The Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council (Nevada ECAC) strives to ensure that ALL children ages 0 to 8, and their families, have equitable access to high quality programs and services that meet their needs to fulfill our vision that:

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.

While we strive for universal access, we recognize that the need for and potential impact of high-quality programs are greater for some than others in our State. To prioritize service delivery for children and families with the greatest need, we have developed the following definition to serve as guiding principles for identifying those populations and communities where our efforts should be focused.

To the extent possible, the factors included in the definition are characteristics that are clear and measurable, enabling the Nevada ECAC and our partners to identify these populations and the communities where they live.

The definition will be utilized to:

- Support the early childhood system in development and implementation of communication and outreach efforts to identify where and to whom to conduct outreach, as well as effective methods for two-way communications.

- Support data and evaluation efforts aimed at ensuring equitable access and impact of early childhood programs and services.

- Support policy and finance decisions to ensure appropriate resources are directed to the appropriate populations and communities, as well as to address policy barriers impacting equitable access to early childhood programs and services.

- Support systems alignment efforts to identify trusted community partners and entities, as well as to enhance coordination and alignment across early childhood system sectors serving these populations and communities.

- Ensure that populations and communities with the greatest needs are integrated into key leadership and decision-making roles in the early childhood system.

The following indicators were established to identify populations of children who are considered "vulnerable or underserved" and thus have the greatest need for early childhood services and support.

Vulnerable or Underserved Children includes all families with children who:

- Are at or under 200% of the Federal Poverty Level[1]
- Reside in rural areas
- Reside in single-parent households
- Reside in tribal areas or are members of a tribe
- Are multilingual learners
- Are immigrants or refugees
- Have a disability and/or a developmental delay
- Have a special health care needs
- Have a behavioral and/or mental health needs
- Are under 3 years of age
- Are experiencing transiency and/or housing insecurity
- Are experiencing homelessness
- Are involved with Child Protective Services
- Identify as members of racial/ethnic/cultural minority groups including (but not limited to): African American, Asian, Hispanic/Latinx, Native American Alaska Native, Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander, and LGBTIQA+*, or
- Have 4 or more adverse childhood experiences or environments including[2]:

  ▪ Verbal abuse   ▪ Parental separation/divorce

  ▪ Physical abuse   ▪ Witness domestic violence

  ▪ Sexual abuse   ▪ Household substance use

  ▪ Lack of emotional support   ▪ Household mental illness

  ▪ Parent/guardian in prison

  ▪ Lack of basic needs (Food, Shelter and Health services)

*LGBTIQA+: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, asexual and other sexually or gender diverse

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[1] 1 Federal Poverty Level is determined annually by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. Federal Poverty Level guidelines are posted online at: https://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/povertyeconomic mobility/

[2] 2 According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "Adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs, are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood… [and include] aspects of the child's environment that can undermine their sense of safety, stability, and bonding." https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/index.html. List adapted from ACES 10 question survey for use in pediatric practice: https://acestoohigh.com/got-your-ace-score/.

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Communications and Engagement

- Who/where do we need to target outreach efforts?
- What organizations are working in these communities/with these populations that we can learn from and partner with?
- How do we need to align/adjust messaging, materials, and strategies to best reach these populations to connect to services and identify service/access barriers?

Data and Evaluation

- Are we equitably serving the populations most in need of services and support (priority populations – who are they and how do we define)?
- Do we have access to the data we need to identify these populations in terms of geography (where are they located to target service delivery/outreach) and to track service utilization (are they receiving and/or participating in EC programs/services)?
- Are our efforts impacting the populations who have the highest need for services and support?
- Are there gaps in serving the priority populations? Where are the largest gaps – check regularly to identify changes.
- Are we meaningfully including community voices when working with data (quantitative and qualitative)?

Policy & Finance

- When new funding/resources are available to expand access to EC services and support, where and/or to whom should receive priority regarding location/populations served?
- Are additional resources needed to serve these populations?
- Are there policy barriers that limit equitable access to programs and services for these populations?

Systems Alignment

- Are state agencies/programs prioritizing these populations?
- Do cross-sector partnerships exist within these communities to support equitable access to programs and services?
- Are there structural/regulatory barriers that limit equitable access to programs and services for these populations?
- How can we align/coordinate efforts across early childhood sectors to meet the needs of these populations? What sectors/entities are currently working with these populations that we can coordinate with?

Executive Leadership

- Are these populations and/or the organizations that work directly with these populations represented in leadership and decision-making roles in the early childhood system?