

The Navajo Nation Child Care Centers



Grace M. Boyne, Program Manager II, Direct Services

The Navajo Nation Department of Child Care and Development

The Navajo Division of Social Services



How Learning Occurs at the Navajo Nation Child Care Centers And Its Impact

- There are 27 child care centers in Arizona, New Mexico and Utah.
- Before the pandemic, DCCCD served 629 children.
- Currently, DCCCD serves 104 children with some centers still closed.
- We also have 50 home-based providers.

There are three basic philosophies at the child care center:

1. Nutrition
2. Physical Activities
3. Literacy (We read read to the whether they are 6 weeks old or 6 years old; we use both the Navajo and English languages).
 - The age group of our children is 6 months to 12 years, 11 months.



Cultural and Continuous Learning

- Children are taught through the native language. Information is transferred within a popular culture such as language, signals or artificial materials.
- It is a lifetime of learning because we live our culture.
- Our children range in ages but we start with the babies.
- Publication by First Things First: “Baby, Let’s Talk! Serve and Run”
- This states as their brain develops – incredibly fast in the first days, months, years, they learn by hearing words from you and then they respond to you. We read to the babies, talk to them and they respond. We start this early.



What Works/Best Practices

- ▶ Collaboration with First Things First/Other partners
- ▶ Milestones/Accomplishments
- ▶ Success Stories: Learned colors and to count 1 to 10 in the Navajo language.
- ▶ Success Stories: Karigan Child Care participants– now working on his third degrees.
- ▶ Success Stories: Karigan Child Care participants – worked with DCCD and now working with DSS.
- ▶ Literacy has long-term consequences; it impacts learning.
- ▶ Navajo language is our first language. We think “Navajo” first.



What Doesn't Work/Obstacles

- ▶ A primary obstacle is that we do not have trained personnel in fields such as mental health to work with the children/staff to deal with the after-effects of Covid-19.
- ▶ Lack of personnel with Learning Methodologies & Curriculum Development.



Need Technology: Tribal Assistance System (TAS)

- ▶ TAS will streamline the processes.
 - ▶ Automated check-in process.
 - ▶ Clock-in/out
- ▶ TAS will assist with efficient eligibility determination.
- ▶ TAS will support referral to other services that children may be potentially eligible for.
- ▶ Data Management/Generating reports.
 - ▶ Annual Report: ACF 700 Data Report
- ▶ Automate Payments to Private Providers
 - ▶ Co-Payments vary per applicant.
 - ▶ Work with OOC to run batches (Payments).
- ▶ Using technology to allow DCCD to focus on direct services.



Recommendations

- ▶ Increase Administrative Cap from 15% to 25%
- ▶ Notice of Award (NOA)
 - ▶ Allocation should be for the entire Fiscal Year
 - ▶ No Quarterly Allotments
 - ▶ Quarterly Allotments Results in Higher Administrative Cost
- ▶ Carryover to go into Reserve Account
 - ▶ Continue to serve family without interruptions
 - ▶ To expend all funds.