

PROJECT BRIEF

The Tribal Early Childhood Research Center (TRC)

Project Team:

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Project Description.

The Tribal Early Childhood Research Center (TRC) is a partnership between researchers and American Indian and Alaska Native communities, programs, and practitioners to advance our understanding of young children's development within the context of American Indian and Alaska Native families, early care and education programs, and communities through research. TRC activities include pilot research, training, and a semi-annual conference on child development research and evaluation with American Indian and Alaska Native communities. The TRC relies on a Steering Committee and Communities of Learning that include researchers, American Indian and Alaska Native community and program partners, and federal partners to guide its efforts. The TRC is based out of the University of Colorado Denver, Colorado School of Public Health, Centers for American Indian and Alaska Native Health and includes research partners at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health – Center for American Indian Health, Michigan State University – Office of University Outreach and Engagement, and the Brazelton Touchpoints Center at Harvard Medical School. The TRC is funded by a grant from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation.

Research Questions.

Because the TRC is a research network, we support several research projects, each with its own set of research questions. Given the nature of our work, we describe below the overarching

research questions being explored through our partnerships. Each research question listed below represents a unique project/product.

- *What supports exist for American Indian and Alaska Native children to learn Native language and participate in cultural practices?*
- *How does exposure to Native language and culture in the classroom relate to children's cognitive development, physical health, and behavior and socio emotional health?*
- *What are the cultural perspectives of using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System in American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs?*
- *What are the systems that support developmental screening in American Indian and Alaska Native early childhood settings? Are developmental screeners working to improve outcomes for children and families in American Indian and Alaska Native communities?*
- *What is the capacity of early childhood systems in American Indian and Alaska Native communities for meeting the developmental needs of young children and families? What are the capacity-building needs among American Indian and Alaska Native early childhood programs for carrying out early childhood needs assessments?*

***Sample.** *Projects include children, families, and staff from Head Start, Child Care, Home Visiting, and other early childhood programs in American Indian and Alaska Native communities.*

***Methods.** *Methodologies vary depending on the research question and the product we are producing.*

***Progress Update.** *We are happy to share any of our ongoing or completed work at CCEEPRC's 2019 annual meeting. In addition to our support for addressing our currently posed research questions, the TRC is hosting two upcoming events:*

- *The TRC Summer Institute will be hosted in partnership with the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Center for American Indian Health the week of July 15-19, 2019 in Baltimore, MD. The Summer Institute offers graduate level coursework and mentorship to students interested in pursuing early childhood research with American Indian and Alaska Native communities. Participants complete a 2-credit graduate level course, meet with Summer Institute faculty, and learn more about graduate opportunities at Johns Hopkins. A limited number of TRC Summer Institute scholarships will be awarded on a competitive basis.*
- *The Native Children's Research Exchange (NCRE) conference brings together researchers, evaluators, and practitioners to share in an open exchange of information and ideas, build collaborative relationships, mentor new scholars, and disseminate knowledge about Native children's development. The NCRE conference will be held September 12-13, 2019 in Denver, CO.*

***Implications for policy/practice**

The TRC supports research and other activities that inform policy and practice.

Implications for research

There is a dearth of research on American Indian and Alaska Native children's growth and development, the validity of existing measures of early development for American Indian and Alaska Native children, and theories of American Indian and Alaska Native children's development. Additional research on these topics can help guide early care and education efforts that aim to support American Indian and Alaska Native children's development.

For more information:

To learn more about the TRC and the Summer Institute: www.tribalearlychildhood.org

To learn more about NCRE: www.ncreconnect.org

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