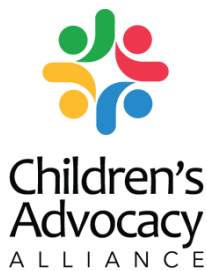




# 2025 Legislative Report



**Policy Progress  
and Challenges for  
Nevada's Children and Families**



## About CAA

The Children's Advocacy Alliance (CAA) is an independent voice for Nevada's children, advancing systemic change in the areas of early childhood education, children's health, and child welfare. We work to ensure every child in Nevada has the opportunity to thrive by building consensus around policy priorities and leveraging the strength of our collective voice to create lasting change.

CAA engages in legislative advocacy, champions bills in collaboration with community partners, and elevates the voices of families and advocates in the policymaking process. Our work is rooted in equity and driven by the belief that those most impacted by policy should play a central role in shaping it. We work year-round with coalitions, families, providers, and fellow advocates to improve systems that serve Nevada's children and families.

Our efforts are focused across three main program areas, our three pillars:

### Early Childhood Education and Development

CAA is committed to advancing high-quality early childhood education and care. We recognize the critical importance of the earliest years of life and advocate for investments that support Nevada's children, families, and early educators. Supported by the Alliance for Early Success and the Pritzker Children's Initiative, CAA leads the Strong Start Prenatal to Three Coalition, convening statewide stakeholders to improve early childhood systems. Through our nationally recognized Child Advocacy Ambassador program, we train and support parents and caregivers to lead local and statewide advocacy efforts rooted in lived experience.

### Children's Health

CAA advocates to ensure all children in Nevada have access to affordable, quality health care, including behavioral and mental health services. We actively worked to support families impacted by the Medicaid "unwinding" process, ensuring eligible children did not lose coverage. As the convener of a statewide coalition for children's mental health, we are focused on expanding access to providers, strengthening school-based services, and improving insurance coverage for children with behavioral health needs.

### Child Welfare and Equitable Access

CAA works to prevent child maltreatment and ensure system-involved youth are supported and heard. We advocate for policies that strengthen families, improve supports for youth in foster care, and promote healing and stability. This includes advancing extended foster care, improving transition services for older youth, supporting youth leadership and civic engagement opportunities, and building comprehensive prevention systems. Our work is guided by the goal of interrupting cycles of trauma and inequity and creating pathways to well-being for all children and families.

# Overview of the 2025 Legislative Session

Nevada's 83rd Legislative Session took place from February 3 to June 2, 2025, during a period marked by federal uncertainty and fiscal restraint. The session unfolded under split partisan control: Democrats held a majority in both the Senate and Assembly; Republican Governor Joe Lombardo had a limited time to sign or veto bills. Out of 42 Assembly seats, 27 were held by Democrats and 15 by Republicans; in the 21-member Senate, Democrats held 13 seats and Republicans 8. In both chambers, Democrats were one seat short from the two-thirds supermajority needed to override a veto from the Governor, leaving the Governor's veto power from the 2023 legislative session intact.

Budget constraints and a projected shortfall shaped a cautious fiscal approach, with lawmakers focused on passing a balanced budget and sustaining existing programs. For the first time since 2009, the Economic Forum revised its biennial budget projection downward during the legislative session from its initial estimate in December 2024 to \$12.2 billion in May 2025. This decrease resulted in many important bills with fiscal notes losing the possibility for passage. With Nevada already ranking among the worst in the nation for child and family well-being, a lack of funding for new programs posed serious challenges to addressing ongoing needs.

The purpose of this report is to take a deeper dive into children's policy as it was addressed throughout Nevada's 83rd Legislative Session of 2025.



## 2025 Legislative Priorities: Spotlight on CAA's Seven Key Bills

Bill #	Description	Outcome	
SB82	Office of Early Childhood Systems within the Governor's Office		Died during Session
SB165	Behavioral Health and Wellness Practitioner, higher-education for children's mental health		Approved by Governor
SB284	Protecting social security benefits for youth experiencing foster care		Approved by Governor
SB460	Comprehensive education bill, moves Nevada toward Universal Pre-kindergarten		Approved by Governor
AB185	Expands licensure for home-based child care providers to be allowed in common-interest communities		Vetoed by Governor
AB339	Office of Children's Mental and Behavioral Health within the Department of Health and Human Services		Died during Session
AB340	Mandates insurance reimburse for screenings, assessments and diagnoses of developmental delays of childhood		Died during Session

## SB 82

# Creation of the Office of Early Childhood Systems

*Senate Bill 82 would have created the Office of Early Childhood Systems in the Governor's Office. The goal would be to evaluate programs that support young children in order to reduce redundancy, strengthen delivery of services, and find sustainable funding opportunities.*

Senate Bill 82 was pre-filed on January 7, 2025 → introduced on February 3 2025  
→ died on April 12, 2025 with the first committee deadline **X**  
Sponsor: Senate Government Affairs Committee on behalf of the  
Joint Interim Education Committee  
Presenter: Senator Angela "Angie" Taylor

## Legislative Path

### Implications for Children & Families

#### If enacted:

Creating a dedicated Office of Early Childhood Systems would centralize state leadership, leverage funding, and create a data-informed approach to early childhood policy, setting the stage for a coherent early childhood system.

#### Implications of the Bill's Failure:

Nevada's current delivery and oversight of programs for young children and families is fragmented, with siloed systems that can lead to redundancy, confusion, and missed opportunities. The proposed legislation would increase coordination, strategic planning, and system alignment across the state.

Without this formal structure, identifying service gaps and pursuing federal assistance is more difficult, slowing progress toward accessible, high-quality care. Families continue to face lengthy and duplicative application procedures across various state programs; SB82 would have created a single point of entry to simplify access for families using state services. The Office would have identified funding gaps and opportunities for fiscal efficiencies, leveraging both state and federal resources to support sustainable, equitable service expansion.

Finally, the Office of Early Childhood Systems would explore options to support workforce development in the early childhood field.

### What is Next:

The Office of Early Childhood Systems remains a **top priority** for CAA and many early childhood advocates in the State. We will continue to educate Nevada's legislators on the importance of a **cohesive early childhood governance structure**. Additionally, we will strengthen our partnership with the Governor's Office policy team for early childhood.



## SB 165 **Bolsters the Child Mental Health Workforce**

*Senate Bill 165 creates licensure of Behavioral Health and Wellness Practitioners (BHWP); seeds the first Nevada-accredited psychology internships; and creates scholarship, degree and micro-credential programs for prevention-focused children's mental health at Great Basin College (GBC), University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), & University of Nevada, Reno (UNR).*

Senate Bill 165 was pre-filed and introduced on February 3, 2025 → passed the legislature on May 31, 2025 → signed by Governor Joe Lombardo on June 6, 2025! 🎉

Sponsor: Senator Rochelle Nguyen

Co-sponsors: Senator Carrie Ann Buck & Senator John Steinbeck

### **Legislative Path**

#### **Implications for Children & Families**

In Nevada, we have bachelor-level programs that do not fully prepare graduates to engage in real-world behavioral health care focused on prevention and early intervention. Historically, we encourage students to pursue graduate degrees focused on intervention at higher levels of distress, leaving our children to suffer until they meet a critical threshold. SB165 allocates funding to GBC, UNLV, and UNR to create new programs that offer a hybrid education model of coursework and clinical experience. The new programs will be housed within the School of Psychology and will offer supervised real-world training, before graduation, that allows students to meaningfully prepare for a career in child behavioral health.

A Behavioral Health and Wellness Practitioner (BHWP) is a child-focused mental health professional who fills a gap in Nevada's delivery of mental health care by centering on early intervention, preventive care, and screenings. A graduate can become licensed as a BHWP once they complete the bachelor degree or micro-credential that is being created through the passage of SB165. Students pursuing a degree to become a BHWP will be eligible for scholarships funded through SB165.

SB165 establishes the first Nevada internship program accredited by the American Psychology Association for UNLV students interested in child psychology. Nevada will be able to create and retain child psychologists rather than lose them to other states.

#### **What is Next:**

The next step for SB165 is work with the community and higher education to build and promote BHWP programs. Nevada's children and families are navigating a child mental health care desert, with alarming numbers of children in emergency rooms for care or sent to out-of-state treatment facilities. SB165 will have a positive impact, yet there is more to do through legislation, regulation, and community building. To join us on our mission to support youth mental health in Nevada, sign up for our Children's Mental Health Action Coalition virtual monthly convenings

## SB 284 Protecting Foster Youth Social Security Benefits

*Senate Bill 284 protects social security benefits in dedicated savings accounts for foster youth who are eligible, and ensures that foster youth are notified if the state is checking their eligibility and if they are designated as eligible for benefits.*

Senate Bill 284 was introduced on March 5, 2025 → passed the legislature on May 22, 2025 → signed by Governor Joe Lombardo on May 31, 2025! 🎉

Sponsors: Senators Nichole Cannizzaro, Melanie Scheible, Rochelle Nguyen

Co-sponsors: Senators Michele Cruz-Crawford, Skip Daly, Fabian Doñate, Marilyn Dondero Loop, Edgar Flores, James Ohrenschall, Angie Taylor

### Legislative Path

#### Implications for Children & Families

SB284 ensures that Social Security payments intended for youth experiencing the foster system are placed in dedicated trust accounts for their direct use and future stability. The bill requires states to report how these benefits are managed and prohibits using them to offset foster care expenses. Additionally, SB284 ensures that the state communicates with the individual foster youth if their eligibility is being reviewed, and requires that they receive notification of their eligibility. Eligibility for social security benefits means that the youth has a disability and/or a parent who has died.

Foster youth will receive financial literacy support as part of accessing their accumulated benefits upon transition out of the foster care system. The funds can be used to provide a financial safety net for housing, education, and other essential needs. This transparency in process establishes stronger advocacy measures to ensure foster youth are aware of their benefits and have legal avenues to claim them.

#### What is Next:

The next step for SB284 is implementation. Savings accounts have already been opened, and the State Treasurer's Office has offered their support with any technical challenges that may arise with funding the accounts. CAA is continuing to grow the Nevada Child Welfare Coalition that brings together community partners statewide who are invested in strengthening the foster care system and creating brighter futures for our youth in Nevada.

## SB 460 Universal Pre-Kindergarten

*Senate Bill 460 is a comprehensive K-12 education bill that moves Nevada toward universal pre-k. The bill includes an appropriation of \$9,000,000 over the biennium to provide early childhood education for free or at low cost in underserved communities.*

## Legislative Path

Senate Bill 460 was introduced on April 29, 2025 → amended to become a cohesive bill combining the priorities of both Senate Majority Leader Nicole Cannizzaro, and Governor Joe Lombardo → passed the legislature on June 2, 2025 → signed by Governor Joe Lombardo on June 10, 2025! 🎉

Sponsors: Senators Nicole Cannizzaro, Marilyn Dondero Loop, Julie Pazina

Co-sponsors: Senators Michele Cruz-Crawford, Skip Daly, Fabian Doñate, Edgar Flores, Roberta Lange, Dina Neal, Rochelle Nguyen, James Ohrenschall, Melanie Sheible, Angie Taylor

### Implications for Children & Families

SB460 expands the types of entities that can receive grants for kindergarten (pre-k) to include institutions within the Nevada System of Higher Education. Universal pre-k is not fully established through the provisions in this bill. The pre-k related sections in SB460 focus on supporting children who are most in need of services.

Based on SB-460, a pre-kindergarten program must serve children who are 4 years of age and:

- Whose family has a household income less than or equal to 250 percent of the federal poverty level,
- Who have individualized educational plans (IEPs),
- Who are members of a vulnerable and historically underserved population, or
- Whose primary language is not English.

SB460 appropriates \$12,000,000 to the Early Childhood Literacy and Readiness Account for grants supporting early childhood literacy and readiness.

SB460 let students attend public schools outside their zone; appropriates \$7,000,000 to provide transportation for students with financial need.

### What is Next:

Quality early childhood education is not available to many of Nevada's children. 2025 Kids Count data shows a significant increase in the number of three- and four-year-olds not enrolled in school from 64% in 2018 to

67% in 2023. Nevada ranks 46th in the nation for child education, starting with early educational programs. The benefits of pre-k include greater success at school, less need for special education, less grade retention, and higher graduation rates; higher levels of verbal, mathematical, and intellectual achievement; lower unemployment and higher earnings; less social support dependency; lower rates of crime and many more. CAA will continue to advocate for access to universal pre-k. The mixed delivery model incorporating public schools, private centers, and community-based organizations can be leveraged to expand the number of available seats in Nevada.



## AB 185 Expanding Licensed Home-Based Child Care in Common-Interest Communities

*Assembly Bill 185 would have expanded access to licensed home based child care in common interest communities with homeowners associations (HOAs). Through AB185, HOAs would be prohibited from denying a child care provider the right to become licensed for home-based child care, as long as they met necessary requirements for licensure.*

Assembly Bill 185 was introduced on February 3, 2025 →  
passed through the legislature on May 27, 2025 → vetoed by Governor Joe Lombardo on June 5, 2025  
Sponsored by Assemblymember Natha Anderson

### Legislative Path

#### **Implications for Children & Families**

Nevada remains a child care desert, meaning there are more children who need childcare than there are seats and providers to care for them. The child care crisis is highly attributed to both affordability and access. In many cases, the costs of child care surpass the cost of college tuition, creating a significant financial burden for families. Currently, homeowner associations (HOAs) in Nevada can prohibit home-based child care providers from becoming licensed to operate in their homes, perpetuating the shortage of crucial community resources. AB185 would have allowed home-based childcare providers to become licensed regardless of whether they live in an HOA. Allowing for licensure means the number of child care spaces for Nevada families would have expanded greatly, and the cost of care would decline,

as home-based childcare is more affordable than facility care. Finally, in Southern Nevada in particular, 100% of new housing developments are required to have an HOA to be in compliance. This means that the pool of housing not governed by an HOA is diminishing and families have no choice but to live in an HOA, regardless of whether they actively sought out that structure.

#### **What is Next:**

Nevada's child care crisis remains a prominent issue impacting thousands of families. We were disheartened by Governor Lombardo's veto of AB185 as it means families will continue to struggle. CAA remains steadfast in our advocacy for equitable licensure opportunities for home-based child care providers in the interim, including broadening conversations with state leaders and stakeholders to alert them of their power to alleviate the crisis.

# AB 339

## Office of Children's Mental and Behavioral Health

*Assembly Bill 339 would have created the Office of Children's Mental and Behavioral Health within the Department of Health and Human Services. AB339 died in the Senate Finance Committee, however, the language in AB339 was rolled into the Governor's Health Bill, SB495, with a slight name change to the Office of Mental Health with a focus on children's behavioral health. The office would have served as a statewide hub to coordinate, oversee, and enhance the mental health system for children.*

Assembly Bill 339 was introduced on March 3, 2025 → was successfully amended into Governor Joe Lombardo's healthcare bill, SB495 → both bills died on June 3, 2025 with the closing of Sine Die ✗  
Sponsored by the Assembly Health and Human Services Committee on behalf of the Joint Interim Health and Human Services Committee  
Presented by Assemblymember Heather Goulding

## Legislative Path

### Implications for Children & Families

AB339 was developed in response to critical gaps in Nevada's children's mental health system and aligns directly with the priorities identified by the Children's Mental Health Action Coalition.

Recognizing the lack of statewide coordination, inconsistent service delivery, and barriers to access, Nevada needs a centralized, strategic approach to improve mental and behavioral health services for Nevada's children. The Office of Children's Mental and Behavioral Health would have worked in collaboration with existing consortia, boards and other agencies to ensure consistency and inclusion of their previous efforts. The Office would have been responsible for developing and guiding a comprehensive statewide plan for children's mental and behavioral health services, including policy development, service coordination, and quality assurance.

According to the 2025 Annie E. Casey Foundation KidsCount Databook, Nevada currently ranks 45th in the nation for childhood health. Since 2019, the child and teen death rate has increased by 16% with the leading cause of death comprising of accidents, homicides, and suicides[1]. Nevada ranks 46th in the nation for education which may be attributed to poor access to mental health treatment and care providers in the state. When the mental and behavioral health of children is prioritized, academic performance and overall well-being improve with a decrease in deaths that stem from mental health issues.

### What is Next:

The Department of Justice (DOJ) found that Nevada violated the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by overusing institutionalization of children with behavioral and mental health disorders. Provisions in AB339 would have established a Center of Excellence for children's mental health within UNLV, aligning with settlement recommendations from the DOJ. The need for state-level leadership remains. As such, CAA remains committed to finding solutions that support coordination and oversight of Nevada's youth mental health services.

## AB 340 Mandating Insurance Reimbursement for the Screening, Assessment, and Diagnosis of Developmental Delays of Childhood

*Assembly Bill 340 would have required all insurance in Nevada to reimburse providers for the screening, assessment and diagnosis of certain developmental delays of childhood, including Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorders (ADHD), specific learning disorders and intellectual disabilities.*

Assembly Bill 340 was introduced on March 3, 2025 → died on June 3, 2025 with the closing of Sine Die.  
Sponsored by the Assembly Health and Human Services Committee on behalf of the Interim Health and Human Services Committee  
Presented by Assemblymember David Orentlicher

### Legislative Path

#### Implications for Children & Families

This policy initiative was conceptualized through the Children's Mental Health Action Coalition, a mental health coalition led by CAA, in an effort to align best practices for insurance coverage of developmental delays of childhood with best practices for autism spectrum disorders (ASD) as outlined in NRS Chapter 287.0276. Nevada ranks 51st in the nation for access to youth mental health care, meaning many children go without necessary screenings and diagnoses. Families often face denied insurance coverage or out-of-pocket costs for assessments, making it harder to get a timely diagnosis and appropriate care. Screening assessment and diagnosis allows children to qualify for early intervention services that lead to better educational, social, and emotional outcomes. Alternatively, delayed diagnosis can result in academic struggles, behavioral issues, and increased long-term costs.

#### What is Next:

The progress of AB340 stalled in the Assembly Ways and Means Committee due to a \$60,000 fiscal note placed on it by the Public Employees Benefit Program to ensure that all Nevadans would have access to these services. This fiscal note is considered small in the grand scheme of our Nevada State budgeting, but was a hurdle for the bill due to a deficit in our state budget. The focus of this session, budgetarily, was on maintaining existing programs. We will continue advocating for these services to be included in insurance coverage, and educating state leaders on the cost saving potential of preventive mental health care.

# Children's Week at the Nevada Legislature 2025

Child advocates took the Capital by storm during the 2025 Children's Week at the Legislature week-long event. This session, Children's Week took place March 10-13 with each day representing a different theme for child and family policy.

- 💙 Monday was Education Day,
- 💛 Tuesday was Child Welfare and Safety Day,
- 💚 Wednesday was Mental Health Day and
- Thursday was Physical Health Day

The success of this year's Children's Week was rooted in partnership between the Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy (NICRP) and Children's Advocacy Alliance (CAA), and in collaboration with the numerous community partners who sponsored, tabled and attended Children's Week each day.

Children's Week brought together dozens of Nevada-strong organizations, families, and advocates to make children's voices heard in the halls of power. We had over 40 partners sponsoring and/or tabling throughout the week, and over 60 partners who attended the event. Each day, we celebrated groups of children and families in the building with various activities including engaging with legislators through personal interactions, sitting in on floor sessions, and attending storytime with legislators.

A Daily Run of Show/Schedule included:

- 9:00 am - Press Conference
- 10:30 am - Building Tour
- 11:00 am - Senate Floor Session
- 11:30 am - Assembly Floor Session
- 12:00 pm - Lunch & Community Partner Highlights
- 1:00 pm - Story time with Legislators
- 2:30 pm - Wellness activity
- 3pm - Art activity
- 4pm - Closing and clean up



We worked to ensure representation across the State was present, bringing a bus full of families up from Clark County on Monday, hosting two buses of students from northern Nevada on Wednesday, as well as inviting local schools to attend all week.

Each day, five community partners presented about their work over the lunch break, providing meaningful connections and engagement with the community. We began and ended Children's Week with our beloved Teddy Bear Parade and a great and productive time was reported by all.



# Children's Week at the Nevada Legislature 2025

A special thank you to the legislators who participated in Children's Week:

## Senators:

- Nicole Cannizzaro,
- Lori Rogich, and
- John Steinbeck

## Assemblymembers:

- Natha Anderson,
- Tracy Brown May,
- Jill Dickman,
- Danielle Gallant,
- Ken Gray,
- Jovan Jackson,
- Selena La Rue Hatch,
- Erica Mosca,
- Hanadi Nadeem,
- Duy Nguyen, and
- PK O'Neill



# Uplifting Nevada's Voice

## Children's Advocacy Ambassador Program

### The Children's Advocacy Ambassador Program

brings together individuals from across Nevada that believe in the value of high quality early childhood supports for ALL children and advocates interested in addressing pertinent issues facing our Nevada children. It is a convening of those who want to help make a difference in Nevada. Advocates in the program will build skills and tools to speak up for children and help make a change in Nevada. Ambassadors will learn how to share their story, how a bill is created, how to testify in front of the legislature, how to use social media for social good, and many more skills for creating real change.

As an ambassador, participants are asked to commit to attend monthly advocacy meetings and trainings for a one-year commitment. Participants are expected to dedicate anywhere from 5 to 10 hours per month of engagement including, but not limited to:

- Advocacy meetings (via teleconference/web conference)
- Advocacy workshops and training opportunities
- Testifying on behalf of Early Childhood Education and other issues impacting children at the State or local levels
- Writing letters to representatives
- Sharing their stories via social media
- Attending relevant community events
- Speaking and collaborating with diverse groups

Through storytelling and direct action, our ambassadors brought the lived experience of families into policy conversations.

### 2025 Ambassadors In Action



Deetra Stewart co-presented Assembly Bill 185, alongside Assemblymember Natha Anderson and Denise Tanata. She shared her story of operating home-based child care in an HOA for years before she learned that she was not allowed to and was forced to close her doors. Her story influenced legislators, reminding them that policy has an impact on real people. Watch Deetra's story [here](#).

And her full presentation and testimony is [here](#).



## Uplifting Nevada's Voice

### Children's Advocacy Ambassador Program



Arzelia Sanford is a Child Advocacy Ambassador who shared her story through a letter. With this letter, CAA and Children's Cabinet were able to share with legislators in the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. Sharing her story gave visibility to the folks that AB185 would impact, and was a key voice in getting the bill passed through the committee.



Octavia McLaurin is a former Child Advocacy Ambassador who provided testimony for AB185, watch her testimony [here](#)



## Uplifting Nevada's Voice

# Nevadans United For Early Childhood Equity (NU-ECE)

Nevadans United for Early Childhood Equity (NU-ECE) was born at the end of the 2023 legislative session to create a safe space for leaders to share authentic conversations and solution-focused strategies to improve the lives of young children and families living in underserved communities. In coalition, NU-ECE is committed to amplifying diverse voices in policy discussions that shape the future of children and families in Nevada. Through strategic collaboration with organizations serving the state's most vulnerable communities, NU-ECE works to drive equitable, evidence-based policy solutions that foster a strong foundation for children's success.

During the 2025 legislative session, members dedicated their time to building an inclusive, multidisciplinary network of stakeholders, including nonprofits, community organizations, and passionate advocates, to advance policies, programs, and services that yield the most impactful outcomes for children. By leveraging lived experiences and elevating historically underrepresented voices, members worked to ensure policy decisions reflected the real needs of Nevada's families. Through knowledge-sharing, resource alignment, and collective action, NU-ECE identified systemic challenges, highlighted opportunities, and implemented targeted universal strategies, beneficial for all children with families farthest from opportunity, kept top of mind.

On May 12, 2025, members of Nevadans United for Early Childhood Equity (NU-ECE) played a pivotal role in leading the nationally recognized initiative, "Day Without Child Care" (DWCC). This coordinated day of action, organized by

child care providers, families, and advocates, underscored the urgent challenges facing early childhood education while advancing the call for systemic reform. The initiative aimed to highlight the ongoing child care crisis, including chronic underfunding, workforce instability, and the need for fair, livable wages for providers. Through collective advocacy, DWCC amplified awareness and mobilized stakeholders to push for sustainable investments in child care infrastructure, ensuring equitable access and support for families nationwide.

To raise awareness, the Children's Advocacy Alliance hosted a webinar to bring together early childhood experts, providers, and advocates to share solutions to stabilize and strengthen Nevada's fragile child care system. Following the webinar, a community event hosted by Family Child Care Providers and supported by Child Care Change Makers gained statewide media coverage with a focus on one of our most prominent early childhood bills, Assembly Bill 185. Assembly Bill (AB) 185 seeks to protect family child care by limiting common interest communities from prohibiting family child care providers from opening a business in their homes.

At a time when Nevada faces losing thousands of childcare seats, threatening working families, the economy, and the future of our youngest learners, AB 185 is crucial to ensure Nevada is moving towards meeting the growing demands across the state.

We are both thrilled that AB 185 has made its way successfully through the 2025 legislative session, and devastated that Governor Lombardo vetoed this momentous legislation.

## Media Coverage 2025 NV Legislative Session

**February 4 – Nevada Current:** 'Assurances' abound, but few details about displacement of mental health providers for homeless hub

**February, 10 – KNPR: Report:** Nevada's reading, math levels are a 'cause for concern.' Will policy change that?

**February 12 – Nevada Current:** Lawmaker hopes to extend paid family leave law to Nevada's private sector

**March 6 – Las Vegas Sun:** Nevada bill aims to respect rights of parents while expanding access to sex education

**March 11 – News Froms The States:** HOAs are creating barriers for home-based childcare providers, lawmakers told

**April 2 – Reno Gazette Journal Op Ed:** Is Nevada a place to plant roots and grow a family?

**April 23 – LV Review Journal Op Ed:** Why a bright future for Nevada begins in pre-K

**April 29 – Fox 5:** Childcare for thousands of Nevadans could end with federal cuts

**May 12 – Fox 5:** Clown leads 'Day Without Child Care' march in Las Vegas park

**May 13 – News 3 LV:** Nevada advocates call for end to childcare 'desert' at local rally

**May 19 – Reno Gazette Journal Op Ed:** How a fair tax credit strengthens families and futures

**May 28 – Nevada Independent:** How big an impact would film tax bill make on Nevada pre-K?

**June 9 – LV Review Journal:** Nevada in bottom four for children's well-being, report says

# Weekly Legislative Calls and Coalition Engagement



Each week, advocates for children across Nevada virtually convened to discuss upcoming legislation, events to look out for, and opportunities to give testimony on bills that would impact children and families. CAA's weekly updates empowered dozens of organizations to take timely, informed action throughout the session. We tracked the progress of bills as they moved through the session, including whether they passed their work sessions, and met the necessary deadlines to keep moving. During the calls, we were able to provide technical support for navigating the Nevada Legislative website, NELIS, where to find certain exhibits, and how to read a bill/amendment. Many of our calls included informational updates about prospective bills and provided opportunities for attendees to discuss legislation, ask questions, and share about their upcoming events. There were a few key moments when the group was called to action to provide testimony on children-centered priority bills. Among those who were able to participate and share with their networks, advocates effectively sent 318 emailed campaign letters to their representatives to educate them on the importance of bills AB185, SB165, AB339 and AB340 for improving child and family well-being in Nevada.

"The weekly legislative updates provided by Children's Advocacy Alliance during the 83rd legislative session, created valuable opportunities for the community to stay informed about legislation impacting Nevada's current behavioral health workforce. The meetings helped stakeholders stay abreast of potential legislative changes critical to the future of behavioral healthcare. The updates created space for stakeholders to contribute to our legislative process by identifying hearings where their voices could be heard concerning key legislation. These efforts in turn contributed to the strengthening and development of locally driven support for Nevada's youth."

**Dr. Ashley Noel Pruitt, Associate Director of Technical Assistance and Policy, BeHERE Nevada**

"Kudos to Carissa Pearce and the Children's Advocacy Alliance team for hosting the weekly Legislative Update calls. Although I couldn't attend this year's session in Carson City, the calls kept me informed and engaged. They also helped mobilize support for key bills, amplifying the nonprofit sector's voice."

**Jane Jensen Saint, Executive Director, American Access Institute**

"I'm so grateful to the Children's Advocacy Alliance (CAA) for allowing me to join in the weekly legislative briefing sessions for the current legislative session. As the Nevada Coordinator for the Western Regional Alliance for Pediatric Emergency Management (WRAP-EM), I am always in search of meaningful partnerships that support improving the lives of children in Nevada, especially in health care, public health, and mental health. Working with the CAA has allowed me to stay abreast of important legislative issues related to children's health. It has been gratifying to be able to provide WRAP-EM resources and data to the group for their use as they reviewed legislation and prepared testimony in support of legislation critical to strengthening health and safety for Nevada's kids."

**Irene L. Navis, AICP, Nevada Coordinator, Western Regional Alliance for Pediatric Emergency Management (WRAP-EM)**

# Weekly Legislative Calls and Coalition Engagement



"As a partner who is building ties and connections with partners in Nevada, I found the Children's Advocacy Alliance weekly legislative calls to be indispensable! I highly valued the updates on committee proceedings, recap of bill developments, and minutiae on happenings at the capitol. Carissa fostered a feeling of community among partners on the call, and anyone with questions or insights were welcomed to contribute. There are so many sectors and interests seeking to influence legislators, and so having the collective voice and organization provided through the Children's Advocacy Alliance augmented our efforts. Thanks to all who contribute!"

**Matthew Richardson, Acting Senior Manager for State Affairs, Changent (Formerly Nurse-Family Partnership and Child First)**

Online electronic bill tracking during the legislative session is a helpful tool. So is attending or viewing bill hearings. But the only way to really know what's going on is to be there, regularly, in the building to get the inside scoop. Who has time for that!? Carissa and CAA filled that role for those who care about children's issues and were so generous in sharing their intel and insights. Thanks so much for your weekly legislative briefings!"

**Todd Butterworth, Senior Research Analyst, Guinn Center for Policy Priorities**



## Missed Opportunities

*Assembly Bill 205 was introduced on February 3, 2025, sponsored by Assemblymember Heather Goulding, passed through the legislature on May 21, 2025, and was vetoed by Governor Joe Lombardo on June 3, 2025. AB205 would have shifted Nevada's delivery of sexual education in schools to a passive model in which parents had the choice to opt out of their child receiving the planned sexual education curriculum.*

### Why It Matters

AB205 would have changed the current opt-in system to ensure students have access to the critical information they need to make healthy, informed decisions, while still maintaining parental autonomy over choosing whether their child receives sexual education. This legislation is particularly necessary for Nevada students who do not have an active parent or guardian involved in their education. Without access to medically accurate information, youth and teens are more likely to rely on myths, misinformation, or social media instead of evidence-based education. Comprehensive sexual education goes beyond preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, it teaches critical life skills like consent, communication, and healthy relationships, which are essential for teen mental health and long-term well-being. By empowering youth with the knowledge to build respectful, healthy relationships, we not only support their mental and emotional well-being, but we also take an important step toward reducing domestic violence and fostering safer communities for future generations.

### What is Next:

One important takeaway for AB205 is that it passed through the legislature meaning our legislators recognize the big impact that this small change will make for Nevada's youth. It is likely that this initiative will come again in the next legislative session as we continue the work to support Nevada youth in making safe, informed choices about their health and future.



## Missed Opportunities

*Assembly Bill 217 was introduced on February 3, 2025, sponsored by Assemblymember Cecelia González, passed through the legislature and was vetoed by Governor Joe Lombardo on June 5, 2025. AB217, referred to as the "Student Safety Act," would have prohibited a school district, public school, or any employee of such an entity from allowing a United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officer onto public school campuses unless there is a lawful court order or warrant. Additionally, this bill would have prohibited public schools from releasing educational records for the pupil or the family or household of a pupil to an ICE officer or other federal, state or local law enforcement officers without a lawful court order or warrant.*

### Why It Matters

Schools have always been considered safe spaces, and AB217 would have continued to respect them as such. Right now, many students, especially those from families with mixed immigration status, are in distress. This fear is directly impacting their mental health, their school attendance, and ultimately, their ability to learn because they no longer feel psychologically safe in their school. Chronic absenteeism is a growing crisis. According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation's 2024 KIDS COUNT Data Book, over 40% of Nevada's students missed more than 10% of the academic year. That is more than 47,000 kids. Students cannot learn if they are not in school. If immigration authorities are allowed to enter schools, these numbers will only rise as fear keeps more students at home. Parent engagement in their child's education will likely decline as parents no longer feel safe on school property, meaning their children are suffering the fear of engaging in their education or keeping their family safe.

#### What is Next:

Advocates should engage in educational "know your rights" campaigns to support families with mixed immigration statuses.

# Missed Opportunities

*Assembly Bill 268 was introduced on February 20, 2025, sponsored by Assemblymember Sandra Jauregui and Assemblymember Shea Backus, and died on June 3, 2025 with the closing of Sine Die. AB268 would have provided funding to Nevada schools for universal free breakfast and lunch for Nevada students.*

## Why It Matters

In Nevada, an estimated 130,000 children do not have a reliable source of food. Over the interim in 2024, CAA partnered with the UNLV William S. Boyd School of Law Poverty Law & Policy Clinic to research and report how various states approach universal school meals and nutrition. This research shows that universal school meals reduce childhood hunger, eliminate stigma associated with poverty, and support academic success. Hungry children cannot learn. When children have guaranteed access to meals throughout the day, they are able to spend their time in school focusing on learning and social emotional health. Access to meals in school is particularly impactful for students who do not have regular access to meals outside of school.

## What is Next:

This bill did not make it through Nevada's 83rd legislative session due to its appropriation amount of \$86,000,000 over the biennium. Assemblymember Jauregui submitted a proposed amendment that would have reduced the appropriation amount to \$33,097,720 over the biennium once it was learned that a majority of Clark County currently offers universal school meals as part of a federal funding program. Advocates will continue to convene throughout the interim period to strategize messaging and funding opportunities for ensuring children have access to food throughout their school day.

## Missed Opportunities

*Senate Bill 171 was introduced on February 3, 2025, sponsored by Senator James Ohrenschall and Senator Melanie Scheible, passed through the legislature on May 27, 2025, and was vetoed by Governor Joe Lombardo on June 2, 2025. SB171 would have enacted a shield law in Nevada to protect law-abiding medical providers from illegal overreach from outside states for providing gender-affirming care in Nevada.*

### Why It Matters

Nevada state law allows qualified medical providers to provide gender-affirming care to youth as long as the care is medically necessary and guardian consent has been received. There are states in the country that do not allow qualified medical providers to perform gender-affirming care, and some of those states, including Texas, have pursued legal action against out-of-state providers for offering gender-affirming care to youth. SB171 was a necessary piece of legislation that would have protected Nevada pediatricians to provide care that is deemed appropriate for the patient. Nevada providers should not be punished for providing care that is within their scope of practice by jurisdictions in states other than Nevada.

### What is Next:

We will likely see this type of legislation again in the 2027 legislative session. In the interim, advocates can continue to support pediatricians and educate their communities on the importance of provider protections.

# Missed Opportunities

*Senate Bill 174 was introduced on February 3, 2025, sponsored by Senators James Ohrenschall, Lisa Krasner, and Lori Rogich, co-sponsored by Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop, and died on June 3, 2025 with the closing of Sine Die. SB174 would have allowed Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapists to provide care directly within school settings for students with autism spectrum disorder.*

## Why It Matters

Parents have voiced their challenges with receiving ABA therapy for their children who are in school. Without access to ABA therapists in schools, parents are required to take their child out of school to receive care, which often means taking time off from their job, losing out of income, and their child losing hours from their education each week. Even worse, students in Nevada are not being excused for leaving school for ABA therapy, which means they may be facing unjust consequences for receiving necessary treatments. For children with autism, receiving ABA therapy in school can significantly improve their social skills, communication, and behavior, leading to better academic performance and overall development. Families will also benefit as they no longer need to juggle between school, work, and therapy appointments, reducing stress and logistical challenges.

### What is Next:

Children in Nevada are still in need of ABA therapy in schools, so we will continue to advocate for families to have better access to necessary care. In the interim,

## Missed Opportunities

*Senate Bill 306 was introduced on March 10, 2025, sponsored by Senator Michelee Cruz-Crawford and Assemblymember Erica Mosca, and died on June 3, 2025 with the closing of Sine Die. SB306 would have addressed critical gaps in Nevada's mental health system around inpatient psychiatric care for youth with emotional disturbances. This bill would have protected youth in need of psychiatric cases by ensuring they could not be turned away from receiving care*

### Why It Matters

SB306 was commonly referred to as the "no eject, no reject" bill as it would have supported the Southern Nevada Child Haven facility by providing additional placement for youth needing mental health support in additional facilities. This bill would have set clear guardrails for existing challenges related to the placement of youth into mental health facilities, and would have ensured that support continues once the child is discharged. A discharge plan is not guaranteed under current law, despite being a necessary stepping stone for setting youth on a path to succeed when they are back with their family and in the community.

### What is Next:

Collaboration with state child welfare programs and continued advocacy during the interim will be essential to improve how Nevada responds to youth in mental and behavioral crisis.

# Looking Ahead

With lessons learned and momentum in key areas, CAA remains committed to building a Nevada where every child can thrive.

- Preview of CAA's next steps and priorities
  - Nevada Child and Family Databook release
- Advocacy opportunities during the interim
  - Child Ambassador Program
  - Internship
- Community engagement goals
  - Coalitions
    - Child Welfare Network Coalition
    - Strong Start Prenatal to Three
    - Children's Mental Health Action Coalition

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# WHO WE ARE



Children's Advocacy Alliance is the convener for organizations, educators, parents and everyone dedicated to the safety, health, education and economic well-being of our state's children and families. We hire policy experts in these fields to ensure the best results for Nevada's most vulnerable population and our future.

**Elisa Cafferta**  
Executive Director



Elisa Cafferata is a fourth-generation Nevadan, an unrepentant #nightowl, champion of change and an experienced advocate. She has decades of policy and program experience advocating for women and children including policy wins for public health, women's equity, workforce development and earned paid sick leave.

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**Dr. Tara C. Raines**  
Deputy Director/Director of Kids Count Initiatives



Dr. Tara C. Raines is a licensed psychologist with a history of research promoting equity and access in the areas of education and mental health. She has spent the last decade implementing and supporting a number of grants to improve outcomes for youth at highest risk for mental health disorders. She believes in the value of using data to identify and implement supports for Nevada's most vulnerable youth.

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**Annette Dawson Owens**  
Community Engagement Manager



Annette serves as the Community Engagement Director for CAA and works to improve outcomes for Nevada children and families. Her education background gives her experience in advocating for access to an excellent education for all students as well as supporting those affected by child welfare issues such as foster and kinship care, or impacted by the juvenile justice system. Annette also trains child advocates to navigate systems and engage with electeds, to secure better outcomes for our children.

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**Dr. Jamelle Nance**  
Director of Strong Start Initiatives



Jamelle brings vast experiences in the field of Human Services, Education, and Organizational Leadership. Jamelle earned a bachelor's degree in Behavioral Science with a concentration in Child Advocacy Studies and a master's degree in Administration of Human Services. She wholeheartedly believes that a strong start provides children and families with a solid foundation to build a strong and promising future.

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**Ben Douglas**  
Director of Finance



With over a decade of experience with non-profits as a board member, Ben comes with a great deal of experience from for-profit business serving as the executive in charge of finance, operations and administration. Douglas has spent the last 15 years facilitating accounting and management classes at the university. Douglas graduated with his MBA in 2003 and then obtained his Masters of Science in Accountancy in 2010.

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**Carissa Pearce, MPH**  
Government Affairs Manager



Carissa Pearce, MPH is a dedicated advocate for children and family well-being with expertise in health policy and legislative advocacy. She recently graduated from UNR with a master's in Public Health, Epidemiology, and is passionate about addressing health disparities and creating equitable systems for Nevadans to thrive. Carissa advocates for impactful policy changes to expand access to quality care and resources for underserved communities in Nevada.

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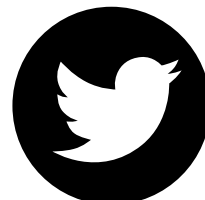
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# Appendices

CAA tracked and advocated on over 63 bills, ensuring children's needs were represented across early childhood, child welfare, health, housing and beyond.



Children's Health Focused Bills				
Bill Number	Description	Position	Outcome	
AB6	Establishes Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Treatment Assistance Program.	Support		Approved by Governor
AB56	Original language* removed continuing education for healthcare providers to learn about suicide prevention, cultural competence, and substance use disorders. *This language was added back in through an amendment.	Oppose → Neutral		Approved by Governor
AB67	Establishes Nevada Baby Bonds Program for babies born on Medicaid to reduce poverty.	Support		Died in first house
AB81	Ends daylight savings as it has a negative impact on youth cognition, health, and academic performance.	Support		Died by second house committee deadline
AB167	Provides medical and mental treatment to youth placed in corrective room restriction.	Neutral		Approved by Governor
AB196	Establishes Psychometricians in Nevada.	Neutral		Approved by Governor
AB204	Prevents patient wages or property from being seized to pay off medical debt.	Support		Vetoed by the Governor
AB205	Passive consent (opt-out model) for sex education in schools.	Support		Vetoed by the Governor
AB266	Provides vital information relating to lactation and breastfeeding.	Support		Approved by Governor
AB268	Provides universal free school breakfasts and lunches to public schools in Nevada.	Support		Died in Assembly Ways and Means
AB269	Loan forgiveness for mental health providers.	Support		Approved by Governor
AB297	Expands home-visiting services for Nevadans with Medicaid.	Support		Died in Assembly Ways and Means
AB343	Increases transparency in health care costs in hospitals.	Support		Approved by Governor


















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AB360	Ensures timely and accessible syphilis testing to pregnant individuals and their babies.	Support	✓	Approved by Governor
SB78	Consolidates all licensing boards and commissions in Nevada.	Neutral	✗	Died in Senate Finance
SB88	Removes medical debt acquired when individuals are incarcerated.	Support	✓	Approved by Governor
SB138	Provides presumptive Medicaid coverage for newborns requiring NICU care.	Support	✓	Approved by Governor
SB140	Ensures that courts recognize the needs of youth in specialized treatment programs for neurodevelopmental disorders.	Support	✓	Approved by Governor
SB174	Allows Applied Behavior Analysis therapists to provide care in schools for students with autism.	Support	✗	Died in Senate Finance
SB185	Provides Medicaid reimbursement for families caregiving for a disabled/ill child.	Support	✓	Approved by Governor
SB187	Establishes a timeframe for when a Child Welfare Agency must act on certain medical or mental health needs.	Support	✓	Approved by Governor
SB228	Establishes a pediatric stem cell and bone marrow transplant program in Nevada.	Support	✗	Died in Senate Finance
SB244	Provides Medicaid coverage for treatment for obesity.	Support	✗	Died in Senate Finance
SB282	Expands access to healthy food in designated food deserts.	Support	✗	Died in Senate Finance
SB306	Creates guardrails for the placement of youth into mental health facilities.	Support	✗	Died in second house on Sine Die
SB348	Establishes Newborn Screening Program Enhancement and Sustainability Initiative.	Support	✓	Approved by Governor
SB353	Provides Medicaid reimbursement for certain mental health services.	Support	✓	Approved by Governor
SB495	Creates Office of Mental Health.	Support	✗	Died in second house floor on sine die
SB501	Allocates funds toward childcare services.	Support	✓	Approved by Governor

Child Welfare and Equitable Access Focused Bills				
Bill Number	Description	Position	Outcome	
AB65	Strengthens protections for vulnerable youth in guardianship proceedings.	Support		Approved by Governor
AB223	Strengthens habitability laws for rental property to protect tenants from unsafe living situations.	Support		Vetoed by the Governor
AB250	Ensures creditors and reporting agencies recognize coerced debt in victims of domestic violence.	Support		Approved by Governor
AB283	Establishes new procedures for summary evictions to support tenants in housing disputes.	Support		Vetoed by the Governor
AB387	Increases transparency and accountability in guardianship proceedings.	Support		Approved by Governor
AJR1	Revises housing revenue process by closing a loophole for investors and making them pay fair share.	Support		Died in Senate
SB177	Requires formal meetings between involved adults in decision making for supporting foster youth.	Support		Approved by Governor
SB183	Limits caseloads for caseworkers to 30 children per caseworker.	Support		Approved by Governor
SB241	Prohibits youth probation under 18.	Support		Approved by Governor
SB284	Preserves social security benefits for eligible foster youth until they transition from care.	Support		Approved by Governor
SB383	Establishes alternative and meaning options for community service for Juvenile Justice.	Support		Died in Second House
SB457	Governor Lombardo's bill on crime provisions.	Oppose		Died on the floor on Sine Die








### Early Childhood & Education Focused Bills

Bill Number	Description	Position	Outcome	
AB79	Allows elected officials to use unspent campaign funds for childcare.	Support		Vetoed by the Governor
AB185	Removes HOA restriction for the licensure of home-based childcare.	Support		Vetoed by the Governor
AB212	Expands Digital Pre-k through Virtual Early Childhood Family Engagement Program.	Neutral		Approved by Governor
AB217	Prohibits United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officer presence on school grounds unless a warrant is provided, prohibits ICE from accessing student records.	Support		Vetoed by the Governor
AB388	Requires companies of a certain size to implement a Paid Family and Medical Leave program.	Support		Vetoed by the Governor
AB406	Implements guardrails for the use of artificial intelligence (AI) for youth mental health care.	Support		Approved by Governor
AB416	Protects library materials in schools from being inaccessible/hidden.	Support		Vetoed by the Governor
AB533	Expands open enrollment for school choice.	Support		Approved by Governor
AB584	Governor Lombardo's education bill, reworked priority sections into SB460.	Neutral		Died on Sine Die
AJR9	Urges Congress to enact legislation to prohibit ICE officers from entering schools and places of worship for the purposes of enforcing federal immigration laws.	Support		Enrolled and Delivered to Secretary of State
SB104	Sustains funding for school gardens across Nevada.	Support		Became law with no signature
SB135	Continues funding for Communities in Schools (CIS).	Support		Approved by Governor
SB460	Comprehensive education bill. Universal Pre-k, school accountability, open zoning.	Neutral		Approved by Governor





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Voting Rights Related Bills				
Bill Number	Description	Position	Outcome	
AB148	Sends sample ballots and poll locations before mail ballot distribution deadline.	Support		Approved by Governor
AB306	Mandates additional mail ballot drop boxes in certain counties between the end of early voting and election day.	Support		Vetoed by the Governor
AB367	Ensures voting materials are available in multiple languages.	Support		Approved by Governor
AB497	Allows Nonprofit organizations to receive donations from leftover PAC funds.	Support		Approved by Governor
AB534	Allows voting for individuals (mother's and father's) incarcerated in county or city jails to vote via electronic voting systems.	Support		Vetoed by the Governor
SB74	Expands access to voting and candidacy opportunities for parents.	Support		Died in Second House on Sine Die
SB422	Extends DMV hours during election season.	Support		Vetoed by the Governor