



General ECAC

Public Meeting

Wednesday, January 21, 2026

9:00 am-12:00 pm

In-Person Meeting Locations

Southern Nevada

Sunrise Children's Foundation
2795 Desert Inn Rd #100
Las Vegas, NV 89121

Northern Nevada

Child Care Services Center
961 Matley Lane, #110
Reno, NV 89502

VIRTUAL MEETING held via Zoom.com **Join us: [HERE](#)**

MINUTES

1. Welcome, Call to Order, Roll Call, Language Access 5 minutes

Tiffany Alston, Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council Chair

Patrice Gardner, Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council Vice Chair

- Tiffany Alston called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM

a. Language Access Description and Instructions

Nayesdi Badillo, Family Engagement Specialist, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education

- Nayesdi Badillo shared instructions for interpretation and language option

b. Roll Call

Brandi Hearst, ECAC Administrative Coordinator,

- Brandi Hearst conducted roll call

Members' Present

1. SEAT C Brooke Yarborough, Social Services Chief 2, Division of Social Services, Nevada Department of Human Services
2. SEAT D Jennese Black Education Programs Professional, Nevada Department of Education
3. SEAT E Betsy Newman, Part C Coordinator, Clinical Program Planner II, Nevada Department of Human Services, IDEA Part C, Aging and Disability Services Division
4. SEAT F Dr. Diane Nicolet, Trustee, Washoe County School District."
5. SEAT G Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward Associate Professor, Early Childhood Multilingual and Special Education, UNLV
6. SEAT H Deetra Stewart, Family Home Care Provider,
7. SEAT I Dr. Stephanie Vega, Ph.D., Teacher, Washoe County School District
8. SEAT J Tiffany Alston, Director of Programs, Sunrise Children's Foundation
9. SEAT K Patrice Gardner, M.Ed, ECAC Vice Chair, Education Programs Supervisor, NV Head Start State Collaboration Director Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
10. SEAT L, Dazzrael Lyke, Developmental Specialist 4, Aging And Disability Services Division.
11. SEAT M Kathy Yoder Bass, Non-Profit Provider
12. SEAT N Tiffany Olivas, Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Manager, The Children's Cabinet
13. SEAT R, Laura Brown, Monitoring and Compliance Coordinator, Acelero Head Start
14. SEAT R, Tina Springmeyer, Director, Department of Child and Family Services
15. SEAT R Brianna Cambra Provider Support Director, The Children's Cabinet
16. SEAT R, Amanda Haboush-Deloye, Associate Professor, The Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy UNLV

Members Absent

1. SEAT A Edith Farmer, MA Supervisor, Child Care Licensing Department of Supportive Services
2. SEAT B Tami Conn, Deputy Bureau Chief, Division of Public and Behavioral Health
3. SEAT O, Abbey Bernhardt, National Alliance on Mental Illness, Nevada Chapter
4. SEAT P Vacant (not counted for quorum)
5. SEAT Q Vacant (not counted for quorum)
6. SEAT R, Dr. Linda Young, Founder, The Village Foundation, Former CCSD School Board Trustee

Public in Attendance

1. Nyesdi Badillo, Family Engagement Specialist, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
2. Mary Childrey, The Children's Cabinet
3. Sarah Dillard, Rural Local ECAC
4. Connie Flores, Child Care Licensing
5. Josefina Garcia, Interpretation
6. Lela Gonzales, MSML Project Coordinator, The Children's Cabinet
7. Brandi Hearst, ECAC Administrative Coordinator, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
8. Matthew Hoffman, Education Programs Specialist, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
9. Dr. Janelle Nance, Communication and Engagement Co-Chair
10. Sabrina Jones, ECAC Systems Specialist, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
11. Scott Jones, Lakeshore Learning
12. Evelyn Knight, Lyon-Churchill ECAC Chair
13. Peach Koon, Rural Local ECAC
14. Michael-Ann Lazzarinoi, Chair of Rural ECAC
15. Janice Lee, Pyramid Model
16. David Loaiza-Funk, Interpreter
17. Smriti Neupane, Nevada Institute of Children's Research and Policy (NICRP)
18. Carrie Paldi, NevAEYC Vice President
19. Kate Pflughoeft, PDG B-5 Assistant Grant Manager, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
20. Darby Porter, Program Officer III, Nevada State Library System, Nevada Public Archives
21. Dana Preece, Birth-3rd Grade, Specialist, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
22. Anna Severns, Education Programs Specialist, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
23. Rachel Stepina, PDG B-5 Grant Manager, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
24. Denise Tanata, Policy and Finance Co-Chair
25. Amanda Zapata, Community Member

2. Public Comment #1 6 min

Public Comments was given during this agenda item.

- Scott Jones announced changes in Lakeshore and Matthew Bell returning to help NEvad Customers

3. Approval of Flexible Agenda (Discussion for Possible Action) 3 min

The Council approved a flexible agenda..

Tiffany Alston, Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council Chair

Patrice Gardner, Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council Vice Chair

- Amanda Haboush-Deloye motioned for a flexible agenda
- Tiffany Olivas seconded the motion
- Members voted, motion carried, flexible agenda approved

4. Approval of Meeting Minutes from November 19, 2026 (Discussion for Possible Action) 3 min

The Council approved the November 19, 2026, meeting minutes.

Tiffany Alston, Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council, Chair

Patrice Gardner, Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council Vice Chair

- Tiffany Olivas noted typos to edit on page 6 to edit formatting and page 5 to remove the bullet "cost"
- Rachel Stepina suggests to revise "Rachel Stepina discusses the notice funding opportunity"
 - Delete first 3 bullets,
 - New first bullet would be "Rachel Stepina discusses notice of opportunity systems building grant..."

- The sub bullets that follow would read "requires a sustainability plan, require shared early childhood vision, build a unified, coherent statewide early care and education plan, maximize family choice for early care and education options,
- update bullet from "it was due in 13 days" to "Due Dec 1, 2025"
- Kathy Yoder-Bass motioned for approval of November 19, 2025, Meeting Minutes with edits
- Amanda Haboush-Deloye seconded the motion
- Members voted, motion carried, meeting minutes approved

5. Child Care Subsidy Updates (Informational, Discussion) 10 min

The Council members updated on Child Care Subsidy, and the "Final Rule" federal rollbacks.

Brooke Yarborough, Social Services Chief 2, Nevada Department of Human Services

- Brooke Yarborough explained to members that ACF has filed an amendment to roll back final approval requirements from Final Rule 2024 that is anticipated to rollback. Brooke Yarborough shared that:
 - They have no additional guidance provided
 - She received an executive order from ACF
 - ACF to file an amendment to roll back final rule requirements from Final Rule 2024. Specifically, rolling back paying by attendance, and enrollment
 - stipulations allowing payment by enrollment is being rolled back
- Anticipating less demand for grants and contracts
 - Offering more flexibility for states to determine their own :
 - Provider rates
 - Co-payment amounts
 - The final rule requirements for the co-payment are set under 7% and it is potentially being looked at for amending to allow for flexibility
 - Additional information on the ACF website.
- Denise Tanata asked if that means Nevada was working on strategies to implement the previous rules. Is it anticipated that the changes to the federal rules mean we can't do some of those strategies move forward or is that something we would have the option to do, not a federal requirement?
- Brooke Yarborough responded that Denise Tanata was correct. It's not a requirement. It's optional based on the funding limitations

6. Strategic Planning Update (Discussion for Possible Action) 20 minutes

The Council to hear Executive Leadership Strategic Plan Ad Hoc progress updates. with the possibility of items to vote on as they become available

Denise Tanata, Strategic Plan Ad Hoc Committee Co-Chair

- Denise Tanata reminds to Members what the ad hoc was created for and share the goals as well as the objectives that are both in draft mode.
 - Goals have been reviewed and approved by Executive Leadership
 - Objectives are still in the works and have not been reviewed yet by Executive Leadership have subcommittee names, although subcommittee structure has not yet been decided
 - Subcommittee structure had an attachment to goals which may not remain
 - Subcommittees can share goals, and have objectives assigned to them
- Denise Tanata read the goals and objectives to members and shared that objectives were discussed at the Ad Hoc meeting, being cautious of our role to not implement but to recommend and advise, language has been updated within the goals
- Members did not have comments for goal 1 and objectives
- Denise Tanata continued to Goal 2

- showed Members that original Goal 1 has been removed, Goal 2 is now Goal 1
- Ad Hoc was clarifying what a qualified and prepared workforce was, respectfully compensated, including a definition of early childhood workforce, keeping in mind that this is inclusive of all of the sectors within the early childhood system
- Deetra Stewart asked what the plan is as far as funding to accomplish the goals and objectives such as workforce being qualified and prepared, the stability and recruitment. Further, asking if these are goals we just advise on, or do we consider the cost and where to get funding to support that?
- Denise Tanata explained the next goal:
 - It's the role of the ECAC to address funding, effective fiscal policy, sustainability of programs and services, and supporting:
 - Growth in infrastructure-looking at how to fund these items.
 - Looking at different objectives aligned under the subcommittee structure would support:
 - Integration
 - Alignment
 - Collaboration
 - Need to focus on fiscal policy and sustainability as an individual goal.
 - It impacts other areas such as workforce development:
 - How much funding is needed
 - What does that look like
 - where are some models that we could use.
- Members had no comment on Goal 3 and the objectives
- Denise Tanata read Goal 4 and the objectives, allowing members to discuss
- Tiffany Alston shares that she feels good about the goals and objectives and loves to see the newly formed structure ideas and describes the goals as feeling clean and clear
- Patrice Gardner asks Tiffany Alston if she wants to hold a special meeting for the Ad Hoc to present the Goals, Objectives, Structure of the Strategic Plan and Structure of Subcommittees to vote for approval of the 2026-2030 Strategic Plan in full
- The Members discussed dates and times and decided on the date of 2.18.26 from 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm with an emphasis on Strategic Planning presentation and vote on the agenda only accompanied by the legalities such as public comment etc
- Tiffany Olivas asked about the subcommittees and how that will look for Parents, a possible Parent subcommittee and what their roles look like within the subcommittee structure
- Tiffany Alston responded, explaining that we are being intentional on the subcommittees and perhaps collapsing some subcommittees and combing the ones that can work together and perhaps making room for new subcommittees, but I (Tiffany Alston) can not say what that will look like as we have not had full discussion within the Ad Hoc.
- Denise Tanata shares that the structure currently doesn't necessarily work as we don't necessarily have the capacity within the membership of the subcommittees that the members necessarily have ways to achieve progress in the goals. The number of meetings we have, without support -how will that look?
- Rachel Stepina asked if we could get a transitional plan, so it is visual for everyone, and we know what to expect or what to do
- Tiffany Alston shares that Executive Leadership should only be for Co-Chairs or ECAC Members, and it looks like the roster is now showing that anyone can join the Subcommittee and it should no longer be open to everyone, we will also look at that and add to the Bylaws.

7. ECAC Logo Reveal (Informational, Discussion) 3 min

Members presented with the new ECAC logo

Tiffany Alston, Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council, Chair

Patrice Gardner, Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council, Vice Chair

- Sabrina Jones and Brandi Hearst showed the new logo
- Tiffany Alston asks for us to have a funding page added to the website conversation so we can have not only a donation button and perhaps a ecommerce fund collection for people to buy swag or shirts, etc
- Amanda Haboush-Deloye asked if we could have a rectangular shaped logo as well
- Patrice Gardner responded that we could ask PMA if we can put the butterflies on the left or right
- Brandi Hearst responded at that she too has already run into issues with such a large square logo, I have a mock of a rectangular logo I just need to know if the Council prefers the butterflies on the Left or right, and the words stay the same as the square logo shows the wording.
- Members discussed the butterflies being on the Left
- Densie Tanata asked about the tag line "starting early is string right on time" being removed from the logo, are we not using that tagline anymore?
- Brandi Hearst responded that in discussions with PMA she had brought to their attention that it was not legible on the logo, but hasn't seen the tagline anywhere else.
- Patrice Gardner responded that we can also ask PMA about adding the tagline to a version of the logo it shouldn't be a problem.

8. Collaborative Tools (Informational, Discussion) 10 min

The Communication and Engagement Subcommittee presents an overview of the tools they created to help build alignment and collaborative efforts among the subcommittees.

Dr. Jamelle Nance and Brianna Cambra, Communication and Engagement Co-Chairs

- Dr Nance shared with the members the 3 tools Communication and Engagements created for use:
- Outreach Tracking: for members to add events to get approved to go, and track how it went as well as community contacts made
- Welcome Tool for parents and families new to Early Childhood System
- Key Messaging: for Members to input their key messages for Communication members to push the communication out so all subcommittees have a voice and the actual public-facing messages
- Tiffany Olivas asked if there is a way to know what materials to bring if doing an outreach event
- Dr. Nance responded that the spreadsheet has a column for materials

9. First 5 Nevada Family Leadership Council Updates (Informational, Discussion) 5 min

The Council will hear First 5 Nevada Family Leadership updates

Anna Villatoro, The Children's Cabinet, No Parent Spotlight

- Tiffany Olivas moves to table this item to March, adding 10 minutes to Parent Spotlight and 10 minutes for First 5 updates
- Anna Villatoro shared new training for this year, utilizing parent feedback to create training they asked for
- one starting 1.22.26, focus: family mental health.
- February is National Parent Leadership Month, Family Leadership planning to celebrating that.
- Dr. Nance will also be a part of that training, speaking to the importance of Family Leadership

10. Subcommittee Updates (Discussion for Possible Action)

Subcommittees can update the Council with success stories and barriers to their work.

Tiffany Alston, Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council, Chair

Patrice Gardner, Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council Vice Chair

- **Executive Leadership** – Tiffany Alston and Patrice Gardner, Co-Chairs
 - Patrice Gardener reminds members and partners to be sure that they are doing the partner summary report as our participation from partners has dwindled.

- Sabrina Jones shared ECAC Appointed Member Seats P and Q are open
- **Systems Alignment** – Tiffany Olivas and Abbey Bernhardt, Co-Chairs
 - Tiffany Oliva asked for time to share her Infographic created within the Subcommittee showing the Early Childhood System, noting that Communications and Engagement could use this tool for their project as well
- **Communications and Engagement** – Dr. Janelle Nance and Brianna Cambra, Co-Chairs
- **Policy and Finance** – Denise Tanata, Co-Chair, Looking to fill Co-Chair Vacancy
 - Denise Tanata shared they are working on proposed work plan activities for supporting implementation of the 2026 interim policy recommendations that were included in the 2025 Annual Report
 - They had recommendations to the interim policies committees for presentations on some of the topics that we had identified as key focus areas and priorities
 - They could develop policy recommendations, focused on the early childhood system for the 2027 Legislative Session
 - Being proactive in our outreach to make recommendations move forward
 - drafting a plan for that that will identify key messaging and priority areas
 - send that information to our partners, starting with the Annual Report, with specific requests for them to review and share the messaging
 - have a list of action items that our partners can take to help promote recommendations and strategies
 - in the process of putting together a survey to send out to you all to identify who can support specific activities that we'll need to do in terms of:
 - developing some key messaging
 - documents
 - presentations
 - making requests
 - Brandi Hearst had shared a draft of that in the materials online
- Denise Tanata asked Brandi Hearst if she could make the edits to the "Call To Action" form and share the link to the Council so members can complete it.
 - Brandi Hearst made edits and posted links
- **Data and Evaluation** – Marty Elquist and Amanda Haboush-Deloye, Co-Chairs
 - Amanda Haboush-Deloye shared they had finalized their Research Questions and Data Points, to be posted online soon

11. Nevada ECAC Partner Updates (Information/Discussion)

Nevada ECAC Partners, Agencies, Local ECACs, and other programs can briefly share updates, progress, new initiatives, services, or upcoming challenges. The Jan/Feb 2026 Nevada ECAC Partner Summary Report is available on the ECAC website at: <https://nvecac.com/ecac-reports-documents/>

Nevada Department of Education (NDE)

- **Office of Comprehensive Student Services (OCSS)**, Cate Guzy
- **Office of Early Learning and Development (OELD)**, Michael Mitchell
 - QRIS, Sara Kharrat
 - PDG B-5 Grant, Rachel Stepina
 - Nevada Ready!Pre-K, Marissa LaCroix

Nevada Department of Human Services (DHS)

- **Division of Supportive Services (DSS)**
 - Child Care and Development Program (CCDP), Brooke Yarborough
 - Child Care Licensing, Edith Farmer

- **Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS)**

- Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH), Rhonda Lawrence

- **Aging and Disability Services Division (ADSD)**

- Early Intervention Services, Dazzrael Lyke:
 - Visited historic West Side School and office did outreach at Taste for Dream
- Idea- Part C, Betsy Newman:
 - Completed State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report to the federal government, to our Office of Special Education Programming, indicates how the Early Intervention programs across the state have done throughout 2025
 - facing critical staffing shortages for all of our EI providers
 - continuing our outreach from the Part C perspective to see about more initiatives to try to fill the vacancies in the state.

- **Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH)**

- Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Blanca Ayala
- Maternal, Child & Adolescent Health (MCAH), Tami Conn
- Oral Health Program, Jannette Gomez
- Nevada State Immunization Program- Tami Conn

Nevada Department of Administration (NDA)

- Nevada State Library, Archives and Public Records, Darby Porter

Nevada ECAC Partners

- HRSA: Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems, Health Integration, Tiffany Olivas
- The First 5 Nevada Family Leadership Council, Anna Villatoro
- Nevada Association for the Education of Young Children (NevAEYC), Robin Marx-Mackerly and Carrie Paldi
 - Carrie Paldi shared that the 2026 annual state conference, the Power of Play, which will be held at Nugget in Sparks on April 23rd - 25th, 2026
 - Registration on NevAEYC.com, as well as sponsor and exhibitor information.
 - Patrice Gardner asked if they are still accepting proposals (for training)
 - Mary Regan, Nevada AYC conference chair, said submissions for proposals ended in October 2025, currently looking for sponsor exhibitors, and they received some scholarship funds which they are looking into ways to disperse. That will benefit the most people, and Early bird rates are going on now until February for registrations.
- Nevada Child Care Provider Committee (CCPAC), Carrie Paldi and Lela Gonzales
 - Carrie Paldi announced that the child care provider action committee successfully developed three policy briefs, and will meet this month to plan their official release to policymakers, stakeholders, and child care workforce.
 - There is a webinar to introduce the brief is scheduled for February, and the details will be shared with the ECAC once finalized. If you have any questions, or would like to review the briefs, please contact Lela Gonzalez at lgonzalez@childrenscabinet.org.

- Pyramid Model, Janice Lee

- Research and Needs Assessments (NICRP), Amanda Haboush-Deloye

- Nevada Association for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health, Jacquelyn Kleinedler

- Children's Advocacy Alliance (CAA; Strong Start Prenatal to Three (PN-3); and (PCI); Dr. Jamelle Nance

- Dr. Nance shared Children's Advocacy Alliance would be starting our fourth cohort (at end of January) of the Child Advocacy Ambassadors (training for parents, specifically those who are caregivers of young children and interested in advocacy, meeting virtually once per month thanked Nevada Early Intervention Services and the Nevada Department of Education teams for continuing to support the initiative.
- Policy Summit details coming soon
- Strong Start Prenatal to 3 supported through the Pritzker Initiative to continue that work, more meetings are coming up
 - Dr. Nance looking to partner with ECAC Policy and Finance to align efforts going into 2027 legislative Session
 - Awarded a Thrive from the Start grant, which was a smaller grant, focusing on youth children that are homeless, partnered with School House Connections, looking to align efforts, especially policy around decreasing early childhood homelessness and working with Child Welfare leads and bringing their voices to the table.

- Head Start and Early Head Start, Laura Brown
 - Laura Brown shared that the PDC Headstart location has successfully moved to Lorenzi Park
 - Grassroot Recruitment efforts happening Feb 7 and Feb 21 at the following locations:
 - Craig Ranch Park
 - Lorenzi Park
 - Gary Reese Freedom Park
 - East Las Vegas Family Park
 - Lewis Family Park
 - Trail Canyon Park
 - Burkholder Heritage Park
 - Recruiting for enrollment and staff
 - Last weekend Martin Luther King Jr Parade attended last weekend
 - Kicking off 2026 with a focus on Safety within the Head Start buildings

Nevada’s Local ECACs

- Elko/Northeastern, Sarah Carone
- Southern Nevada, Amanda Haboush-Deloye
- Washoe County, Anna Severns and Kacey Edington
- Carson/Douglas, Tiffany Olivas
- Tribal, Ashleigh Baker
- Rural Nevada, Michael-Ann Lazzarino
- Lyon-Churchill, Evelyn Knight

12. Agenda Items for the next meeting to be scheduled on March 18, 2026 *(Discussion for Possible Action)* **5 minutes**

Council can add and discuss agenda items for the next Meeting in March 2026.

Tiffany Alston, Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council, Chair

Patrice Gardner, Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council, Vice Chair

- Add System Alignment Infographic
- Add NDE Data Presentation from Matthew Hoffman
- Members to email other ideas

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

Members of this Council did not share announcements.

- No shares

14. Public Comment #2 *(Discussion for Possible Action)* **6 min**

Public comments not given during this agenda item

- No Comment

15. Upcoming ECAC Meetings *(Informational)*

Communication and Engagement: 1.27.26 @ 11:30 am

Systems Alignment: 1.28.26, @1:00 pm

Executive Leadership: 2.03.26, @ 11:00 am

Policy and Finance: 2.17.26 @3:30 pm

Data and Evaluation: 2.19.26, @1:00 pm

General ECAC: 3.18.26, 9:00 am

16. Adjournment

Tiffany Alston adjourned meeting at 11:10 am

3 Action Steps:

- Brandi Hearst to update "Call to Action" and send to ECAC
- Executive Leadership to review Bylaws and add items to match Strategic Planning
- Brandi Hearst to create meeting for Special Session on 2.18.26

One Sentence Summary:

The Council reviewed and discussed the goals and objectives being put together by the Ad Hoc and decided to have Special Session Meeting to review final edits and a vote on the official goals and objectives of the 2026-2030 Strategic Plan, they also saw the reveal of the new logo, with some minor requests for additions to the logo to be asked of PMA.