



CENTERING

# Native American

CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES

Cultivating Connection to Promote Healing and Well-being  
in Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

A Centering Equity in Infant and Early Childhood  
Mental Health Consultation Resource



CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FOR  
Infant & Early Childhood  
Mental Health Consultation  
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# CONTRIBUTIONS

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# INTRODUCTION

## CULTIVATING CONNECTION TO PROMOTE HEALING AND WELL-BEING IN NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

**Cultivating connection and belonging for Native American children, families, and communities is necessary to honor their strengths and resilience and to support healing, given the tenuous and traumatic history this population has endured through centuries of colonization.**

These actions are also important to elevate, given the heightened racism, cultural erasure from colonization, devastating loss of Elders due to COVID-19, and ongoing socioeconomic challenges experienced by Native American people today. During their earliest years, the most critical stage of brain development, Native American infants and young children need connections to family, community, and culture to promote their well-being. Infant and early childhood mental health consultants (MHCs) can support early childhood leaders and program staff who provide center- and home-based child care, early intervention, and home visiting to foster these connections.

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# HONORING THE DIVERSITY OF NATIVE AMERICAN PEOPLES

**Throughout this resource, the term “Native” is used to refer to the individuals and populations indigenous to the lands presently referred to as the United States. “Indigenous” is used to reference Indigenous Peoples globally.**

American Indian is commonly used to refer to Indigenous Peoples in the contiguous 48 states of North America, Central America, and South America, while Alaska Native is commonly used to refer to Indigenous Peoples in Alaska. As an overarching term, “American Indian and Alaska Native” (AIAN) includes people who have “origins in the original peoples of North and South America” and is inclusive of 574 federally recognized Tribes (sometimes referred to as Nations, Bands, Pueblos, Villages, Communities, and other terms), as well as dozens of state-recognized Tribes.<sup>1</sup>

Too often, people understand Native communities as a monolith or in generalities. However, these communities each have their own distinct cultures, languages, and histories.

An estimated 7.4 million people identify as Native, according to data from the U.S. Census.<sup>2</sup> These individuals may identify as Native only, or as Native in addition to one or more racial or ethnic categories, and some may have Indigenous ties to other regions, such as First Nations communities in Canada.<sup>3</sup> It is important to understand that Native identity for these individuals exists on a spectrum, in part due to their communities’ complicated histories of colonization and experiences of forced disconnection from core elements of identity such as place, culture, and language. For example, some might be very engaged with language and traditions, while others may be newly connecting with their Native identity or choose not to be engaged with cultural traditions at all.

Within the context of early childhood programs that serve Native American children and families, and among those engaged in research, evaluation, and training with such programs, it is common for the population terminology used to align with that of the agency that funds them. For example, “AIAN” is frequently used in Head Start research with Native populations, as the Office of Head Start uses it to represent the Tribes and Native-serving organizations that provide Head Start services. Entities may also choose to use “American Indian and Alaska Native” as it is the legal terminology used in U.S. federal policy. It is important to be aware that these overarching labels can reinforce the false belief that Native communities



are a monolith. In addition, for some communities, the use of race-based population descriptors for Native people can be problematic, given the sociohistorical roots of race as a concept and the use of race and racialized language to promote a hierarchy of human value. When working in the context of a specific

Native community, the preference may be to use Tribal specific terminology rather than an overarching term. As you will see in this guide, we recommend that consultants ask the people with whom they work how they identify.

## ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

Building on the *Equity in Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) Webinar Series: Culture, Identity, and History as Sources of Strength and Resilience for Tribal Communities in IECMHC*,<sup>4</sup> this resource guides IECMHC consultants and supervisors as they seek to address equity in their work. The series includes an examination of issues of racialized inequities and bias in the early care and education experiences for Native American children and families, and explores ways to strengthen culturally responsive practices to reduce disparities and support children’s healthy development and learning within a consultation framework.

The goal of this companion resource is to support the development of equitable learning environments for Native children. The resource is divided into three sections.

**Section 1** provides foundational knowledge of Native American histories, cultural values, and resiliency as essential context for promoting healing and well-being within Native American communities today.

**Section 2** aims to guide users through the Center of Excellence (CoE) Revised IECMHC Competencies and share promising practices and concrete strategies to increase consultants’ and supervisors’ capacity to address personal and institutional bias. These competencies support culturally responsive practice and can be applied to the core components of IECMHC to build upon the unique strengths of Native children, families, and communities.

**Section 3** presents real-life IECMHC case scenarios and questions for individual and group reflection.

**Section 4** includes policy implications and conclusions for implementing anti-racist, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive IECMHC for Native children and families.



# SECTION 1

## HISTORY AND CONTEXT OF NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITIES AND STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS

**The relationships between Native communities in the U.S. with state and federal governments have been historically harmful, as state governments and the federal government have a long history of attempting to eliminate and suppress Indigenous lifeways and languages.**

Each Tribe has its own history of land dispossession and violence enacted upon the community by the actions taken on behalf of the federal government. In forcibly removing Native communities from their homelands and Native children from their homes and families to attend federal Indian boarding schools,<sup>5</sup> the federal government forced Native people to choose assimilation or extinction.<sup>6</sup>

Native children were sent to boarding schools outside of, and often incredibly far away from, Native communities due to the belief that residing in their homelands had resulted in “uncivilized” systems, structures, and cultural ways. As off-reservation boarding schools were established, the plan was to remove children from “all outside influences and contact with the tribe, which is positively necessary in order to teach them morality.”<sup>7</sup> Remnants of this educational and life-experience legacy centered on similar ideologies can be felt and seen across Native communities today. Historical trauma resulting from loss, and grieving of the loss associated with generations of forced assimilation, acculturation,

and removal of children for “civilized” schooling help explain the circumstances and conditions present in Native American communities today.<sup>8</sup>





# HISTORY AND CONTEXT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD IN NATIVE COMMUNITIES

**Indigenous communities worldwide have identified the importance of nurturing early childhood development through ceremony, cultural practices, and fostering connectedness to family, spirituality, community, and the environment.<sup>9</sup>**

As an essential protective factor, connectedness supports the development of a child's relational identity and sense of belonging.<sup>10</sup> As noted above, Indigenous communities are among the most culturally and geographically diverse in the U.S., with 574 federally recognized Tribal Nations and dozens of state-recognized Tribes representing hundreds of distinct cultures, languages, and geographies.<sup>11</sup> Centering child development within these diverse contexts is necessary for understanding and measuring cultural protective factors in Tribal communities.<sup>12</sup>

Tribes, as sovereign nations, maintain a government-to-government relationship with the U.S. federal government.<sup>13</sup> Over time, this political relationship has created challenges and opportunities for the well-being of Native people and the early care and learning environments that Native families experience. Today, Native children and families live in rural, reservation, and urban settings, and they are served in early childhood programs operated by Tribal Nations and organizations, as well as those operated by non-Native entities, such as state or local public or private programs. Federal funding is a key source of funding for Tribal early childhood programs and is considered a part of the federal government's treaty and trust obligations to Tribes.<sup>14</sup>

Native-led early childhood programs often draw on rich Native language and cultural resources in their programming and operate within uniquely resourced and challenged contexts.<sup>15</sup> Native communities place a high value on early childhood development and are rich in cultural, language, and relational resources. However, many of these communities also face a high risk for negative health and academic outcomes that can present additional stressors for families and capacity challenges for community programs and systems. These higher risks are due to the impact of historical and present-day colonization practices.<sup>16</sup> For example, the use of religious and federal Indian boarding schools disconnected Native people from supportive cultural practices and relationships, modeled harsh caregiving that may have been carried forward in future caregiving, and fostered mistrust of externally operated and funded entities such as federal programs, schools, and healthcare.





A long history of broken treaties and harm from federal policies and regulations implemented through educational, medical, and research systems makes even more salient the importance of building genuine and trusting relationships in early childhood education and care settings. More details about this history are provided in the *Equity in IECMHC Webinar Series: Culture, Identity, and History as Sources of Strength and Resilience for Tribal Communities in IECMHC*.<sup>17</sup>

When educational environments are not familiar with the strengths and experiences of Native communities, all children and families miss the opportunity to understand the shared histories and contemporary roles of Native people in the U.S. Importantly, the opportunity to facilitate safe, supportive, and positive learning environments for Native children

and families may be missed. The size of the Native population in the U.S. relative to other population groups, as well as the geographic isolation of many Native communities, contribute to the invisibility of Native people in many contemporary spaces and discussions.<sup>18</sup> Research from the Reclaiming Native Truth project conducted from 2016–18 found that an estimated 40% of Americans believed that Native people no longer exist.<sup>19</sup> In addition, when Native people and cultures are depicted in early childhood programming and materials, the portrayal is often inaccurate, stereotypical, and historical, perpetuating myths and misconceptions among young learners and creating uncomfortable learning environments for Native children and families.<sup>20</sup>

## CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

**A culturally responsive early care and education framework emphasizes incorporating students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds in early learning environments and is an important tool for responding to the challenging histories and present contexts experienced by Native children and families.<sup>21</sup>**

Central to this approach is the use of teaching strategies that validate and affirm the cultural experiences of diverse students, thereby creating an inclusive learning environment. By aligning learning with children's everyday experiences, culturally responsive education fosters cognitive development by recognizing the crucial role that social and cultural contexts play in shaping children's early identity and developmental trajectories.<sup>22</sup>

Integrating cultural and linguistic knowledge into early care and education not only supports children's cognitive and emotional development, but also promotes equitable learning outcomes, particularly

for marginalized communities.<sup>23</sup> This framework also supports the development of cultural identity, a crucial aspect for marginalized and Indigenous populations.<sup>24</sup> Research demonstrates that culturally responsive practices can increase engagement from both children and their families, particularly in historically marginalized communities, such as African American, Latine, and Native populations.<sup>25</sup> While this framework promotes educational equity by addressing the unique needs of diverse children and placing value on their cultural and linguistic backgrounds, implementing culturally responsive schooling in Native communities has historically been limited.<sup>26</sup>

# INDIGENOUS CONNECTEDNESS: SOURCES OF STRENGTH AND WELL-BEING

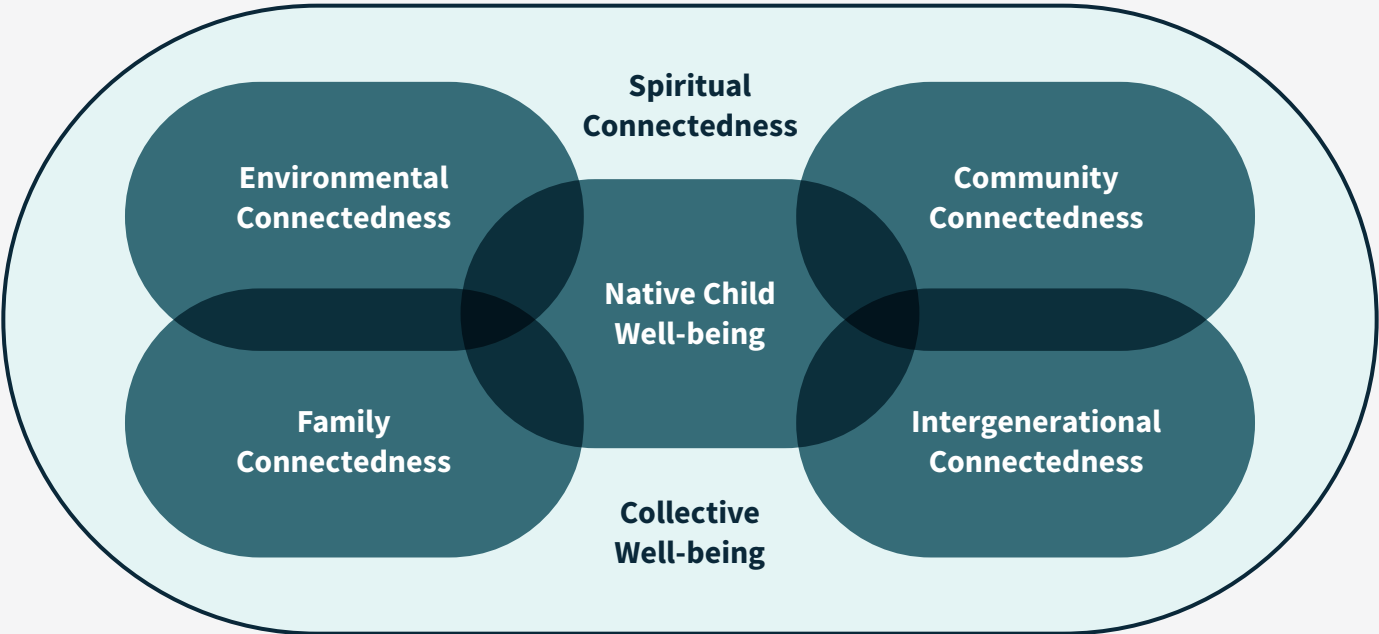
**The Indigenous Connectedness Framework describes the relationships between the concepts that underlie cultural connectedness among Indigenous peoples, especially those native to the North American continent, Australia, and New Zealand.<sup>27</sup>**

The framework emphasizes that children’s development is fostered through deeply rooted environmental, community, family, intergenerational, and spiritual connections. As the framework suggests, Indigenous Peoples develop relational identity through connectedness, culture, and spirituality. This has important implications for IECMHC, as it prioritizes cultivating connections and deep relationships as the foundation for supporting children’s development.

For example, an early childhood educator may choose to teach traditional lifeways connected to the seasons

as a way to support children’s growing connection to their environment, family, community, and ancestors. By teaching children how to responsibly forage ramps or wild leeks in the spring in northern woodland areas, children learn many cultural lifeways, which includes the lesson of taking only what is needed so that the Earth can continue to provide nourishment for future generations. Children engage in these activities with family and community members, hearing stories about how ancestors engaged in these same activities. They learn that this food is provided by the Earth to

**Figure | Simplified Model of the Indigenous Connectedness Framework<sup>28</sup>**



them now because their ancestors took care of the environment; they did not take more than necessary.

The Indigenous Connectedness Framework illustrates that connections are central to Indigenous lifeways. In his book, *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*,<sup>29</sup> Shawn Wilson also illustrates these connections in the way Indigenous worldviews are non-linear, holistic, artistic/visual, spiritual, and intuitive. Underlying these aspects of Indigenous worldviews is the foundation of relationships. It is important to recognize that there are variations in the patterns of relationships and the way people connect through non-verbal gestures and verbal communication across and within Native and non-Native communities. Even with the differences in these patterns, as described by Wilson, a commonality across Indigenous worldviews is the importance of community grounding in deep and broad relationships.<sup>30</sup>

The revised Competencies for IECMHC can guide IECMHC consultants as they engage with early childhood leaders and staff who work with Native children, families, and communities. Consultants can support leaders and staff in adopting and/or implementing an approach that focuses on the

strengths of Native communities that are inherent within these deeply rooted connections. Focusing on these strengths supports the use of culturally sensitive practices aligned with cultural values and lifeways. Efforts to support early childhood education programs serving Native children and families should be guided by existing initiatives that explore cultural alignment in early childhood education,<sup>31</sup> as it is important for IECMH consultants working with Native communities to understand the role of Native language learning and cultural practices in promoting the health and well-being of Native children.<sup>32</sup>

As Massotti and colleagues state, “it is important for non-Native persons to understand that the meaning of culture to Native American/Indigenous Peoples is not about esteem, taste or music but rather is described as a cognitive map on how to be. Native American/Indigenous culture can be thought of as all the things and ways in which Native/Indigenous people understand who they are, where they come from and how they are to interact with others. Hundreds of years across many generations have taught that culture-based activities and interventions improve Native/Indigenous health and well-being.”<sup>33</sup>

## CONSEQUENCES OF ANTI-NATIVE BIAS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

### **What can Native stereotypes look like in early childhood education?**

- Only including Native American content in classroom lessons around the U.S. federal Thanksgiving holiday and using activities that require dressing up like “Pilgrims” and “Indians.”
- Using lessons or classroom materials that only refer to Native American people in the past tense.
- Family tree/history activities that assume migration to the U.S. from other places or that are not inclusive





of diverse family structures (e.g., multigenerational households).

- Making the assumption that Native parents/caregivers do not care about education.
- Assuming that Native children will not perform well on standard screening and assessment tools.
- Making insensitive remarks about a Native child's or family's physical appearance, name, or mannerisms in ways that question or romanticize their Native identity based on depictions of Native people in popular media.

## Pause and Reflect

- How, when, and where did you come to learn about Native American Peoples?
- What opportunities to learn about Native American Peoples exist in your current setting/context?
- What have you learned about Native American Peoples that you did not know previously?

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## Native Invisibility or Erasure

Native invisibility or erasure refers to the systemic disregarding, marginalizing, or omission of Native peoples, their histories, cultures, and contributions within a society or dominant narrative.<sup>34</sup> This can occur in various forms, including:

- **Educational Erasure:** School curricula may often focus on European history or settler-colonial perspectives while minimizing or ignoring Indigenous perspectives, achievements, and Native peoples' continuing presence. Educators are often trained to use educational approaches not inclusive of Indigenous ways of learning.
- **Media Representation:** Native communities and cultures are frequently underrepresented or misrepresented in films, television, literature, and news media, perpetuating stereotypes or overlooking Native stories altogether.
- **Cultural Erasure:** Traditional Indigenous knowledge, languages, practices, and sacred spaces can be lost or suppressed through colonial policies or modern cultural assimilation, leading to the disappearance of key aspects of Native identity and history.
- **Historical Erasure:** Many Native peoples have experienced the deliberate erasure of their contributions and existence from history books, particularly their resistance to colonization or their roles in shaping modern nations.
- **Legal and Political Invisibility:** Governments may fail to recognize Native sovereignty, self-determination, or legal rights, often excluding Native voices from policymaking or land use decisions.

# SECTION 2

## PROMISING PRACTICES FOR COUNTERING BIAS AND PROMOTING CONNECTIONS IN EARLY LEARNING SPACES

Alignment with the Revised IECMHC Competencies

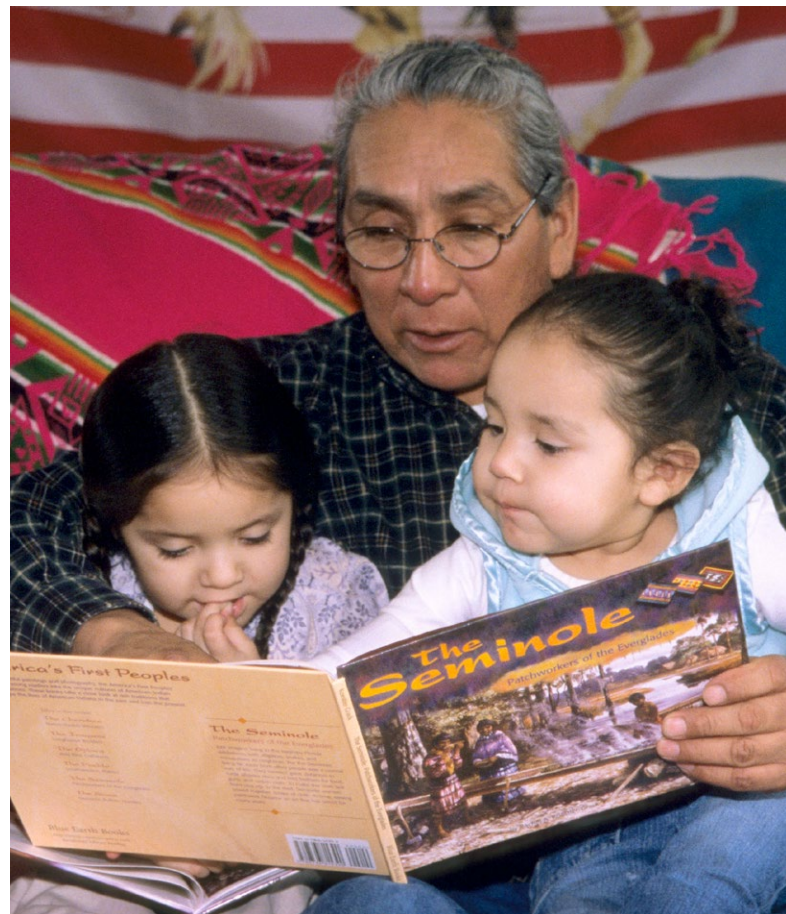
**We return to the revised IECMHC Competencies as our guide for countering bias and promoting connection and belonging in IECMHC.**

This section provides a rationale for centering Indigenous Connectedness, Native language, and cultural practices for effective mental health consultation with programs that support Native families, children, and providers.

For each competency, concrete strategies are suggested to support consultants' reflective capacity, ability to facilitate systemic change, and increased knowledge of values rooted in scholarship by Native mental health researchers and practitioners.

A central question remains: *How do we extend the notion of Native connection and belonging into mental health consultation as a framework for transformation and an outcome for Native children and families?*

How do we extend the notion of Native connection and belonging into mental health consultation as a framework for transformation and an outcome for Native children and families?



## COMPETENCY 1

# Role of the IECMH Consultant

The foundation of IECMHC is the consultative relationship developed between the consultant and the consultee (e.g., teacher, home visitor, social worker, pediatrician). Within this relationship, consultants work to build trust, mutual respect, and responsiveness, and the consultant models and supports consultees in developing positive relationships with caregivers and children.

To be responsive to the needs of Native children and families, it is essential to have a foundational understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing and how these ways of knowing are grounded in relations with all others, including human relatives (all other humans) and non-human relatives (animals, plants, water, and Earth). This understanding is the foundation of the Indigenous Connectedness Framework.<sup>35</sup>

Developing and maintaining genuine, strong, and trusting relationships between early childhood providers and families provides the foundation for

the service's success. This may be especially true for some Native children and families. In some Native communities, families are more likely to live in multigenerational and extended family households. Thus, the child's circle may be larger (e.g., aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins), and providing the family with the opportunity to expand the decision-making team is critical. Honoring the importance of environmental, community, family, intergenerational, and spiritual connections provides a strong foundation for IECMH consultation.

Other aspects of a strong relationship between a provider and family include the provider's cultural humility (see definitions), positionality as a learner and partner, understanding of their cultural identity, and recognition of the privileges and power afforded by their positionality and identity. Thus, it is imperative that the consultant be able to model these cultural understandings and competencies in their interactions with the consultee.

## COMPETENCY 1 Promising Practices

- Reflect on your current social location (i.e., race, ethnicity, gender role, socioeconomic status) and how it impacts your work with Native families, children, and providers.
- Increase awareness of the history of harmful practices enacted by the U.S. government, researchers, medical professionals, and mental health practitioners that have resulted in a mistrust of health and education professionals by many Native families and children. View the *Equity in IECMHC Webinar Series* and other resources found at the end of this resource.
- Commit to earning families' trust by acknowledging potential power dynamics and centering their values and goals for consultation, using a trauma-informed approach when appropriate.<sup>36</sup>
- Co-create a plan to address stigma with families, providers, and the communities served. For example, consider using a name or acronym for IECMHC that centers on community, connection, and belonging for your program.<sup>37</sup> Team names should be identified by the community you serve and reflect their culture and language.



## COMPETENCY 2

# Foundational Knowledge

The consultative stance, which encourages consultants to highlight the importance of not being the expert, is vitally important when building relationships with people whose culture, life circumstances, and values may differ from their own. Most IECMH consultants are educated and trained within the U.S. education system, which values Eurocentric theories related to child-rearing, mental wellness, and education. Considering the dynamic nature of culture and its practices over time and circumstance, consultants must learn about Native history and culture broadly, as well as the specific history and cultural context of the communities they serve. Additionally, consultants should learn

about the work of Native scholars and Native ally scholars on mental health and child development concepts<sup>38</sup> related to child-rearing,<sup>39</sup> social-emotional development,<sup>40</sup> healing,<sup>41</sup> spiritual practices, and caregiver expectations to promote cultural connection and belonging.<sup>42</sup> A practice responsive to the needs of Native families should consider the opportunity to uplift cultural identity development, prioritization of affective knowledge, and the integral nature of extended family to adult-child attachment. By expanding on their cultural understandings, IECMH consultants strengthen their own connections to the programs and communities they serve.

## COMPETENCY 2 Promising Practices

- Learn about the history of Native people in the U.S., the diversity of Native cultures and languages, and the range of other intersectional identities, such as transracial adoptee status, gender, history of colonization, biracial and multiracial identities, Tribal membership/citizenship status, etc. Research the deep structures of Native cultures, histories, languages, and lifeways well enough to structure the consultation process appropriately. View the *Equity in IECMHC Webinar Series* and other resources found at the end of this resource.
- Learn about the specific history, culture, and language of the Native community or communities that the consultees you support work within.
- Intentionally seek information on Native connection and belonging as resistance, pleasure, and leisure to expand your thinking of Native communities (e.g., research archives, visit galleries exhibiting Native artists, and immerse yourself in Native-centered spaces).<sup>43</sup>
- Research and learn about White cultural values in education, mental health, and theories of change. These ideologies are reflected within the mental health consultation system and strongly influence the experiences of Native children, families, caregivers, and providers. Research and learn about Native cultural values in education, mental health, and theories of change. Identify and consider similarities and differences between White and Native ideologies.
- Support consultees in identifying relevant cultural and linguistic knowledge regarding children's development and educating young children through a racial equity lens. Integrate learning and dialogue about Native-centered healing and social-emotional pedagogy in consultation and reflective supervision.<sup>44</sup>

CONTINUED ►

- Participate in racial bias training as part of the mental health consultation process. Training should include information about the history of racism, white supremacy, sexism, and ableism and their impact on the field of IECMHC. The CoE Racial Equity Toolkit

can facilitate new learning and discussion of complex topics related to racial equity.<sup>45</sup> Encourage those you work with (i.e., other consultants, supervisors, and consultees) to participate in racial bias training.

### COMPETENCY 3

## Equity and Cultural Sensitivity

To ensure that consultation is conducted with an equity lens, it is crucial to start by closely examining one's own culture, beliefs, and values to grasp their influence on interactions with children, families, and programs. When collaborating with programs serving Native families, the consultant should be familiar with the cultural context of families and providers. Building strong relationships with program staff is one way to develop this cultural familiarity, which enables consultants to better interpret the meaning behind a child's behavior. Additionally, consultants should collaborate with early childhood providers and families to co-develop and implement strategies that best meet a child's needs within the family's cultural context.

These connections develop best when consultants learn about the consultees' (i.e., providers and families) preferred communication style, their perceptions, beliefs, and values about gender roles, gender identification and expression, child-rearing practices, beliefs about recovering from adversity, and, most importantly, their dreams and hopes for their children. This exploration should be done with genuine curiosity and humility and move at the pace and to the extent that consultees are comfortable with. Checking in with consultees regularly regarding their comfort level with the information being discussed is also advised.



Consultants need to be aware of the impact of historical trauma and institutional racism when building relationships with Native providers or families. Building trust and establishing rapport may require extra effort and time, but a more deeply grounded consultative relationship allows the consultant to support the consultee more effectively. IECMHC protocols or other integrated best practices may need to be modified to ensure adequate time in the initial trust-building phase to be the most effective.

Through a trusting relationship and with foundational cultural knowledge and competence, IECMHC consultants can support programs and staff as they bridge cultural differences in caregiving expectations between Native families and providers. Cultural child-rearing practices are not neutral but interwoven with important values, a sense of belonging, and responsibility to community.

Consultants need to be aware of the impact of historical trauma and institutional racism when building relationships with Native providers or families. Building trust and establishing rapport may require extra effort and time, but a more deeply grounded consultative relationship allows the consultant to support the consultee more effectively.

## COMPETENCY 3 Promising Practices

- Reflect on your values around infant caregiving, child development, classroom practices, and the concept of which behaviors are considered “appropriate behaviors.” Where did you learn these ideas (e.g., home, school, college, community)? How do these ideas align with your values? How do they align with voices within the Native communities that you are working with?
- Evaluate the ways in which policies and practices reflect White middle-class values, which may not align with the values of those who you are serving. Work with providers to balance classroom and early childhood policies and practices to be culturally responsive. Tailor services to specific cultural values and expectations of Native families.
- Consider the structure of the consultation referral process, intake procedures, and assessment practices. Consider the importance of conducting work in person with consultants and providing

additional time to develop a strong consultative relationship.<sup>46</sup>

- When working with providers and writing improvement plans, reframe cultural behaviors that are often mislabeled as inappropriate as developmentally and culturally appropriate. For example, in some Native cultures, communication during collaboration may be more likely to include non-verbal communication. This is often mislabeled in Native children as reflective of language skill deficiency when it may be a cultural practice that supports higher levels of collaboration.



## COMPETENCY 4

# Reflective Practice

Maintaining a reflective stance is integral to the important daily work of IECMH consultants. Broad reflection may not provide the targeted processing needed when considering the context, experiences, and values of Native families.<sup>47</sup> However, equity-centered reflection that calls out pervasive beliefs about Native people and cultures is necessary to counter bias and promote connection and belonging by raising awareness of cultural connections and practices as sources of strength that promote well-being. This includes questioning the role of power, privilege, and oppression in work with providers, families, and children and its potential impact on the

consultee-consultant relationship. Utilizing strategies such as reflective journaling and group discussions can facilitate this process. Further, intentional and frequent reflection is essential to ensure ongoing awareness.

Maintaining a reflective stance is integral to the important daily work of IECMH consultants.

## COMPETENCY 4 Promising Practices

- Engage in ongoing self-reflection of how your positionality, culture, gender identity, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status impact personal and professional beliefs and attitudes. Consider the central questions:
  - Who am I?
  - What do I believe?
  - How do my beliefs and identity influence my work with children, families, and providers?
- Reflect on and identify your biases and beliefs about Native communities. Consider how marginalizing ideas or messages about Native communities, families, and children have appeared in your family and social circles, then examine how they have impacted your belief systems. Notice these biases without judgment to create an uninhibited space for unlearning harmful beliefs.
- Commit to increasing your awareness of your personal biases.<sup>48</sup> Consider finding an accountability partner or joining an accountability group in your personal or professional life to help support you in sustaining active self-reflection and identifying personal and institutional biases.
- Consider the following questions when creating plans for programs, classrooms, and children and families:
  - Who benefits and who is disadvantaged by the strategies or approaches I am using?
  - How is my positionality influencing my approach?
  - Is the flow or cycle of consultation responsive to the needs of consultees?
  - Do these practices promote connection and community support, or act as a barrier to those goals?<sup>49</sup>

## COMPETENCY 5

# Child and Family Focused Consultation

MHCs are often called upon to assist teachers in responding reflectively to behaviors they perceive as challenging. The goal of IECMHC is not to “fix” children or families but rather to partner with consultees, families, and children to address the root causes of reported concerns and prevent future harmful situations. Before attempting to change parenting behaviors that may be believed to be unhealthy, it is important to understand that these practices may be the result of personal or group-based racialized trauma and colonization. This competency invites consultants to leverage the strengths of the families they work with, centering their culture and identity in the process. Doing so allows for the co-creation of

meaningful consultation experiences between the consultant and the family. It is vital that consultants support staff in building trust with families by actively listening and honoring the family’s identified strengths and needs. Adopting asset-based language and perspectives further reinforces the trust between the consultant and the family. All children need to feel safe, affirmed, and protected. However, early childhood educators’ biases about Native children and families can result in children feeling “deficient” because of their unique culture and history.<sup>50</sup> Accordingly, it is necessary to actively challenge and counteract these biases, reframing Native culture and connections as a source of strength and resilience.

## COMPETENCY 5 Promising Practices

- Increase awareness of the history of harmful practices enacted by mental health practitioners that have resulted in a mistrust of mental health professionals by many Native families and children.
- Commit to earning community and family trust by acknowledging potential power dynamics and centering their cultural values and goals for consultation, using a trauma-informed approach when necessary. Listen to what families have to say about their own strengths and needs.<sup>51</sup>
- Ask family members about their primary/preferred language, including specifically asking about Native languages. When appropriate, encourage the child’s and family’s use of their home/primary languages. If the family’s primary/preferred language is their Native language, ask the family if they would like consultation services to be provided in the family’s Native language using an interpreter from the community. When relevant, learn about and connect back to program and community language preservation/revitalization efforts.<sup>52</sup>
- Ask the family if there are extended family and community members who play a significant role in the family’s life. These individuals can be included in the consultation process as they may be an important source of support for the family and child.<sup>53</sup>
- Co-create a plan to address stigma and biases with families, providers, and the communities served. Building trust with families will create a safe space for them to share experiences in early childhood spaces where they have faced stigma and bias.<sup>54</sup>

## COMPETENCY 6

# Classroom Focused Consultation

Early learning settings should be places of connection and belonging that do not perpetuate racial or cultural trauma. Through direct teaching, sharing resources, and appropriate use of assessment, MHCs can support providers in becoming active disruptors of bias and enablers of connection and belonging. Using culturally responsive tools sensitive to bias can result in more equitable learning environments and positive experiences for children.<sup>1,6</sup> Many mainstream classrooms and home-based learning environments operate based on cultural values that may not align with Native family practices. This is reinforced by observation and direct assessment tools rooted in dominant belief systems about how adults support children's learning and how children are expected to demonstrate learned skills and knowledge. Commonly used assessment tools over the past decades generally do not reflect the lived realities of Native children and do not meaningfully integrate the

perspectives of Native early childhood professionals. Some of these tools have created revisions to increase the responsiveness of the assessment process. For example, the Classroom Assessment Scoring System for Pre-K-3rd (CLASS-PK-3rd) released a revision that more effectively embeds principles of equity to reduce observer bias and integrate the voices of Native experts.<sup>55</sup> It is imperative for consultants to be aware of the cultural responsiveness of each version of a tool and trained in the version found to be most responsive and, therefore, appropriate for use in classrooms serving Native children. When IECMH consultants utilize individual child and classroom-based assessments that are not culturally responsive, their consultative work may be guided by information that is irrelevant and potentially harmful to the process of building relationships and guiding children's development.

## COMPETENCY 6 Promising Practices

- Reflect on your beliefs about what constitutes an evidence-based practice. Where did you learn what type of evidence is valid in defining an “evidence-based” practice or tool?
- Adopt child, program, and classroom/home-level tools that are equity-minded, valid, and reliable. When identifying new tools, use separate tools, alongside global classroom quality measures, that pay particular attention to influences such as bias and equity (e.g., Assessing Classroom Sociocultural Equity Scale (ACSES)),<sup>56</sup> the inclusion of children with disabilities (e.g., Inclusive Classroom Profile),<sup>57</sup> experiences of racial trauma (e.g., Parent and Caregiver's Childhood Experiences of Racial Acceptance and Rejection (CERAR)),<sup>58</sup> and the inclusion of culture and Native language (e.g. Native Culture & Language in the Classroom Observation (NCLCO)).<sup>59</sup> If the community you are working with has developed their own assessment tools or used tools that they have identified as culturally appropriate, include them in your work.
- Facilitate providers' capacity to consider how a program's physical environment and culture impact the well-being of Native children, families, and leaders. Is the physical environment reflective of the fullness of Native culture, including art, music, traditions, etc.? If not, encourage programs to solicit stories and/or images from the community.<sup>60</sup>
- Build consultees' capacity in classroom management skills that encourage expressions of connection and belonging that may be outside of what providers have experienced.<sup>61</sup>



## COMPETENCY 7

# Programmatic Consultation

Program-wide consultation provides an opportunity to drive system-wide change and create safe, welcoming, and affirming spaces for Native families. This involves examining program design for biases and reflecting on potential disparities in the representation of Native people in leadership roles. According to implicit leadership theory, individuals are less likely to hold leadership roles when their personalities differ from the cultural archetype of a leader.<sup>62</sup> Native employees may be viewed as “quiet” and “hard-working” and tend to value humility and collaboration—traits that can clash with the stereotypical image of an “ideal” American leader, who is seen as assertive, charismatic, confident, and self-promotional. Underlying the values of humility and collaboration is Indigenous Connectedness; we are better able to live a life full of deeply rooted connections to each other, the land, and

our culture across generations if our principles center on humility and collaboration rather than on power and individual attainment. However, unless Native employees express a higher level of communication assertiveness, they may be overlooked for leadership roles. The goal of programmatic consultation is to assist programs in creating spaces that are not sources for more racial or cultural trauma but rather places where Native children, families, and program staff feel safe and brave. Implementing concrete and substantial changes in policies, practices, and attitudes prioritizing Indigenous Connectedness will foster greater belonging for Native children and families.<sup>63</sup>

## COMPETENCY 7 Promising Practices

- Consider the use of coded language such as “vulnerable,” “marginalized,” “low-income,” and “at-risk.” Are these phrases substitutes for being Native or from a reservation? Replace these phrases with asset-based terminology specific to the topic being addressed. To identify appropriate asset-based terminology for the community you work with, look toward the strengths of community connections and culture that support young children’s development. For example, a consultant might need to reframe any negative connotations they have about intergenerational households by understanding the importance of Intergenerational Connectedness.<sup>64</sup> Embrace asset-based language and perspectives, and counter deficit-based perspectives of Native families. Conduct an audit of language use in materials and personal language use. For a week, note the words you use when referring to a Native child or adult.
- Conduct a critical assessment of the workforce, including the cultural, organizational, and individual barriers that keep Native people from attaining career progress and leadership positions. For both staff and the children and families we serve, it is important to assess how Native staff may be discouraged from using their home language, dialect, or style in learning settings and promote safe, Native-affirming environments.
- Increase the program's capacity to collect and use disaggregated data by race/ethnicity, gender, language, and early intervention to identify disparities, celebrate accomplishments, and create targeted policies.

CONTINUED ▷

- Work with administrators to remove and replace practices and policies that disproportionately harm Native children (i.e., harsh or exclusionary discipline, disparities in referrals).
- Create safe, brave spaces for Native employees to connect, such as culturally specific affinity groups, to build community and increase morale within the workplace. Be mindful of putting Native colleagues in a position where they are expected to be the "token Native/Indian" and educate others about racism and rhetoric directed toward Native Peoples. Seek out reputable sources and spend time learning

about anti-Native language and beliefs on your own and acknowledge that cultural learning and humility are lifelong practices.<sup>65</sup>

- Recognize how Native holidays and cultural observances, which are often not included in standard company calendars, contribute to feelings of exclusion for Native employees. Recognize that many federal holidays have negative implications for Native Peoples, as these holidays often celebrate events and figures that were harmful to Native communities and Tribes.

## Pause and Think

- Historically, who has and continues to dominate mental health consultation, and how does this influence infant and early childhood research, practice, communication, and engagement?



## COMPETENCY 8

# Systems Wide Orientation

This competency offers a valuable opportunity to integrate the wisdom of Native scholars, educators, families, and children into mental health concepts and supports across all learning environments. Community members, with their insights into the mental health needs of Native children and families, are vital in cultivating safe and supportive spaces. Building relationships and connections with key community organizing and advocacy groups can provide the necessary support for ongoing professional development, assist with identifying resources for families, and create authentically Native-centered spaces and processes. Working with the Tribe or Tribal-serving organization in your area is an essential step in this process. Understand that

each Tribe has sovereignty, and Tribal approval may need to be obtained to work with an early childhood education program managed by a Tribe.

Building relationships and connections with key community organizing and advocacy groups can provide the necessary support.

## COMPETENCY 8 Promising Practices

- Identify community members, employees of the Tribe, and culturally aligned parties with whom to partner and compensate them for their participation and contributions.<sup>66</sup>
- Connect consultees to community resources and support for needs that extend beyond the goals of IECMHC.<sup>67</sup>
- Acknowledge how racism and community trauma have impacted Native children, families, and communities; this cannot be separated from child behavior and classroom dynamics.
- Partner with local family childcare networks to establish best practices for engaging home-based providers who serve Native children and families.<sup>68</sup>

## Pause and Reflect on Part 2

- How can allies and those who are non-Native embrace and uplift Native culture without misappropriating it?
- What does this look like for consultants and other educational staff working in settings without, or with low percentages of, Native children in their service population? Why is this important for children who are non-Native?
- How will you commit to elevating Native connection and belonging in your professional and personal lives?



# SECTION 3

## SCENARIOS BASED ON REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCES IN IECMHC

**The scenarios below draw on the real experiences of Native children, families, and providers in early learning settings.**

They highlight opportunities for IECMHC to be responsive to the strengths, needs, and values of Native communities to promote healing and well-being. The scenarios are followed by questions to prompt personal reflection and facilitate group dialogue. Readers can use the promising practices outlined above to guide their thinking.





## SCENARIO 1

### Presentation of Scenario

A consultant was asked to meet with a teacher and assistant teacher in an urban Head Start center that serves mostly Native children. Neither teacher was Native. The consultant was requested to provide support just before the winter holiday break, as the teachers were experiencing challenging behavior in the classroom. The assistant teacher had worked in the program for several years and told the consultant that he had good relationships with the children in the classroom. On the other hand, the lead teacher had begun working in the classroom just two months earlier, and she was getting to know the children. Both teachers told the consultant that four children in the classroom were exhibiting problematic behavior, yelling and screaming at the teachers and refusing to follow directions. The consultant established weekly meetings with the teachers that would begin after the winter holiday to get to know the teachers, learn more about the children's needs as expressed through their behavior, and identify how the teachers and children could be supported. In the first few meetings, the teachers expressed frustration with the children's behavior and stated they were doing everything they could in the classroom. The lead teacher said that she felt the children were defiant and doing whatever they wanted. The consultant asked the teachers to describe a few situations that resulted in these behaviors in detail. Through the teachers' retelling of situations and direct observations made by the consultant, it became clear to the consultant that the new teacher was managing behavior with techniques that were at odds with the community's culture. The consultant observed the lead teacher trying to control children's behavior using threats of isolation. For example, the consultant observed the teacher telling a child, "If you don't come over here right now, then I'm going to put you in the time-out room."

## SCENARIO 1 QUESTIONS

### Personal Reflection Questions

- What are your initial feelings about and reactions to this scenario?
- What are your beliefs about how Indigenous ways of knowing and being should be included in the classroom?
- What knowledge and information would support the lead educator in this scenario to be more effective in her new role with the children?

### Questions for Discussion and Action

- How can you learn about the cultural values of the communities you serve to inform your work with an early childhood educator or provider?
- How might the classroom environment be different if the lead educator came into her role with questions about Indigenous ways of knowing and being?
- How might the classroom environment be different if the lead educator spent more time building relationships with the children when first entering her role?

## Follow-up with the Consultant and Teacher

Through discussions over several weeks, the consultant guided the teachers to the understanding that the children's routines had been disrupted when the new lead teacher came in and changed the classroom schedule. The consultant also had conversations each week with the teachers to support their understanding of how to support positive behavior through relationships and the connection of this approach to the Native community's valuing of relationships and supporting children's autonomy. After a few more weeks of meeting, the lead teacher also realized that her approach to behavior management in the classroom was focused on punishing negative behaviors through isolation (time out away from the main group) or verbal correction using a harsh tone of voice ("No! Don't do it that way!"). The lead teacher stated that she realized that her approach to behavior management came from her own upbringing and did not align with the culture of the families and children she was serving. She expressed a commitment to learning how to support the children in her classroom in a way that aligned with the culture's values of guiding learning through relationships, responsibility to the community, and autonomy. The consultant continued to meet with the teachers, and the lead teacher made significant progress in establishing a consistent classroom schedule, which allowed the teacher to focus on supporting positive behavior through relationships and providing children with autonomy.

Relationships are central to many Indigenous communities' core beliefs, and consultants must recognize their centrality in supporting young Native children's development.

## SCENARIO 1 DEBRIEF

### Debrief with Considerations

Relationships are central to many Indigenous communities' core beliefs, and consultants must recognize their centrality in supporting young Native children's development. Educators, especially those not from the communities they serve, may need guidance to build these relationships, as they form the foundation for meaningful learning experiences in the classroom. In many Indigenous cultures, the emphasis on autonomy is deeply connected to the significance of relationships. Everyone, including children, has a responsibility to care for their relations—family, the community, and the natural environment. This responsibility also comes with the autonomy needed to contribute to the community.

When beginning to work with an educator or administrator, the consultant should explore with the educator or administrator how the practices in the classroom could be better aligned with cultural values.

## SCENARIO 2

### Presentation of Scenario

A consultant is beginning to work with a pre-Kindergarten program in a rural community. Approximately one-fifth of the families served by the program are Native American and have connections to the multiple Native American reservation-based communities that are nearby. The majority of the program's staff are non-Native and from the rural community, with deep ties to farming and agriculture industries in the region. A non-Native teacher who grew up in the rural community and is in her first year of teaching requests consultation and expresses concern about the behavior of Native children in her classroom. The teacher shares that the Native children appear tired and disengaged, and she has observed a lack of care and attention from the children's parents. She states that some of the parents attended family events at the beginning of the school year but have not responded to notes sent home about their children's behavior and did not attend parent-teacher meetings to close out the first quarter of the school year. The teacher tells the consultant that she is seeking ways to better engage the Native children and help their parents understand the importance of education.

### Follow-up with the Consultant and Teacher

The consultant encourages the teacher to reflect on the parent outreach strategies she has used thus far and on her own assumptions about what it looks like for children and parents to be engaged in a learning environment. The teacher recognizes that in-person communication with parents is needed and decides to use drop-off and pick-up times to build rapport with the parents and eventually request meetings to discuss what she is observing in the classroom. After several weeks of using this strategy and meeting one-on-one with parents, the teacher learns that many of the parents work full-time throughout the week and participate in a Tribal language group with

## SCENARIO 2 QUESTIONS

### Personal Reflection Questions

- What assumptions is the teacher making about why the children are tired in class?
- What assumptions is the teacher making about the value parents place on education?
- What underlying beliefs might inform these assumptions?
- What opportunities might the teacher miss if she moves forward with these assumptions?

### Questions for Discussion and Action

- How should the consultant support the teacher to understand her assumptions and underlying beliefs? How can the consultant do this in a way that allows the teacher to be open to hearing other people's perspectives?
- How should the consultant guide the teacher to respectfully develop stronger relationships with the Native families she is serving?

their children that meets Monday and Wednesday evenings in a reservation community about 30 minutes away. The Tribe recently started the language group to support revitalization of the language, which is fluently spoken by fewer than ten community members. Several parents remarked to the teacher how meaningful it is to learn their Native language with their children and build stronger connections to their Tribal community.

The teacher realizes that the parents care about their children’s learning and their connection to their Native language and culture. The consultant further encourages the teacher to see these family characteristics as strengths that can be built on in the classroom. Through the teacher’s relationships with parents, she connects with leaders of the language group and invites them to visit her class and share resources for including the language in classroom activities (e.g., labeling classroom items, teaching key words for common activities). These actions foster trust and connection with the Native parents and create space for their children to be engaged and excited in the classroom. The students are proud to support their classmates in learning about their Tribal language. Importantly, all classroom members also have a new opportunity to learn about the culture and language of a local Tribal community.

As relationships, understanding, and trust is built, consultants can support staff and programs in further building connections with Native communities to achieve a systems-wide approach to fostering a safe and supportive educational environment for Native families.

## SCENARIO 2 DEBRIEF

### Debrief with Considerations

Assimilation policies, such as federal Indian boarding schools, have disconnected many Native American communities and families from their languages and cultural practices. These policies have also left Native American people feeling invisible in the very places that have been their homelands for centuries. At times, inaccurate and biased beliefs may fill the gaps, and Native families may feel unsafe sharing their cultural identities and languages in school settings. Today, many Native American communities are actively developing resources and programming to sustain and revitalize their languages and cultural practices, making space for Native families to (re)connect and heal. Access to these types of efforts varies, and families may have to navigate practical barriers to participate (e.g., location, timing) as well as their own emotions and feelings about engaging in them (e.g., shame and/or guilt of having limited knowledge, responsibility to preserve knowledge for future generations).

Consultants can be a resource in this process by helping educators create space for (re) connection. Consultants can support educators in adopting a consultative stance, encouraging them to reflect on their own assumptions about Native people and approach their engagements with students and families through a lens of cultural sensitivity. As relationships, understanding, and trust is built, consultants can support staff and programs in further building connections with Native communities to achieve a systems-wide approach to fostering a safe and supportive educational environment for Native families.



# CONCLUSION

**IECMHC is uniquely positioned to counter racism and bias because of its goal to build providers' reflective capacity.**

Committing to reflecting on and questioning one's beliefs about concepts integrated into the value systems we have come to accept as truth can be a challenge. Seeking the support of those on a similar journey of unlearning and relearning can provide needed support and new perspectives during times of uncertainty.

Self-reflection is an ongoing process with no specific endpoint. It may become easier as you practice stepping outside your thought processes and interacting to understand new ways of thinking. It is necessary to learn critical reflective practice before implementing anti-bias, anti-racist pedagogy, or culturally responsive teaching. Embracing self-compassion as you develop these critical reflective practices may increase your willingness to commit to the process. Just as we have compassion for our youngest learners as they grapple with complex emotions, be compassionate towards yourself and your colleagues as you learn new topics and adjust to new situations. When intentional strategies to counter bias and increase Native representation are applied, early learning spaces have the potential to be safe and joy-producing environments for Native children and families.

It is essential to move from reflection to knowledge consumption to action. The authors of this resource hope to provide you with a foundation to begin implementing these promising practices and integrating them into your daily work. Resources are provided below to support your continued efforts to help Native children, families, and providers have equitable experiences that are void of bias and full of connection.



Self-reflection is an ongoing process with no specific endpoint. It may become easier as you practice stepping outside your thought processes and interacting to understand new ways of thinking.

## Policy Considerations

1. Ensure that children and early care and education providers working with Native communities have meaningful access to IECMHC—this includes the culturally tailored expansion of IECMHC beyond licensed early care and education settings.
2. Commit to building, recruiting, retaining, and promoting a more robust Native IECMHC workforce that is diverse and reflects the Native communities served by IECMHC.
3. Intentionally match consultants' cultural and linguistic identities with those of the families and early care and education providers they serve.
4. Provide enhanced professional development opportunities for MHCs, their supervisors, and program leaders. This includes explicit and purposeful integration of history, unique experiences of racism and trauma, and culturally and linguistically responsive practice into IECMHC to meet the needs and uplift the strengths of Native children and families in all their diversity—cultural, economic, and linguistic.
5. Demonstrate community- and state-wide leadership in advancing equity for Native children and families across adjacent systems like K-12 education, housing, nutrition, health care, child welfare, transportation, etc.
6. Support reflective supervisors' capacity to discuss equity issues, including systemic racism, bias, and resulting disparities experienced by Native families.
7. Integrate Native community, teacher, and family perspectives during service delivery.
8. Promote effective transitions or seamless systems of care from consultation to intervention to help decrease barriers to early childhood mental health care for Native families, given their historical experiences with oppressive and harmful health and education systems, which can create challenges in creating a sense of trust and rapport building.
9. Build knowledge and awareness of the importance of maintaining and growing children's home language across families, providers, and systems leaders and intentionally connect children and families to Native language learning opportunities across early learning and primary school systems.



# SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

Resources in this section provide readers with additional places to learn about topics described throughout this document. The resources have been placed into overarching categories, but may be relevant to multiple aspects of cultivating connectedness to promote healing and well-being for Native American children, families, and communities.

## Resources for Identifying Children's Books

### **American Indians in Children's Literature**

[americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com](http://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com)

### **Birchbark Books**

[birchbarkbooks.com/collections/young-readers](http://birchbarkbooks.com/collections/young-readers)

### **First One Hundred Institute**

[firstonehundred.org](http://firstonehundred.org)

### **Flyleaf Books**

[flyleafbooks.com/native-american-heritage-kids](http://flyleafbooks.com/native-american-heritage-kids)

### **Lee and Low Books**

[leeandlow.com](http://leeandlow.com)

### **Native Northwest**

[nativenorthwest.com/childrens-book](http://nativenorthwest.com/childrens-book)

### **Teaching for Change**

[teachingforchange.org](http://teachingforchange.org)

## Resources about Native American Populations

### **Transforming teaching and learning about Native Americans**

[americanindian.si.edu/nk360](http://americanindian.si.edu/nk360)

### **Honoring indigenous cultures and histories**

[ted.com/talks/jill\\_fish\\_honoring\\_indigenous\\_cultures\\_and\\_histories?subtitle=en](http://ted.com/talks/jill_fish_honoring_indigenous_cultures_and_histories?subtitle=en)

### **Reclaiming Native Truth | Research Findings: Complication of all Research**

[rnt.firstnations.org/research](http://rnt.firstnations.org/research)

### **U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Minority Health**

[minorityhealth.hhs.gov/american-indianalaska-native-health#:~:text=The%20U.S.%20Census%20Bureau%20defines,at%20the%20individual%20state%20level](http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/american-indianalaska-native-health#:~:text=The%20U.S.%20Census%20Bureau%20defines,at%20the%20individual%20state%20level)

### **Indian Entities Recognized by and Eligible To Receive Services From the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs**

[federalregister.gov/documents/2024/01/08/2024-00109/indian-entities-recognized-by-and-eligible-to-receive-services-from-the-united-states-bureau-of](https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/01/08/2024-00109/indian-entities-recognized-by-and-eligible-to-receive-services-from-the-united-states-bureau-of)

### **U.S. Census Bureau | Facts for Features: National Native American Heritage Month: November 2024**

[census.gov/newsroom/facts-for-features/2024/aian-month.html#:~:text=7.4%20million,More%20Stats](https://www.census.gov/newsroom/facts-for-features/2024/aian-month.html#:~:text=7.4%20million,More%20Stats)

### **U.S. Census Bureau | Detailed Data for Hundreds of American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes**

[census.gov/library/stories/2023/10/2020-census-dhc-a-aian-population.html](https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2023/10/2020-census-dhc-a-aian-population.html)

### **U.S. Census Bureau | Detailed Data for Hundreds of American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes**

[bia.gov/service/federal-indian-boarding-school-initiative#:~:text=The%20announcement%20directed%20the%20Department,to%20the%20Department%27s%20priority%20page%20](https://www.bia.gov/service/federal-indian-boarding-school-initiative#:~:text=The%20announcement%20directed%20the%20Department,to%20the%20Department%27s%20priority%20page%20)

## Resources about Inclusive Approaches to Support Native American Children and Families

### **Native Perspectives on Child Development**

[nicwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/NICWA\\_Safe-Babies\\_Native-Perspectives\\_revised-8-13-24.pdf](https://www.nicwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/NICWA_Safe-Babies_Native-Perspectives_revised-8-13-24.pdf)

### **Trauma-Informed/Healing-Centered Engagement Teaching Resources**

[provost.tufts.edu/celt/inclusive-and-equitable-teaching/trauma-informed-healing-centered-engagement-teaching-resources](https://provost.tufts.edu/celt/inclusive-and-equitable-teaching/trauma-informed-healing-centered-engagement-teaching-resources)

### **Culturally-Based Curriculum Digital Resources for Schools, Teachers, Parents and Students**

[niea.org/virtual-resources-for-parents-and-teachers](https://www.niea.org/virtual-resources-for-parents-and-teachers)

### **2020 Center on Excellence in Infant and Mental Health Consultation Webinar Series**

[ecmhc.org/resources/equity/equity-webinars](https://www.ecmhc.org/resources/equity/equity-webinars)

### **Incorporating Indigenous Practices to Support Social Emotional Learning**

[educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/pdf/incorporating-indigenous-practices508c.pdf](https://www.educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/pdf/incorporating-indigenous-practices508c.pdf)

### **The Impact of Trauma-Informed Practices in Early Childhood Education**

[resilientfutures.us/resources/earlychildhoodtraumainformedpractices](https://www.resilientfutures.us/resources/earlychildhoodtraumainformedpractices)

### **Center on Excellence in Infant and Mental Health Consultation Racial Equity Toolkit**

[iecmhc.org/resources/coe-equity-toolkit](https://www.iecmhc.org/resources/coe-equity-toolkit)

### **Cross-Sector Allies Together in the Struggle for Social Justice: Diversity-Informed Tenets for Work With Infants, Children, and Families**

[zerotothree.org/resource/journal/cross-sector-allies-together-in-the-struggle-for-social-justice-diversity-informed-tenets-for-work-with-infants-children-and-families](https://www.zerotothree.org/resource/journal/cross-sector-allies-together-in-the-struggle-for-social-justice-diversity-informed-tenets-for-work-with-infants-children-and-families)



# Resources about Research Relating to Native American Children and Families

## **Tribal Resource Center - Communities of Learning & Research**

[coloradosph.cuanschutz.edu/research-and-practice/centers-programs/caianh/projects/trc/communities-research](http://coloradosph.cuanschutz.edu/research-and-practice/centers-programs/caianh/projects/trc/communities-research)

## **Home and Community Native Language and Cultural Experiences Among AI/AN Children in Region XI Head Start: Findings from the American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey 2015**

[acf.hhs.gov/opre/report/home-and-community-native-language-and-cultural-experiences-among-ai/children-region-xi](http://acf.hhs.gov/opre/report/home-and-community-native-language-and-cultural-experiences-among-ai/children-region-xi)

## **Native Language and Culture Experiences among Children in Region XI Head Start Classrooms & Programs: Findings from the American Indian and Alaska Native Head**

## **Start Family and Child Experiences Survey 2015**

[acf.hhs.gov/opre/report/native-language-and-culture-experiences-among-children-region-xi-head-start-classrooms](http://acf.hhs.gov/opre/report/native-language-and-culture-experiences-among-children-region-xi-head-start-classrooms)

## **Native Language Use in Region XI Head Start Classrooms**

[acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/opre/native\\_language\\_use\\_region\\_xi\\_apr2023.pdf](http://acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/opre/native_language_use_region_xi_apr2023.pdf)

## **Jillian Fish Publications**

[jillianfish.com/publications](http://jillianfish.com/publications)

## **Native Culture & Language in the Classroom Observation (NCLCO)**

[acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/opre/nclco-stand-alone\\_2019-updates\\_january2021\\_508.pdf](http://acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/opre/nclco-stand-alone_2019-updates_january2021_508.pdf)

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