



A Companion Guide to the First 5 Nevada Family Leadership Facilitation Rubric

The Children’s Cabinet’s First 5 Nevada Family Leadership Council (FLC) is dedicated to meaningfully engaging Families in Nevada’s Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) and its subcommittees. This companion document is designed to enhance the FLC’s Facilitation Rubric. It provides a detailed explanation of each competency and outlines a path from "Needs Improvement" to "Excellent" to help facilitators develop their skills.

In addition, we've included key insights from the [Ascend Aspen Institute's 8 Principles for Engaging and Centering Parent Voices](#). These principles, developed in partnership with Families, offer essential guidance on how to listen to families as equal partners:

- **Engage Families as experts:** Families have unique insights into the effectiveness of family-supportive programs and policies. Their firsthand knowledge is invaluable for improving outcomes.
- **Ensure all voices are heard:** Recognize and address the structural barriers that disproportionately affect some communities.
- **Partner with Families:** Go beyond simply asking for opinions. Provide Families with leadership opportunities and decision-making power to build genuine partnerships.
- **Foster parent safety, authenticity, and autonomy:** Create a safe space where Families can tell their stories without fear of being censored. Ensure the demographics of participants reflect the communities being served.
- **Prioritize social capital:** Programs that help families move toward economic stability often succeed because they build social capital—stronger connections to peers, family, friends, and community organizations.
- **Compensate Families appropriately:** Treat Families' expertise with the same respect as any other expert. Stipends should cover out-of-pocket costs, such as child care, and reflect the local living wage.
- **Cultivate learning and evaluation:** Organizations need the capacity to effectively reach out to, identify, and support parent leaders. Documenting these efforts helps build an organizational knowledge base.



- **Thank and recognize Families:** Publicly acknowledge and appreciate families' contributions. This not only demonstrates their voices were heard but also provides them with a public track record of leadership that can be used for future professional opportunities.
- **Finally, consider utilizing Language Access for all meetings.** Nevada has one of the highest rates of households where a non-English language is spoken. *With Spanish the most popular and Tagalog in second, about a third of the Nevada population speaks a language other than English at home.* (Source: [The Nevada Independent, June 2025](#))

Before moving through this companion guide, please ensure that you are familiar with the First 5 Nevada Family Leadership Facilitation Rubric found on The Children's Cabinet Family Leadership Partner's page: [Family Leadership Partners - Children's Cabinet](#)

Please note – We've included specific recommendations for including family engagement in meetings requiring Open Meeting Law (ECAC and all Subcommittees are required to follow Open Meeting Law per Nevada Revised Statute [NRS: CHAPTER 432A - SERVICES AND FACILITIES FOR CARE OF CHILDREN](#)). That information begins on page 9.



Facilitation Rubric Companion: Competency Breakdown

There are 9 identified competencies addressed within the Facilitation Rubric:	
Communication	This competency evaluates a facilitator’s ability to use language, tone, and delivery to create a clear and understandable environment.
Listening	Focuses on a facilitator’s ability to share the floor, affirm others’ contributions, and provide adequate wait time for responses.
Creating Safe Spaces	A facilitator's ability to create a welcoming and inclusive environment where everyone feels comfortable sharing
Managing the Group Decision Process	Assesses how a facilitator guides a group through decision-making, ensuring that all voices are heard.
Advance Preparation	How well a facilitator prepares a meeting to ensure all participants can easily access information and participate.
Flexibility and Adaptability	Addresses a facilitator’s ability to respond to unexpected changes calmly and positively
Respectful Interactions	Assesses how a facilitator ensures all interactions are respectful and supportive for everyone involved. Facilitators remain engaging and consistently focused on the purpose of the meeting.
Access, Inclusion, and Opportunity for All	Measures a facilitator’s commitment to integrating all families' experiences and their ability to create an environment for people from all backgrounds. Celebrate the diversity of experience and voice at the table from participating families.
Time Management	Evaluates a facilitator’s ability to be punctual and respect the time of all participants. Families who are taking time away from their children or are utilizing an alternate arrangement for the care of their children, should be confident that a meeting starts and ends as posted.

The following sections describe each of competencies included in the Facilitation Rubric. Each Competency can be observed as Needs Improvement, Fair, Good, & Excellent. Each competency and measurement is described below, with examples of each. Examples are not to be prescriptive, rather, just included to support the readers' understanding.

Communication

This competency evaluates a facilitator's ability to use language, tone, and delivery to create a clear and understandable environment.

- **Needs Improvement:** Uses inappropriate or offensive language, tone, or mannerisms. Inappropriate comments (slurs, insults, etc.) have no place in a meeting. The facilitator cuts off parents while they are speaking, minimizes what the parent is saying, and does not listen. This can prevent other parents or families from participating.
- **Fair:** Inconsistently clear and coherent. Needs to improve vocal tone, volume, speed, and word choice. **Example:** Family Leaders attending a meeting might be inexperienced or uncomfortable in a public meeting. It is helpful for meeting facilitators to ensure that everyone can hear their voice, see their faces (camera on), and ensure that they are speaking slow enough for all, even those who are unfamiliar with early childhood terms, can follow along.
- **Good:** Usually clear and articulate. Asks if content is understood and provides examples when needed. **Example:** Before discussing a complex report, the facilitator provides a summary of its purpose and relevance to the meeting. They also ask speakers to clarify acronyms and consider language barriers by planning for interpretation.
- **Excellent:** Consistently removes all communication barriers. The facilitator ensures their voice is clear, their language is simple, and they provide multiple opportunities for engagement. They proactively monitor all speakers to ensure no jargon or acronyms are used without clarification. **Example:** An excellent facilitator ensures that their own voice is clearly heard, their language is understood, and they provide many opportunities for engagement. A facilitator at this level will monitor all guest speakers, council / subcommittee members, and themselves to ensure there are no acronyms used (or they are defined in the beginning), clarifying questions are asked, or if interpretation is needed, it is available during the meeting.

Listening

This competency focuses on a facilitator's ability to share the floor, affirm others' contributions, and provide adequate wait time for responses.

- **Needs Improvement:** Dominates the conversation, interrupts others, and fails to affirm comments. Does not thank the speaker for their comment. **Example:** The facilitator consistently talks over family leaders, making them feel their contributions are not valued and discouraging future participation from all parents.
- **Fair:** Inconsistently affirms others and tends to be one of the first to speak. Does not provide enough wait time for participants to respond. **Example:** Family leaders may feel they don't have enough time to process information or speak up, especially if they are less confident in a public setting. If board members are dismissive or talk over participants, families may feel that their insights are an afterthought rather than an integral part of decision-making.
- **Good:** Usually affirms family leaders and shares the floor. Provides appropriate wait times for responses. **Example:** The facilitator responds thoughtfully to questions, demonstrating they understand the concerns raised. They also ensure complex topics are explained clearly.
- **Excellent:** Actively listens to and affirms every participant. The facilitator consistently creates space for all voices, honors every perspective, and incorporates family feedback into the decision-making process. They actively seek out and value every comment. **Example:** The facilitator invites families to have input into the decision-making process and listens to their feedback. They ask families what time the meeting schedule is best for them and adjust the meeting schedule. Both spoken and written input (like chat) are treated equally valid and important. The facilitators paraphrase and reflect on what's shared to show understanding. An excellent facilitator works with a second person who monitors the chat and ensures every comment is addressed. The facilitator confirms the participant's intended message by repeating what they believe they heard the individual say

Creating Safe Spaces

This competency is about a facilitator's ability to create a welcoming and inclusive environment where everyone feels comfortable sharing.

- **Needs Improvement:** Consistently overshares or infringes on others' boundaries. Fails to explicitly state that the meeting is a safe space. **Example:** The facilitator does not always clearly state that the meeting is a safe space. Does not remind families that they are welcome to participate. Be mindful that some families and communities may be new and unfamiliar with the process of public comment, so explicitly invite them to provide input when appropriate.

- **Fair:** Discloses personal information but responds well to feedback. May infringe on boundaries once. **Example:** The facilitator focuses mainly on their own interests and, while they consider feedback, there is a clear opportunity to increase family and parent involvement by asking them about specific issues.
- **Good:** Usually contributes to a safe environment. Never infringes on others' boundaries. **Example:** The facilitator reminds all participants that they are welcome and can provide input, and they never violate anyone's boundaries.
- **Excellent:** Consistently contributes to a safe environment and never infringes on boundaries. **Example:** The facilitator starts every meeting with a warm welcome and explicitly states that it is a safe space for open dialogue, and all opinions are welcome and valued; they also ensure this statement is included in the meeting's agenda. Meeting Facilitators also avoid using jargon and technical terms that might confuse or exclude anyone.

Managing the Group Decision Process

This competency assesses how a facilitator guides a group through decision-making, ensuring that all voices are heard. *Scores for this competency are only if decisions are made. (i.e. and Agenda items are labeled "Discussion for Possible Action").*

- **Needs Improvement:** Fails to manage the decision-making process. **Example:** The facilitator ignores an agenda item that requires a decision and moves on, or they make a decision on their own without involving the group.
- **Fair:** Inconsistently engages participants in the decision-making process. **Example:** The facilitator only sometimes checks in with family leaders or asks for their feedback on decisions, rather than making it a consistent practice.
- **Good:** Usually manages the decision-making process and includes family leader input. **Example:** The facilitator requests feedback from family leaders for over 50% of the items requiring a decision, acknowledging that their thoughts are important even if they don't have voting authority.
- **Excellent:** Consistently manages the decision-making process and always values family leader input. **Example:** For all items requiring a vote (exceptions are calls for flexible agenda, previous meeting minute approvals, etc.) the facilitator requests and considers families' opinions and experiences, asking if everyone clearly understands vote on floor prior to moving forward before any votes are cast.



Advance Preparation

This competency measures how well a facilitator prepares a meeting to ensure all participants can easily access information and participate.

- **Needs Improvement:** Zoom links, physical locations*, agendas, or supplemental materials are not provided in advance. **Example:** Families don't receive key meeting details ahead of time, leaving them unprepared to engage and discourage future attendance. Lack of access to key meeting details may create frustration and discourage families from attending future meetings. Ensure the facilitator is in a quiet, distraction-free environment for the entire duration of the meeting.
- **Fair:** The Zoom link and physical location* are not easily accessible before the meeting. Agendas and/or materials are not printed for in-person participants. Materials are not sent at least a few days ahead for those online to view. **Example:** Families may struggle to follow along or participate effectively without having materials distributed or easily accessible.
- **Good:** The Zoom link and physical location* are shared ahead of time when possible. Agendas and materials are posted online and printed for in-person attendees (for General ECAC meetings only). **Example:** Families have the information they need to review materials and plan their participation. Placing links for past meeting minutes, Agenda, and materials in the chat is a great way to ensure families have the information they need to participate.
- **Excellent:** The Zoom link and physical location* are shared well in advance. All materials are family-friendly (no jargon or acronyms), accessible, and available in both English and Spanish. **Example:** The facilitator translates all materials, sends out invitations at least one to two weeks in advance, and provides a clear agenda with any relevant documents to ensure full inclusivity.

*In-person or hybrid meetings are typically only provided during the bi-monthly General Nevada ECAC meetings. All Subcommittee meetings are conducted virtually using ZOOM.

Flexibility and Adaptability

This competency evaluates a facilitator's ability to respond to unexpected changes calmly and positively. *Scored only if applicable.*

- **Needs Improvement:** Reacts poorly and/or rudely to unexpected changes in the schedule, venue, public or member participation, technology etc.

- **Fair:** Expresses discomfort with unexpected changes in the schedule, venue, public or member participation, technology etc. Example: A facilitator may seem uncomfortable if a family leader is late to share their "parent spotlight."
- **Good:** Usually demonstrates ability to adapt to unexpected changes of the schedule, venue, public or member participation, technology, etc. **Example:** The facilitator shows comfort and understanding when a family leader must make a last-minute change, such as moving from an in-person to a virtual meeting.
- **Excellent:** Consistently demonstrates the ability to calmly adapt to unexpected changes during meetings. **Example:** The facilitator understands that families may have unforeseen needs and can easily adjust the agenda, such as moving an item featuring family input to an earlier time if they need to leave early.

Respectful Interactions

This competency assesses how a facilitator ensures all interactions are respectful and supportive of everyone involved. Facilitators remain engaging and consistently focused on the purpose of the meeting.

- **Needs Improvement:** Causes tension or shows disrespectful behavior. **Example:** A facilitator uses a passive-aggressive, mocking, or negative tone, making participants uncomfortable. A facilitator that allows other meeting participants to cause tension or show disrespect could also be rated low in this competency.
- **Fair:** Inconsistently acts in and communicates in a respectful and supportive manner to all attendees. **Example:** The facilitator greets most participants warmly but fails to acknowledge parents who are present.
- **Good:** Usually acts in and communicates in a respectful and supportive manner. **Example:** The facilitator generally maintains a positive tone and gratitude for participants input. If a situation appears to happen, they intervene respectfully.
- **Excellent:** Consistently models respectful and supportive behavior for all attendees. **Example:** When a family member shares a story, the facilitator listens attentively and ensures the families have their full attention, making sure to thank them for contributing their story.

Access, Inclusion, and Opportunity for All

This competency measures a facilitator's commitment to integrating all families' experiences and their ability to create an environment for people from all backgrounds. Celebrate the diversity of experience and voice at the table from participating families.

- **Needs Improvement:** Frequently makes inappropriate or offensive comments or jokes. **Example:** The facilitator uses culturally insensitive language that offends participants.
- **Fair:** Demonstrates some lack of respect for all perspectives and may make less-than-appropriate comments. Does not respond well to attendee feedback. **Example:** The facilitator highlights mothers as caregivers only, and when a participant corrects them, they brush it off.
- **Good:** Usually demonstrates respect for all perspectives. May make an error in language but responds well to feedback. **Example:** The facilitator highlights mothers as caregivers only and when a participant corrects them, they apologize and correct themselves.
- **Excellent:** Consistently models inclusive attitudes and appreciation for all perspectives. **Example:** The facilitator encourages feedback from family leaders and celebrates the various experiences and voices at the table. They also integrate issues related to real life experiences from all of Nevada's families into discussions.

Time Management

This competency evaluates a facilitator's ability to be punctual and respect the time of all participants. Families who are taking time away from their children or are utilizing an alternate arrangement for the care of their children, should be confident that a meeting starts and ends as posted.

- **Needs Improvement:** The facilitator does not manage their time and is not punctual including their breaks (if necessary). **Example:** The facilitator starts and ends meetings late, disrespecting the time of family leaders who may have other obligations like child care.
- **Fair:** The facilitator demonstrates inconsistent time management and struggles to stay on schedule, affecting start and stop times. **Example:** The facilitator starts the meeting late and allows the discussion to go off topic (assuring families that their concerns will be noted and addressed at another time) ultimately missing important agenda items that matter to the family.

- **Good:** The facilitator manages their time, follows the agenda, and is mostly punctual, including their breaks (if necessary). **Example:** The facilitator makes necessary adjustments to keep the meeting on schedule and ensures it starts and ends on time. **Example:** The meeting facilitator ensures the topics and discussions are related to the agenda.
- **Excellent:** The facilitator manages time effectively and remains punctual, including during breaks when necessary. They stick to the agenda without going off topic, documenting any additional topics raised, and ensuring appropriate follow-up. **Example:** The facilitator follows the agenda to respect everyone's time and avoid causing stress, especially for Families who need to pick up their children from school.

Tips and Tricks:

- **Test your microphone:** In a Zoom meeting, click the up arrow next to the "Unmute" button and select "Test speaker & microphone." Follow the prompts to check that your audio is working correctly.
- **Language access through interpretation:** The Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five and The Children's Cabinet provides language access services to ECAC meeting facilitators. (Although these are limited in scope and grant funded, there are other programs and companies in Nevada that provide this for a fee.) Language Access provides simultaneous interpretation for families who speak a different language from the meeting facilitator. Familiarize yourself *before the meeting* with the process and set up meeting (ZOOM) to ensure that interpretation "channels" are accessible. This does take some practice but is an invaluable way to connect with families with lived experience.
- **Language access through translation services:** Using a translation service can help meeting facilitators out with the translation of important meeting materials in multiple languages. Translating agendas, meeting minutes, and supportive documents ensures families can prepare for meetings and actively participate in discussions. While there are multiple low or no-cost online translation services, it is recommended to hire a translation service provider to ensure that content meets the nuances of non-English languages. The United Way of Southern Nevada provides Language Access services for Nevada non-profits and government agencies at no cost.

Suggestions for including family engagement in meetings requiring Open Meeting Law

The Open Meeting Law (OML) requirements are designed to ensure transparency, but it can present unique challenges for fostering authentic family leadership. Here are some resources and strategies to help increase family leadership in OML-required meetings:

1. Understanding Open Meeting Law (OML) and Family Participation

- **Nevada's OML:** Key requirements include advance public notice of meetings (including agenda, date, time, and location), public access to meetings and materials, and a mandatory period for public comment.
- **Public Comment:** The OML mandates that public bodies must allow for public comment. While the ECAC can impose "reasonable time, manner, and place restrictions," they cannot legally prohibit public criticism. Facilitators and public bodies need to understand these rules to create a structured but welcoming environment for families' input.
Explain to the members and families that public comment is another opportunity to give input.
- **Quorum:** It's crucial to understand the definition of a "quorum." This is the minimum number of members of a public body who must be present for a meeting to be valid. Informal polling of members outside of a meeting to reach a decision is a violation of the OML. Nevada ECAC utilizes a simple majority for quorum and for voting purposes.

2. Best Practices for Facilitating Family Leadership in an OML Context

- **Advance Preparation is Key:** OML requires advance notice of meetings and materials. *This is an opportunity, not a barrier.*
 - **Family-Friendly Agendas:** As mentioned in the F5N Family Leadership Facilitation Rubric, it's important to create clear, jargon-free agendas. Highlight specific agenda items where parent input is sought and explain what kind of feedback would be most helpful.
 - **Early and Accessible Information:** Ensure meeting invitations, agendas, and supplemental materials are sent out well in advance (at least one to two weeks). Make them accessible online and provide hard copies for in-person attendees. It is also recommended by the F5N FLC that Agendas, Minutes, and relevant materials be provided via links placed in the ZOOM chat function.
 - **Multiple Languages:** Provide all materials in the community's primary languages, such as English and Spanish.

- **Suggestions for Creating a Welcoming Environment:**
 - **Opening and Closing Rituals:** Start and end meetings on time. Use a consistent and welcoming opening to set a positive tone and an explicit closing to thank Families for their time and contributions.
 - **Child care and Stipends:** OML does not prohibit the provision of support like child care, transportation, or stipends. Compensating Families for their time and expertise is a fundamental principle of authentic partnership and removes a major barrier to participation. This is often an allowable use of grant funds (e.g., from the Preschool Development Grant, HRSA ECCS, etc.).
 - **Structured Public Comment:** Clearly explain the public comment process (consider providing a document to the speaker beforehand to explain the process) at the beginning of the meeting. This helps Families feel more comfortable and empowered to speak. For example, state the time limit, how speakers will be called, and what the ECAC's protocol is for responding to comments (e.g., "we will listen and take your feedback into consideration for our next steps").
 - **Active Listening:** Facilitators and board members should model active listening during public comment. Avoid interrupting and acknowledge the feedback received (keep phones down unless taking notes). It's okay to say, "Thank you for that important perspective; we will be sure to consider that as we move forward."

Beyond the Formal Meeting:

- **Pre- and Post-Meeting Engagement:** The OML governs formal meetings, but it doesn't prevent engagement outside of them.
 - **Informal "Listening Sessions":** Consider holding informal, non-OML required sessions where Families can share their thoughts in a less formal setting. This can help build trust and gather valuable feedback that can then be brought to a formal meeting.
 - **One-on-One Consultations:** Offer opportunities for one-on-one or small-group consultations with professionals to help Families navigate the early childhood system. This builds individual capacity and empowers them to advocate for their children.
 - **Surveys and Feedback Tools:** Use online surveys or other evaluation tools to gather anonymous feedback on a regular basis. This can help identify barriers to participation and inform future meeting improvements.

By thoughtfully applying these strategies, facilitators can move beyond simply complying with OML to actively use it as a framework for building a transparent, inclusive, and family-led decision-making process.

Key Resources and Organizations:

- **[The Ascend Aspen Institute's 8 Principles:](#)** These principles are a fantastic framework for building authentic partnerships.
- **[National Center for Family & Parent Leadership \(NCFPL\):](#)** This organization provides a wide range of resources on parent leadership, including best practices for parent compensation, recruitment, and meeting facilitation. They have a "Seat at the Table" initiative designed to connect Families with leadership opportunities on advisory councils and boards.
- **[Head Start's Resources:](#)** The Head Start program has a wealth of information on parent and family engagement, including guides for leading online meetings and creating family-centered strategies. Their resources emphasize viewing Families as experts and partners.
- **[Clark County, NV Open Meeting Law Guide:](#)** For specific guidance on Nevada's OML, resources from local governments like Clark County can be invaluable for understanding the legal parameters of public comment and meeting procedures.
- **[Tips for Holding a Successful Listening Session:](#)** Listening sessions are a great way to build relationships with families who can be engaged in future advocacy opportunities.

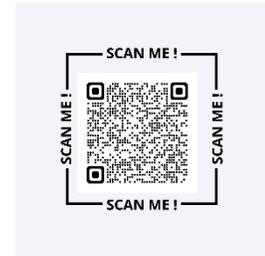


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Connect with us!



Thank you for taking the time to review this Companion Guide for the First 5 Nevada Family Leadership Council's Facilitation Rubric. If you would like to learn more about this Guide, the Rubric, or family leadership support in general, please contact us!

The Children's Cabinet First 5 Nevada Family Leadership webpage: [Nevada Family Leadership Council - Parent Leadership and Engagement - Children's Cabinet](#)

General Email Inbox: FamilyLeadership@childrenscabinet.org



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