



Nevada Early Childhood  
Advisory Council

# Annual Report 2025

Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council  
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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

December 1, 2025

Dear Governor Joe Lombardo and Ms. Amy Stephenson,

On behalf of the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council, it is our honor to submit the Annual Report for the 2025 calendar year. Pursuant to the requirements set forth in Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 432A.076, this report is submitted to the Governor of the State of Nevada and the Members of the Nevada State Legislature.

This report outlines the Council's statutory purpose, guiding vision, and core fundamental values, provides a comprehensive summary of key policy priorities, interim recommendations, and future planning for ECAC; shows key accomplishments and milestones achieved during this reporting period. The Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council remains steadfast in its commitment to collaboration, accountability, and continuous improvement in service to Nevada's children and families.

We extend our gratitude for continued leadership and partnership in building a strong foundation for Nevada's future by strengthening the early childhood system.

Sincerely,

Tiffany Alston  
[Nevada ECAC Chair](#)  
Nevada Head Start Association, President  
Sunrise Children's Foundation, Director

Patrice Gardner  
[Nevada ECAC Vice-Chair](#)  
Nevada Head Start Collaboration, Director  
Nevada Department of Education, Office of Early Learning and Development



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# Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) Overview

## 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.

## 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.

## 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.



# Strategic Plan - Draft Goals for 2026-2028

We are pleased to announce that the ECAC Strategic Plan is nearing completion. This plan will guide the Council’s priorities for 2026–2028. The goals listed below represent an initial draft. An Ad Hoc Committee will further refine and prioritize these goals to ensure alignment with the key focus areas developed during the ECAC Strategic Planning Retreat.

The retreat, held on October 29–30, 2025 brought together approximately 40 participants- ECAC members, parents of young children and family members, partners, professionals, and community members who contributed their perspectives and expertise to shape the direction of the new Strategic Plan.

The strategic planning process also included extensive reviewing and analyzing national research and documentation, examining external factors that can affect the early childhood system, completing Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Challenges (SWOC) analysis, taking the time to listen to concerns, perspectives and lived experiences.

Community engagement was a central component, capturing input from 1,700 survey respondents including 60% parents of young children and insights from 28 key leader interviews. These efforts provided a detailed view of challenges and opportunities across Nevada’s early childhood system.

<b>Strategic Plan Focus Areas:</b>
➤ Organizational Governance & Compacity
➤ Workforce Development
➤ Connected Services and System
➤ Funding & Affordability
➤ Advocacy & Influence

<b>Strategic Plan Goals:</b>
1. Promote the growth and sustainability of a qualified early childhood system workforce that is fairly compensated and supported.
2. Promote an integrated, aligned, and family-centered early childhood system that strengthens coordination and access across agencies and data systems.
3. Advocate for sustainable funding streams for early childhood system and affordable early care and learning.
4. Elevate the visibility and value of coordinated early childhood system, dedicated to enhancing the life of children.
5. Establish a sustainable operational infrastructure to fulfill the mission and mandate of the Early Childhood Advisory Council.

# Key Policy Priorities 2026

## Child Care Access & Affordability

- Expand subsidies and financial assistance for families.
- Increase availability of quality childcare and Pre-K programs (including full day).
- Ensure foster families and underserved communities have consistent access.

## Workforce Support & Compensation

- Increase wages and benefits, including health insurance, for the early care workforce.
- Expand training pathways and reduce burdensome requirements.
- Support program sustainability in both urban and rural areas.
- Evaluate the efficacy of current processes, including the use of waivers, in maintaining mandated student-teaching ratios in Pre-K and Kindergarten classrooms.

## System Alignment & Governance

- Address fragmentation across early childhood, K–12, and child welfare system.
- Establish a clear governance structure for early childhood.
- Implement a universal application to streamline program access.

## Family Support & Engagement

- Adopt family-centered approaches across all programs.
- Simplify communication of resources and reduce administrative burdens.
- Expand home visiting programs and engagement supports.

## Health & Well-being

- Expand access to health support for young children and the workforce.
- Promote trauma-informed practices in child welfare and early education.
- Ensure early identification and intervention for at-risk children.

## Data & Accountability

- Develop an Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS).
- Use data to guide decision-making and track outcomes.



# ECAC 2026 Interim Policy Recommendations

## Summary to the Legislature and Governor

- The Nevada ECAC recommends the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education and the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Health and Human Services schedule presentations during the 2026 Interim to understand current barriers and potential policy solutions to consider for the 2027 Legislative Session for the following priority issues identified by the ECAC.
- Early Care and Education Access and Affordability: Opportunities to expand access to high quality, affordable early care and education programs that meet the needs of families, including foster families and relative caregivers.
- Early Childhood Education, Workforce Supports and Compensation: Opportunities to increase training, reduce administrative barriers and support livable wages and benefits for the early childhood workforce. Address the impact on teachers and students of utilizing waivers to go over mandated student-teacher ratios in kindergarten classrooms.
- Systems Alignment and Governance: Address fragmentation across Nevada’s early childhood system and solutions to improve our early childhood governance structure, including the adoption of family-centered approaches, alignment of policies and regulations, streamlining administrative processes, and utilizing systems to support data driven decision-making. Evaluate efficacy of current processes to maintain state-mandated student teacher ratios.
- The Nevada ECAC recommends the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Government Affairs to schedule a presentation during the 2026 Interim to discuss current barriers and potential policy solutions to address Early Childhood System Governance and Infrastructure.
- The Nevada ECAC recommends the Joint Interim Committee on Revenue to schedule a presentation during the 2026 Interim to discuss funding needs of Nevada’s early childhood system and assess potential revenue streams to expand access to high quality early childhood programs and services that meet the needs of families with young children in Nevada.
- The Nevada ECAC recommends the Governor’s Office assess and consider opportunities to realign and streamline the governance structure of Nevada’s early childhood programs and services to address fragmentation, improve administrative efficiency and coordinate services to support a family-centric approach to the delivery and implementation of key early childhood programs and services.



# ECAC Highlighted Accomplishments

The dedication and support of each Subcommittee have led to the following accomplishments:

## Executive Leadership Subcommittee

### Goal 1: Strengthening Early Childhood Leadership Infrastructure:

**ECAC has advanced governance and operational capacity through:** effective and consistent leadership, administrative support staff and subcommittee work. The accomplishments include the continued work of the development of the 2026–2028 Strategic Plan, the revision of its workplan and administrative manual, and the establishment of a formal annual planning process for policy priorities. Membership processes have been streamlined, new member orientations implemented, and majority of Council seats filled. Family engagement has been enhanced through feedback loops, Spanish interpretation, and flexible meeting schedules.

## Systems Alignment Subcommittee

### Goal 2: Enhancing Coordination Across Early Childhood Systems:

**Redesigned an EC System Graphic:** The Comprehensive Early Childhood System Graphic and visual guide including definitions and descriptions, allows families to understand and navigate the connection between various agencies, families, early childhood workforce and the communities of Nevada, created to clearly illustrate how programs and services connect to support children from the prenatal stage through age eight. This guide serves as a user-friendly tool for families, providers, and policymakers, helping them understand how health, education, and community systems interact.

**Membership Alignment:** Conducted a review of ECAC Membership, to identify gaps across Early childhood system sectors and worked to ensure full Early Childhood system representation of the Council.

This effort ensures that voices from all Early Sectors are included in decision-making. It also allows ECAC to better integrate cross-sector priorities and incorporate shared goals into the Council's work plan, ultimately improving coordination and outcomes for children and families statewide. These sectors include:

- Early Childhood Education
- Maternal and Child health
- Family Supports
- Economic Well-Being
- Impacted Individuals/Family representation with lived experience

## Communication & Engagement Subcommittee

### Goal 3: Expanding Connections with Families and the Community:

#### Ad Hoc Communications & Engagement Subcommittee:

Creation of a Communication & Engagement Ad Hoc Committee strengthens ECAC's ability to build a strategic communication plan. The plan promotes ECAC awareness, engages professionals serving families, strengthens partnerships with parents and provides accessible ways for families and stakeholders to participate in the Early Childhood Systems.

Cont.

### **Targeted Outreach Using Event Tracking & Campaigns:**

Identifies gaps in the information sharing and ability to historically track ECAC participation and requests in community engagement opportunities. In 2025, the committee created an "Event Outreach" workbook which allows review and approve requests for outreach or participation in events, monitor the request status and event details, and capture the outcomes, reach, and engagement discussions that the event provided. This tool provides consistency across the ECAC in making decisions about what stakeholder engagement opportunities should be prioritized.

### **Policy & Finance Subcommittee**

#### **Goal 4: Aligning Funding Strategies with Policy Objectives:**

**Mapping Funding Sources:** The Early Childhood Programs Funding Matrix provides an overview of early childhood funding across a range of programs in Nevada. This helps policymakers, partners, and communities understand how services are financed and where gaps exist. Its purpose is to serve as a valuable tool for planning, and ensuring investments align with early childhood systems priorities. The matrix also shows which programs have lost or are at risk of losing funding and the impact those lost funds have on families and providers.

**Legislative Review and Analysis:** The subcommittee received regular updates before, during and after the 2025 Legislative Session on a range of bills and budgets impacting Nevada's early childhood system. Analysis, discussion and advisory support were provided to ensure the ECAC stays aligned with emerging policy opportunities and clearly identifies funding needs and gaps that require attention. This alignment strengthens Nevada's ability to advocate for sustainable early childhood policies and investments.

### **Data & Evaluation Subcommittee**

#### **Goal 5: Strengthening Data Systems and Accountability:**

##### **Key Talking Points for Policymakers and Stakeholders:**

Developing unified talking points strengthens ECAC's ability to communicate data, needs, and priorities to policymakers, agencies, and the public. These messages help build understanding of how data supports system improvement, accountability, and reinforce the importance of investing in early childhood integrated data systems.

##### **Statement regarding Best Practices for Data Collections:**

The development of best practices for data collection in partnership with Nevada Department of Education ensures that Nevada's approach is family-centered, and respectful.

These practices also promote consistency and accuracy across agencies, helping improve the quality and usefulness of early childhood data statewide.

##### **Prioritizing Children and Families with the Greatest Needs:**

The Data and Evaluation Subcommittee created a Vulnerable Populations definition that will support early childcare system alignment. In addition, ensure children and families with the greatest needs receive prioritized support and services through targeted outreach, appropriate data practices, and help EC partners and leaders to make informed policy and funding decisions.



## Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council

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and the system will support children and families in achieving their full potential.*