



## Overview

Nevada is creating a statewide screening and assessment system to help identify children and youth who may have mental health or substance use needs early, consistently, and across all systems. This initiative is part of the Children's Behavioral Health Transformation and is required under a U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Settlement Agreement.

The system will:

- Recognize behavioral health needs early
- Provide timely assessments
- Ensure real connection to care not just referrals
- Prevent unnecessary institutionalization
- Increase access to home and community-based services
- Ensure equity in access across the state

## Who is this system for?

**All children and youth in Nevada should have access** to behavioral health screening regardless of Medicaid eligibility.

**Comprehensive assessments** are required for children who:

- Have had 3+ mobile crisis responses in the past year
- Are exiting juvenile justice and may need services
- Were recently hospitalized or in residential treatment
- Spent 7+ days in emergency child welfare shelters and are assessed as high risk

## What does this system look like?

It provides a clear, three-step path:

- **1. Screening**
  - A brief checklist to flag possible concerns.
- **2. Assessment**
  - A trained provider conducts a more detailed review.
- **3. Connection to Care**
  - Children are referred to and supported in accessing appropriate services.

## Core Components

- **Screening Tools**
  - Developmentally appropriate, validated questionnaires.
  - Used in schools, shelters, child welfare, and more.
- **Clinical Assessments**
  - Evidence-based evaluations by trained providers to determine a youth's level of need

- **Comprehensive Assessments**
  - Full diagnostic reviews by licensed mental health professionals.
  - Used to develop treatment plans and determine service needs.

## Key Terms

- **Screening**
  - A short checklist or questionnaire that helps spot early signs of behavioral health concerns.
- **Clinical Assessment**
  - A more detailed review by a trained provider to understand needs and risks.
- **Comprehensive Assessment:**
  - A full diagnostic evaluation used to guide care planning.
- **Focus Population**
  - Medicaid-eligible children with high behavioral health needs, as outlined in the DOJ Settlement Agreement.
- **Plan of Care**
  - a personalized roadmap for services and supports.
- **Wraparound Facilitation**
  - A structured team-based approach to care coordination.

## Requirements under the DOJ Settlement

Nevada must:

- Adopt validated tools with community input
- Screen children across systems (welfare, justice, Medicaid)
- Create agreements with counties for detention and shelter screening
- Provide access via a toll-free number and website
- Set and enforce timelines for screening and assessment (e.g., within 1-3 business days)
- Monitor compliance to ensure children receive timely services

## What happens next?

- **Summer-Fall 2025:** Working Group input
- **Late 2025-2026:** Tool selection and pilot testing
- **By January 2027:** Goal for statewide launch

## Reflection Questions for Working Group Representatives

- What is your experience with screening and assessment within Nevada's behavioral health or primary care settings?
- How can these tools best support connecting children and adolescents to appropriate care?
- *(For providers/community partners)* What supports would you need to implement these tools in your practice or setting?