Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council

Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council
Family Leadership & Engagement Subcommittee
Public Meeting Minutes
Thursday, October 1, 2026
4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. -Virtual Meeting ID: 889 9190 2210 Passcode: 927474

Attendance

Members' Present

- Tiffany Olivas, Co-Chair, Childhood Comprehensive Systems Manager, The Children's Cabinet
- Zepporah Cousin Lee, Co-Chair Family Leadership and Engagement
- Cherry Clark, Developmental Specialist III, Nevada Early Intervention Services
- Tiarha Huerta, Senior Manager, Waterworks
- Dazzrael Lyke, Developmental Specialist 4, Aging and Disability Services Division
- Octavia McLaurin, Child Care Owner
- Brittany Morris, Sped-Itinerant ECE Teacher, Washoe County School District Betsy Newman
- Kate Pflughoeft, Assistant Grant Manager, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of
- Deetra Stewart, Family Home Care Provide
- Tina Springmeyer, Director, Department of Child and Family Services
- Anna Villatoro, Family Leadership Coordinator, The Children's Cabinet
  Betsy Newman, Part C Coordinator, Clinical Program Planner II, NDHS IDEA Part C, ADSD

Members Absent

- Darby Porter, Youth Services Consultant, Nevada Library Systems
- Elizabeth Glover, CEO, Echoes of Excellence

Public Participants

- Sabrina Jones - ECAC Systems Coordinator, NDE, Office of Early Learning & Development
- Shannon Bilbray-Axelrod - Policy and External Affairs Director, The Children's Cabinet
- Denise Tanata - Policy & Finance Subcommittee Co-Chair
- Anna Whitehead - Community Participant, The Children's Cabinet

Minutes

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

- Tiffany Olivas welcomed attendees and called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m.
- Roll call was conducted, quorum was confirmed, and attendees were reminded to complete the attendance roster.

2. Public Comment #1

- No public comment was offered.

3. Approval of Flexible Agenda (For Possible Action)

- Zepporah Cousin Lee made a motion to approve a flexible agenda and Anna Villatoro seconded the motion.
- The motion passed with no opposition or abstentions stated.

4. Approval of September 3, 2026, Meeting Minutes (For Possible Action)

- Kate Pflughoeft requested correction of the spelling of her last name in the September minutes and attendance record.
- Betsy Newman moved to approve September 3 minutes with the stated correction.
- Kate Pflughoeft seconded the motion.
- The motion passed with no opposition or abstentions stated.

6. Family Leadership & Engagement Work Plan – Continued Review and Action Planning

- Tiffany Olivas used the approved flexible agenda, to defer this item for guest presenters can addressed Items 8-10.
- Tiffany Olivas tabled the work plan until the November meeting due to time constraints.

7. Family Review and Feedback Request Process

- This item was deferred to the November meeting due to time constraints. (Future follow-up to be discussed with the workplan).

8. Preparing Families for the 2027 Legislative Session and Children's Week: Legislative Process 101

- Shannon Bilbray-Axelrod, Director of Policy and External Affairs, provided an overview of the Nevada legislative process and emphasized that families do not need to be policy experts to participate effectively. She discussed ways families can participate, including contacting legislators, attending hearings, providing public comment or written testimony, and sharing personal experiences that show how policy decisions affect children and families.
- Children's Week at the Legislature was identified for March 29-31, 2027. Participants discussed transportation, accessibility, family child care provider participation, and the importance of statewide representation.
- Denise Tanata clarified that the Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy at UNLV is the primary host for Children's Week and that Amanda Haboush-Deloye is a primary contact for transportation planning.

9. Policy & Finance Collaboration (Information and Discussion)

- Denise Tanata provided a high-level overview of the Policy & Finance Subcommittee's Strategic Plan responsibilities related to early childhood governance, funding needs, fiscal sustainability, and diversified funding sources.

Discussion Included:

- Discussion focused on opportunities for Family Leadership & Engagement to help translate policy concepts into family-centered language and ensure family experiences inform policy discussions.
- Members discussed how a more coordinated early childhood governance structure could reduce the burden on families who currently navigate separate programs, applications, eligibility requirements, and agencies.

10. ECAC 2026 Policy Priorities and Recommendations (Review, Discussion, and Public Comment)

- Denise Tanata described the ECAC policy priorities survey being prepared for ECAC members, Subcommittee members, partners, and other regular participants.

Discussion Included:

- The survey will ask respondents to rank proposed policy priorities and provide additional input. Members were encouraged to complete the survey and participate in the October 22 Policy & Finance meeting if available.
- Discussion reinforced the need to communicate policy recommendations in language that clearly explains how proposed changes may affect families.

11. ECAC Subcommittee Co-Chair Rotation (For Possible Action)

- Members reviewed the draft rotation schedule and discussed the purpose statement.
- Members supported combining concepts from the two draft purpose statements to emphasize coordination, sharing current work, family experience, and continued collaboration.
- Kate Pflughoeft moved to advance the proposed rotation process and purpose to the Executive Leadership Subcommittee. The motion was seconded.
- The motion passed with no opposition or abstentions stated. Tiffany Olivas stated that she would present the proposal to Executive Leadership.

12. Member Share-Out and Items for Next Meeting (Information and Discussion)

- Anna Villatoro shared a family-training opportunity supported through The Children's Cabinet for parents, caregivers of children birth to age five, and expectant families. The training is intended to build knowledge about early childhood development and help families prepare to share their experiences with decision-makers.
- Kate Pflughoeft shared an Act for Kids family engagement and storytelling opportunity in Reno and noted a new five-year Health Resources and Services Administration grant award to The Children's Cabinet.
- Deetra Stewart shared information about the Family Child Care Regional Conference scheduled for October 17 and discussed outreach to parents and home-based childcare families. Anna Villatoro and Deidre Stewart agreed to connect regarding family outreach.
- The Family Leadership & Engagement Work Plan- will continue discussion at the November 5 meeting.

13. Upcoming ECAC Meeting Schedule (Review)

- Members reviewed upcoming ECAC and Subcommittee meetings, including the November 18 General ECAC meeting.

14. Public Comment #2

- No public comment was offered.

15. Adjournment

- Tiffany Olivas thanked members, presenters, families, partners, staff, and members of the public for participating.
- The meeting was adjourned at 5:32 p.m. The next Family Leadership & Engagement meeting is November 5, 2026, from 4:00-5:30 p.m.

Action Step Summary / Follow-Up

- Return the Family Leadership & Engagement Work Plan to the November 5 meeting for continued review and action planning.
- Continuing development of the Family Review and Feedback Request Process as part of Work Plan implementation.
- Tiffany Olivas will present the proposed ECAC Subcommittee rotation process to Executive Leadership.

- Family Leadership & Engagement will continue coordinating with Policy & Finance to strengthen family participation in ECAC policy priorities and family-friendly policy communication.
- Members will review and respond to the ECAC policy priorities survey.
- Continue legislative-preparation activities for families leading into the 2027 Legislative Session and Children's Week.
- Anna Villatoro and Deetra Stewart will connect with outreach to families and home-based childcare participants.

Meeting Summary

The Subcommittee approved the flexible agenda and September 3 meeting minutes with a name correction; received legislative-process and Policy & Finance updates; discussed family-centered communication of ECAC policy priorities; advanced the proposed ECAC Subcommittee rotation process to Executive Leadership; and identified the Family Leadership & Engagement Work Plan for continued discussion in November.