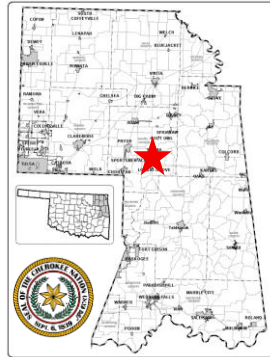


# Honoring Tribal Culture and Context in Early Childhood Development Research & Theory



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# Introduction



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# Agenda



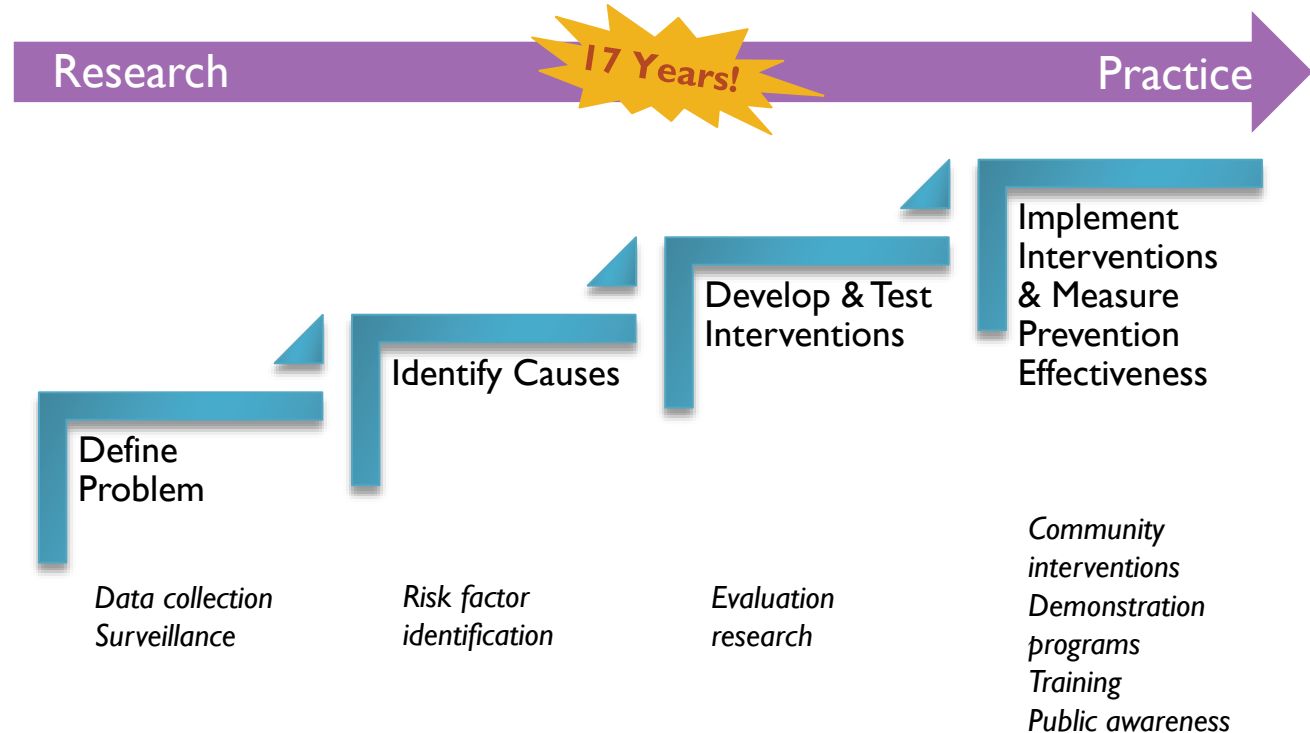
- Discuss progress toward an early childhood development research agenda that honors Tribal culture and context
- Share examples of progress in recent research
- Provide concluding recommendations for the Commission

# 7 Needs for Tribal child development research identified in 2012

1. Develop theories and methodologies that are scientifically and culturally grounded.
2. Critically evaluate measures and assessment tools for use with Native children and adolescents.
3. Better document rates of mental health problems and availability of services.
4. Develop and evaluate culturally based interventions for Native youth.
5. Enhance training opportunities for Native investigators interested in child development research.
6. Educate both the broader child development community and funding agencies about the unique context of research in Native communities.
7. Facilitate collaboration among Native and non-Native scholars interested in Native child development.

# A reminder: Evidence building is a time-consuming process

Public Health Model of a Scientific Approach to Prevention



...and in Tribal contexts it is likely even longer

Public  
Health  
Model of a  
Scientific  
Approach to  
Prevention



**Barriers to efficient research processes...**

Define  
Problem

Identify Causes

Develop & Test  
Interventions

Implement  
Interventions  
& Measure  
Prevention  
Effectiveness

**What are the  
facilitators?**

- ▶ **Mistrust**
- ▶ **Competing demands**
- ▶ **Misaligned timelines**
- ▶ **Inflexible institutional policies**
- ▶ **Limited knowledge of Native context**
- ▶ **Siloed efforts**

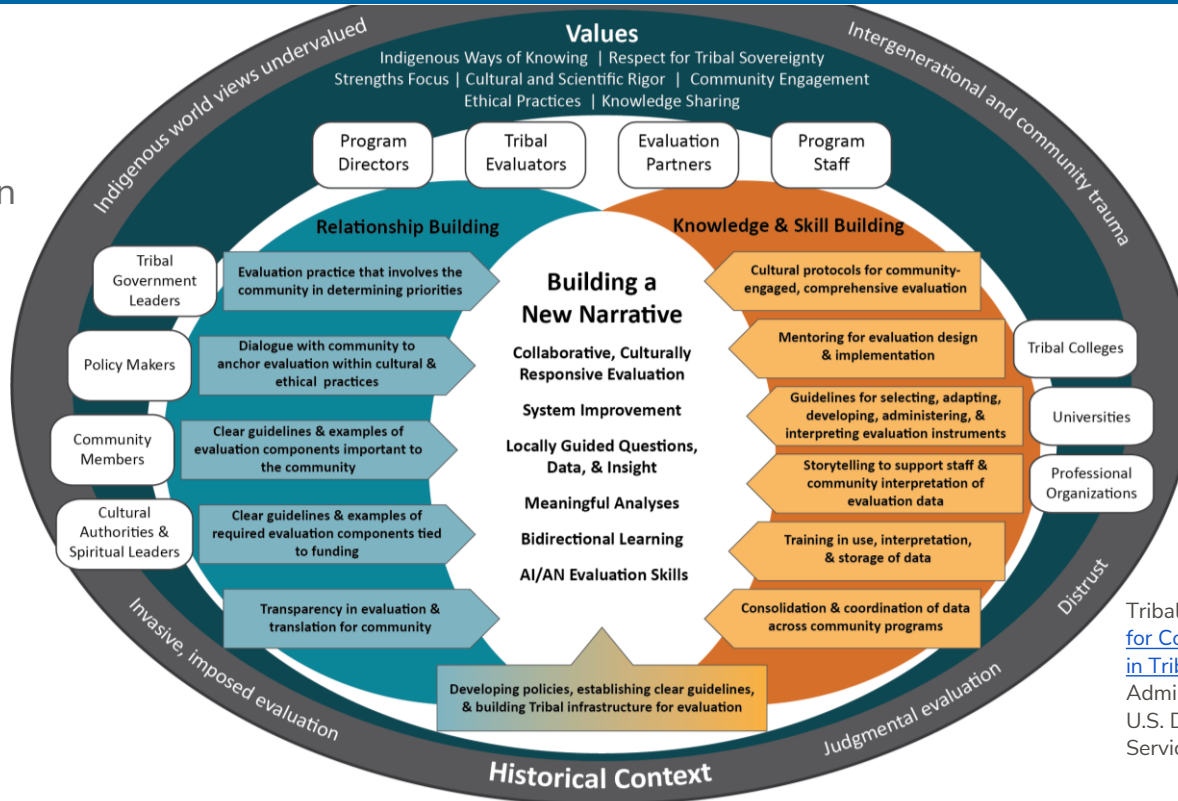
# 5 proposed values for Tribal research

1. Indigenous knowledge is valid and should be valued.
2. Research is not culturally neutral.
3. Responsible stewardship includes the task of learning how to interpret and understand data and research.
4. Tribes must exercise sovereignty when conducting research and managing data.
5. Research must benefit Native people.



# An example of progress towards defining and communicating a collaborative, culturally responsive approach

A Framework for Co-Creating Collaborative & Effective Evaluation to Improve Tribal Child Welfare Programs



Tribal Evaluation Workgroup. [“A Roadmap for Collaborative and Effective Evaluation in Tribal Communities.”](#) Children’s Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. September 2013.



# Tribal stewardship promotes the ethical conduct of research with Native children and families.

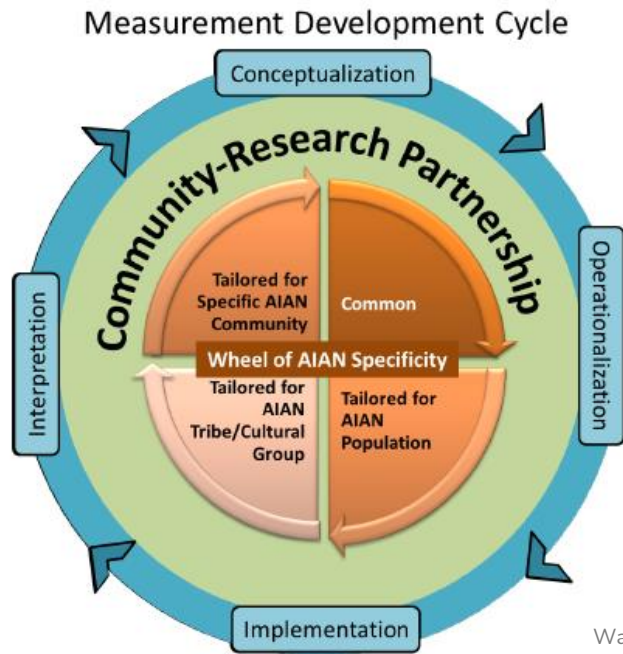


Tribal partners should guide decisions about:

- Confidentiality – e.g., protection of individual and, if desired, community
- Consent – e.g., appropriate age, role of kinship/extended family caregivers
- Referral context – e.g., appropriate standards in limited resource setting
- Legal and jurisdiction issues – e.g., differences in state/tribal mandatory reporting laws
- Study design – e.g., appropriate control procedures in randomized trials
- Sustainability – e.g., minimum assurances when resources and human capital are limited
- Cultural sharing – e.g., defining what can be shared and how



The TRC conducts scientifically and culturally rigorous research on early childhood measures using a Community of Learning (CoL) approach.



Walls, M., Whitesell, N., Barlow, A., & Sarche, M. (2017). <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15332640.2017.1310640>

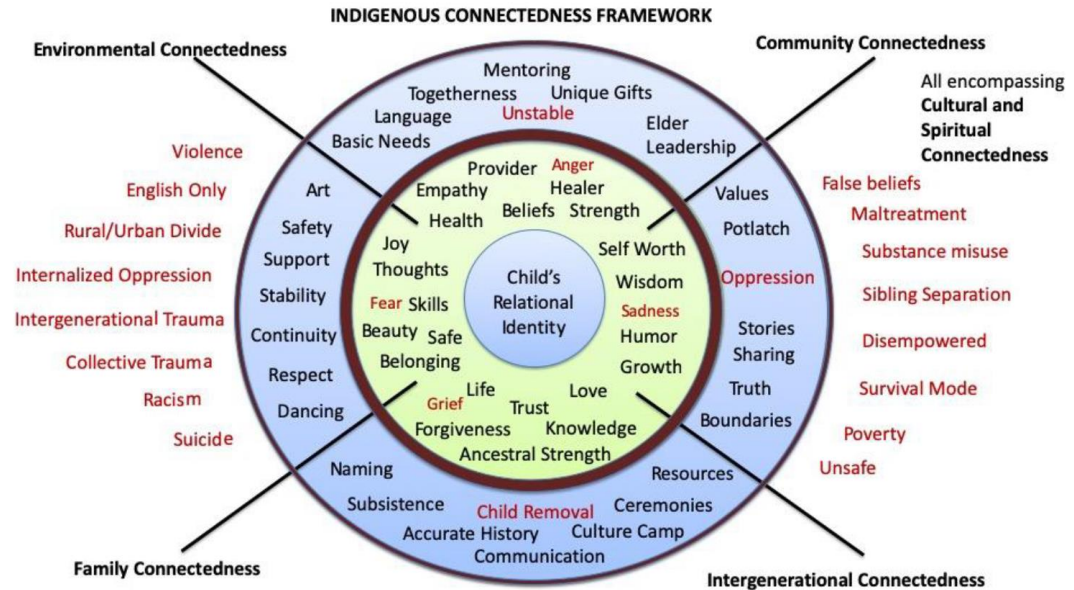
### TRC CoLs have examined:

- The Survey of Well-Being of Young Children (SWYC)
- The Classroom Assessment and Scoring System (CLASS)
- Developmental Screening in Tribal Communities (Tribal PEDS)

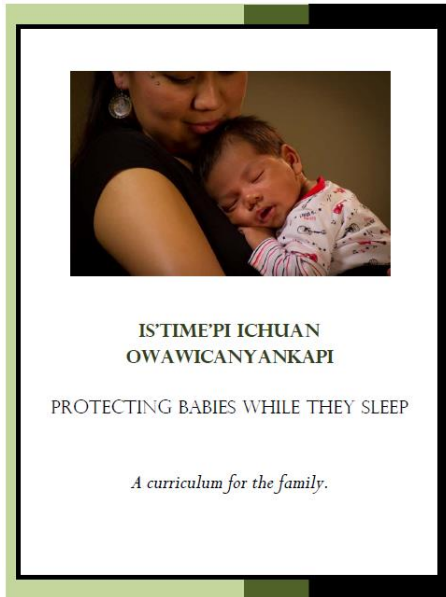


A new TRC CoL draws on Indigenous frameworks to shift from measurement of parent-child interaction to early relational health.

- The Indigenous concept of family connectedness indicates that children need to build strong relationships with family outside the parent-child dyad ([Ullrich, 2019](#))
- Fundamental point of Indigenous cultures—the symbiotic child-community relationship—should be understood by policy-makers and program developers ([Guilfoyle et al., 2010](#))



# Infant Care Practices Study



## A CBPR Initiative to Reduce Infant Mortality in the Northern Plains

### Aims:

1. Determine relation of knowledge, beliefs, and access to resources for sleep environment.
2. Develop culturally appropriate intervention to increase safety of sleep environment.
3. Evaluate efficacy of the intervention.

Approach: CBPR, Focus Groups, Randomized-Controlled Trial

Progress: Aims 1-2 complete, Aim 3 in progress

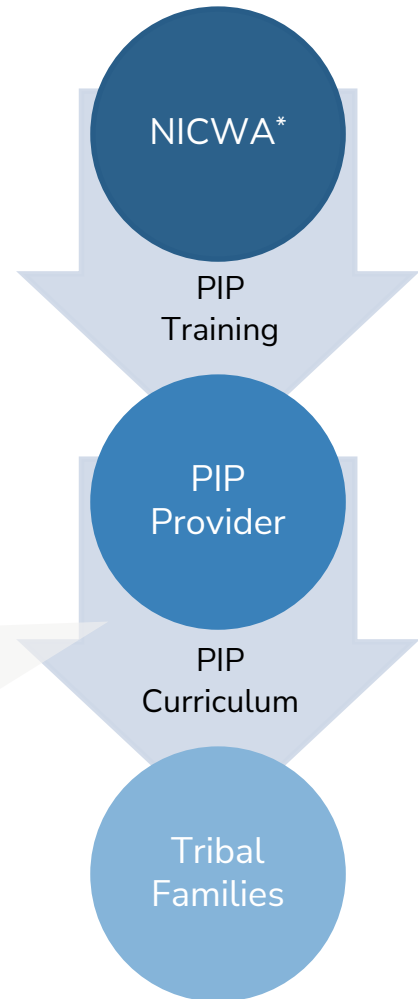
The Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) creates an opportunity for ongoing funding of the longstanding, culturally-based Positive Indian Parenting (PIP) curriculum.

### FFPSA

- Goal: Prevent entrance to foster care
- Provides: Reimbursement for in-home parent skills training
- Catch: Training must have an established evidence-base

### Sessions

- Traditional parenting
- Lessons of the storyteller
- Lessons of the cradleboard
- Harmony in child rearing
- Traditional behavior management
- Lessons of mother nature
- Praise in traditional parenting
- Choices in parenting



\*National Indian Child Welfare Association, learn more at: <https://www.nicwa.org/about-pip/>

# Recommendations

1. **Promote comprehensive, culturally appropriate and valid measurement** of outcomes for children, parents/caregivers, and communities in early childhood research with Tribal populations.
2. **Create federally funded early childhood research and evaluation opportunities that are specific to tribal communities** and emphasize the use of strengths-based, 2Gen or multi-generational, community-based and/or – engaged approaches.
3. **Address barriers related to reliance on mainstream evidence-based standards** that make it challenging for implementation of culturally based programs and practices.

# GV

(Wa-do)

Thank you!

## Questions?

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 [@aroundhim\\_d](https://twitter.com/aroundhim_d)



# Additional Resources



Tribal early  
childhood  
development  
resources to  
support the  
Commission  
on Native  
Children's  
work

- The Tribal Early Childhood Researcher Center's [Website](#) and [Early Childhood Measures Compendium](#)
- [Administration for Children and Families Tribal Early Childhood Webinar Series](#)
- [Indigenous Child Development Brief](#)
- [Perspectives of Region XI Head Start Federal, Research, and Program Partners in Carrying out a National Study of American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start Children, Families, and Programs](#)
- [National Indian Health Board Information Hub on Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\) in Indian Country](#)

# About Child Trends

Founded in 1979, Child Trends is the nation's leading research organization focused exclusively on improving the lives of children and youth. We work to ensure that all children thrive by conducting nonpartisan research and partnering with practitioners and policymakers to apply that knowledge. We believe that programs and policies that serve children are most effective when they are grounded in deep knowledge of child and youth development and informed by data and evidence.

If it affects children and youth, we study it. Our staff of over 200 work in multiple locations across the country. We study all child developmental stages, from infancy to early adulthood, in the places where they live, learn, and play. Our 360-degree perspective encompasses the whole child, which includes their health and safety, cognition and academic success, and social and emotional well-being.



[www.childtrends.org](http://www.childtrends.org)

# Child Trends resources to support the Commission on Native Children's work

- [Applying the Research and Evaluation Provisions of the Family First Prevention Services Act](#)
- [Child Trends Comments on Improving and Strengthening the Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse](#)
- [Adverse childhood experiences are different than child trauma, and it's critical to understand why](#)
- [Childhood adversity screenings are just one part of an effective policy response to childhood trauma](#)
- [Common Indicators of Social-Emotional Well-being in Early Childhood](#)
- [Child Well-Being: Constructs to Measure Child Well-Being and Risk and Protective Factors that Affect the Development of Young Children](#)
- [American Indian and Alaska Natives must be included in Research on Adverse Childhood Experiences](#)