



Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council

**Executive Leadership
Strategic Planning Retreat**
Public Meeting
Thursday, October 30, 2025
8:30am-2:00pm

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

Location:

SUNRISE CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION
2795 DESERT INN ROAD LAS VEGAS NV 89121

MINUTES

1. Welcome, Call to Order, Attendance

Tiffany Alston, Nevada ECAC Chair and Patrice Gardner, Nevada ECAC Vice Chair

- Tiffany Alston called meeting to order at 9:00am
- Brandi Hearst conducted roll call

Members' Present

1. Tiffany Alston, ECAC Chair
2. Marty Elquist, Data and Evaluation Co-Chair
3. Patrice Gardner, ECAC Vice Chair
4. Dr Elizabeth Glover, CE
5. Amanda Haboush Deloye, Data and Evaluation Co-Chair
6. Jerek Hough, District Manager, Source Academy
7. Dr. Jamel Nance, Communication and Engagement Co- Chair
8. Tiffany Olivas, Systems Alignment Co-Chair
9. Darby Porter, Nevada Library System
10. Denise Tanata, Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Advisor, The Children's Cabinet
11. Kathy Yoder-Bass, Provider Representative

Members Absent

1. Elysa Arroyo, Policy and Finance Co-Chair
2. Abbey Bernhardt, Systems Alignment Co-Chair
3. Cherry Clark, Nevada Early Intervention Services
4. Ashley Dines, Parent Representative
5. Dr Elizabeth Glover, CEO
6. Darby Porter, Nevada Library System

Public in Attendance

1. Jess Angel, Parent/Family Leader
2. Nyesdi Badillo, Family Engagement Specialist, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education, Subcommittee Member
3. Shannon Bilbray-Axelrod- Community Member
4. Jennese Black, Education Programs Professional, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education, ECAC Member
5. Laura Brown, Head Start Representative, ECAC Member
6. Tami Conn, Deputy Bureau Chief , Department of Human Services, State of Nevada, ECAC Member
7. Lindsey Dorneman, University of Nevada, Reno
8. Nicole Flangas, Community Member
9. Brandi Hearst, ECAC Administrative Coordinator, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
10. Danielle Holmes, Director, The Children's Cabinet





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11. Sabrina Jones, ECAC System Specialist, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
12. Sampada Karandikar, University of Nevada, Reno
13. Kathy Knickelbein, Head Start Representative
14. Marisa Lacroix, Education Programs Supervisor, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
15. Adriana Lemus, Parent, Family Leader, Subcommittee Member
16. Dazzrael Lyke, Developmental Specialist 4 Early Intervention Services Aging and Disability Services Division, State Of Nevada, ECAC Member
17. Kristen McNeill, Public Works Team
18. Jamie Mendez, Early Childhood Workforce Specialist, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education, Subcommittee Member
19. Smriti Neupane, S. Nevada ECAC Member
20. Steven Romero, Education Programs Professional, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
21. Tina Springmeyer, Director, Department of Child Family Services, ECAC Member
22. Rachel Stepina, PDG B-5 Grant Manager, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education, Subcommittee Member
23. Deetra Stewart, Home Care Provider, ECAC Member
24. Kate Verville, Public Works Team
25. Anna Villatoro, Family Engagement Specialist, The Children's Cabinet, Subcommittee Member
26. Lakesha Washington, The Children's Cabinet, Subcommittee Member
27. Jenna Weglarz-Ward, Associate Professor UNLV, ECAC Member
28. Linda Young, Owner of It Takes a Village, ECAC Member

2. Public Comment #1 5 min.

No Public Comment given during this agenda item

- No Comment

3. Strategic Planning Discussions, Reviews and Idea Shares (Informational, Discussion) 360 min

The Subcommittee and other participants were a part of the planning of the next strategic plan - discussing, reviewing, strategizing, planning, listening and sharing any and all topics within the Early Childhood System of Nevada.

Tiffany Alston, Nevada ECAC Chair and Patrice Gardner, Nevada ECAC Vice Chair

With Kristen McNeill, Kate Verville of Public Works

- Patrice Gardner opened up with "Puzzle Partner" activity - participants are to come up with one word and one wish
- Kristen McNeill gave participants an overview of the Strength\had, Weaknesses, Opportunity, Challenges (SWOC) Analysis
 - Reviewed priorities
 - linking the activities from 10.29.25 with the interviews
 - linking the activities from 10.29.25 with the surveys (over 2000 responses)
 - showed the members the ideas they came up with, aligning them with the wants and needs of the responses.

Discussion:

- What is a goal?
 - Goals are broad. There is your overarching.
 - The goal is your roadmap. It's the "what". It is not "how".
- What is an objective?
 - Objective- narrows down the goal to achievable action
- What is the strategy?
 - Strategy even more narrow and in the "nitty gritty"
- The participants split into 3 groups to draft 4-5 goals for next strategic plan





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Group 1:

Child/families supported by high functioning EC system

NV ECE workforce compensated respectfully

ECS sustainable funding

ECE integrated data system

Adequate infrastructure and supported system to ensure families with lived experiences who recommend their communities.

Group 2:

Create feedback opportunities for impacted populations of early childhood services.

Utilize a shared family governance model

Funding communication between sectors

Improve affordability and accessibility of early childhood programs for children

Increased coordination and collaboration between state and local agencies.

Group 3:

Nevadans are aware of and choose to engage in the early childhood advisory council.

Each EC sector in Nevada works toward a shared and aligned strategic vision

Share intentional recommendations based on early childhood data reviews.

- Kristen McNeil read through goals outlined above and the group did a "Gallery Walk" prioritizing which goals they thought were most important

Group Goal Discussions included:

- Quote from this activity If a family or a legislator said, "what's your goal?" I need to be able to say the goal instead of summarize it"
 - State longitudinal data system is accessible by EC programs to drive decision making.
 - Children and families are supported holistically through a coordinated early childhood system.
 - Advanced financial policies and strategies to sustain high-quality programs and ensure early childhood system growth.
 - Increased statewide awareness of Nevada Early Childhood to strengthen populations of early childhood services.
 - Increased statewide awareness of ECAC to strengthen the early childhood workforce to be reflected of the communities they serve, to be equipped in skills and knowledge while receiving holistic support, have clearly defined and articulated career pathways.
- After much discussion, these are the groups drafted goals:
 - **GOAL**
DATA Nevada has a sustainably funded system that is linked and accessible by EC programs to drive decision making.
 - **GOAL**
COORDINATED SYSTEM Nevada Children and Families are supported holistically through a coordinated early childhood system.
 - **GOAL**
FUNDING Advanced financial policies and strategies to sustain high-quality programs and ensure early childhood system growth.
 - **GOAL**
ENGAGEMENT Increase statewide awareness of the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council to strengthen populations of early childhood services.
 - **GOAL**
WORKFORCE Strengthen the early childhood workforce to be reflective of the communities they serve have competitive compensation to be equipped in skills and knowledge while receiving holistic support and having clearly defined. and articulated career pathways.





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Key Discussion Takeaways:

- Tiffany Alston is not opposed to rewriting drafted goals
- Denise Tanata explained there's space for engagement, but what is our role.... We are going to support and advise that to make sure that advances in our state.
- Tiffany Alston: It's about children and families being supported holistically through coordinators, early childhood institutions. engaging people about a coordinated system. They're engaging people about funding and what you need to be doing about funding. You're engaging families in the infrastructure and support. You're engaging in the work of leadership, for workforce development.
- Tiffany Olivas states engagement goal seems more internal to the functions and infrastructure and activities of the Council itself.

There are things like infrastructure pieces, and how we're reaching out to families and practitioners, and getting them to feel like we're a trusted source, and engaging with us, and subcommittees. Getting people to know and engage with ECAC itself.

- Tiffany Alston expressed we are missing a Governance goal
 - Asks how do these fit into subcommittees?
- Marty Elquist We've got a lot of work that we're still dedicated to underneath our current subcommittees, and there are strategies and are a work in progress. We need to take those that have... And make sure that they're completed and realign them, because that work still must get done.
- Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward- with the data from yesterday and the analysis that you all provided, I'm thinking I don't want governance structure and sustainability to get lost, random funding, or huge volunteer sources, sometimes we have support, and sometimes we don't... and we've got 82-plus meetings, we can't get lost, the support we have had it's such a huge reason why the capacity of our work has grown.
 - A governance structure, if it's not a goal, needs to be carefully put into our work somewhere else because that variability was clear in the analysis- the logistics, the behind the scenes to decide how heavy a lift is that? Does it need to be a dedicated goal, or could it be done in other ways?
- Marty Elquist explains that Public Works has all the goals and information and suggests they put it in the correct structure for us to do the work.
- Kristen McNeil responded that she does not want to take away from all the work that has been done
- Patrice Gardner mentioned the idea of moving from Subcommittees to Task Forces to be focused on the work without as much OML being a barrier.
- Dr Linda Young- reminded the participants to remember the WHY in why they are in those seats right now.
 - "The civil rights movement, and I was just a little kid there, was very passionate, and it didn't depend on who funded you. Or if you got any money. It was a in the heart. kind of concern. that you had to do this for the next generation....This has to be more than just. our goals and strategies. This is... this is huge. I mean, I can't tell you enough how I was a high school teacher. I can't tell you how many kids I lost (died). And how many kids ended up in prison because they didn't have this foundation of early childhood, and they didn't have access to it.... ECE is a civil rights issue."
- Kristen McNeil let everyone know that they are going to talk about the information and wordsmith it and bring it back to the General ECAC meeting 11.19.25.

4. Public Comment #2

Public Comment taken during this agenda item on any matter within the Subcommittee's control or advisory power.

- Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward shared that she is hosting 2 sessions for families
 - 1. Child development and
 - 2. How to connect with community services,
 - Hosted by Dr. Weglarz War,
 - register on the UNLV College of Education website





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- Dr. Linda Young announced that the Young Early Learning Institute starts February 2, 2026, through March 25, 2026, partnered with Nevada Department of Education and Clark County School District, The Nevada Association of School Administrators and the Village Foundation.

5. Adjournment

- Tiffany Alston adjourned meeting at 2:03pm