Each year Step Up for Kids brings together people to show widespread support for investments in children and families. Participants include child advocates, politicians, parents and kids. Events held across the country raise awareness among voters and political candidates regarding the issues American children face, such as access to early care and learning, after-school programs, poverty, child abuse and neglect, and health care. This year, an event took place in Las Vegas, Nevada, to spread the message of making Nevada’s children a priority!

On Saturday, October 14, 2023, the Nevada Institute for Children’s Research and Policy, in partnership with the Southern Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council (SNECAC) hosted the 16th Annual Step Up for Kids event. The event was held from 9:00 am-12:00 pm at the Alexander Library in North Las Vegas. This year’s event was a success with 535 attendees. Throughout the event, families had the opportunity to interact with over 30 community organizations that provided information about resources, planned fun activities and games for kids, and graciously donated raffle prizes! Families also enjoyed free tacos, face painting, a petting zoo, live DJ, costume contest, voter registration and a produce market by UNR Extension with free fruits and vegetables! The audience was also entertained throughout the event by Las Vegas Cause Players, who dressed up as superheroes and took pictures.

NICRP hosted the Clark County Youth Mayor election to engage children in the electoral process. Fourth and Fifth graders in Clark County were given the opportunity to apply. The finalists were selected to campaign at the event. Finalists, Charlotte McQueen, Isabella Vivas, Jack Leatham, Raymond Wold Jr, and Ricky Gourrier López Jr created campaigns about an issue they were passionate about, displayed their campaign materials at the event, discussed their issues with attendees, and gave a 1-2-minute speech on their campaign issues. Since this election was for kids and by kids, only youth 17 years and under could vote for their favorite candidate. The kids in attendance were able to register to vote, enter a voting booth, and cast their ballot. Congratulations to Jack Leatham for winning the election!

This event would not have been possible without the help of our community partners: