



Annual Report 2023

NEVADA EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL

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January 5, 2024

The Honorable Governor Joe Lombardo
c/o Boards and Commissions
101 North Carson Street
Carson City, NV 89701

Amy Stephenson
Legislative Counsel Bureau
Director's Office
401 South Carson Street
Carson City, NV 89701



Dear Governor Joe Lombardo and Ms. Amy Stephenson:

On behalf of the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council (Nevada ECAC) we are pleased to present the annual report for the 2023 calendar year. Pursuant to NRS 432A.076, the Nevada ECAC must submit an annual report to the Governor and the Legislature. This report reviews the purpose, vision, and values of the Council and includes a summary of the Council's three-year strategic plan, key accomplishments this year, and recommendations for improving the early childhood system in the state.

We welcome any questions you might have regarding this 2023 annual report. On behalf of the entire Nevada ECAC, it is our honor to serve the Governor and the people of the great state of Nevada.

Sincerely,

Tiffany Alston

Tiffany Alston
Nevada ECAC Chair

Nevada Head Start Association, President
Sunrise Children Foundation Director

Patrice Gardner

Patrice Gardner
Nevada ECAC Vice-Chair

Nevada Head Start State Collaboration, Director
Nevada Department of Education
Office of Early Learning and Development

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About the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council

Our Purpose

The Nevada ECAC shall work to strengthen state-level coordination and collaboration among the various sectors and settings of early childhood education programs in Nevada.

Our Vision

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.

Our Fundamental Values

"All" means all. Opportunities and access are needed for children regardless of race, ethnicity, language, ability, or socioeconomic status; also includes children in all environments including those with disabilities.

Executive Summary of the Nevada ECAC 2023 Annual Report

The Nevada ECAC made significant progress on its strategic plan in 2023. Below are some highlighted key accomplishments from 2023 and recommendations for 2024.

Key 2023 Accomplishments:

- Appointed a new Nevada ECAC Chair (June 2023)
- Implemented two Nevada ECAC Administrative and Systems positions to support the Nevada ECAC (June 2023)
- Assisted in the development and structuring of Assembly Bill during the 2023 Nevada Legislative Session to establish a Governor's Office for Early Childhood Systems (*Although the bill did not pass, efforts provided insight into what is needed to support a coordinated leadership infrastructure in Nevada*)
- Supported the successful passage of Assembly Bill in the 2023 Nevada Legislative Session to expand the scope and membership of the Nevada ECAC to include representation of the comprehensive early childhood system inclusive of early learning, maternal and child health, and families.
- Provided advisory support and technical assistance to the Guinn Center
- Participated in the *Manifesto for Race Equity and Parent Leadership* alongside parents and community partners.
- Completed the Nevada Early Childhood Network Analysis with Visible Network Lab.
- Partnered with The Children's Cabinet for the Nevada Early Childhood Marketing and Outreach Campaign
- Provided technical and financial assistance to The Children's Funding Project to complete Nevada's initial Children's Fiscal Map.
- Created a comprehensive list of early childhood programs, key indicators, and a data dictionary to inform a data system.
- Collaborated with the Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy (NICRP) to conduct a comprehensive inventory of data systems in the state that collects information with the help of federal funding.

Key Recommendations for 2024:

- Establish the Governor's Office for Early Childhood (prenatal to age eight) to align policy and fiscal decision-making for the early childhood system across relevant agencies.
- Restructure the Nevada ECAC to establish program and community level advisory support and include state funding for the two new administrative support positions.
- Conduct assessment of the strengths, disparities, inequities, strategic priorities and goals among programs and agencies within the early childhood system
- Implement a strategic two-way communications plan to engage and connect providers, families, and community partners.
- Identify funding pathways and policy changes needed to meet program and system goals.
- Implement an Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS)

Nevada ECAC 2022-2024 Strategic Plan Summary

On January 19, 2022, the Nevada ECAC approved the [2022-2024 Strategic Plan](#), which aims to enhance the Early Childhood System in the state. Coordination and alignment of the early childhood system across sectors and existing initiatives is a crucial component of the Nevada ECAC and its 2022-2024 Strategic Plan. Therefore, the goals, activities, and critical accomplishments mentioned below result from the combined efforts of several state agencies and programs, organizations, and other key community partners. We have substantially coordinated and leveraged existing initiatives and resources to support our collective work.

The Nevada ECAC 2022-2024 Strategic Plan aims to establish a more comprehensive and integrated early childhood service system. It strives to ensure that every child in Nevada has access to quality early childhood services regardless of their family's location or challenges. The plan builds on existing and expanding collaborative relationships and ongoing initiatives across the state. It provides a clear framework and targets for the shared work ahead while being flexible enough to allow stakeholders across Nevada to define, implement, and refine strategies and action plans that respond to specific communities' and populations' strengths and needs.

To achieve the objectives set out in the 2022-2024 Strategic Plan, the Nevada ECAC has formed five workgroups comprising appointed members and more than 40 key community partners from across the state, including both provider and parent representatives. We've made significant progress on the plan for 2023 and are excited to continue our efforts in 2024 to improve the early childhood infrastructure in Nevada, aiming to promote improved outcomes for young children and their families.

The 2025-2027 strategic planning process has begun as we currently identify and select processes for facilitation and execution for the next plan. This six-month facilitation and creation process will be paid for through federal Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) funding.

Strategic Plan Goals and Achievements

Below is a summary of strategic plan achievements and progress toward the goals of the Nevada ECAC.

Goal 1 – Create a Coordinated Early Childhood Leadership Infrastructure in Nevada

Appointed Tiffany Alston, President of Nevada Head Start Association as the Nevada ECAC Chair in June 2023. The Council would like to recognize Denise Tanata, former Chair, for her service to the Nevada ECAC through June 2023.

Added two administrative staff positions through federal PDG B-5 dollars administrative staff positions through PDG B-5 grant to support the Council and improve implementation of the strategic plan.

- The Nevada ECAC Systems Specialist supports the ongoing work of the Council, including adjusting the corresponding workplans that drive the action steps and measurable outcomes of the plan. The specialist works closely with Nevada ECAC and systems partners to facilitate the shared goals of the Council.
- The Nevada ECAC Administrative Assistant position supports compliance with Open Meeting Law, creates minutes, assists with scheduling, co-develops agenda, and manages the website and access to documents. Both positions are new, and funding will continue through 2025, including the development of the 2025-2027 Strategic Plan.

Goal 1, Continued

Assisted in the development and structuring of AB113 in the 2023 Nevada Legislative Session to establish a Governor’s Office for Early Childhood Systems. *(Although the bill did not pass, efforts provided insight into what may be needed moving forward to support a coordinated leadership infrastructure in Nevada.)*

Drafted and supported the successful passage of AB114 in the 2023 Nevada Legislative Session to expand the scope and membership of the Nevada ECAC.

Provided advisory support and technical assistance to the Guinn Center with the development of the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Governance Structure study, which is scheduled to be complete in 2024.

Received training on the *Manifesto for Race Equity and Parent Leadership* to support the successful integration of family representatives in advisory and leadership positions.

Goal 2 – Increase Coordination and Alignment Between Systems of Care for Young Children and Families

Completed the Nevada Early Childhood Network Analysis with Visible Network Labs which included an assessment of 56 early childhood partners, representing a collective 786 partnerships. The analysis is being utilized to help identify assets and gaps in network connections throughout the early childhood system to improve cross sector coordination and alignment.

Goal 3 – Increase Capacity to Equitably Connect Families with the Early Childhood System Continuum of Care and Community at Large.

Supported the Nevada Early Childhood Marketing and Outreach Campaign in its primary focus to increase outreach to underserved populations and increase awareness and access to childcare assistance programs statewide. The Nevada ECAC continues to receive regular updates from the campaign during the bi-monthly Council meetings and monthly subcommittee meetings.

- This campaign reached Nevadans via more than 50 million messages shared through various media platforms and contributed to a 22 percent increase in the number of children served by the childcare subsidy program. Furthermore, the monthly benefits distributed increased by 45 percent.

Goal 4 – Identify Budget and Finance Strategies to Drive Policy Goals and Objectives

Provided support and technical assistance to The Children’s Funding Project to complete Nevada’s initial Children’s Fiscal Map and the development of the Early Childhood Fiscal Map, which will be released in early 2024.

Goal 5 – Improve data collection by fostering understanding and collaboration with providers, families, policy makers and other stakeholders.

Created a master list of early childhood comprehensive systems (ECCS) services and programs, along with key program indicators (KPIs), a data dictionary, and research questions and data points for a data system to address.

Partnered with the Nevada Institute for Children’s Research and Policy (NICRP) at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, to complete a cross-sector inventory of data systems in Nevada, with the support of federal funding.

Recommendations for 2024

The recommendations are categorized to align with the Nevada ECAC Goals outlined in the 2022- 2024 Strategic Plan.

Goal 1: Create a Coordinated Early Childhood Leadership Infrastructure

Establish the Governor’s Office for Early Childhood (prenatal to age eight) to align policy and fiscal decision-making for the early childhood system across relevant agencies.

Federal and private funding are currently available to support Goal 1. For example, the Health Resource and Service Administration grant (currently led by The Children’s Cabinet in collaboration with multiple state agencies and private partners) extends through July 2026 and the federal PDG B-5 grant (currently led by the Nevada Department of Education) extends through December 2025. Additional state agencies and private partners also contribute to this statewide goal.

Early Childhood Leadership Infrastructure

- Assembly Bill 113 proposed to add the Nevada Governor’s Office of Early Childhood to guide informed decision making regarding early childhood policy, practice, and financing at the Governor and Executive Leadership level. While AB113 was unsuccessful, the Council recommends:
 - Improve coordination and efficiency across state departments and local levels of government.
 - Mobilize resources around the Governor’s priorities for children and families.
 - Facilitate holistic approach to serving children and families who utilize a cross sector of programs and supports.
 - Strengthen partnerships with non-profit and private sector entities serving these populations.
 - Increase equitable access to programs and services in the early years to prevent or reduce the need for more costly remediation or services in later years.

ECAC Administrative Support

- Provide funding to sustain the two administrative support positions of the Council, described on page 4 of this report.
- Continue to support the current strategic plan (2022-2024) and the corresponding workplans that drive the action steps and measurable outcomes of the plan.

Goal 2: Increase Coordination and Alignment Between Systems of Care for Young Children and Families

Conduct assessment of the strengths, disparities, inequities, strategic priorities and goals among programs and agencies within the early childhood system.

Early Childhood Systems Alignment and Governance Structure

- Review and consider implementing the recommendations from the upcoming Guinn Center Report (anticipated 2024) on Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems governance structure. This study includes an analysis of governance structures by incorporating work completed by Nevada ECAC critical partners during 2023, for example the system asset and gap analysis (SAGA) and the early childhood fiscal mapping project and examines related primary and secondary sources.
 - Request a meeting or presentation upon completion of the report to review recommendations for consideration.
 - Determine implementation resources needed to implement these recommendations.

Goal 3: Increase Capacity to Equitably Connect Families with the Early Childhood System Continuum of Care and Community At Large

Implement a strategic two-way communication plan to engage and connect providers, families, organizations, and agencies.

Two-Way Communication with Families

- Engage and connect with underserved populations, including providers, families, and community members through two-way communication via the new First5Nevada website.
- Prioritize opportunities for families and the early childhood workforce to participate in decision making processes and to share their voices throughout cross-sector early childhood systems.

Goal 4: Identify Budget and Finance Strategies to Drive Policy Goals and Objectives

Identify funding pathways and policy changes needed to meet program and system goals:

Early Childhood Fiscal Mapping

- Review and adopt fiscal strategies included in the Children’s Funding Project Nevada Early Childhood Fiscal Map Report to expand equitable access to high quality programs and services in Nevada. Request a meeting or presentation upon completion of the report to review recommendations for consideration.

Goal 5: Execute Data Collection and Integrated Systems to Increase Equity and Accountability

Implement an Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) to improve service delivery.

Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS)

- Support and provide resources necessary to develop a Nevada ECIDS that includes cross-sector data to inform decision-making and accountability across the early childhood system.
 - Identify or hire a cross-agency coordinator to support the effort and connect with data leaders across agencies.
 - Develop a Nevada-specific shared purpose, vision, and mission for early childhood data.