Nevada ECAC 2027 Policy Recommendations for the 2026 Annual Report

ACTION REQUESTED: The Nevada ECAC Policy & Finance Subcommittee is recommending the following policy priorities for inclusion in the Nevada ECAC 2026 Annual Report.

The following recommendations reflect the priorities identified through the 2026 Nevada ECAC policy survey and align with the Nevada ECAC's 2026–2030 Strategic Plan, prior annual reports, and adopted policy priorities. Collectively, the recommendations would establish the governance, financing, organizational capacity, and data infrastructure needed to create a more coordinated, equitable, and sustainable early childhood system for Nevada's children, families, and providers.

1. Establish a Dedicated Nevada Early Childhood Fund

Establish a permanent Nevada Early Childhood Fund to coordinate and strategically invest public, private, and philanthropic resources in programs and infrastructure serving children from the prenatal period through age eight and their families.

Key provisions should:

- Prioritize expanded access to affordable, high-quality child care, infant and toddler care, mixed-delivery Pre-K, and home-visiting programs.
- Support early childhood workforce compensation, benefits, professional preparation, and retention.
- Provide grants, low-interest financing, or other supports that help providers open, expand, improve, and sustain programs in urban, rural, frontier, and underserved communities.
- Establish transparent eligibility criteria, measurable outcomes, public reporting, and safeguards ensuring that funds supplement rather than replace existing early childhood investments.
- Permit the state to leverage appropriations with federal, local, employer, and philanthropic resources.

2. Create Sustainable State Revenue Streams for Early Childhood

Develop dedicated and recurring state revenue streams sufficient to sustain and expand Nevada's early childhood system, reduce the cost of care for families, and improve the financial stability of providers and the early childhood workforce.

Key provisions should:

- Require utilization of early childhood fiscal analysis that identifies the true cost of quality care, existing funding gaps, and viable state revenue options.

- Evaluate a range of financing mechanisms, including dedicated taxes or fees, employer-supported approaches, tax credits, public-private partnerships, and mechanisms that leverage philanthropic capital.
- Include protections that preserve access for infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, foster children, relative caregivers, and families in rural and underserved communities.
- Require regular reporting on revenue, expenditures, populations served, geographic distribution, and measurable child and family outcomes.

3. Provide Dedicated State Funding and Capacity for the Nevada ECAC

Establish recurring state funding and permanent staff capacity for the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council to fulfill its statutory responsibilities and lead implementation of Nevada's early childhood strategic priorities.

Key provisions should:

- Support dedicated executive, policy, fiscal, data, communications, administrative, and family-engagement capacity.
- Reduce reliance on time-limited federal grants for core ECAC operations.
- Fund meaningful participation by parents, early childhood educators, providers, rural communities, and other affected constituencies, including stipends, interpretation, translation, accessibility, transportation, and child care supports.

4. Establish an Integrated Early Childhood Governance Structure

Establish a unified, accountable early childhood governance structure with the authority and capacity to align programs, funding, regulations, and family access across state agencies.

Key provisions should:

- Clearly define responsibility for statewide early childhood strategy, budgeting, program coordination, accountability, and outcomes.
- Align child care subsidies, child care licensing, Pre-K, early intervention, home visiting, workforce development, and related family-support programs while preserving specialized program expertise.
- Create a coordinated accountability framework with shared goals, performance measures, and reporting requirements across agencies.
- Streamline duplicative applications, eligibility determinations, monitoring processes, and provider requirements, including continued development of a common or universal application for families.

- Review conflicting regulations, administrative requirements, zoning barriers, and delayed payment processes that limit provider participation or program expansion.
- Require sustained consultation with families, providers, educators, local communities, and populations that experience barriers to access.

5. Develop a Statewide Early Childhood Integrated Data System
Authorize and fund a phased statewide Early Childhood Integrated Data System that securely connects program, workforce, fiscal, access, and outcome data across Nevada's early childhood system.

Key provisions should:

- Establish interagency data governance, common definitions, data-sharing agreements, privacy protections, security standards, and clear rules governing appropriate data use.
- Connect data across child care, Pre-K, early intervention, health, home visiting, child welfare, workforce, and other relevant programs where legally permissible.
- Produce actionable information on service access, unmet need, workforce supply, provider capacity, family experiences, funding distribution, program quality, and child outcomes.
- Disaggregate data by geography, age, disability, language, program setting, and other relevant factors while protecting individual privacy and avoiding the identification of small groups.
- Provide policymakers, agencies, communities, and the public with accessible dashboards and recurring reports to guide investments and measure progress.
- Implement the system in phases, beginning with a governance framework, inventory of existing data assets, priority use cases, and sustainable financing and maintenance plans.

Together, these recommendations provide a practical framework for moving Nevada from fragmented, time-limited initiatives toward a coordinated early childhood system with clear accountability and sustainable financing. The Nevada ECAC recommends that the Governor and Legislature advance these priorities as an integrated agenda, recognizing that governance, funding, organizational capacity, and data must work together to improve access, affordability, quality, and outcomes for Nevada's children and families.