



Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council

Systems Alignment Subcommittee

Public Meeting

Wednesday, October 22, 2025

1:00 pm-2:30 pm

“Nevada’s children will be safe, healthy, and thrive during the first eight years of life, and the system will support children and families in achieving their full potential.

Meeting Location: This meeting will be held via Zoom.com. To join us, click **HERE**.

Meeting ID: 875 3050 2489

Passcode: 760482

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MINUTES

1. Welcome, Call to Order, Roll Call (*Informational*)

- Tiffany Olivas started meeting at 1:03 pm
- Brandi Hearst conducted roll call

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

1. Abbey Bernhardt, Co-Chair
2. Patrice Gardner, ECAC Vice Chair
3. Adriana Lemus, Parent Leader of First 5 Nevada
4. Jamie Mendez, Early Childhood Workforce Specialist, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
5. Dr. Nance, Communication and Engagement Co-Chair
6. Dr. Diane Nicolet, WCSB Board Trustee
7. Tiffany Olivas, Co-Chair
8. Dana Preece, B-3 Specialist, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
9. Anna Severens, NV Pre-K, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
10. Rachel Stepina, PDG B-5 Grant Manager, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
11. Lakesha Washington, Early Childhood Coordinator, The Children's Cabinet

MEMBERS ABSENT

1. Anna Binder, Parent
2. Tina Springmeyer, Washoe County School District

PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

1. Jess Angel, Parent Leader
2. Mary Childrey, The Children's Cabinet
3. Brandi Hearst, ECAC Administrative Coordinator, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
4. Sabrina Jones, ECAC System Specialist, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
5. Sabrina Schnur, Community Member
6. Denise Tanata, Policy and Finance Co-Chair
7. Anna Villatoro, Family Engagement Specialist, The Children's Cabinet
8. De Yates, Community Member

3. Public Comment #1

Public comment was not given.

- No comment

4. Approval of a Flexible Agenda (*Discussion for Possible Action*)

The Subcommittee approved a flexible agenda.

Tiffany Olivas and Abbey Bernhardt, Subcommittee Co-Chairs

- Jamie Mendez motioned for a Flexible Agenda
- Dr. Nicolet seconded the motion
- Members voted unanimously, motion carries





5. Approval of September 24, 2025, Minutes (Discussion for Possible Action)

The Subcommittee approved minutes from 9.24.25

Tiffany Olivas and Abbey Bernhardt, Subcommittee Co-Chairs

- Anna Villatoro requested to add Adriana Lemus to the Roster as she attended as a new member
- Lakesha Washington is also missing her name as a new member who attended
- Rachel Stepina asked to change the word IDEA to Idea on agenda item #7
- Patrice Gardner motioned for approval of September 24, 2025, Minutes with the above corrections
- Anna Severns seconded the motion
- Abbey Bernhardt abstains from voting due to absence
- Members voted unanimously, motion carries

6. Annual Report Plan & Policy Priority Discussion (Discussion for Possible Action) 10 min

The Subcommittee reviewed the results from the policy priority survey.

Denise Tanata, Policy and Finance Co-Chair

- Denise Tanata explained that the survey had 34 responses, the majority were community/partners who responded, not enough ECAC members
- The purpose of the survey was to develop a set of draft recommendations to submit to the Executive Leadership Subcommittee to include as potential recommendations in the ECAC annual report to the legislature and the Governor.
 - Recommendations broken into the following six categories
 - Childcare access and affordability.
 - Workforce support and compensation
 - System alignment and governance
 - Family support and engagement,
 - Health and well-being
 - Data and accountability
- Policy and Finance Subcommittee has finalized recommendations to be the following:
 - Recommend that the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education and the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Health and Human Services schedule presentations
 - Consider For The 2027 Session On The Following Priority Issues
 - Early Care And Education Access And Affordability.
 - Early childhood education workforce supports and compensation
- Systems Alignment
 - Joint Interim Standing Committee on Government Affairs schedules a presentation to discuss barriers and potential policy solutions
 - Early childhood system governance and infrastructure.
 - Joint Interim Committee on Revenue to schedule a presentation.
 - Discuss funding needs of Nevada's early childhood system
 - Assess potential revenue streams to expand access to high-quality early childhood programs and services.
 - Identify needs of families with young children.
 - Recommendation to the governor's office to 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
 - Coordinate services to support a family-centric approach to the delivery
 - implementation of key early childhood programs and services.
- Patrice Gardner asked if we are going to bring up funding for ECAC, as other boards have secured funding
- Denise Tanata responded that we can always include it as a standalone recommendation under system alignment and governance. Other Boards are directly aligned under specific state agencies and programs.
- Rachel Stepina asked if these recommendations are polished final copies to paste into the report?





- Densie Tanata explained that it would be up to the Executive Leadership team on how they want to handle that
- Rachel Stepina suggested starting with a short introduction to stay on topic and content not getting lost, then asked:
 - Who would be in charge of creating the presentations we recommended as a priority
 - If our recommendations are chosen, are we ready to present or provide the information to them?
- Denise Tanata shared that the Legislative Council staff would be responsible for just making sure that they're getting all the presentations that they need to have coming in and talking about the right things
- Jamie Mendez mentioned partnering with Start Early to complete some of those action step items, and determine next steps, formulate where we're at as a state that helps support some of the workforce-specific pieces that you've outlined
- Densie responded, " Yes, please send it over!"
- Patrice Gardner asked if ECAC is no longer asking for the Governor's Office, as we haven't heard that come up
- Denise Tanata responded as a member, not a co-chair. We all still know that there needs to be some changes to the governance structure of our early childhood system, maybe take a different approach, and get new perspectives.

7. 2026 Systems Alignment Meeting Schedule (*Discussion for Action*) **5 min**

Subcommittee discussed 2026 scheduling.

Brandi Hearst, ECAC Administrative Coordinator

- The Subcommittee discussed as a group whether they liked the 2025 schedule and whether it should remain the same for 2026.
 - Some members expressed that they might prefer a different time frame to meet their scheduling needs.
- Brandi Hearst and Tiffany Olivas to create a scheduling survey- majority rules for 2026-to go out in Early December, discuss at the December meeting, and decide the official 2026 schedule to add to the calendar and publish publicly

7. Early Childhood Sector Graph (*Discussion, Informational*)

Early Childhood Sector Graph reviewed at next meeting

Tiffany Olivas and Abbey Bernhardt, Subcommittee Co-Chairs

- Tabled to meeting in December

8. Nevada Prenatal to Three System Asset and Gap Analysis (*Discussion, Informational*)

The Subcommittee to review details within the Prenatal SAGA: Key Findings and recommendations, advancing a common vision, to identify the gaps and develop strategies to bridge the gaps within the Early Childhood System.

Tiffany Olivas and Abbey Bernhardt, Subcommittee Co-Chairs

- Tabled to next meeting if Strategic Plan and Goals are available

9. Idea Share (*Discussion for Possible Action*)

The Subcommittee members review and share ideas, adding them to the Idea Share document.

Tiffany Olivas and Abbey Bernhardt, Subcommittee Co-Chairs

Tiffany Olivas shared the Idea Share document with members

- Sabrina Jones asked Tiffany Olivas if the Idea Share document is going to be shared with everyone.
- Tiffany Olivas wants to share this document after logistics and discussion around that topic have happened.

10. Work Plan Review (*Discussion, for Possible Action*)

The Subcommittee reviewed its Work Plan.

Tiffany Olivas and Abbey Bernhardt, Subcommittee Co-Chairs

- Tiffany Olivas went over the Work Plan with members
- Rachel Stepina suggested adding a column for tracking alignment between the idea and why it's important to accomplish it to show the audience the Big picture.

11. Agenda Items for DECEMBER 17, 2025 (*Discussion for Possible Action*)

The Subcommittee added to the next Systems Alignment meeting agenda.





Tiffany Olivas and Abbey Bernhardt, Subcommittee Co-Chairs

- Action item- Vote on 2026 schedule
- Recap on Strategic Planning experiences and how this subcommittee is affected
- Legislative Updates is now a standing item
- Update on Policy Priorities- ask for Denise Tanata to share in Dec Jan, or Feb, whenever there is an update to have this available
- Denise Tanata discusses the importance of both the Policy subcommittee and Systems Alignment Subcommittee sharing knowledge on Policy Priorities to collaborate and align the Early Childhood system. She expresses that the members could benefit from the same information as well.
 - suggests looking at:
 - how we share information
 - structure of subcommittees:
 - to be more efficient
 - clearly outline the roles

12. Remaining 2025 Meetings (Informational)

- Systems Alignment: NO NOVEMBER MEETING, 12.17.25 @1pm
- Executive Leadership: 11.04.25, 12.02.25 @ 11:00am
- Communication and Engagement: NEW DATE 11.18.25, 1-2:30pm
- Policy Ad Hoc: 11.12.25 @ 10:00am
- Policy and Finance: 11.12.11.25 @ 1:00pm
- General ECAC Meeting 11.19.25, 9:00am
- Data and Evaluation: 11.20.25, 12.18.25 @1:00pm
- New Member Orientation 12.04.25, 11:00am
 - Register here: <https://forms.gle/zNZ3z7Me5r3n7xRk6>

13. Member Updates and Share-Outs (Discussion, Informational), 5 min

Members of this Subcommittee did not make announcements.

- No comment

14. Public Comment #2

Public comment taken during this agenda item.

- Anna Villatoro thanked the parent leaders for attending this meeting
- Rachel Stepina offered to get boxes of Pre-K standards to anyone who would like to have them. Denise Tanata asked about the Infant Toddler Guidelines
- Rachel Stepina confirmed they do have Infant Toddler guidelines as well.

15. Adjournment

- Tiffany Olivas adjourned the meeting at 2:34 pm

• 3 Action Steps:

- Tiffany Olivas to create the Sectors Graph between this meeting and the next meeting in December
- Brandi Hearst to create a scheduling survey with Tiffany Olivas and email it to members so that we can get a good idea of what scheduling needs to be voted on at the December 17 meeting

• **One Sentence Summary:** During the meeting, the Subcommittee reviewed the survey results and what various responses were for policy recommendations, reviewed the Prenatal Saga and explored what the Saga entails, and decided to look into new scheduling options moving into 2026.

- To add a column, track how activity will align with the 2026-2030 Strategic Plan, showing the direction of the idea and why it's important to accomplish it, for the big picture to be captured.

