

BUILDING NEVADA'S EARLY CHILDHOOD COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM

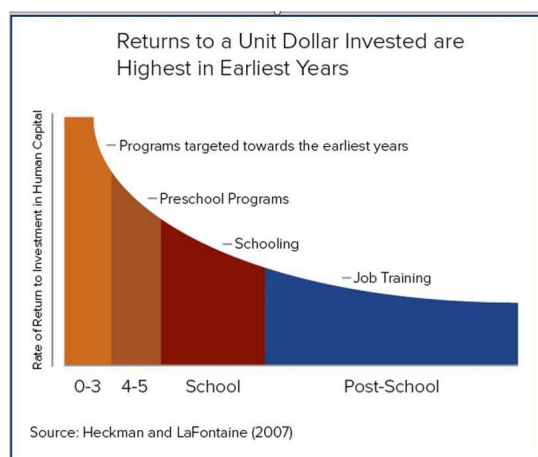
Why:

Early childhood is a period of rapid learning, growth and development that shapes the foundation for healthy life-long well-being, academic achievement, and economic productivity. Years of research confirms that a coordinated **early childhood comprehensive system** is vital to ensuring children, and their families, can succeed and thrive.

An **early childhood comprehensive system** in this context includes equitable access to:

- Prenatal care to ensure optimal birth outcomes for both the mother and child
- Pediatric care to support healthy development
- Social support programs that address the social determinants of health (addressing basic needs)
- High quality early learning programs that meet the needs of children (learning & development) and families (safe, affordable care ensuring that working parents can go to work)

In Nevada, the current early childhood system is administered through six state agencies, including 22 separate divisions and more than 85 different programs. In addition, there are over 20 state-level advisory bodies and hundreds of non-government organizations supporting these programs.



[Studies](#) suggest that investments in high quality early childhood programs yield some of the highest returns, setting the stage for successful Nevada citizens. The most effective investments include a holistic approach to early interventions, supporting early learning, healthy development and addressing broader social determinants of health. Alignment and coordination of early childhood programs across sectors is vital to achieving desired outcomes for children, families and the State of Nevada.

Policy and Infrastructure Needs to Support Nevada's Early Childhood System:

1. Governor's Office of Early Childhood
 2. Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS)
 3. Expansion of High-Quality Early Childhood Programs
- Governor's Office of Early Childhood
- A comprehensive, coordinated statewide infrastructure is critical to support integration, collaboration, efficiency, effective outcomes and service delivery. Establishing a Governor's Office of Early Childhood will allow the Governor and Legislature to make informed decisions regarding early childhood policy, financing and infrastructure by:
- Improving coordination and fiscal efficiency across state departments and local levels of government;
 - Mobilizing resources around identified priorities for children and families;
 - Facilitating a holistic approach to serving children and families who utilize a cross sector of programs and supports;

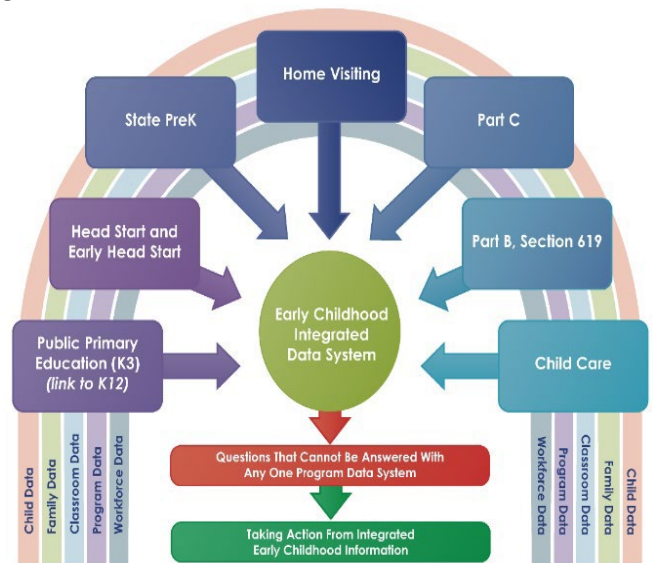
- Strengthening partnerships with non-profit and private sector entities serving these populations; and
- Increasing equitable access to programs and services in the early years to prevent or reduce the need for more costly remediation or services in later years.

➤ Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS)

The goal of an ECIDS is to collect data from early learning education, health, human services, childcare providers, and communities to improve and provide accountability for early childhood decisions and investments. ECIDS data could be linked to the statewide longitudinal Nevada P-20 Workforce Research Data System (NPWR) so that research, advocacy, and continuous improvement concerns can be answered. The difficulty is there is a myriad and disparity of early childhood data stores across the many programs and agencies within the state. An ECIDS would provide a streamlined avenue for a cross-agency approach which would minimize duplicative child counts by utilizing unique student identifiers, allow data to be deployed efficiently to understand the effectiveness of programs and services, and to improve and expand initiatives that result in positive outcomes for children and families. More importantly, an integrated data system can be used to measure the collective impact of programs managed across agencies and guide families in understanding and selecting programs that fit their needs.

Examples of the types of questions that could be answered with an ECIDS:

- How many 3 and 4-year-olds are currently receiving some form of childcare in NV?
 - By county/district
 - By setting/funding type
 - By eligibility
- How many children need to be served to reach universal pre-k?
 - How close/far away are we from 70% by funding type?
- How many licensed ECE teachers are employed in NV?
 - By setting
 - By county/district
 - By setting/funding type
- Long-term Effectiveness of State Pre-K and other Pre-K programs
 - Longitudinal measurements (assessment scores, dropout rates, chronic absenteeism, discipline frequencies, etc.)



➤ Expansion of High Quality Early Childhood Programs

Numerous high quality early childhood programs currently operate in Nevada, but few are supported at a level to impact state level outcome measures. Some of these programs, along with the approximate percentage¹ of eligible children/families served, include:

- Nevada Ready! PreK – Approximately 8% of eligible children served
- Head Start – Approximately 7.9% of eligible children served
- Early Head Start – Approximately 2% of eligible children served
- Child Care Subsidy – Approximately 6% of eligible children served

¹ Estimates for each program are based on currently available data for participation/enrollment, total number of children in the respective age group and eligibility criteria, as available. Additional data collection and analysis would be required to report actual percentages for each program.

- Home Visiting (MIECHV) – 320 families served in FY18, less than 1% of all live births
Many of these programs (with the exception of Nevada Ready! PreK) are reliant on federal funding streams which are insufficient to meet the needs of our population. Efforts to streamline and coordinate service delivery, along with strategic investments in high quality programs will increase access and ultimately result in outcomes that will have state-level impact.

These recommendations are supported by the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council (Nevada ECAC) and were included in the [2022 Nevada ECAC Annual Report](#) that was submitted to the Governor and Legislature pursuant to NRS432A.076(3).

Definitions:

- Early Childhood – The prenatal period to age eight, which encompasses access to nutrition, health care mental and behavioral health, protection, play and early learning to stimulate children’s physical, cognitive, linguistic and social-emotional development.
- Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) – A data system collects, integrates, maintains, stores, and reports information from early childhood programs across multiple agencies within a state that serve children and families from birth to age eight. Typically, the data included in an ECIDS are related to the individual child, the child’s family, the classroom, the program/providers, and other services that provide comprehensive care and education for young children.
- Universal Pre-K – The availability of high-quality, publicly funded Pre-K to all students and families regardless of zip code or socio-economic status. State funded Pre-k is defined as a minimum of 25 hours per week offered in a mixed delivery system.
- Mixed Delivery System – A system of early childhood care and education (ECCE) services that are delivered through a combination of programs, providers, and settings, such as Head Start, licensed family and center-based childcare programs, public schools, and other community-based organizations, that is supported by a combination of public and private funds.