



COMING TOGETHER AT THE TABLE: PARTNERING WITH URBAN ALASKA NATIVE FAMILIES FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S SCHOOL SUCCESS (2019)

Karen Roth, PhD
University of Alaska Fairbanks



QASGIQ: COMING TOGETHER

“If you want to go far, go together”

PARENT INVOLVEMENT VS. FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

- To **involve** is 'to surround or envelope'
- To **engage** is 'to **come together** and interlock.' Thus, involvement implies doing to; in contrast, engagement implies doing with (Ferlazzo, 2011)



STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

- Thirty years of family engagement research has established its importance to P-12 student success (Epstein, Jeynes, Mapp)
- Alaska Native families participate less in children's schooling than other cultural groups in the ASD (McDowell, 2012)
- Goal of Western schooling: systemic assimilation of Native peoples with loss of cultures, languages, and lifeways (Adams, 1995; Smith, 2012; Williams, 2009)
- Outreach to families remains largely school-centric (McCarty & Lee, 2014)
- Educators may not have adequate knowledge and skills to implement effective outreach to all families (Epstein, 2018)
- Majority of educators are White, middle-class creating potential for cultural disconnect for Native students and families

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Discover reasons Alaska Native families participate less in children's schooling than other families in the ASD:

- Multiple studies have found culturally relevant curricula and pedagogies increase school success for Indigenous students (Barnhardt, 2011; Brayboy & Castagno, 2009; Jester, 2017; McCarty & Lee, 2014, Vinlove, 2017)
- Less research exists on the impact of culturally relevant family outreach to success for *urban* Alaska Native students
- Need for “macro-level” approach to supporting Indigenous students and families (Kanu, 2007)



LITERATURE REVIEW

- Importance of family engagement to P-12 student success (Epstein, Mapp, Jeynes)
- History of Western schooling for Alaska Natives (Barnhardt, 2001; Child, 2000; Williams, 2009)
- Intergenerational trauma (Braveheart)
- Relational accountability as Indigenous worldview (John-Shields, Topkok, Wilson)
- Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies (Brayboy & Castagno, 2009; Jester, 2017; John-Shields, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1995; McCarty & Lee, 2014; Paris, 2012; Vinlove, 2017)

“EDUCATION FOR EXTINCTION” (ADAMS, 1995)



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THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

- Impact of effective school-family partnerships on P-12 student success (Epstein, Jeynes, Mapp)
- Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies to support culturally diverse students (Barnhardt & Kawagley, Brayboy & Castagno, Jester, Ladson-Billings, McCarty & Lee, Paris, Vinlove)
- Relational accountability as Indigenous worldview (John-Shields, Topkok, Wilson)
- “Suspending Damage” (Tuck)
- History of Western schooling for Alaska Natives (Barnhardt, Williams)



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How do Alaska Native families of preschool children in the ASD experience school outreach and which practices are seen as culturally sustaining and/or effective?
2. How do ASD preschool teachers currently implement outreach to Alaska Native families?
3. How might ASD preschool teachers serve as models of culturally sustaining family engagement for other educators and would additional training improve outreach for all grade level teachers?

RESEARCH PARADIGMS

- **Mixed Methods**
 - “Multiple Mental Models to ensure Validity/Reliability”
 - “Plurality of Philosophical Paradigms” (Patton, 2016)
- **Qualitative Paradigm**
 - Constructivist
 - Post-positive
 - Naturalistic
 - Inductive/Iterative
 - Cross-cuts disciplines (Aligns with INDS)

- **Indigenous** (Respectful, Reciprocal, Responsible)
- **Critical Theory** (Examining assumptions of dominant culture for hegemony)
- **Social Justice** (Interrogating power structures that perpetuate inequalities)
- **Appreciative Inquiry** (Generative, capacity-building)
- **Grounded Theory**
 - Inferences from data-(Glaser & Strauss, 1967)
 - Systematic (to point of “saturation”)
 - Flexibility in design
 - Rigorous
 - Researcher as “instrument”

DATA COLLECTION

Content Analysis:

- ASD family outreach materials N=26 (21-General Education/5 Indian Education)
- UCI network analysis software

Survey:

- ASD preschool teachers (32 out of 38 teachers participated)
- 15 questions: Eight: 5 point Likert Four: Demographic info Three: Open-ended

Interviews:

- Eight Alaska Native family members
- Unstructured prompts around experiences with ASD outreach
- Interview tool based on Indigenous Medicine Wheel holistic approach (Madden, 2014)
- One-two hours

Participant-Observer:

- Three family events at Cook Inlet Native Head Start

CONTENT DATA ANALYSIS

- Literature: Use of deficit terms that privilege White, middle-class families in outreach strategies and materials (Kumar, 2014; Rimm-Kaufmann & Pianta, 2005; Tuck, 2009)
- 26 ASD family outreach fliers (21 -Gen Ed/ 5 Indian Ed)
- Coded terms and images used in fliers that reflected values/worldview of group
- Conducted frequency count of terms and images in fliers
- Uploaded to UCI network analysis software program (Visual representations of frequency of nodes and centrality connections)


SAMPLES OF ASD GENERAL EDUCATION OUTREACH MATERIALS

KINDERGARTEN ROUND UP ★

Is your child starting kindergarten in the Anchorage School District in the 2018-19 school year?

Come join us!
Gladys Wood Elementary
Tuesday, April 10, 2018
5:30 p.m.

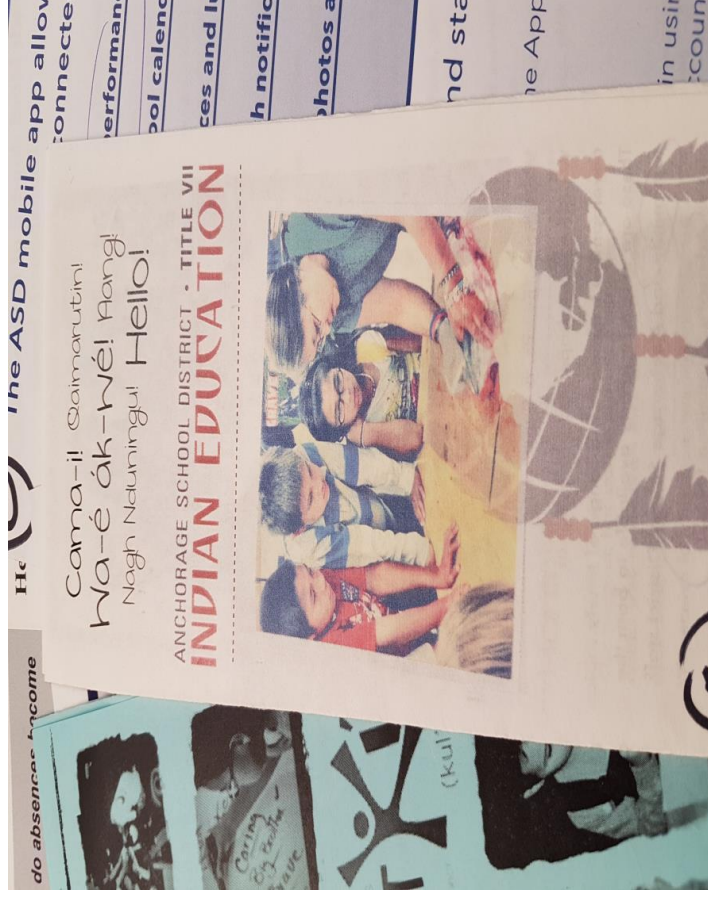
ASD staff will share what to expect as your child begins kindergarten in the fall. Together we will partner to help your child be best prepared to experience early kindergarten. Information will be available on how to help your child at home and how to enroll in kindergarten. Parents/guardians are encouraged to ask questions and take home resources.



Anchorage School District
www.asdk12.org



ASD NATIVE EDUCATION OUTREACH MATERIALS



General ASD Family Outreach Materials		Indian Ed Family Outreach Materials	
N=21	Frequency of Term or Image Per Flier	N=5	Frequency of Term or Image Per Flier
Parents	1.54	Parents	1.00
Family	0.81	Family	2.75
Literacy	0.43	Learning	1.00
Assessments	0.41	Assessments	0.50
Parent Training	0.43	Parent Training	0.75
Community	0.11	Community	1.75
Culture	0	Culture	3.50
Advocacy	0.19	Advocacy	1.25
Social-emotional learning	0.05	Social-emotional learning	1.50
Resources	0.05	Resources	0.50
Academics/Student Success	0.08	Academics/Student Success	3.00
Partnership	0.05	Partnership	1.00
Home	0.14	Home	0

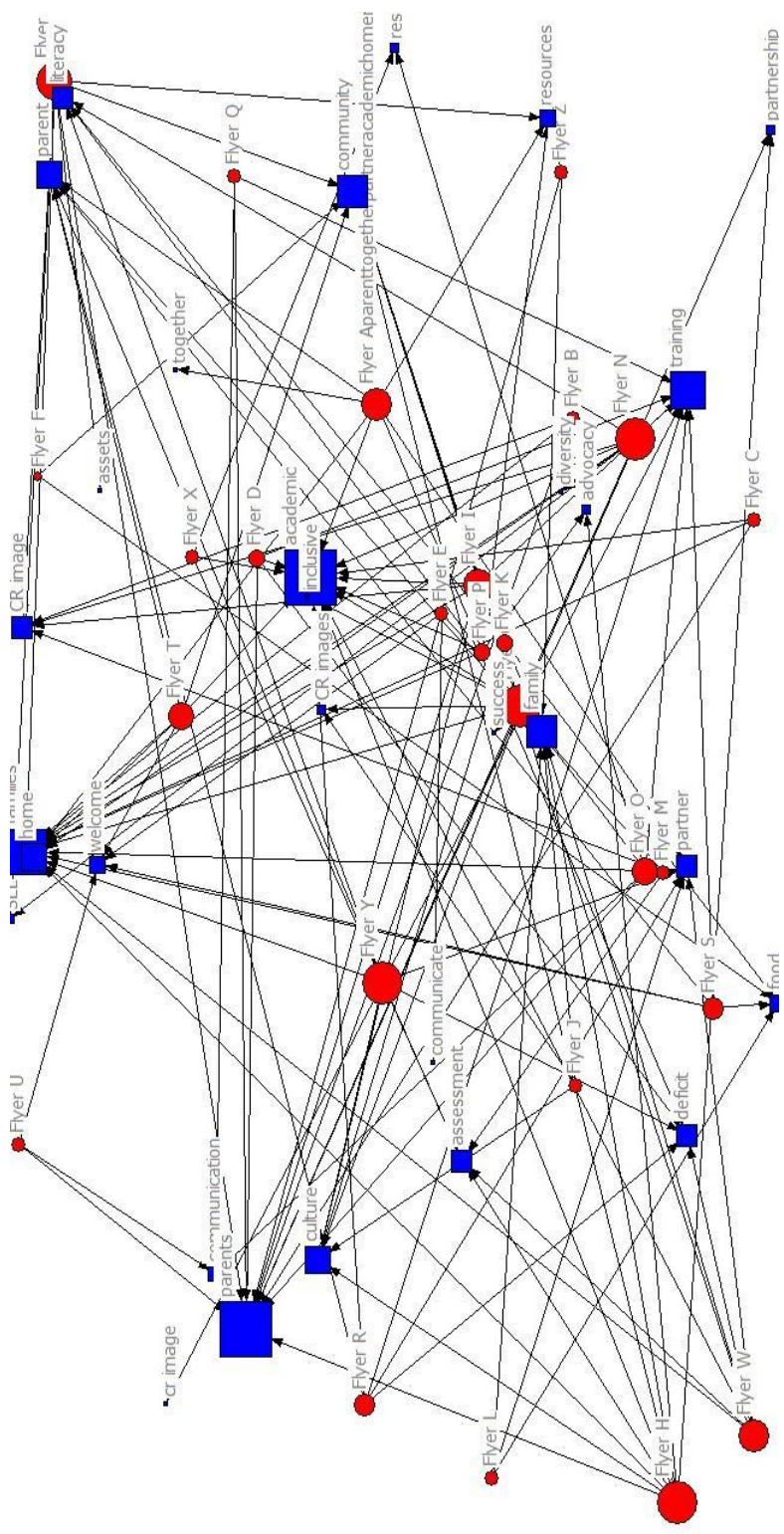
SOFTWARE NETWORK ANALYSIS (BORGATTI & HALGIN, 2011)

Guiding Concept: Social ties represent value systems

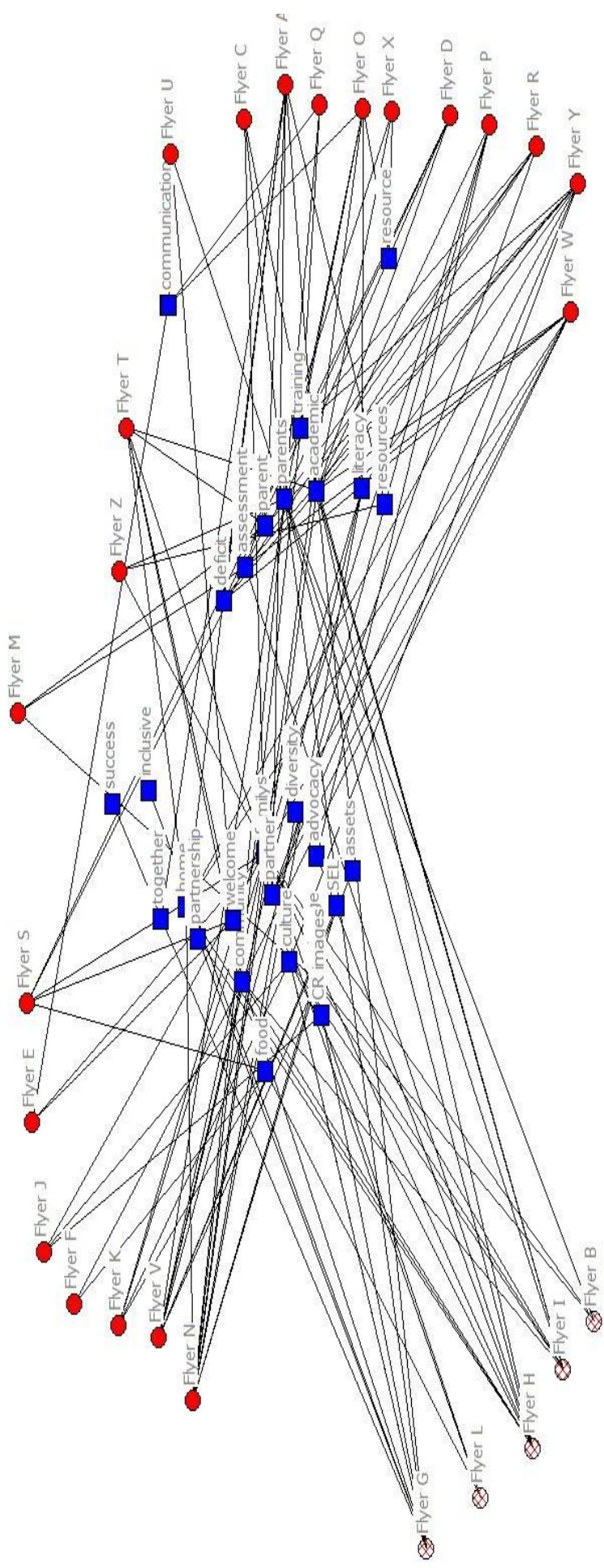
Terms:

- **Bridging:** Fills structural gaps “Strength of Weak Ties” (Granovetter, 1983)
- **Bonding:** Similar backgrounds tend to stick together
- **Betweenness:** Distance between nodes signifies closeness of connections
- **Centrality:** Nodes that represent power and influence
- **Homophily:** Tendency to avoid moving beyond comfort zone

UCI NETWORK ANALYSIS SOFTWARE: CENTRALITY MEASURE



UCI NETWORK ANALYSIS SOFTWARE: BONDING & BRIDGING PATTERNS



PRESCHOOL TEACHER SURVEY

Title One	Special Education	Migrant Education	Kids' Corps Head Start
9	23	2	4

- 32 of 38 teachers responded: 3.03%-AN, 3.03%-Hispanic, 6.06%-Mixed Race, 81.82%-White, 6.06%-Other
- 113 AN students out of 1,030 preschoolers or 9.1% (Only 2 had no AN students)
- Questions: 1 student demographics, 8 general information, 3 teacher demographics, and 3 open-ended
- 5 point Likert Scale for general information (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree)
- Most effective strategy: Home Visits. Others: ongoing, informal communication, flexibility, family bulletin board, texts photos of children, daily acts of respect

PRESCHOOL TEACHER SURVEY RESPONSES

Q1: “Alaska Native families place a high value on education.”	47% Strongly Agree	37% Agree
Q2: “I feel comfortable communicating with Native families.”	61% Strongly Agree	33% Agree
Q3: “I want to know more about Alaska Native cultural values.”	39% Strongly Agree	51% Agree
Q4: “I want to know more about the AN history of schooling and how it may affect school success today.”	9% Somewhat Agree	
Q5: “I want to learn how to create stronger relationships with families”	42% Strongly Agree	36% Agree
Q6: “I know the family members in the households of my AN students”	48% Strongly Agree	48% Agree
Q7: “It is my responsibility to provide AN families info on ways to support child’s school success.”	28% Strongly	50% Agree
Q8: “I am confident my communication with AN families strengthens our partnership.”	16% Somewhat	6% Disagree
	58% Strongly	40% Agree
	51% Strongly	45% Agree

QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Series of cumulative coding cycles and reflective analytic memo-ing to develop categories for theory generation (Miles et al., 2014)

- **First Cycle:** Open-coded for initial categories and sub-categories (Revisited research questions)
- **Second Cycle:** Axial coded and combined like categories (Revisited and revised research questions)
- **Selective Coding:** “Story emerging and hypothesis forwarded” (Miles, et al., 2014) (Revisited/revised research questions)
- Reread interviews and wrote summative impressions
- Created chart of codes and how they related to lit review
- Member Check with Alaska Native family members

FINDINGS: RESEARCH QUESTION I

- 1. **How do Alaska Native families of preschool children in the ASD experience school outreach and which practices are seen as culturally sustaining and/or effective?**
 - Most positive experiences were associated with ANCCS or CITC programs with a couple of outliers
 - Need non-Native educators to recognize:
 - Importance of Family & Community
 - Need for Educators as Allies
 - Difficulty of Transition from Rural to Urban Schools
 - Value of Holistic Approach to Education
 - Importance of Strong Home-School Connection
 - Subsistence as a Core Native Value



FINDINGS: RESEARCH QUESTION 2

2. How do ASD preschool teachers currently implement outreach to Alaska Native families?

- Relational approaches
- On-going, informal communication
- Integrating families' Funds of Knowledge
- Home Visits

FINDINGS: RESEARCH QUESTION 3

- 3. How might ASD preschool teachers serve as models of culturally sustaining family engagement for other educators and would additional training improve outreach for all grade level teachers?**
 - Need for more PD
 - Co-facilitation model with Native educators and community members



IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

- Increase principals' awareness of need for more effective outreach to Alaska Native families through PD
- Include Alaska Native families more directly in decision-making (advisory boards, surveys, home visits)
- Tailor school outreach to Native families in relational and culturally relevant ways
- PD for non-Native teachers for increased awareness and strategies to improve outreach practices
- Increased collaboration between ASD's Indian Education program and general education school personnel



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- More studies in Alaska on *urban* Native students and their families
- Studies that include a broader representation of Alaska Native families in the ASD
- Studies to establish the impact of school leaders' commitment to culturally sustaining outreach to Native families on their children's school success
- How well Alaska's preservice teachers are prepared to implement culturally relevant and responsive outreach to Native families



LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

- Focused on ASD's exemplary outreach practices with Alaska Native families
- Small sample size may limit generalizability
- Researcher's positionality

Educators as Allies:
Strengths-based
Intentional
Family-centric
Culturally
Competent

Student Success:
Mutually
defined
Evidence-
based

Relational Accountability:
Respect
Reciprocity
Responsibility

Family Engagement Framework for Alaska Native Families

Integrating Families' Funds of Knowledge:
Cultural Values
& Experience
Languages

Holistic View of Education:
Values-based/
Academic
Balance
Place-based

Strong Home-School Connection:
Home
visits/Informal

CULTURALLY SUSTAINING ENGAGEMENT FOR ALASKA NATIVE FAMILIES:
BALANCED AND RELEVANT





THANK YOU, QUYANA, QUYANAQ, GUNALCHEESH!

Questions?

Contact Information:

- Karen Roth, PhD
- Klroth@alaska.edu