins shared the prenatal to three policy impact center clearinghouse page and mentioned that their policy summit was scheduled for 11AM-12:30PM on October 12, 2023. Since the summit would interfere with the October Finance and Policy subcommittee meeting, she asked if the subcommittee meeting should be rescheduled.
- Brianna Cambra commented that she would be attending the policy summit. She asked if the September Finance and Policy subcommittee meeting would still be taking place.
- Julie Houchins answered yes, and that it was just the October meeting that would be affected. She confirmed that the October subcommittee meeting would be cancelled.

### **8. Discuss Agenda Items for Next Meeting, Including Presentation or Discussion Requests from EC Systems Partners**

*(Discussion, For Possible Action)*

*Julie Houchins and Elysa Arroyo, Subcommittee Co-Chairs*

- Julie Houchins confirmed that she and Elysa Arroyo would connect and determine the agenda for the next subcommittee meeting on September 14, 2023.

### **9. Public comment #2**

*Public comment will be taken during this agenda item on any matter within the Council's jurisdiction, control, or advisory power. No action may be taken on a matter raised under this item until the matter is included on an agenda as an item on which action may be taken. The Council Chair will impose a time limit of three minutes.*

- No public comment was given.



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### 10. Adjournment

- Julie Houchins adjourned the meeting at 2:12 PM.