

2023

Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

NEVADA EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL (ECAC)

2650 Flamigo RD,
Las Vegas NV, 89116

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Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council

OUR PURPOSE STATEMENT

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

OUR VISION

Nevada's children will be safe, healthy, and thrive during the first eight years of life, and the system will support children and families in achieving their full potential.

OUR FUNDAMENTAL VALUES

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

Tiffany Alston
Chair

Director of Sunrise Children Foundation

Patrice Gardner
Vice-Chair

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

December 1, 2023

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



Amy Stephenson
Legislative Counsel Bureau
Director's Office
401 South Carson Street
Carson City, NV 89701

Dear Governor Joe Lombardo

Pursuant to NRS 432A.076, the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council (Nevada ECAC) must submit an annual report to the Governor and the Legislature. We are pleased to present the information for the year 2023 on behalf of the Nevada ECAC. This report outlines a summary of the Council's strategic plan, key accomplishments, and recommendations for improving the early childhood system in the state.

ECAC 2022-2024 Strategic Plan Summary

On January 19, 2022, the ECAC approved the 2022-2024 Strategic Plan, which aims to enhance the Early Childhood System in the state. Coordination and alignment of the early childhood system across sectors and existing initiatives is a crucial component of the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) and the 2022-2024 Strategic Plan. Therefore, the goals, activities, and critical accomplishments mentioned below result from the combined efforts of several state agencies and programs, nonprofit partners, and other key stakeholders. We have substantially coordinated and leveraged existing initiatives and resources to support our collective work.

The Nevada Early Childhood Strategic Plan aims to establish a more comprehensive and integrated early childhood service system. It strives to ensure that every child in Nevada has access to quality early childhood services regardless of their family's location or challenges. The plan builds on existing and expanding collaborative relationships and ongoing initiatives across the state. It provides a clear framework and targets for the shared work ahead while being flexible enough to allow stakeholders across Nevada to define, implement, and refine strategies and action plans that respond to specific communities' and populations' strengths and needs.

To achieve the objectives set out in the 2022-2024 Strategic Plan, the Nevada ECAC has formed five workgroups comprising appointed members and more than 40 key stakeholders from across the state. These stakeholders include both provider and parent representatives. We've made significant progress in the first year of the plan. We are excited to continue our efforts beyond 2023 to improve the early

childhood infrastructure in Nevada, aiming to promote better outcomes for young children and their families.

Strategic Plan Goals:

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

Select 2023 Key Accomplishments and Activities:

Overall:

- Election and transition of the ECAC Chair position
- Administrative staff positions through PDG B5 grant to support and enhance the work of the ECAC.

Goal 1 – Create a Coordinated Early Childhood Leadership Infrastructure in Nevada

- Assisted in the development and structuring of AB113 in the 2023 Nevada Legislative Session to establish a Governor’s Office for Early Childhood Systems. Although the bill did not pass, efforts provided insight into what may be needed moving forward to support a coordinated leadership infrastructure in Nevada.
- Drafted and supported the successful passage of AB114 in the 2023 Nevada Legislative Session to expand the scope and membership of the Nevada ECAC to include representation of the comprehensive early childhood system inclusive of early learning, maternal and child health, and families.
- The Council has provided advisory support and technical assistance to the Guinn Center with the development of the Early Childhood Governance Structure study, which is scheduled to be complete in 2024.
- Nevada ECAC members and partners received training on the *Manifesto for Race Equity and Parent Leadership* to support the successful integration of family representatives in advisory and leadership positions.

Goal 2 – Increase Coordination and Alignment Between Systems of Care for Young Children and Families

- Completed the Nevada Early Childhood Network Analysis with Visible Network Labs which included an assessment of 56 early childhood partners, representing a collective 786 partnerships. The analysis is being utilized to help identify assets and gaps in network connections throughout the early childhood system to improve cross sector coordination and alignment.

Goal 3 – Increase Capacity to Equitably Connect Families with the Early Childhood System Continuum of Care and Community at Large.

- Assisted in the successful execution of the Nevada Early Childhood Marketing and Outreach Campaign focused on increasing awareness and access to childcare assistance programs, particularly to ensure outreach to underserved populations and support outreach efforts. In the first six months of the campaign, messaging was delivered to Nevadans nearly 50 million times and the childcare subsidy program saw a 22 percent increase in the number of children served, as well as a 45 percent increase in monthly benefits distributed.

Goal 4 – Identify Budget and Finance Strategies to Drive Policy Goals and Objectives

- Provided support and technical assistance to The Children’s Funding Project to complete Nevada’s initial Children’s Fiscal Map and the development of the Early Childhood Fiscal Map, which will be released in early 2024.

The following is a list of entities and organizations that are working with Nevada ECAC to spearheading these efforts or collaborating with the Nevada ECAC

Key Stakeholders and Community Partners:

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

Recommendations For 2023:

The recommendations are categorized to align with the Nevada ECAC Goals outlined in the 2022 - 2024 Strategic Plan.

Goal 1: Early Childhood Leadership Infrastructure
Establish a Governor’s Office for Early Childhood Systems (use language from 2022 Annual Report and add reference to AB113)
Goal 2: Increase Coordination and Alignment Between Systems of Care for Young Children and Families
Early Childhood Governance Structure: Review and potentially implement the early childhood governance structure recommendations from the upcoming Guinn Center Report. Request a meeting or presentation upon completion of the report to review recommendations for consideration.
ECAC Administrative Support: Provide funding, as recommended by NDE in the AB114 (2023) fiscal note to sustain administrative support the Nevada ECAC in the amount of \$251,520 for the upcoming biennium.
Food Handling Policies for Childcare Providers: Review and revise provisions for food handling and safety for childcare providers to reduce administrative and fiscal burdens while still ensuring food safety. Would enable more providers to offer food and potentially be eligible for CACFP program. Would require some coordination with local health districts. (Recommendation from Childcare Provider Action Committee)
Goal 3: Increase Capacity to Equitably Connect Families with the Early Childhood System Continuum of Care and Community At Large
Coordinated Intake and Referral System: Support and provide resources necessary to develop, implement and sustain a coordinated intake and referral system that includes a broad range of cross sector early childhood programs and services, creating a centralized location for parents, providers, and community organizations to provide referrals and streamline access to needed resources.
HOA Barriers for Home-Based Childcare Providers: Enact policies that prevent HOAs from restricting the operation of home-based childcare businesses in common interest communities (CAA/Pritzker Policy Priority; Wonder school and Access Community Capital have data/stories of impact).
Early Childhood Fiscal Mapping: Review and adopt fiscal strategies included in the Children’s Funding Project Nevada Early Childhood Fiscal Map Report to expand equitable access to high quality programs and services in Nevada. Request a meeting or presentation upon completion of the report to review recommendations for consideration.

Medicaid Funding to Expand Home-Visiting: Create category of home-visitors to be eligible service providers (with specified supervisory authority), like CHW provisions from last two legislative sessions. Potentially will be included with EC Fiscal Mapping recommendations. May also need to look at eligible services, plan amendment or waiver and/or development of a billing service hub or support services to enable smaller community-based organizations (who are operating home-visiting programs) to bill for Medicaid. DPBH/MIECHV Program and DHCFFP would need to be engaged – some discussions and research currently underway.

CACFP Reimbursements: Request state investment to enhance CACFP reimbursements for childcare providers, as current rates are not sufficient to meet rising food costs. Alternatively (or concurrently) request Legislature to submit letter to congressional delegation to address this issue at the federal level (Recommendation from Childcare Provider Action Committee)

Goal 5: Execute Data Collection and Integrated Systems to Increase Equity and Accountability

Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS): Support and provide resources necessary to develop a Nevada ECIDS that includes cross sector data to inform decision-making and accountability across the early childhood system.

Other Potential Policy Recommendations for Consideration:

Prenatal to Three Policy to Impact Center:

Paid Family Leave Program – Enact a statewide paid family leave program of at least 6 weeks.

Reduce Administrative Burden for SNAP – Increase recertification period from 6 months to 12 months.

Comprehensive Screening & Connection Program – Invest in an evidence-based comprehensive screening and connection program (Dulce, Healthy Steps, Family Connects)

Group Prenatal Care – Provide financial support and enhanced Medicaid reimbursement rates for group prenatal care programs.

Evidence-based Home-Visiting Services – Create general fund investment to expand access to home-visiting programs (beyond federal resources – new federal funding will require match).

Early Head Start – Create general fund investment to expand access to Early Head Start Programs.

Early Intervention Services – Increase eligibility for children and/or maximize the use of Medicaid to pay for early intervention services.

Summary Recommendations:

Policy Recommendations for 2023 Annual Report:

- Nevada ECAC Policy & Finance Subcommittee recommends policy changes for the 2023 Nevada ECAC Annual Report. The recommendations align with the 2022-2024 Strategic Plan.
- Early Childhood Leadership Infrastructure
- Establish a Governor’s Office for Early Childhood Systems and add a reference to AB113.
- Increase Coordination and Alignment Between Systems of Care for Young Children and Families

- Review and implement the early childhood governance structure recommendations. Provide funding for administrative support and revise food handling policies for childcare providers.
- Increase Capacity to Equitably Connect Families with the Early Childhood System Continuum of Care and Community At Large
- Develop a coordinated intake and referral system. Establish a self-assessment process for eligibility to make funding assistance available immediately. Enact policies that prevent HOAs from restricting home-based childcare businesses in common interest communities.

Key points

1. Early Childhood Fiscal Mapping: Adopt fiscal strategies in the Children’s Funding Project Nevada Early Childhood Fiscal Map Report to expand access to high-quality early childhood programs and services.
2. Medicaid Funding to Expand Home Visiting: Create a new category of home visitors to be eligible service providers. Request plan amendment or waiver and development of a billing service hub or support services to enable smaller community-based organizations to bill for Medicaid.
3. CACFP Reimbursements: Request state investment to enhance CACFP reimbursements for childcare providers or ask the Legislature to address this issue at the federal level.
4. Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS): Develop a Nevada ECIDS that includes cross-sector data to inform decision-making and accountability across the early childhood system.

Additional Recommendation

- Enact a statewide paid family leave program of at least six weeks.
- Increase the SNAP recertification period from 6 to 12 months.
- Invest in evidence-based screening and connection programs.
- Provide financial support and enhanced reimbursement rates for group prenatal care programs.
- Create a general fund investment to expand access to evidence-based home-visiting programs.
- Create a general fund investment to expand access to Early Head Start Programs.
- Increase eligibility for early intervention services and maximize the use of Medicaid to pay for them.

We welcome any questions you might have regarding this 2023 annual report. On behalf of the entire NECAC, it is our honor to serve the Governor and the people of the great state of Nevada.