

Creating Sustainable State Investment for Nevada's Early Learning System



About Us

The Child Care Provider Action Committee (CCPAC) is a group of Nevada child care providers dedicated to ensuring the early childhood workforce has a permanent direct voice in state policy decisions. Operating under the principle of "Nothing About Me, Without Me," the CCPAC leverages the practical operational expertise of its members to review, develop, and improve systems impacting children and the early learning sector.

Introduction

Nevada stands at a critical moment for early childhood investment. Across the state, families struggle to find affordable, high-quality child care, while providers face tight margins, staffing shortages, and rising costs. Early educators—central to young children's development—are among the lowest-paid workers in the economy. At the same time, too many children miss out on essential early learning experiences that shape long-term academic, social, and economic outcomes. While federal funding helps sustain services, it is insufficient to meet Nevada's current or future needs. To build a resilient, high-quality mixed-delivery early learning system, Nevada must establish sustainable state-level investments that strengthen the child care subsidy program, expand access to Nevada Ready! Pre-K, and support families and providers statewide.

Learning from Other States

Other states offer strong models for building predictable, long-term funding for early learning.

New Mexico created a \$10 billion Early Childhood Trust Fund and passed a constitutional amendment dedicating a share of permanent fund revenue to early childhood education. This historic investment expanded child care access, eliminated copayments, and demonstrated a statewide commitment to treating child care as essential infrastructure.

Oregon's Multnomah County implemented a progressive local income tax to fund universal preschool—showing how local innovation can drive early childhood expansion when statewide action is limited.

Illinois established a standalone early childhood agency and increased state appropriations for early learning, illustrating the role of governance, coordination, and sustained budgeting in expanding services.

These examples show that when states prioritize early learning, they can dramatically increase access, improve quality, and strengthen their workforce. The approaches taken by these states underscores the importance of governance and political will in driving systemic reform.

Building a Sustainable Path Forward for Nevada

To ensure long-term stability, Nevada can pursue a mix of strategies—including a dedicated funding stream, a constitutional amendment to earmark a portion of state revenue, and employer-focused incentives. The state's unique economic base—mining, tourism, and hospitality—offers opportunities to generate new revenue without disproportionately impacting working families. Public-private partnerships, employer contributions, and county-level innovations can further complement statewide action.

But the foundation must be clear: Nevada needs a comprehensive state investment plan that strengthens child care subsidies and expands access to Universal Pre-K.



Home-based providers and advocates at Children's Week 2025

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Strengthening the Child Care Subsidy Program

Nevada's child care subsidy program is currently limited by restrictive income eligibility thresholds and insufficient funding to serve all eligible children. Restoring eligibility to 85% of the State Median Income (SMI)—consistent with federal guidance and aligned with Nevada Ready! Pre-K's income threshold—would allow more working families to access care and reduce the financial strain caused by rising costs. Adding a state appropriation to the federal resources currently available for this program would also help address waitlists, stabilize providers, and ensure that subsidy reimbursement rates support high-quality care.

Advancing Toward a Mixed Delivery Universal Pre-K

Expanding Nevada Ready! Pre-K is a critical step toward a universal preschool system that is accessible and responsive to the needs of Nevada's working families. Strengthening and scaling Nevada Ready! Pre-K—including through a mixed-delivery model that leverages school districts, community-based organizations, licensed child care centers, and home-based programs—expands parental choice and ensures families can select the setting that best fits their schedules, cultural preferences, and children's developmental needs. A broader, more diverse Pre-K system would provide high-quality, developmentally rich early learning experiences for children across every zip code. Additional state-level funding is essential to expand infrastructure, grow available seats, support quality improvement, and reduce long-term educational disparities statewide.

Conclusion

Nevada has an opportunity—and an obligation—to build a stronger early learning system that supports children, families, and the state's economic future. By investing state dollars to enhance federal resources, expanding eligibility and access through the child care subsidy program, and advancing toward a universal Nevada Ready! Pre-K model, the state can create a more stable, efficient, and high-impact early childhood landscape. With clear leadership, bipartisan collaboration, and sustained commitment, Nevada can ensure every child enters kindergarten ready to thrive.

Policy Recommendations

Establish a Dedicated Early Childhood Fund:

Create a state fund seeded through targeted revenue sources (expansion of existing or creation of new revenue) to support child care subsidies and Nevada Ready! Pre-K expansion, including infrastructure growth.

Increase State Funding for the Child Care Subsidy Program:

Restore income eligibility to 85% of SMI and establish state appropriations to blend with available federal funding to serve more children. Utilize a Cost of Quality Model to establish reimbursement rates that align with high-quality standards to support provider stability and reduce parent co-pays.

Expand Nevada Ready! Pre-K Toward Universal Access:

Invest in additional Pre-K seats through a mixed-delivery model. Support program quality, educator compensation, and statewide, voluntary access for all 3 and 4-year-olds. Utilize the cost modeling study published by West Ed on behalf of the Department of Education, Office of Early Learning and Development¹, to establish rates that meet the full cost of care based on geographic region and provider type.

Strengthen Public-Private Partnerships:

Establish incentive programs and targeted tax credits to encourage employers to invest in child care solutions—including subsidizing slots, offering on-site care, or contributing to local funds.

Enable Local-Level Innovation and Investment:

Authorize local jurisdictions to establish voter-approved children's funds and other local revenue mechanisms that generate dedicated funding to support community-based early childhood programs.