



## Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council

### NEVADA EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL (ECAC) POLICY & FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE PUBLIC MEETING THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2024 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**

*Elysa Arroyo and Brenda Morales-Solorzano, Subcommittee Co-Chairs*

- Elysa Arroyo 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
  - Brenda Morales-Solorzano, Developmental Specialist Supervisor, Aging and Disability Services Division
  - Brianna Cambra, Regional Quality Director, The Children's Cabinet
  - Elysa Arroyo, Manager of Grants, Compliance, and Government Relations, Aerospace Machine & Supply
  - Lela Arney Gonzales, ARP Project Coordinator, The Children’s Cabinet
  - Marty Elquist, SEED Director, The Children’s Cabinet
  - Patti Oya, Office of Early Learning & Development Director, Nevada Department of Education
- Members Not in Attendance:
  - Brian Cullen, Fiscal and Data Manager, Division of Welfare and Supportive Services, Childcare & Development Program
  - Katarina Jackson, Director, Lullaby Nursery
  - Nicole Martin, Division of Welfare and Supportive Services, Childcare & Development Program
- Public in Attendance:
  - Anna Villatoro, Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Program Specialist, The Children's Cabinet
  - Denise Tanata, Early Childhood Systems Advisor, The Children's Cabinet
  - Jamelle Nance, Director of Strong Start Initiative, Children's Advocacy Alliance
  - Jamie Mendez, Early Childhood Workforce Specialist, Nevada Department of Education, Office of Early Learning and Development
  - Joan Jackson, Education Programs Professional, Nevada Department of Education
  - John Giammona Wilber, ECAC Administrative Assistant Nevada Department of Education, Office of Early Learning & Development



## Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council

- Mary Regan, Child Care Resource & Referral Manager, Las Vegas Urban League Early Childhood Connection
- Rosa Tamayo, Parent Leadership Coordinator, The Children's Cabinet
- Sabrina Jones, ECAC Systems Specialist, Nevada Department of Education, Office of Early Learning & Development

### 2. Public Comment #1

- John Giammona Wilber noted that telephonic public comment could be called into +13462487799 or +16694449171.
- Denise Tanata noted that she didn't see the phone numbers listed in the chat.
- John Giammona Wilber re-posted the phone numbers for telephonic public comment in the meeting chat.

### 3. Approval of a Flexible Agenda

*(Discussion, For Possible Action)*

*Elysa Arroyo and Brenda Morales-Solorzano, Subcommittee Co-Chairs*

- Brianna Cambra motioned for the approval of a flexible agenda.
- Lela Arney Gonzales seconded the motion.
- All members present voted in favor of the motion; none opposed.
- The motion passed unanimously.

### 4. Approval of Meeting Minutes from September 14, 2023

*(Discussion, For Possible Action) Elysa*

*Arroyo and Brenda Morales-Solorzano,*

*Subcommittee Co-Chairs*

- Elysa Arroyo requested that John Giammona Wilber screenshare the September 14, 2023 meeting minutes for review.
- Jamie Mendez noted that there was a typo in Patti Oya's last name.
- Brianna Cambra noted that her title was listed incorrectly.
- Lela Arney Gonzales noted that her title was listed incorrectly.
- Marty Elquist noted that "OST" should have been listed as "OSR" and that "licensing efforts" should be replaced with "relevant educational partners."
- Marty Elquist motioned to approve the minutes with the four noted corrections.
- Anna Marie Binder seconded the motion.
- All members present voted to approve the motion; none opposed.
- The motion passed unanimously.

### 5. Meeting Overview and Welcoming New Co-Chair, Brenda Morales-Solorzano

*(Discussion) The new co-chair will be introduced, and both co-chairs will provide brief context about the subcommittee and the meeting.*

*Elysa Arroyo and Brenda Morales-Solorzano, Subcommittee Co-Chairs*

- Elysa Arroyo welcomed new Policy & Finance subcommittee co-chair, Brenda Morales-Solorzano. She invited to give a brief self-introduction. She explained that Brenda Morales-Solorzano had stepped up to fill the vacancy left by Julie Houchins' departure.
- Brenda Morales-Solorzano introduced herself and explained that she worked with early intervention in Reno. She added that she was a supervisor overseeing the development of specialists and therapists. She explained that she had previous experience working with regional centers and community providers. She commented that she was excited to join the subcommittee as co-chair.



## Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council

- Elysa Arroyo explained that there hadn't been a subcommittee meeting in several months, and, to get everybody re-acquainted, there would be a brief overview of the meeting agenda.
- Elysa Arroyo explained that there would be a summary of the PN3 winter summit, updates about the eligibility portal, a review of the subcommittee workplan, and an announcement of the new regular schedule for 2024.

### 6. Highlights from PN3 Summit

*(Discussion) Jamelle Nance, Director of Strong Start Initiative, Children's Advocacy Alliance*

- Jamelle Nance clarified that she would be speaking on the upcoming Winter Policy Summit for the Children's Advocacy Alliance (CAA).
- Jamelle Nance explained that the upcoming summit would be the first summit held in-person. She expressed enthusiasm for the line-up of panelists and guests. She added that the event would be held in Las Vegas at the Culinary Academy of Las Vegas.
- Jamelle Nance explained the initiative of the summit as bringing together local, state, and national experts to discuss policies to improve the lives of children.
- Jamelle Nance noted that the audience included a wide range of participants from legislators to community partners, business leaders, and childcare providers. She noted that about 150 people had signed up to participate in the summit so far.
- Jamelle Nance noted that the event would include an 8 Am registration and breakfast, a joint group session in the morning focusing on data (encompassing kids count data, Guinn Center data, Opportunity 180 data.) She noted that the group session was set to led by CAA deputy director, Tara Raines.
- Jamelle Nance noted that the next session on the agenda would allow participants to select from three breakout rooms regarding different topics: restorative justice, engaging parents in advocacy efforts, and an early childhood systems one-on-one.
- Jamelle Nance explained that there would be a lunch panel focusing on childcare and corporate social responsibility. She added that this panel would be focusing on family-friendly work environments and promoting policies for keeping families employed.
- Jamelle Nance added that there would be another session of three different breakout rooms for participants to choose from after lunch: health care access, housing/ economic justice, and the childcare workforce.
- Jamelle Nance commented that the summit would round out with one last opportunity for participants to choose between a selection of breakout sessions: the foster kinship transition, pre/post natal health care, and engaging your elected officials.
- Jamelle Nance shared that Annette Dawson Owens was the point of contact for the event and that more information on the event could be accessed at CAANV.org. She welcomed any questions about the event.
- Anna Marie Binder thanked Jamelle Nance and noted that the work of CAA was "invaluable to the state."
- Elysa Arroyo thanked Jamelle Nance for her time and for the presentation.

### 7. Discuss Development of Early Childhood Programs Eligibility Portal

*(Discussion, For Possible Action) Members will continue to discuss the establishment of an Early Childhood Programs Eligibility Portal, similar to the First 5 South Carolina First Steps online system (see link below). Members will review the EC Program Eligibility Portal Document to identify all relevant Early Childhood Programs, eligibility criteria and key contacts. Members may discuss additional issues relevant to the development of the portal. Denise Tanata, The Children's Cabinet Sample: First 5 South Carolina - <https://first5sc.org/>*

- Denise Tanata noted that there had been significant progress made on the eligibility portal since that last meeting of the Policy & Finance subcommittee. She added that the idea and initial work on the eligibility portal had sprung from the Policy & Finance subcommittee.



## Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council

- Denise Tanata explained that the Nevada Child Care Fund campaign (which was focused on childcare financial resources and getting providers connected to programs) was in the process of wrapping up and transitioning into the original statewide outreach and marketing campaign.
- Denise Tanata added that the eligibility portal was based on ECAC conversations regarding the need to support families and reduce barriers for accessing programs and services. \
- Denise Tanata explained that the new campaign was First5Nevada and included a comprehensive website of which the pivotal feature was the eligibility portal.
- Denise Tanata added that the Nevada eligibility portal was based upon a portal developed by South Carolina, which had already been reviewed by the subcommittee. She added that the same developer, 37Peers, created both portals.
- Denise Tanata commented that the current version of the portal included nearly 30 early childhood programs delivered by over 60 organizations throughout Nevada.
- Denise Tanata screenshared the current version of Nevada Early Childhood Programs Eligibility Portal Program List. She briefly introduced some of the organizations included in the list. She added that more programs were set to be added to the list. She added that a specific criteria for inclusion on the list was being finalized.
- Denise Tanata Screenshared a first draft of the eligibility portal as it was set to appear on the Nevadafirst5 website. She noted that the portal was available in both English and Spanish.
- Denise Tanata demonstrated how families would input some brief information into the eligibility portal and an algorithm would show which programs and services they qualified for. She noted that the language as presented in the portal was developer-created and that options would be re-worded to be more parent-friendly.
- Denise Tanata explained that the draft eligibility portal was going to be presented to focus groups of both English-speaking and Spanish-speaking families. She noted that programs presented to parents for eligibility would also eventually include brief descriptions before being linked. She added that families would have the option of being emailed their eligibility program results and that all information being input could be saved for parents to check the eligibility of multiple children easily.
- Denise Tanata explained that the portal and website were set to go live in early March 2024. She invited questions.
- Mary Regan commented that the eligibility portal had been being discussed for a while and that the flexible and workable draft that Denise Tanata shared was going to be deeply appreciated by Nevada providers and families.
- Patti Oya asked if Nevada Ready PreK was included in the program list.
- Denise Tanata answered yes and showed that it was included.
- Patti Oya asked what the eligibility portal would show for a family with a child aged four living in Clark County.
- Denise Tanata demonstrated an answer by adding new information into the portal. She noted that Nevada Ready PreK was not included in the trial results although it should have been. She noted that she would follow up with developers and the portal was still in the testing process.
- Patti Oya noted that the criteria for Nevada Ready PreK and options for families were complex and somewhat convoluted. She expressed interest in how the eligibility portal would simplify that complexity for families.
- Denise Tanata confirmed that by editing the criteria to specifically match the requirements for Nevada Ready PreK, the portal did link to the interest form on the Clark County School District Website.
- Patti Oya asked if the portal included the United Way seats available in Clark County.
- Denise Tanata answered that a family eligible for Nevada Ready PreK in Clark County would be linked to seat options both through the CCSD and United Way of Southern Nevada. She added that descriptions detailing the difference between the options would also be provided.
- Anna Marie Binder noted that the eligibility portal would be a great resource for families in Clark County who were confused about the options available to them. She thanked everyone involved in creating the portal.



## Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council

- Denise Tanata noted that some features of the portal were still being added, such as an AI chat function. She clarified that families would also be able to interface with real people, and that conversations with families would be used to identify policy issues and potentially address specific access problems for families.
- Anna Marie Binder asked if the initial notice of information collection was all that families would see regarding information collection.
- Denise Tanata answered that the information provided would be used to update and correct the portal. She added that lists of eligible families could also be compiled and shared with programs.
- Anna Marie Binder thanked Denise Tanata and noted that the portal was going to be so helpful to Nevada families who experienced childcare access issues.
- Denise Tanata added that she would be sharing the program list and invited suggestions for additions to the list. She noted that while Child Find programs were included in the lists, they would not be included immediately in the portal once more information was clarified. She noted that the subcommittee would be notified prior to the official launch of the portal.
- Anna Marie Binder noted that there had been mention of parental focus groups. She asked how those groups were going to be advertised and shared.
- Denise Tanata answered that a flier had been created and shared through some channels. She added that there were small incentives for families to participate, but that there hadn't been a formal social media push of the flier (as to prevent scammers.) She noted that she had asked interested individuals to reach out to her by EOD on 02/09/2024. She noted that a second round of focus groups would also be held for the website as a whole. She noted that information about the second round of focus groups would be shared with the subcommittee.
- Elysa Arroyo thanked Denise Tanata for the information and reiterated the subcommittee's excitement about the eligibility portal.

### 8. Subcommittee Workplan Review

*(Discussion, For Possible Action) The subcommittee will review and potentially act upon and/or update their workplan. Elysa Arroyo and Brenda Morales-Solorzano, Subcommittee Co-Chairs*

- Elysa Arroyo screenshared the combined subcommittee workplan. She explained that the subcommittee would briefly review elements of the workplan. She noted that since both subcommittee co-chairs were new, they would be relying on longer-standing members of the subcommittee to provide context.
- Sabrina Jones noted that Elysa Jones was sharing an internal copy of the workplan document. She requested to share the publicly posted version of the workplan document.
- Elysa Arroyo granted permission, thanked Sabrina Jones, and asked the subcommittee if there were any updates on the childcare subsidy, Nevada Ready PreK or universal PreK.
- Patti Oya noted the Nevada Ready PreK WestEd report had been finished. She offered to share a copy of the report with the subcommittee. She added that the WestEd universal PreK report was still happening but was having a slow start.
- Marty Elquist commented that the Childcare Subsidy (P5 Fiscal Strategies) were still set for a 06/30/24 completion date. She noted that a survey was set to go out to all licensed childcare providers by Friday of next week.
- Brianna Cambra asked if the access capital analysis startup costs should be included in the workplan.
- Denise Tanata agreed that the access capital analysis should be added to the subcommittee workplan. She explained that the analysis was a childcare facility fiscal analysis and revenue plan which was set to be fully completed by 09/30/24.
- Elysa Arroyo asked if the "list of policy changes needed to improve early childhood systems" (as detailed in the workplan) had any updates.
- Brianna Cambra asked if an initial brainstorm list from The Children's Cabinet should be shared.
- Marty Elquist commented that the brainstorm list would be a good place to start. She noted that she wasn't aware of a list besides the brainstorm list and what was set to be shared at the winter policy summit.
- Denise Tanata commented that she wasn't sure what list was going to be incorporated into the policy summit.



## Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council

- Jamelle Nance asked for clarification on the question.
- Brianna Cambra clarified that The Children’s Cabinet had a brainstorm document which was being used to guide conversations with GOWIN board members. She suggested that the list could be shared with partners and ECAC members as they exited the policy summit to develop a more comprehensive collaborative plan.
- Jamelle Nance commented that she didn’t think the winter policy summit would hold up the discussion moving forward.
- Marty Elquist commented that the GUINN center recommendations were separated from a list of policy recommendations created for the GOWIN group (the governor’s workforce innovation.) She added that there was no real system in place for sharing policy issues and priorities.
- Jamelle Nance commented that the CAA did have a list of policy recommendations based on what was gathered from community partners, which could function as a jumping off point.
- Brianna Cambra suggested adding a review of CAA policy recommendations to the next subcommittee agenda.
- Denise Tanata expressed interest in comparing the CAA list as well as national policy recommendation reports (such as from Kids Count.) She added that this review may help the ECAC identify systems issues. She added that she could make sure the national information was ready to share with the subcommittee by next meeting.
- Anna Marie Binder commented that, at the last Joint Interim Education Meeting, there was a presentation by a group which tracked national reports for lawmakers. She offered to find and share the links to the resources shared.
- Jamelle Nance offered to share the CAA’s policy recommendation list at the next subcommittee meeting.
- Elysa Arroyo thanked everybody for their input and noted that the workplan review would remain a standing agenda item for next month’s subcommittee meeting. She asked Denise Tanata to confirm the launch date of the eligibility portal.
- Denise Tanata answered that the eligibility portal was set to be launched in March of 2024. She suggested putting “Q1 of 2024” on the timeline for the workplan.

### 9. Discuss Agenda Items and for Upcoming Subcommittee Meetings

*(Including Presentation or Discussion Requests from EC Systems Partners) and Announce 2024 Meeting Schedule (Discussion, For Possible Action) Elysa Arroyo and Brenda Morales-Solorzano, Subcommittee Co-Chairs*

- Elysa Arroyo announced that ECAC Policy & Finance Subcommittee meetings were set to continue on the second Thursday of each month starting at 1 PM for an hour and a half.
- Patti Oya asked for clarification as to if the meetings were scheduled for 60 or 90 minutes.
- The subcommittee expressed a preference for 60-minute-long meetings.
- Elysa Arroyo confirmed that meetings would be scheduled for 60 minutes. She asked if there were any additional requested agenda items beyond the policy recommendations review.
- Marty Elquist suggested an item to review outcomes from the policy summit.
- Jamelle Nance confirmed that she’d be able to provide a review of the policy summit outcomes.

### 10. 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.*

- Anna Marie Binder commented that John Giammona Wilber had announced he’d be leaving his role as ECAC Administrative Assistant. She thanked him for his time supporting the ECAC.
- John Giammona Wilber added that his last day would be on Friday, February 16. He thanked the subcommittee for their hard work and kindness. He encouraged any subcommittee members to reach out to Sabrina Jones or Rachel Stepina for ECAC related needs.

### 11. Adjournment



## Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council

- Elysa Arroyo adjourned the meeting at 2:03 PM.

### **Selected Action Items**

- Information regarding parent focus groups for the full Nevadafirst5 website will be shared with the subcommittee.
- National early childhood policy recommendation reports will be compiled and shared with the subcommittee at their next meeting.
- The subcommittee will be alerted before launching the eligibility portal publicly.

### **One Sentence Summary**

- The subcommittee met their new co-chair, discussed the Winter Policy Summit, reviewed the draft eligibility portal, updated their workplan, and announced their 2024 meeting schedule.