GOAL:

The Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) Data and Evaluation Subcommittee seeks to improve early childhood data collection and data system integration to increase equity in accessing and utilizing services and to ensure accountability of public investments.

OBJECTIVES & PROGRESS:

To achieve the above goal, the Subcommittee is working to:

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

   a. The subcommittee is working on the creation of a data communications playbook for each target audience to ensure we are communicating clearly, directly, and inclusively about early childhood data. The playbook will include best practices in data collection, how the data can be trusted, how consumers can access data and why collecting data is necessary for individual program needs as well as system needs.

2. Increase availability of, access to, and use of data that can be disaggregated by key demographics to drive informed decision making to ensure our most vulnerable populations are being served. This includes collecting and analyzing data on child development, program effectiveness, and family needs, and ensuring data accessibility for all relevant stakeholders.

   a. The Subcommittee has created a data dictionary to identify what data are available across the Early Childhood Comprehensive System (ECCS) and if the data that are available can be disaggregated by demographics, geography, and other factors in the ECAC's Vulnerable Children definition.

   b. The data dictionary includes 68 variables across key areas such as early childhood care & education, health, nutrition, family support & engagement, and safety & well-being. The Subcommittee had to search over 40 data sources, both nationally and locally to gather these data.
      i. Many of the data that are currently available do not allow disaggregation of data by geography, age, race/ethnicity, sex, income/poverty, and other key variables that might detect disparities in vulnerable populations.
      ii. It is hard to answer questions about quality or effectiveness as you cannot tie the same children utilizing the service to the outcome. This is especially true across services.
      iii. Some of the data available are not the best measure, but rather the closest related data available.

3. Implement an Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) to improve both data reporting and service delivery with an emphasis on the importance of data privacy, the use of technology to

streamline data processes, and the development of standardized metrics to facilitate consistent and accurate reporting across agencies and organizations.

      a. The development of the data dictionary provides ample evidence that integration is imperative to streamline the number of isolated data systems that are storing the same data elements for many of the same children. Integration is necessary to identify the unique number of children served as well as to better understand the array of services families access and how that may relate to long term measures of well-being (e.g. education, health, socioeconomic status, criminal activity, etc.).

      b. In addition to the data dictionary, the Subcommittee has developed key research questions that early childhood data are needed to answer. Once completed, the data dictionary will be used to compare the available data to the data that are needed to identify early childhood data gaps by sector.

      c. The data elements needed to answer key research questions will be linked to the state's longitudinal data system and be used to measure if Nevada's children are safe, healthy, and thriving during the first eight years of life and that the system is supporting children and families in reaching their full potential.

It is extremely difficult to gather the data necessary to answer key early childhood research questions without coordinated governance, data systems, and adequate data analysis staff across the entire early childhood system. The Data and Evaluation Subcommittee is subcommittee of the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council and does not have funded nor mandatory representation by department or agency. The work of the Subcommittee is driven by the passion and dedication of the members in the hope to create better opportunities for our children and to use data to help us improve our early childhood system across all sectors so we better address the complex needs of our families.

Nevada's youngest children and their families deserve a governance structure that coordinates the entire early childhood system that uses these data to understand the complex needs of Nevada's families, and has the decision-making authority to unify a plan that is informed by these data.