

The Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council (NECAC) managed by Nevada's Head Start State Collaboration and Early Childhood System (HSC&ECS) Office, in collaboration with the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) is leading an effort to build a comprehensive early childhood education system that supports the ability of all children in Nevada to enter kindergarten ready to learn. The two major components of systems change identified in this effort are:

1. Adoption of a common kindergarten entry assessment; and
2. Development of a coordinated data system that links pre-kindergarten (pre-K) to K-12 in order to support early childhood educators to understand and utilize child assessment data to improve programs, curriculum and environments.

In 2011, the State of Nevada submitted an application for the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC). Although the state did not receive the grant, feedback from proposal assisted in identifying areas of improvement for Nevada's early childhood education system that will not only improve the State's grant competitiveness, but also the ability of our State to provide a solid infrastructure for providing high quality early childhood learning opportunities. One of the key infrastructure components in the grant was the development of an early childhood data system used to drive program quality and improve school readiness. Measuring young children's educational progress and readiness to enter school during their Pre-K years will assist in:

- Providing information on teacher and program effectiveness;
- Identifying students who would benefit from intervention and other services; and
- Informing local and state policy and program improvement decisions.

A comprehensive needs assessment was conducted in 2012 with a focus on determining the feasibility at both the state and county level for adopting a statewide approach. The process included focus groups and site visits in all 17 counties and school districts to understand current practices, resource needs, specific barriers, and level of willingness to participate. The final report (available through www.nevadaecac.com) identified stakeholder concerns and considerations, existing assets and resources, as well as recommendations for creating an ideal system in Nevada. The recommendations in the report included consideration and/or inclusion of:

1. A shared vision for school readiness;
2. A cross-agency data governance structure;
3. Identification and collection of relevant student-level data;
4. Development of data sharing protocols;
5. Ongoing data analysis and reporting to key stakeholders and the public;

6. Ongoing and sustainable data collection from students, early childhood programs and the workforce from both public and private programs;
7. Ensuring that data/information is accessible to diverse stakeholders; and
8. Leveraging partnerships that braid a variety of funding sources.

Recommendation:

Implement a Coordinated Early Childhood Data System that will facilitate linkage of state K–12 data systems with early learning, postsecondary education, workforce, social services and other critical agencies and develop governance structures to guide data collection, sharing and use. Development and implementation should align with the feasibility study that was conducted to address implementing a coordinated data system for early childhood that accommodates cross-system information sharing and allows tracking of progress for each child in Nevada.



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