

Understanding a Pre-K Mixed-Delivery Model

Defining a Pre-K Mixed Delivery Model

A mixed-delivery pre-K model is a statewide approach to early learning that funds pre-K across multiple types of providers, rather than limiting access to public schools alone. In a mixed-delivery model, pre-K can be offered in:

- Licensed child care centers
- Family child care homes
- Head Start and Early Head Start programs
- Public schools
- Community-based organizations
- Tribal early learning programs

This structure recognizes that families have diverse needs and that high-quality early learning can happen in many settings—not just in school buildings. A mixed-delivery model is designed to:

- Expand access by using all available community capacity
- Support parent choice across settings, schedules, and cultural preferences
- Stabilize the child care market by ensuring community providers can participate in publicly funded pre-K
- Improve continuity of care for children who already attend child care programs
- Strengthen the early childhood workforce by ensuring equitable funding across settings

Why Mixed Delivery Matters for Nevada

Nevada’s early childhood landscape makes mixed delivery not just beneficial, but essential.

1. Nevada has limited public school capacity for universal pre-K.

School districts across the state do not have the physical space or staffing to serve all eligible 3 and 4-year-olds in school-based classrooms. Community providers already serve thousands of children and can expand more quickly and efficiently than school districts alone.

2. Nevada’s workforce relies heavily on nontraditional-hour care

With one of the highest concentrations of hospitality, tourism, and shift-based jobs in the country, Nevada families need early learning options outside the traditional school day. Only a mixed-delivery system can meet that demand.

3. Child care providers depend on stable enrollment to survive.

Without access to publicly funded pre-K dollars, community providers risk losing 3- and 4-year-olds to school-based programs, destabilizing their business model and reducing infant/toddler capacity. Mixed delivery prevents this “market shock” by ensuring providers can participate and remain financially viable.

4. Nevada’s rural and frontier communities rely on home-based and community-based care.

In many rural counties, family child care homes are the only available option. A school-only pre-K model would leave these communities behind.



Why a Coordinated Early Childhood Governance Structure Is Critical for Nevada

A mixed-delivery model only works when the governance structure—the way early childhood programs are organized, funded, and overseen—supports coordination across agencies and settings. Nevada’s current governance system is fragmented, with responsibilities spread across multiple state agencies, local school districts and community-based organizations.

This fragmentation creates barriers to implementing a cohesive pre-K model.

1. Fragmented governance leads to inconsistent standards and funding.

Different agencies oversee licensing, quality improvement, pre-K funding, and workforce supports. Without alignment, providers face duplicative requirements, conflicting expectations, and uneven access to resources.

2. Families experience a confusing, disjointed system.

Parents must navigate multiple agencies to access child care subsidies, pre-K enrollment, developmental screenings, and early intervention. A unified governance structure simplifies access and improves equity.

3. Nevada needs a single vision and strategy for early learning.

A mixed-delivery model requires coordinated decisions on:

- Funding formulas
- Quality standards
- Workforce compensation
- Data systems
- Enrollment processes
- Provider eligibility

Without a clear governance home, Nevada has a patchwork system that is difficult to sustain and scale.

4. Strong governance ensures community providers are true partners—not an afterthought.

States with successful mixed-delivery systems have governance structures that intentionally elevate community-based providers, ensuring they receive equitable funding and support. Nevada must do the same to avoid unintentionally privileging school-based programs.

A well-designed governance structure is not bureaucratic—it is foundational. It determines whether Nevada can build a pre-K system that is equitable, accessible, and sustainable for all families.

What Nevada Should Consider Moving Forward

To build a strong mixed-delivery pre-K system, Nevada must:

- Establish a unified early childhood lead entity or cabinet-level office
- Ensure equitable funding across all provider types
- Streamline licensing, quality, and reporting requirements
- Develop a single statewide enrollment and data system
- Engage families and providers in decision-making
- Protect infant/toddler capacity by stabilizing community providers

Strengthening governance is essential to expanding access, stabilizing the child care sector, and ensuring every Nevada child has a strong start.



Kids First Nevada is a statewide coalition focused on aligning early childhood programs and modernizing governance structures to improve access, efficiency, accountability, and outcomes for Nevada’s youngest children.

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