Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council

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Policy and Finance Subcommittee Public Meeting Minutes
Thursday, August 27, 2026, Time, 3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Meeting ID: 867 0737 7682 **Passcode:** 851310

Attendance

Members Present 8 of 13

- Tiffany Alston, ECAC Chair, Policy and Finance Co-Chair, Director of Programs, Sunrise Children's Foundation
- Patrice Gardner, Education Programs Supervisor, NV Head Start Collaboration Director NDE Office of Early Learning and Development,
- Lela Gonzales, Family Engagement Specialist, The Children's Cabinet
- Octavia McLaurin, Owner License Family Childcare Provider
- Dr. Diane Nicolet, Trustee Washoe County School District
- Dr. Stephanie Vega, Teacher, Washoe County School District
- Patty West, Subsidy Coordinator, The Children's Cabinet, Subcommittee Member
- Brooke Yarborough, Nevada Department of Human Services, Division of Social Services

Members Absent from 5 of 13

- Abbey Bernhardt, National Alliance on Mental Illness
- Dr. Jerek Hough, Founder, Abbreviated Learning
- Rachel Stepina, PDG B-5 Grant Manager, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
- Denise Tanata, Policy and Finance Co-Chair, Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Advisor the Children's Cabinet
- Kathy Yoder Bass, Non-Profit Provider, Council Member

Public in Attendance

- Andrew Clarke, Community Member
- Sabrina Jones ECAC System Coordinator, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
- Dr. Jamelle Nance, Early Childhood Policy Director, Children's Advocacy Alliance
- Kenneth Shackelford, Community Member
- Anna Whitehead, Parent, Community Member

Minutes

1. Welcome, Call to Order, Roll Call, Introduction

- Tiffany Alston called the meeting to order at 3:52 p.m.
- Sabrina Jones conducted roll call, as noted above.

2. Public Comment #1

- No public comment was offered.

3. Approval of a Flexible Agenda (Discussion for Possible Action)

- The Subcommittee approved the flexible agenda.
- Lela Gonzales moved to approve the flexible agenda.
- Patty West seconded the motion.
- All in favor, none opposed.
- Members voted unanimously. The motion carried.

4. Approval of July 23, 2026, Minutes (Discussion for Possible Action)

- The Subcommittee approved the July 23, 2026, meeting minutes.
- Dr. Diane Nicolet moved to approve the minutes.
- Octavia McLaurin seconded the motion.
- Members voted to approve the motion.
- Lela Gonzales abstained.
- The motion carried.

5. Co-Chair Report

- Co-Chair Tiffany Alston noted that Bill Draft Request will not be presented today. Instead, it will be presented when Denise Tanata is in attendance as she is more familiar with it.

6. Nevada Legislative Updates (Information and Discussion)

This item was tabled until the next meeting.

7. Work Plan Updates and Review (Review and Discussion)

The Subcommittee reviewed key activities, priorities, and potential collaboration opportunities aligned with assigned Strategic Plan goals and objectives.

Objective 1.1: Integrated Early Childhood Governance Structure

- In accordance with Goal 1: Promote an integrated, aligned, family-centered early childhood system, that strengthens coordination across agencies to support the delivery of services that meet the needs of children and families. Tiffany Alston shared an overview slide of Nevada Early Childhood Governance History.
  - Tiffany Alston asked for subcommittee to develop talking points around this visual flow chart to address Objective 1.1: Develop recommendations and advocate for an integrated early childhood governance structure. Tiffany Alston explained that this visual is to improve people's understanding of the evolution of Early Childhood Governance in Nevada.
  - Dr. Nicolet suggested a few bullets to assist people with understanding the terminology "governance reform." She noted that service integration and brain science could also have some description.
  - Tiffany Alston questioned whether the subcommittee should create some talking points for the flow chart. She stated a position statement might be for future consideration.
  - Tiffany Alston asked for subcommittee volunteers to take an arrow from the flow chart and build out talking points. Dr. Diane Nicolet selected "Present." Octavia McLaurin selected "Systems Building and Brain Science."
  - Lela Gonzales asked for clarification about the work plan and Tiffany Alston and Patrice Gardner provided additional details on the national and local milestones for Early Childhood Governance.

- Tiffany Alston reviewed the identified activities for the subcommittee workplan. She explained the need to connect governance discussions to concrete activities and deliverables.
- The subcommittee identified that some of today's meeting materials were not included in the email. Members asked to resume the conversation at next meeting with materials in hand.

8. Agenda Items for September 24, 2026, Meeting (Review and Discussion)

- Presentation on Bill Draft Request
- Resume conversation on workplan activities and deliverables for Objective 1.1
- Review of the early childhood fiscal map with a focus on current funding.
- Revisit the funding matrix.
- Review prior cost modeling.
- Review prior funding needs assessment and analysis work.

9. Member Updates (Informational and Discussion)

- Lela Gonzales shared that The Children's Cabinet was awarded some funds through Child Care Aware of America to do some story sharing. The project is focused on helping parents interact with policy makers through sharing family stories related to policy asks. Childcare Providers and parents are being incentivized to participate in story sharing efforts. There will be a 3-hour training with food on October 15 in Las Vegas. Participants, parents or providers in attendance are eligible for a $50 stipend. Lela suggested that the team might be able to share information and disseminate subcommittee materials at this event as the childcare gaps that parents experience is related to governance structure. These stories may help to elevate awareness of the issues faced with lack of coordinated Early Childhood Governance.

- Tiffany Alston shared that Head Start (at the national level) is looking for folks in the community to make public comment on the Notice for Proposed Rulemaking to eliminate the Head Start Program Performance Standards. The deadline to make public comment is October 6th or 8th. Some examples that current administration would like to eliminate include teachers speaking Spanish to children who speak Spanish; quality criteria for services provided to children with special needs; small group classroom ratios; teacher qualification criteria of bachelor's degrees; expulsion protections; etc. With the removal of expulsion protections, Tiffany Alston noted that children and babies would be expelled or kicked out of early learning. Patrice Gardner stated that she and Tiffany Altson will be doing an overview of the Head Start Notice for Proposed Rulemaking at the general ECAC meeting. They will include details on steps needed to make public comments.

- Brooke Yarborough also encouraged the committee to consider public comments on the Head Start Notice for Proposed Rulemaking, emphasizing attention to child teacher ratios that would revert to state licensing ratios that are less strict.

10. Public Comment #2

- No public comment was offered.

11. Upcoming Meetings (For Reference and Subject to Change)

- Executive Leadership: September 1, 2026, 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
- Family Leadership and Engagement: September 3, 2026, 4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.
- Workforce Development: September 8, 2026, evening meeting, 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
- General ECAC: September 16, 2026, 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
- Communication & Engagement: September 22, 2026, 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
- Data: October 15, 2026, 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

- Policy and Finance: September 24, 2026, 3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

12. Adjournment

- Tiffany Alston adjourned the meeting at 4:35 p.m.

Action Step Summary

- Denise Tanata present Bill Draft Request slides.
- Subcommittee will resume conversation on workplan activities and deliverables for Objective 1.1

- Revisit the early childhood fiscal map, funding matrix, cost modeling, and previous funding needs assessments at the September 24, 2026, meeting.
- Continue updating the early childhood fiscal map with the Children's Funding Project.
- Coordinate with the Family Leadership and Engagement Subcommittee regarding family funding priorities and with the Workforce Development Subcommittee regarding workforce-related funding considerations.

Meeting Summary

The Policy and Finance Subcommittee reviewed key activities, priorities, and potential collaboration opportunities aligned with assigned Strategic Plan Goal 1 and Objective 1.1, with specific focus on Nevada Early Childhood Governance history and flowcharts.