

A close-up photograph of a young child, likely of Indigenous descent, wearing a blue hat with intricate floral embroidery and a blue garment with a white bow. The child has a serious expression and is looking directly at the camera. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green.

# Working within Indigenous Communities

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For the  
The Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission  
on Native Children



# Tribal Early Childhood Initiatives

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- **CCDF Tribal Administrator**
- **Child Care Subsidy/Assistance Program** (work requirement)
- **Tribal Child Care Licensing** (Family/Group, Center-based, SACC/B&A, Infant & Toddler)
- **Literacy**
- **West Central Initiative** – McKnight Foundation – 26 Early Childhood Initiatives – White Earth Reservation only tribal - Collaboration
- **Brain Research & Development** (Parent Supports, Friends/Family/Neighbor Care, TANF Orientations)
- **Health & Safety/Monitoring** (Tribal Licensor, Quality, Education, grants, supports, I.H.S Collaboration)
- **Quality Assurance** (Licensed/Unlicensed, grants, incentives, supports, relationship)
- **Professional Development** (Coaching, Mentoring, Incentives, Training/Higher Ed, Curriculum Training)



## Tribal Early Childhood Initiatives that Promote Healthy Children, Healthy Families & Healthy Communities

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- **Early Learning Scholarships** (Promotes Quality, Increases Parent Choices, Supports EC programs, Supports Quality/QRIS, Increased Rates, Supports Elders Raising Children)
- **Parent Mentoring Program** (Two-generational approach, child development, literacy, activities, mentoring, positive relationships and
- **MN Quality Rating System** (Coaching, Mentoring, Incentives)
- **Caring for Kids Store** (parent incentives, family supports, collaboration)
- **Readmobile** (mobile literacy library, storytelling, events)
- **Free Family Community Events:** Celebrating Fathers, Week of the Young Child, Celebrating Our Children, Child Screenings)
- **Smart Play Spot** - Early Literacy through a Cultural Lens – Collaboration with MN Children’s Museum



# Tribal Early Childhood Initiatives

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- CCDF Peer to Peer Learning Network (supports tribal EC professionals)
- Tribal Early Childhood Initiative (TELI – collaboration/cross-sector training, applications, screenings, parent supports, assessments, community events)
- Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)
- White House Rural Council – rural American initiatives
- Project Launch (Birth to 8)
- Two-Generational Approaches
- Community Initiatives that Incorporate a strong Cultural Lens
- School Readiness
- Parent/Caretaker Relationships



## Tribal Early Childhood Initiatives

- **Indigenous Parent Leadership Initiative** (funded by the MN Community Solutions Healthy Child Development Grant specific for BIPOC communities in MN) working with National Parent Leadership Initiative: Community-led, Civic Design Team, Trainers, Parent Cohort, Child Development, Leadership, Advocacy skill building, Civic Engagement. Partnership with Dr. Anton Treuer: Cultural Foundation classes that support indigenous knowledge, culture and language (support from community elders).
- **Minnesota Indigenous Cultural Professional Development** training initiative – led by MN Department of Education, Tribal Liaison and facilitated by Indigenous Visioning
- **Tribal Early Childhood Tour** (visited 10 of the 11 tribes in MN, met with Tribal Councils, Child Care, Head Start, Early Childhood professionals to discuss the successes and challenges)
- **Statewide Community Needs Assessment Initiative** – State of MN Preschool Development Grant – tribal communities rural and urban to meet with parents/caregivers.



# Lessons from the Field

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- Tribal Nations know their communities best
- Tribal Nations Communities Lead Initiatives
- Two Generational Approaches
- Funding for Tribal Data Systems that Tribes own
- State/Tribal Collaborations
- Indigenous Evaluation for tribal grantees
- Direct Funding for tribal early childhood initiatives that promote collaboration and increase positive community activities, family resource centers, community health and parent/child empowerment
- Supporting the Parent Voice
- Supporting the Working Poor/Cliff Effect



# Lessons from the Field

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- Flexible Federal and state funding that supports tribal communities and tribal organizations to support their Cultural and language (creates unique experience that can open doors to a deeper understanding of the Tribes' cultural values and teachings – healing and protective factor)
    - The Tribes' cultural values and teachings may be unfamiliar to families who lived through generations of historical trauma and negative results of boarding school experiences
    - Culture is a protective factor that can lead to a new way of thinking, living and raising children.
    - Promote Indigenous Evaluation processes within federal, philanthropic and state grantmaking initiatives



# Increasing Child and Family Initiatives within Rural and Urban Communities

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- Federal Agencies Cross Collaborations promote meaningful collaboration on the ground
- Increased collaboration with Housing Development, Indian Child Welfare, Indian Health Service (prevention/intervention) and Early Childhood Programs
- Increased Community Outreach Opportunities
- Increased Tribal Early Childhood Funding (philanthropic, gaming, fundraising, etc) to support and supplement
- Tribal Liaisons within federal and state systems
- Parent Leadership, Parenting, Supports, Incentives, System Navigators, Mentors, Homevisiting
- Look for models that work within Indian Country and support, expand, scale up/right size fit
- Supporting evidence-based or practice-based and supporting best practices within tribal communities
- Support existing/expand Tribal Champions and Tribal Initiatives – listen, learn and expand
- Indigenize



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