



Children's Week 2015 Event Summary

The third biennial Children's Week at the Nevada Legislature was held Monday, March 9 through Thursday, March 12 in Carson City. The week-long celebration was hosted by the Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy (NICRP) and the Children's Advocacy Alliance (CAA). The week was divided into four major themes to guide each day's presentations and activities. Monday's focus was school readiness, Tuesday was children's physical health, Wednesday was children's mental and behavioral health, and Thursday was child safety.



Assemblyman Nelson Araujo presents CAA Director Denise Tanata-Ashby with a proclamation in honor of efforts to improve quality ECE across the state

Monday, March 9 - Over 40 parents, children, and community advocates rode a bus from Las Vegas to Carson City to meet with legislators and speak with them about issues regarding access to quality early childhood education (ECE). Participants were also hosted by their Assembly representatives during an Assembly floor session, received a tour of the legislative building and children led "Teddy Bears on Parade" through the halls of the legislative building. A presentation on the importance of quality and data in ECE and increasing access was given by Patti Oya, Director of the Office of Early Learning and Development in the Department of Education and Marty Elquist from the Children's Cabinet. Assemblyman Nelson Araujo presented the group with a proclamation in honor of their efforts to promote ECE across the state.

During the evening, NICRP and CAA hosted the Children's Champions Awards and legislative reception at the Nevada State Museum. Honorees included Nevada Governor Brian Sandoval and First Lady Kathleen Sandoval, Nevada Supreme Court Justice Nancy Saitta, and community advocate Tameka Henry. The Carson City Symphony's "Strings in Schools" program showcased their talent for the evening and the museum was decorated with artwork made for this event by pre-school aged children at the Western Nevada College Child Development Center.



Carson City Strings in Schools students perform at the legislative reception

Tuesday, March 10 - Children's Health Day began with a breakfast presentation by March of Dimes Director of Program Services Michelle Gorelow on access to prenatal care, as well as Heidi Parker from Immunize Nevada, who focused on Nevada's immunization rates for children. A lunch presentation on improving children's health, obesity prevention and tobacco control was led by State Health Division Obesity Prevention Program Coordinator Jessica Lamb and Nevada Tobacco Prevention Coalition Policy Chair Michael Hackett. Presentations were attended by legislators, staff, and community advocates.

Wednesday, March 11 - Children's Mental Health Day featured presentations from a variety of clinicians and treatment providers. The morning presentations focused on access to mental health

and was led by Las Vegas based mental health agency, Healthy Minds Director Dr. Lisa Durette and the Nevada Division of Child and Family Services Mobile Crisis Unit Deputy Administrator Kelly Wooldridge. The audience learned about emergency services offered by the Mobile Crisis Unit, a now state-wide program that can respond to the clients' home, school, or work. Dr. Durette led a discussion about the importance of attracting more clinicians to practice in Nevada.



Community advocates from Las Vegas at the Nevada Legislature

The lunch time presentation focused on mental and behavioral interventions in-school and out-of-school interventions. Misty Allen a program coordinator with the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Suicide Prevention discussed mental health screening in schools. Pam Becker, Children's Cabinet Director of Community Outreach and Victoria Blakeney from the Nevada Department of Education discussed mental health obstacles for youth transitioning out of school and services available to assist youth in obtaining positive outcomes.

Thursday, March 12 - The fourth and final day of Children's Week was focused on child safety. The morning presentation featured Ronda Clifton, Senior Deputy Attorney General and Nick Trutanich, Chief of Staff for the Nevada Attorney General's Office who discussed child sex trafficking and the office's role in advocating for legislative change, prosecuting offenders, and enhancing services to victims. Also, a member of CASA discussed the importance of their program to Nevada's children in the child welfare system. Finally, Nevada Supreme Court Justice Nancy Saitta discussed the importance of a child's well-being across systems on a continuum of care. In the afternoon, youth in Independent Living Programs across the state led guided group discussions with elected officials including Senator Pat Spearman, Senator Patricia Farley, Assemblywoman Amber Joiner and Assemblyman Tyrone Thompson. Youth were invited to sit with representatives during the Assembly floor session, tour the building and learn about the legislative process.



Thank you to our funders!

