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May 19, 2025

Dear Chair Taylor and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

My name is Carissa Pearce and I represent the Children's Advocacy Alliance (CAA). CAA is a nonpartisan, independent voice for Nevada's children advancing systemic change in the areas of early childhood, children's health and child welfare to ensure every child in Nevada thrives.

We are writing in **neutral of SB460** to share information on the current climate of education in the State, with particular emphasis on pre-kindergarten. Despite the known benefits of pre-kindergarten, in the 2022-2023 school year **Nevada enrolled only about 7% of eligible four year olds in a Pre-K program**, according to the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER).

Providing **high quality early learning experiences**, like Pre-K, helps families prepare their children to achieve and succeed throughout their lives. 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.

Although the benefits are clear, **quality early childhood education is not within reach for many of Nevada's children**. 2024 Kids Count data shows a significant increase in the number of three- and four-year-olds not enrolled in school from 64% in 2017 to 67% in 2022. Nevada ranks **46th in the nation** for child education, which starts with early educational programs.

We agree that the pathway to universal pre-k includes a mixed delivery model that incorporates public schools, private centers, and community-based organizations and we can leverage a variety of programs to expand the number of available seats in Nevada. This model offers parents the flexibility to choose the best fit for their child's needs, ensuring more children have access to high-quality early learning opportunities.

Investing in high-quality, publicly funded universal Pre-K is essential in building a prosperous future for Nevada.

Carissa Pearce, MPH
Government Affairs Manager
Carissa.Pearce@caanv.org

Additional Kids Count data can be found here:
<https://www.caanv.org/2024-kids-count-data-book/>