



Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council

General ECAC Public Meeting

Wednesday, November 19, 2025

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 the meeting [HERE](#).**

Meeting ID: 815 9023 7818

Passcode: 308879

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MINUTES

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

Tiffany Alston, Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council Chair

Patrice Gardner, Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council Vice Chair

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

- Tiffany Alston called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM
- Brandi Hearst conducted roll call
- Nayesdi Badillo shared instructions for interpretation and language options

MEMBER ATTENDANCE

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 C Brooke Yarborough, Social Services Chief 2, Division of Social Services, Nevada Department of Human Services
4. SEAT D Jennese Black Education Programs Professional, Nevada Department of Education
5. SEAT E Betsy Newman, Part C Coordinator, Clinical Program Planner II, Nevada Department of Human Services, IDEA Part C, Aging and Disability Services Division
6. SEAT F Dr. Diane Nicolet, Trustee, Washoe County School District."
7. SEAT G Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward Associate Professor, Early Childhood Multilingual and Special Education, UNLV
8. SEAT H Deetra Stewart, Family Home Care Provider,
9. SEAT I Dr. Stephanie Vega, Ph.D., Teacher, Washoe County School District
10. SEAT J Tiffany Alston, Director of Programs, Sunrise Children's Foundation
11. 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
12. SEAT L, Dazzrael Lyke, Developmental Specialist 4, Aging And Disability Services Division.
13. SEAT M Kathy Yoder Bass, Non-Profit Provider
14. SEAT N Tiffany Olivas, Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Manager, The Children's Cabinet
15. SEAT O, Abbey Bernhardt, National Alliance on Mental Illness, Nevada Chapter
16. SEAT R, Laura Brown, Monitoring and Compliance Coordinator, Acelero Head Start
17. SEAT R, Tina Springmeyer, Director, Department of Child and Family Services
18. SEAT R, Dr. Linda Young, Founder, The Village Foundation, Former CCSD School Board Trustee
19. SEAT R, Amanda Haboush-Deloye, Associate Professor, The Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy UNLV

Members Absent

1. SEAT R Brianna Cambra Provider Support Director, The Children's Cabinet

Seat P Vacant Seat Q Vacant Members: 20 | Quorum = 11

Public In Attendance

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





Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council

2. Mary Childrey, The Children's Cabinet
3. Valerie Dicus, Community Member
4. Dione Gantt, Community Member
5. Cate Guzy, Education Programs Supervisor, Nevada Department of Education
6. Kyla Hannah, Community Member
7. Brandi Hearst, ECAC Administrative Coordinator, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
8. Matthew Hoffman, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
9. Jerek Hough, The Source Preschool
10. Tiarha Huerta, Subcommittee Member
11. Dr. Jamelle Nance, Communication and Engagement Co-Chair
12. Fred Johnson III, The Discovery Source
13. Sabrina Jones, ECAC Systems Specialist, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
14. Sarah Kharrat, QRIS, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
15. Marissa Lacroix, Education Programs Supervisor, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
16. Janice Lee, Pyramid Model
17. David Loaiza Funk- Interpreter
18. Kristen McNeil, Public Works
19. Meghann McQuillan, Education & Information Officer, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
20. Jamie Mendez, Early Childhood Workforce Specialist, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
21. Michael Mitchell, Director, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
22. Kiblah Nabawi, Community member
23. Smriti Neupane, Nevada Institute of Children's Research and Policy
24. Kate Pflughoeft, PDG B-5 Assistant Grant Manager, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
25. Darby Porter, Program Officer III, Nevada State Library System
26. Mary Portfield, Community Member
27. Dana Preece, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
28. Linda Rhodes, Public Works
29. Sabrina Schnur, Community Member
30. Anna Severns, Washoe Local ECAC Co-Chair
31. Gerilyn Slicker, Public Works
32. Sarah Smith, University of Nevada, Reno
33. Rachel Stepina, PDG B-5 Grant Manager, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
34. Denise Tanata, Policy and Finance Co-Chair
35. Candace Vaughn, Administrative Assistant 2, Division of Child and Family Services
36. Gabriela Velasco, Parent
37. Kate Verville, Public Works
38. Anna Villatoro, Family Engagement Specialist, The Children's Cabinet
39. Patty West, Statewide Employee Supports, The Children's Cabinet
40. Kimberly P., Community member

2. Public Comment #1 6 min

Public Comments was taken during this agenda item.

- Denise Tanata announces First 5 Nevada, with Nevada Ready, working together to fill 880+ Pre-K seats

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

- Patrice Gardner motioned for a flexible agenda
- Jennese Black seconded the motion
- Members voted, motion carried, flexible agenda approved

4. Approval of Meeting Minutes from September 17, 2025 (Discussion for Possible Action) 3 min

The Council approved the meeting minutes from September 17, 2025.

Tiffany Alston, Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council, Chair

Patrice Gardner, Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council Vice Chair

- Tiffany Olivas noted typos to edit throughout agenda Items 5-7
- Dr Nicolet motioned for approval of September 2025 Meeting Minutes with edits
- Tami Conn seconded the motion
- Members voted, motion carried, meeting minutes approved
- Betsy Newman, Brianna Cambra, and Stephanie Vega abstained

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

The Council will hear Strategic Planning Retreat updates, the current progress of the Strategic Plan, and discuss what comes next.

Tiffany Alston, Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council, Chair

Patrice Gardner, Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council Vice Chair

Kristen McNeil and the Public Works Team

- Kristen McNeil shared the way they have come up with the strategic plan and goals for the years 2026-2028:
- Linda Rhodes discussed the external forces, such as:
 - Federal safety Net at risk: Big Beautiful Bill Act to cut Medicaid, health care, SNAP, Head Start, etc
 - Cost -
 - Workforce Shortage- Nevada's wages are lower than those of other states in in early Childhood
- SWOC Analysis Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Challenges
 - Strengths:
 - Commitment/expertise
 - Federal grant alignment
 - Infrastructure achievements (ECIDS, First 5, Parent-led programs)
 - Progress in Family Engagement
 - Weaknesses:
 - Lack of funds
 - Deciding without Decision Makers
 - Advisor without a home- provide services with no home base
 - Limited Visibility and public recognition
 - Strategic Plan overreach
 - Opportunities
 - Establish funding
 - Build Partnerships
 - Leverage Visibility, go local
 - Promote Data-Driven Decisions
 - Maximize the power of voice and storytelling
 - Challenges
 - Funding streams ending at the same time
 - Work force collapsed, about 10% less than 2018





- Public perception/recognition
- Fragmented System
- Language Barriers
- Community Member Survey highlights:
 - Common Theme- Cost
 - Lack of service in Rural Areas / Gaps in disability services
 - Too many agencies
 - Parents spending more on care than housing
- Early Childhood Sector Survey
 - Affordability, too expensive
 - Quality Workforce Shortage
 - Too many agencies, everything spread out
 - Investment in Early Childhood is needed
 - 56% Early Childhood Education workforce leave because of pay
- Kate Verville discussed Thought Leader Interviews, noting around 2,000 respondents plus 35-38 participants at retreat, and the main points mentioned were:
 - Initiatives for families to engage
 - Building cross-sector relationships
 - Reduce Subcommittee meetings, rethink 5 goals, and align current needs assessments
 - Challenges for ECAC- lack of funds, federal cuts, temporary grants
 - Retreat participants generated 13 goals, objectives, and initiatives to consider for 2026-2028 Strategic Plans
- ECAC Priority Areas to focus on (Goals)
 - Workforce Development- I: retention, recruitment, compensation, representation, investment from the state
 - Connected Service System- promote an aligned system across agencies and data systems
 - Funding and Affordability- can't accomplish goals without a way to manage with funding and staffing
 - Advocacy and Influence elevate visibility coordination
 - Organizational Capacity- establish sustainable operations and infrastructure
- ECAC's Role:
 - Advising, Recommending, Authentic Voice, Advocating, Story Telling
- 5 Draft Goals:
 - Promote an integrated, aligned, and family-centered early childhood system that strengthens
 - coordination and access across agencies and data systems.
 - Advocate for sustainable funding streams for early childhood systems and affordable early care, developmental, and learning programs.
 - Elevate the visibility and value of coordinated early childhood systems dedicated to enhancing children's lives.
 - Establish a sustainable operational infrastructure to fulfill the mission and mandate of the Early Childhood Advisory Council.
- Tiffany Alston discusses Next Steps:
 - 1. Create an Ad Hoc Committee to help with putting the Strategic Plan together, and put the finishing touches on it
- Tami Conn agrees and would be good with the Ad Hoc
- Patrice Gardner agreed and discussed taking a deep dive into the goals to be sure they are actionable and aligned with subcommittees
- Tiffany Alston agrees to have an Ad Hoc and adds that there was a renewed feeling
- Dr Nicolet would like to help and understands the rigor and believes it may be a tight time frame
- Tiffany Alston asks if there are any questions about the Goals
- Dr Nicolet says, let's do this as we have been working towards this for a long time, BUT some of the goals may interfere with the ability to focus on where we can make the most impact; our hearts are bigger than our capacity. Discusses being careful to expend energy where we can be successful, carefully making our dream doable.



- Stephanie Vega asked Public Works what the representation looked like for 5–8-year-olds and if some primary teachers or parents had represented that age group?
- Linda Rhodes describes that the information about the families and their children's ages will be in the summary of all findings from surveys, and that the primary age groups were represented. In the Sector Survey, there were 212 responses, and that information will be presented by the professionals (Sector Survey)
- Stephanie Vega wants to be sure that the older children in the ECAC scope are being thought of and represented
- Denise Tanata asks if the new goals affect keeping the same subcommittees.
- Tiffany Alston explained that the work we are going to be doing will have to come from the Subcommittees, so we are going to have the Ad-Hoc discuss the best way to accomplish the structure of the Subcommittees

6. Preschool Development Grant Birth-5 (PDG B-5) Review and Updates *(Discussion, Informational)*

The Council will hear a review with updates on the status of the PDG B-5 and discuss next steps

Rachel Stepina, Preschool and Development Grant Birth -5 Manager, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education

- Rachel Stepina discusses notice of opportunity systems building grant..."
 - 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
 - Due Dec 1, 2025
- 3 Critical Elements
 - 1. Statewide early care and education needs assessment and Strategic Plan.
 - 2: Outcome strategies to advance program priorities. This is the bulk of what we would summarize as implementation work or program work.
 - organized this into 3 different categories:
 - Category 1 work for children and families, and the workforce.
 - Category 2 is expanding program availability and sustainability, so looking at access to early care and education programs.
 - Category 3 Data System Focus
 - 3. Needing a focus point across agencies, aligned goals
 - Data collection, analysis, and sharing for multiple audiences.

7. Review and Discuss 2026 Interim Policy Recommendations *(Discussion, for Possible Action)* **10 min**

The ECAC will review and discuss the draft 2026 policy recommendations from the Policy and Finance Subcommittee for potential inclusion in the ECAC 2025 Annual Report.

Denise Tanata, Co-Chair Policy and Finance Subcommittee

- Denise shares the Policy recommendations with the council
- Tiffany Alston asks for a motion to vote
- Dr Nicolet motions to approve the policy recommendations
- Kathy Yoder Bass seconds the motion
- Council Members vote, motion passes anonymously, recommendations are approved for annual report submission

8. Overview of 2025 Annual Report *(Discussion, Informational)*

The Council will hear high level overview of the content included in the 2025 Annual Report.

Tiffany Alston, Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council, Chair

Patrice Gardner, Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council Vice Chair

Sabrina Jones, ECAC Systems Coordinator, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education

- Sabrina Jones gives an overview of the Annual Report, letting Council Members know where to access it, thanking those who helped approve information to get this in on time this year.





9. General ECAC 2026 Schedule (*Discussion, for Possible Action*) **10 min**

Members are to review and discuss the 2025 General ECAC meeting schedule, review how the meeting cadence worked for most members, and how it affected public attendance, to decide if they are keeping the same 2025 schedule and which months will be evenings OR change schedule for 2026 and decide on new days/times for 2026 General ECAC that doesn't conflict with Other meetings within ECAC subcommittees.

Tiffany Alston, Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council, Chair

Patrice Gardner, Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council Vice Chair

- Tiffany Alston requests adding a 3rd nighttime meeting, now having one in May, July, and September
 - Virtual Only, 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm
 - 3rd Wednesday remaining for continuity

10. Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy Share New Needs Assessment Format

(*Informational, Discussion*)

NICRP shared with the Council its new and improved formatting of the Needs Assessment data webpage

Amanda Haboush-Deloye, Data and Evaluation Co-Chair

Smriti Neupane, NICRP

- Smriti Neupane describes that the Data used every month is updated with newly identified resources, such as reports and needs assessment, sharing the following.
 - Shows the Council how to use the new website
 - Formatted for easier search functions
 - Shared a "Thank-You" to the PDG B-5 team for funding the project.
- Members are showing enthusiasm for the following:
 - The ease of use
 - How nice the new formatting is -both to look at and for use

11. Nevada Department of Education (NDE) Data Updates and Review (*Informational, Discussion*) **15 min**

OELD did not present the Council with updates due to time.

Matthew Hoffman, Nevada Department of Education, Office of Early Learning and Development

- Tabled to January Meeting

12. Collaborative Outreach Tool (*Informational, Discussion*) **5 min**

The Communication and Engagement Subcommittee will present in January.

Brianna Cambra, Communication and Engagement Co-Chair

- Tabled to January

13. First 5 Nevada Family Leadership Council Updates, Parent Spotlight (*Informational, Discussion*) **5 min**

The Council will hear First 5 Nevada Family Leadership updates with our "Parent Spotlight" Family Leader sharing them experiences within the Early Childhood System of Nevada.

Anna Villatoro and Tiffany Olivas, The Children's Cabinet

Ana Velasco, Parent Spotlight

- Anna Villatoro introduces Ana Velasco, a mom, a member of the work in Prevent Child Abuse Nevada and participates in the Silver Summit health plan advisory council.
- Ana Velasco shared her story from the Dr. Office, describing her barriers to her son getting the services that he needs
- Tiffany Alston and the Council Members shared their gratitude for Ana Velasco advocating for her child
- Anna Villatoro shared First 5 Leadership Council updates
 - Input to change or improve the early childhood system.
 - Pausing our application for right now



- Currently at 30 families officially a part of the Council.

14. Subcommittee Updates (*Discussion for Possible Action*) 5 Minute review total

Subcommittees shared their updates.

- **Executive Leadership** – Tiffany Alston and Patrice Gardner, Co-Chairs
 - Tiffany Alston thanked Elyssa Arroyo and welcomed Brianna Cambra
- **Systems Alignment** – Tiffany Olivas and Abbey Bernhardt, Co-Chairs
 - Tiffany Olivas asks for more than a few minutes to share the Infographic and get it approved by the Council for Official Use.
- **Communications and Engagement** – Dr. Jamelle Nance and Brianna Cambra, Co-Chairs- no comment
- **Policy and Finance and Ad Hoc Committee** – Elysa Arroyo, Denise Tanata, and Kathy Yoder Bass, Co-Chairs-
 - Denise Tanata asked about stipulations for the Subcommittee meetings taking place if she does not have a Co-Chair.
 - Patrice Gardner volunteered to help until the position is filled
- **Data and Evaluation** – Marty Elquist and Amanda Haboush-Deloye, Co-Chairs, no comment

15. ECAC Partner Updates (*Information/Discussion*) 5 minutes total

Nevada ECAC Partners, Agencies, Local ECACs, and other Programs had time to share

The Nov/Dec 2025 Nevada ECAC Partner Summary Report is linked here: <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 System of Higher Education Institutions and Nonprofit organizations.
 - New Grant available: Early childhood education infrastructure expansion grant:
 - Supports infrastructure projects that align with the Nevada Ready Pre-K program standards, quality rating, and improvement systems program.
 - Projects must prioritize expanding access and increasing availability. of Nevada Ready Pre-K.
 - provide licensed, developmentally appropriate pre-K programming, and ensure long-term sustainability.
 - Link: <https://doe.nv.gov/grants>

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
 - Idea- Part C, Betsy Newman- moved offices to ADSD
- **Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH)**
 - Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Blanca Ayala
 - Maternal, Child & Adolescent Health (MCAH), Tami Conn- asks for help spreading the word to families about the Home Visiting Program
 - tconn@health.nv.gov for Webize / Immunization or Maternal/Child/Adolescent or MCAH questions
 - Oral Health Program, Jannette Gomez
 - Nevada State Immunization Program- Tami Conn shared immunization survey link:
<https://www.dpbh.nv.gov/programs/immunizations/school-and-child-care-immunizations/>



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
- Nevada Child Care Provider Committee (CCPAC), Carrie Paldi and Lela Gonzales
- 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. Nance
- Head Start and Early Head Start, Laura Brown

Nevada 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

16. Agenda Items for the next meeting to be scheduled in January 2026 (Discussion for Possible Action) 5 minutes

Council to email agenda items for the next Meeting in January 2026.

Tiffany Alston, Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council, Chair

Patrice Gardner, Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council, Vice Chair

- Members to email agenda items that they would like to add to the January agenda, if any.

17. Upcoming Meetings (Informational) 0 min

- Data and Evaluation: 11.20.25 @1:00pm
- Executive Leadership: 12.02.25 @ 11:00am
- New Member Orientation 12.04.25 @ 11:00am-Register here: <https://forms.gle/zNZ3z7Me5r3n7xRk6>
- Policy and Finance: 12.11.25, 1:00pm
- Systems Alignment: 12.17.25 @1:00pm
- Data and Evaluation: 12.18.25 @1:00pm

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

- No Comment

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

Public comments taken during this agenda item on any matter within the Council's jurisdiction, control, or advisory power

- No Comment

20. Adjournment

- Tiffany Alston adjourned at 11:55 am



▪ **Action Steps**

- Brandi Hearst to update the 2026 Meeting Calendar Schedule
- Brianna Cambra to email items to Brandi Hearst to post for her Agenda Item, come January

▪ **One Sentence Summary:** The Council heard updates from the Subcommittee Co-Chairs, approved a new ECS infographic, discussed the Strategic Plan progress and next steps to move the work forward, and approved Interim Policy Recommendations as well as the new 2026 meeting schedule.

