

New York State

ECAC Member Manual



Building Success for Children
Ensuring Success for New York

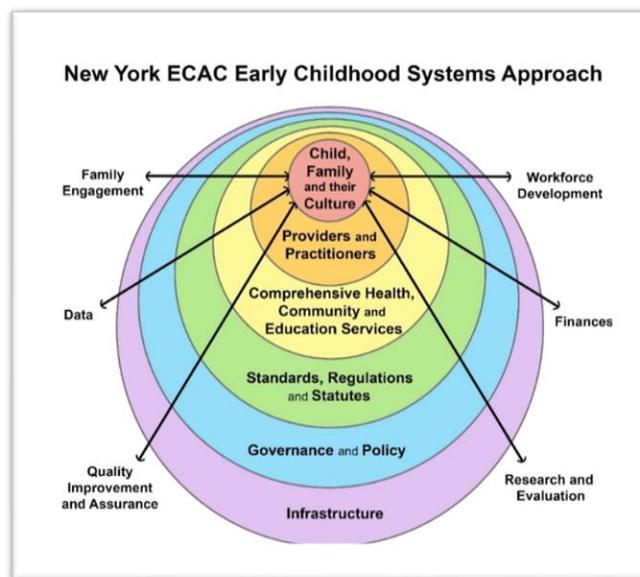
I. Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) Overview

The ECAC is comprised of experts in education, health care, family systems, child welfare and mental health. Members represent state agencies, community-based non-profit organizations, foundations, higher education, unions and other key entities across the state, and are appointed by the Governor. This ensures that a diversity of perspectives and experiences inform our work.

Vision: The Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) believes every child in New York State should be healthy, learning and thriving in a family that is supported by a full complement of services and resources essential for successful development.

Mission: The Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) will provide strategic direction and advice to the Governor and State of New York on early childhood issues. By monitoring and guiding the implementation of a range of strategies, the ECAC supports New York in building a comprehensive and sustainable early childhood system that will ensure success for all young children.

Equity statement: The Early Childhood Advisory Council holds a deep commitment to social justice and racial equity, as a process and a goal, as evidenced by our work across the state. We recognize that, in order to uphold our vision and mission to support young children’s development, we must actively, critically and continuously work to disrupt and dismantle systemic inequities due to race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, legal status and family structure. It is our responsibility to address the inequities impacting the lives of children and families on individual, interpersonal, institutional and structural levels. In doing so we build systems that provide all young children and their families with equitable access to the services, resources and experiences that they deserve in order to thrive.



The ECAC identifies six levers for change as critical for strengthening the early childhood system and providing an infrastructure to support the grounding of this work in social justice, removing barriers to access services, and facilitating equitable child outcomes. The levers are:

1. Family Engagement
2. Data
3. Quality Improvement and Assurance
4. Workforce Development
5. Finances
6. Research and Evaluation

With the young child and family as the focus these levers guide the work of the ECAC across four essential elements:

1. Providers and Practitioners
2. Comprehensive Health, Community, and Education Services
3. Standards, Regulations and Statutes
4. Policy and Governance

These levers and elements are intertwined, and their alignment is necessary to strengthen families' access to the equitable, comprehensive, and culturally relevant services, thereby ensuring healthy development.

II. History

The ECAC was formed in 2009 to provide counsel to the Governor on issues related to young children and their families in accordance with the federal *Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007*. This required every Governor in the United States to create a State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provided three years of funding. These state advisory councils were charged with strengthening statewide coordination and collaboration among the wide range of early childhood programs and services, including child care, Head Start, Early Head Start, IDEA preschool, infant and family programs, and prekindergarten. To meet this federal requirement, New York State created the ECAC.

III. Codification

The ECAC was [codified](#) in 2017 ([New York State Social Services Law section 490-g](#)). This codification defined the membership categories and specific responsibilities of the ECAC, and identified the [Council on Children and Families](#) (CCF) as the host agency ([see appendix](#)).

IV. ECAC Member Roles and Responsibilities

ECAC Members represent agencies and organizations across New York State that focus on early childhood with the goal of creating responsive and coordinated systems for young children and their families. Member expectations include:

- Contributing to the ECAC’s progress based on their expertise, knowledge and experience.
- Attending and actively participating in quarterly ECAC Membership Meetings during which updates from state agencies are provided, information is shared, members exchange ideas, leadership is provided, and focused work on the ECAC Strategic Plan and its activities.
- Acting as ambassadors bringing current information back to their agencies, organizations and communities.
- Identifying responsibilities to implement the Strategic Plan and to assume leadership and supportive roles. Strategic Plan activities occur between Membership Meetings.
- Volunteering for ad hoc responsibilities, as needed.
- Participating in public hearings to provide the public an opportunity to comment on ECAC activities.

V. ECAC Steering Committee Roles and Responsibilities

The ECAC Steering Committee is made up of members who serve in state agency leadership positions and serve as Strategic Plan Goal Coordinators. Steering Committee responsibilities include:

- Guiding the ECAC co-chairs and leading the implementation of the Strategic Plan Goals.
- Attending quarterly Steering Committee meetings (in addition to Membership Meetings) and helping to create Membership Meeting agendas.
- Providing leadership and thought partnership on communications with the Governor’s Office.

VI. Strategic Plan

The ECAC developed a Strategic Plan with ten goals that guide the work of building and strengthening early childhood systems across New York State. Each Goal has related Objectives and Activities, as well as Performance Measures and Progress Indicators that span three years (see the current [Strategic Plan](#)).

ECAC Members and strategic planning partners anchor the planning process in a systems approach which affirms collaborative leadership, mixed-delivery, and an integrated equity lens. ECAC Members implement the Strategic Plan in a variety of ways depending on their role.

Roles include:

- **Goal Coordinator:** Steering Committee Members whose role is to guide the work of the entire goal, by setting priorities for the overarching Goal They work with the goal team to set deadlines for each activity. The Goal Coordinators are responsible for collecting and sharing goal progress and accomplishments with the Steering Committee and the ECAC Membership quarterly.

- **Leader/Convener:** Lead and coordinate activity group meetings, keep the team on track, and guide the activities progress.
- **Active Participants:** Contribute to the work on a regular basis and attend and actively participate in activity meetings.
- **Expert/Resource Person:** Contribute knowledge and expertise, provide thought partnership, strategic direction and support the review of strategic plan work, but expert/resource people may not need to attend all meetings.
- **Staff:** Paid through partnering agencies to support scheduling of meetings, note taking and administrative functions.

VII. ECAC Meetings

ECAC Meetings are held quarterly, typically in Albany’s Empire Plaza on the third Thursday of March, June, September and December from 10:00am-3:30pm. ECAC Members are expected to attend all meetings, actively participate, and share information with their colleagues. The agenda for each meeting is designed to make the most of the time we have together. The agenda is full and requires member participation from start to finish and members are asked to arrange their travel to and from meetings accordingly. The ECAC Meeting [calendar](#) can be found on the [ECAC website](#).

VIII. Proposing a Presentation, Announcement, or topic for an ECAC Membership Meeting

If a member of the ECAC would like to suggest an announcement, topic for discussion, or a presentation about a relevant initiative please reach out to the Coordinator or the Co-chairs. Consideration will be made in the planning process by the Steering Committee. Once an item is added to the Meeting Agenda the Project Coordinator/Co-chairs will coordinate with the speaker.

IX. ECAC Website

The ECAC Website is the primary way to access ECAC resources and materials. The website houses:

- The ECAC Strategic Plan
- History of the ECAC
- ECAC Vision and Mission
- Codification of the ECAC
- ECAC Member Biographies
- ECAC Meeting Calendar
- ECAC Meeting Materials
- Targeted COVID-19 resources for early childhood practitioners, families, programs, and policymakers
- Local, State, and National early childhood highlights

- Resources and Main Publications
- ECAC Work Group Materials & Working Documents
- Parent Advisory Council Materials

X. ECAC Member Appointment Process

The codification of the ECAC specifies the positions in the state that must be on the ECAC. Members are appointed by the Governor’s office, following a comprehensive review process.

Steps in the process include:

- Potential appointees submit resumes upon request to the ECAC co-chairs.
- Resumes are sent to the Governor’s Appointments Office for consideration.
- Potential appointees for ECAC membership receive a packet electronically which includes a comprehensive background check.
- Pending appointees complete all paperwork and submit to any necessary interviews and fingerprinting as soon as possible.
- Pending appointees who are not New York State employees are asked to sign a recusal agreement in accordance with New York State Public Officers Law.

As the appointment process may be lengthy, all Pending Appointees are invited to participate in ECAC meetings and Strategic Plan activities while they are waiting for their official appointment.

XI. New York State Code of Ethics

As a member of the ECAC, the State Code of Ethics applies. Specifically, Section 74 of the Public Officers Law prohibits public officers (including members of Governor-appointed boards, councils, etc.) from engaging in activities that give rise to a conflict or an appearance of a conflict. To ensure compliance with this law, ECAC appointees must agree to conduct themselves so as to prevent potential conflicts of interest. This means that ECAC Members may not use their position on the ECAC to promote any interest, financial or otherwise, direct or indirect, or engage in any business or transaction or professional activity or incur any obligation of any nature, which is in substantial conflict with the proper discharge of your duties in the public interest. Should any such instances arise that may give rise to a conflict or appearance of a conflict, ECAC Members must recuse themselves from any involvement, including but not limited to discussion, deliberation, management, oversight, direction, decision or any other form of action or participation in the matter being discussed.

ECAC Members also must agree to consult with the Ethics Officer for the Council on Children and Families, or such person’s designee, for advice on whether refraining from lobbying on a particular matter is necessary in instances when ethical questions arise or recusal is unclear.

ECAC Members who engage in lobbying or advocacy to influence government decision-making must not use their position on the ECAC in any way that may give rise to a conflict or appearance of conflict.

ECAC Members cannot use their position to coerce, intimidate or influence other state officers or employees for any political purpose, action or contribution, or interfere with any election. ECAC Members are not restricted in making campaign contributions outside of their work on the ECAC.

XII. Transitioning to New Employment Opportunities

ECAC Members are appointed to serve based on their professional role and their work affiliation. When a member changes their employment a discussion with the Co-chairs will be helpful to determine whether the member should remain on the ECAC or resign.

XIII. Expectations of Those who Retire

When members retire from their role and work affiliation, they are no longer eligible to serve on the ECAC. A letter of resignation is submitted to the Co-chairs.

XIV. Parent Advisory Council (PAC)

The ECAC and other policy makers benefit from the perspectives of families on key issues that impact early childhood systems. Families bring lived experience, diverse child rearing perspectives, shared stories and other resources that are often times overlooked in policy development. The Parent Advisory Council (PAC) was created in 2020 by the ECAC. The PAC delivers family voice and perspectives on matters before the ECAC. Specifically, the ECAC calls upon the PAC family voice for policy review, insights, and public speaking engagements, among other things. PAC Members have become essential to the work of the ECAC and the Strategic Plan.

XV. Publication Guidelines

The following guidance is designed to support members in creating documents on behalf of the ECAC, when the ECAC logo is used, when the Co-Chair's names are used, and/or when material is developed for use. Please follow these steps:

- a) The Goal Coordinator, along with their team, generate materials.
- b) The Goal Coordinator then shares these materials with the full Goal team to gather input.
- c) The Goal Coordinator then develops a Cover Letter with the support of their team. The Cover Letter should include the following:
 - Desired audience
 - Targeted timeline
 - How the publication aligns with the Strategic Plan
 - Dissemination plan
 - Outline of any funding that may be required in production
- d) Be sure to include the high-resolution ECAC logo when your document is finalized (available through the ECAC Co-chairs and Project Coordinator).

- e) The materials are then forwarded to the ECAC Project Coordinator for ECAC Co-Chair review. The Co-Chairs will review, approve, or comment with notes/requested edits.
- f) Materials will then be posted on the ECAC website and disseminated.

XVI. Appendices

- [Statute](#)
- [Strategic Plan](#)