



Nevada Early Childhood  
Advisory Council



Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council  
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## Letter from the Chair and Vice-Chair

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

Amy Stephenson  
Legislative Counsel Bureau  
Director of State of Nevada,  
Governor's Office and Finance  
401 South Carson Street  
Carson City, NV 89701

Dear Governor Joe Lombardo and Ms. Amy Stephenson,

On behalf of the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council, we are pleased to present the Annual Report for the 2024 calendar year. In accordance with Nevada Revised Statute, NRS 432A.076, we are submitting this report to the Governor and the Legislature. This document outlines the Council's purpose, vision, and values, highlights key accomplishments, and includes a summary of progress in our three-year strategic plan. Additionally, it offers recommendations for enhancing the early childhood system across the state of Nevada.

Should you have any questions regarding the contents of this report, we welcome your inquiries. On behalf of the entire Nevada ECAC, it is our privilege to serve both the Governor and the people of Nevada.

Sincerely,

*Tiffany Alston*  
Tiffany Alston  
Nevada ECAC Chair

Nevada Head Start Association, President  
Sunrise Children Foundation, Director

*Patrice Gardner*  
Patrice Gardner  
Nevada ECAC Vice-Chair

Nevada Head Start State Collaboration Officer,  
Nevada Department of Education  
Office of Early Learning and Development



A photograph of several young children sitting at a table in a classroom, engaged in a painting activity. They are using paintbrushes and various colored paints on sheets of paper. The background shows a wall with colorful alphabet cards (Aa, Bb, Cc, Dd, Ee, Ff) and other educational posters. The scene is brightly lit and colorful.

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# Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) Overview

## 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 thriving 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 socioeconomics; also includes children in all environments including those with disabilities.



# Nevada ECAC 2024 Key Accomplishments

## Key 2024 Accomplishments:

As of 2024, the Nevada ECAC has accomplished many strategic plan objectives aligned to our goals to strengthen the Early Childhood System to include the following:

- ▶ Sustained two Nevada ECAC Administrative and Systems positions through federal funds to support the Nevada ECAC for 2023-2025.
- ▶ Participated in developing and refining talking points to support the development and passage of an Assembly Bill in the February 2025 Nevada Legislative Session, which proposes the creation of a Governor's Office for Early Childhood Systems. Although the bill did not pass in 2023, the efforts highlighted critical steps needed to establish a unified leadership infrastructure for early childhood systems in Nevada.
- ▶ Expanded Nevada ECAC membership successful passage of Assembly Bill (AB114) NRS 432A.076, Nevada Legislative Session expanded the scope and membership of the Nevada ECAC. We recruited 5 new members, reducing our number of member vacancies to 4. Total membership is 17.
- ▶ Began the development of Nevada ECAC Early Childhood Systems Strategic Plan for year 2025-2029.
- ▶ Provided Spanish interpretation of July, September, and November general meetings, with the assistance from the federal Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) language access initiatives, for families to participate in Nevada ECAC and share valuable input and experiences involving their Early Childhood System experiences.
- ▶ Created a comprehensive list of early childhood programs, key indicators, and a data dictionary to inform a data system.
- ▶ Developed an Early Childhood System Definition to foster consistency across the Early Childhood System.
- ▶ Updated the definition of Vulnerable and Underserved Population for the purpose of identifying prioritizing services for those most in need, common data elements, funding solutions, etc.
- ▶ Partnered with Early Childhood Systems initiatives, including but not limited to:
  - ▶ Guinn Center to review and to identify needs and strategies of the Early Childhood Governor's Office System.
  - ▶ The Children's Funding Project to complete Nevada's initial Children's Fiscal Map. The Nevada Fiscal map is housed on Nevada ECAC Website.
  - ▶ Nevada First Five Family Leadership Counsel to utilize standard rubrics to evaluate how ECAC leaders facilitate public meetings and make changes that will support equitable engagement of family leaders.
  - ▶ The Children's Cabinet for the Nevada Early Childhood Marketing and Outreach Campaign which includes the First Five Nevada Website.
  - ▶ Children's Advocacy Alliance and other agencies to identify policy priorities for Year 2025-2029.



## Strategic Plan 2022-2024 Summary

On January 19, 2022, the Nevada ECAC approved the [2022-2024 Strategic Plan](#), which aims to enhance the Early Childhood System in the state.

The Nevada ECAC 2022-2024 Strategic Plan is focused on creating a more coordinated, aligned, inclusive and integrated early childhood service system. Its goal is to ensure that every child in Nevada has access to high-quality early childhood services, regardless of their family's location or circumstances. Building upon existing partnerships and ongoing statewide initiatives, the plan offers a clear framework with specific goals for the collective efforts ahead. At the same time, it remains adaptable, allowing stakeholders across Nevada to define, implement, and refine strategies and action plans tailored to the unique strengths and needs of different communities and populations. Therefore, the key accomplishments, goals, activities and recommendations mentioned below result from the combined efforts of several state agencies and programs, organizations, and other key community partners. We have substantially coordinated and leveraged existing initiatives and resources to support our collective work.

To achieve the objectives set out in the 2022-2024 Strategic Plan, the Nevada ECAC formed five workgroups comprising both appointed Council members and more than 40 key community partners from across the state, including provider and parent representatives. We've made significant progress on the plan for 2022-2024 and are excited to continue our efforts in 2025 to improve the early childhood infrastructure in Nevada, aiming to promote improved outcomes for young children and their families.

The 2025-2029 strategic planning process has begun as we currently work with Nevada Department of Education to establish an agreement with a vendor to create the next plan. This six-month facilitation and creation process will be paid for through federal Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) funding.



- ▶ The [2022-2024 Nevada ECAC Strategic Plan](#) is located on the Nevada ECAC website at <https://nvecac.com/strategic-planning/>. The Nevada ECAC utilizes the following framework to guide the Strategic Plan and related activities. In carrying out this plan, the Nevada ECAC is committed to laying a solid foundation for systems work that will build upon existing strengths while also innovating and transforming those areas that are not performing optimally. Our work will be grounded in equity, authentic partnerships, and responsive, two-way communication that will lead our path forward.

# Strategic Plan 2022-2024 Summary by Goal

## Goal 1:

### Create a Coordinated Early Childhood Leadership Infrastructure in Nevada

Continued the appointment of Tiffany Alston, President of Nevada Head Start Association, as Nevada ECAC Chair. The Council would like to recognize Chair Alston, for her service to the Nevada ECAC from June 2023-present. Created Recommendations for 2025 to establish the Governor's Office for Early Childhood Systems.

## 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

The Nevada ECAC continues to receive regular updates from the Nevada Early Childhood Marketing and Outreach Campaign during the bi-monthly Council meetings and monthly subcommittee meetings. The campaign's primary focus is to increase outreach to underserved populations and increase awareness and access to childcare assistance programs statewide through <https://www.first5nevada.org/> and <https://primeros5nevada.org>. This campaign reached Nevadans via more than 50 million messages shared through various media platforms and contributed to a 22 percent increase in the number of children served by the childcare subsidy program. Furthermore, the monthly benefits distributed increased by 45 percent.

## 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 was released in early 2024. Partnered with Childcare Advocacy Alliance and other Early Childhood Agencies to review and draft Early Childhood Priorities for the 2025 legislation session.

## Goal 5:

### Improve data collection by fostering understanding and collaboration with providers, families, policy makers and other stakeholders

Created a data dictionary of early childhood comprehensive systems (ECCS) services and programs, along with key performance indicators (KPIs), and whether the KPI can be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, geography, household income, etc. Developed early childhood research questions and related data measurements to track progress in achieving the vision of the Council. Defined the Early Vulnerable and Underserved Population with clear and measurable characteristics to ensure equitable access to services for families that need support the most and to measure the impact of these services.



## Summary of Key Recommendations for the Governor's Office for Early Childhood

To establish the Governor's Office for Early Childhood (prenatal to age eight) to align policy and fiscal decision-making for the early childhood system across relevant agencies. The recommendation includes a detailed plan describing purpose, timeline, early childhood definition, functions, roles, responsibilities, reports, staffing, authority, and funding.

- ▶ **Purpose:** The primary purpose of the Governor's Office for Early Childhood is to develop a plan for restructuring Nevada's Early Childhood System, inclusive of necessary changes to programs, funding, staffing, and data systems, which may include significant realignment of state agencies to meet the holistic needs of young children and their families. The purpose is NOT to create a study or report, but an actionable plan developed with key stakeholders, including impacted populations representing the diversity of Nevada's population.
- ▶ **Timeline:** Establish a timeline to complete the prescribed roles, responsibilities, and functions within a prescribed period of not less than 5 years.
- ▶ **Early Childhood Systems Definition:** Require legislation to include the Early Childhood System definition approved by the Early Childhood Advisory Council on May 29, 2024, ensuring inclusion of all early childhood systems sectors within the scope and responsibility of the Governor's Office for Early Childhood.
- ▶ **Functions, Roles, Responsibilities:** Require the following roles, functions, and responsibilities: 1) Analyze and assess state-specific, national, and international research, reports, studies, and assessments addressing early childhood system governance structures and strategies. 2) Convene key stakeholders and participate in and support relevant advisory councils and boards to assess needs in developing an early childhood system governance structure.
- ▶ **Reports:** Require specific evaluative reports and deliverables.
- ▶ **Staffing:** Ensure the staff support necessary to carry out the roles, functions, and responsibilities detailed below, including the following positions: Director, Data Systems Analyst, Fiscal System Analyst, Early Childhood Workforce Analyst, Family Engagement Specialist, Early Childhood Administrative Assistance and other positions deemed as appropriate.
- ▶ **Authority:** Ensure the support and authority to carry out the roles, functions, and responsibilities detailed above.
- ▶ **Funding:** Provide adequate funding to support a staff with the expertise and experience necessary to complete the roles, functions, and responsibilities outlined below, as well as necessary operational costs to include travel, materials, and other resources as deemed appropriate. In addition, provide state funding to sustain the two administrative support positions of the Council, currently provided by federal funding through PDG B-5.





# Detailed Recommendations for the Governor’s Office for Early Childhood

## I: Purpose Statement

The primary purpose of the Governor’s Office for Early Childhood is to develop a plan for restructuring Nevada’s Early Childhood System, inclusive of necessary changes to programs, funding, staffing, and data systems, which may include significant realignment of state agencies to meet the holistic needs of young children and their families. The purpose is NOT to create a study or report, but an actional plan developed with key stakeholders, including impacted populations representing the diversity of Nevada’s population. We understand that reorganizing the governance structure for a comprehensive, coordinated, and aligned early childhood system is a complex task which will require the development of a coordinated plan to address the numerous governance and support elements necessary to ensure a comprehensive and sustainable system.

The 2023 Assembly Bill 113 proposed adding the Nevada Governor’s Office of Early Childhood to guide informed decision making regarding early childhood policy, practice, and financing at the Governor and Executive Leadership level. While AB113 was unsuccessful in 2023, the Council recommends in 2025 legislative session we continue to support this concept to

- ▶ Improve coordination and efficiency across state departments and local levels of government.
- ▶ Mobilize resources around the Governor’s priorities for children and families.
- ▶ Facilitate holistic approach to serving children and families who utilize a cross sector of programs and supports.
- ▶ Strengthen partnerships with non-profit and private sector entities serving these populations.
- ▶ Increase equitable access to programs and services in the early years to prevent or reduce the need for more costly remediation or services in later year.
- ▶ Federal and private funding are currently available to support Goal 1. For example, the Health Resource and Service Administration grant (currently led by The Children’s Cabinet in collaboration with multiple state agencies and private partners) extends through July 2026 and the federal PDG B-5 grant (currently led by the Nevada Department of Education) extends through December 2025.

## II: Term of Office

To establish the Governor’s Office for Early Childhood as a temporary office in the planning process and a timeline to complete the prescribed roles, responsibilities, and functions (as outlined below) within a prescribed period of not less than 5 years.

- ▶ Review and consider implementing the recommendations from [Guinn Center 2024 Report](#) on Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems governance structure. This study includes an analysis of governance structures by incorporating work completed by Nevada ECAC and critical partners.



# Detailed Recommendations for the Governor’s Office for Early Childhood

## III: Early Childhood Definition

Require legislation to include the Early Childhood System definition approved by the Early Childhood Advisory Council on May 29, 2024, ensuring inclusion of all early childhood systems sectors.

## IV: Key Roles, Functions and Responsibilities

Require the Governor’s Office for Early Childhood to have the following roles, functions, and responsibilities:

1. Analyze and assess state-specific, national, and international research, reports, studies, and assessments addressing early childhood system governance structures and strategies, beginning with the [Guinn Center 2024 report](#), *From Crowded to Coordinated: Examining the Governance of Nevada’s Early Childhood Systems*.

2. Convene key stakeholders and participate on and support relevant advisory councils and boards.

Key Stakeholders shall include but are not limited to:

- ▶ Parents and families who are direct beneficiaries or end users of Nevada’s early childhood system
- ▶ Local government, including both rural and urban municipalities
- ▶ State government administrators and program staff, inclusive of all sectors and services within the early childhood system
- ▶ Members of the early childhood workforce, inclusive of all sectors and services within the early childhood system
- ▶ Community-based organizations and intermediary organizations that assist State government in the delivery of programs, services and supports
- ▶ Academic faculty with research or expertise in early childhood programs and services
- ▶ Advocacy organizations

Advisory Councils and Boards shall include but are not limited to:

- ▶ Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council
- ▶ Maternal and Child Health Advisory Board
- ▶ Nevada Children’s Behavioral Health Consortium and regional Children’s Mental Health Consortia
- ▶ Governor’s Council on Food Security
- ▶ Advisory Council on the State Program for Wellness and the Prevention of Chronic Disease
- ▶ Advisory Committee on the State Program for Oral Health
- ▶ Nevada Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities
- ▶ Interagency Coordinating Council
- ▶ Advisory Council for Family Engagement
- ▶ Governor’s Office of Workforce Innovation – Workforce Development Board and Nevada P-20 To Workforce Advisory Committees



## Detailed Recommendations for the Governor's Office for Early Childhood

3. Meet with representatives from other states and jurisdictions that have implemented or are in the process of implementing new early childhood governance structures to assess insight on identified strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities.
4. Provide staff support to the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council.
  - ▶ Move the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council under the Office to provide staffing support, reporting, and all administrative functions of the Council.
  - ▶ Provide all administrative support to the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council and its subcommittees.
  - ▶ Support the development and implementation of the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council's Strategic Plan.
  - ▶ Provide regular updates on the status of the Early Childhood Governance Structure Assessment and Recommendations Plan and seek input on key findings and recommendations.

### V: Reports and Deliverables

Require the Early Childhood Systems Office to complete the following reports and deliverables:

1. Submit at least quarterly reports to the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council regarding the activities of the Office and any recommendations for improvements to the early childhood system, seeking input and advisory support for key findings and recommendations. Submit a draft of the annual report to the Governor and Legislature for review and input by the ECAC prior to submission.
2. On or before December 1 of each year, submit an annual report to the Governor and the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau regarding the activities of the Office/Department and any recommendations for improvements to the early childhood system.
3. No later than July 1, 2028, submit a final report to the Governor and the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau that includes specific recommendations and a comprehensive plan to reorganize Nevada's early childhood system governance structure.

The report shall include, but is not limited to:

- ▶ Assessing the needs of families with young children in Nevada, with a particular focus on the needs of vulnerable and underserved populations (as defined by the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council), including current challenges of service delivery to inform a governance structure to support more efficient and effective processes.
- ▶ Consolidating or reorganizing State departments, divisions, agencies, offices, or programs, as deemed necessary to support a comprehensive and coordinated governance structure based on the needs of families with young children in Nevada.
- ▶ This may include recommendations to add, change, or eliminate existing departments, divisions, agencies, offices, and/or programs.
- ▶ Offering recommendations to align, braid, and coordinate funding, including consideration of federal mandates and limitations, as well as opportunities to create fiscal efficiency within the system and generate or support new revenue streams, as needed.



# Detailed Recommendations for the Governor's Office for Early Childhood



- ▶ Recommending enhancements and supports for the early childhood workforce necessary to effectively implement the recommended consolidation or reorganization, as well as the broader early childhood workforce needed for programmatic implementation based on the needs of families with young children in Nevada.
- ▶ Providing recommendations to enhance and support early childhood data systems and infrastructure, including, but not limited to, opportunities to develop an Early Childhood Integrated Data System, a Coordinated Intake and Referral System, and a Universal Application System.

## VI: Staffing

Ensure the Governor's Office for Early Childhood has the staff support necessary to carry out the roles, functions, and responsibilities detailed above, including the following positions:

1. Director– The Director of the created entity shall serve as a member of the Governor's Cabinet and have primary responsibility for overall roles, responsibilities, and functions of the Office/Department, including hiring and supervision of all staff listed below. The Director, and/or his or her representatives, will serve as a non-voting members of the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council and will assist in the implementation of the Nevada ECAC Strategic Plan.
  - A. Minimum Qualifications:
    - i. A minimum of 10 years of administrative, management, or leadership experience within Nevada's early childhood system in a public agency or private entity.
    - ii. Demonstrated understanding of early childhood systems, including cross-sector coordination and alignment.
    - iii. Experience and demonstrated ability to convene and collaborate effectively across stakeholder groups, streamline and improve efficiencies, and improve program and system level accountability.
    - iv. Proven ability to communicate complex issues in writing and through public speaking.
    - v. Experience in managing multiple complex programs with a demonstrated ability to improve organizational performance and develop workforce capabilities.
  - B. Appointment – The Governor shall appoint a person from a list of three persons recommended to the Governor by the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council established pursuant to NRS 432A.076.
2. Data Systems Analyst – Responsible for developing the plan to establish an Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) and overall data infrastructure to streamline data input and reporting for a comprehensive early childhood system.
3. Fiscal Systems Analyst – Responsible for coordinating, analyzing, and communicating the impacts of funding for programs and initiatives that fall under the umbrella of the early childhood systems governance structure.
4. Early Childhood Workforce Analyst – Responsible for initiating and managing an early childhood system workforce study, including assessing and identifying strategies to address workforce issues including compensation, benefits, and equitable representation across sectors of the early childhood system.



## Detailed Recommendations for the Governor’s Office for Early Childhood

5. Family and Community Engagement Specialist – Responsible for conducting outreach and engagement of family and community representatives in State-level decision-making including the development and implementation of policies, programs, procedures, and infrastructure impacting the equitable delivery of early childhood programs and services.
6. Early Childhood System Administrative Assistant – Responsible for providing administrative support to the Director and project staff of the Office of Early Childhood Systems, as well as providing administrative support to the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council.

### VII: Authority

Ensure the Governor’s Office for Early Childhood has the support and authority to carry out the roles, functions, and responsibilities detailed above:

1. Require each agency, board, commission, department, officer, employee, or agent of the State or a local government to provide the Office/Department or any representative of the Office such assistance as the functions and operations of the Office may require if that assistance is within the scope of duties of the person or entity.
2. Vest the Office with the authority to request, for each regular session of the Legislature, the drafting of one legislative measure relating to matters within its scope. The request must be submitted to the Legislative Counsel on or before September 1, preceding the regular session.

### VIII: Funding

Provide adequate funding to support a staff with the expertise and experience necessary to complete the roles, functions, and responsibilities outlined above, as well as necessary operational costs to include travel, materials, and other resources as deemed appropriate.

The Nevada ECAC added two administrative staff positions through federal PDG B-5 grant to support the Council and improve implementation of the strategic plan. The award will expire in December 2025. The Nevada ECAC needs financial support to continue to sustain both positions.

- ▶ The Nevada ECAC Systems Specialist supports the ongoing work of the Council, including adjusting the corresponding workplans that drive the action steps and measurable outcomes of the plan. The specialist works closely with Nevada ECAC and systems partners to facilitate the shared goals of the Council.
- ▶ The Nevada ECAC Administrative Assistant position supports compliance with Open Meeting Law, creates minutes, assists with scheduling, co-develops agenda, and manages the website and access to documents. Both positions are new, and funding will continue through 2025, including the development of the 2025-2029 Strategic Plan.





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