

Indigenous Early Relational Wellbeing Practices – Family (IERWP-Family)

This version is tailored for Tribal communities in the
Northeastern Woodlands Region

A Measure of Indigenous Early Relational Wellbeing Practices for Families

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This survey was developed to understand practices that support relational wellbeing among Indigenous children from prenatal to age 5 years. It is intended to be completed by parents or primary caregivers of an Indigenous (American Indian/Alaska Native) child or children aged 5 and younger who is or are enrolled in the [LOCAL PROGRAM]. This includes pregnant or expecting parents enrolled in home visiting. By primary caregiver, I mean someone who plays an active role in raising or caring for a child or children. **If you are not a primary caregiver, please do not complete this survey.**

When responding, please think about your family and the children in this age group, as well as their experiences and connections with family, multiple generations, community, and the environment. Experiences may include those that happen with family, in an early childhood program, in the community, or in other settings.

- Start here -

First, we'd like to know a little about you and your child or children.

1. Please share the ages of any children in your family who are enrolled in the [LOCAL PROGRAM]. **You may select more than one answer.**
   - ☐ Prenatal
   - ☐ Less than 3 months
   - ☐ 3-6 months
   - ☐ 7-9 months
   - ☐ 10-12 months
   - ☐ 13-18 months
   - ☐ 19-23 months
   - ☐ 2 years
   - ☐ 3 years
   - ☐ 4 years
   - ☐ 5 years

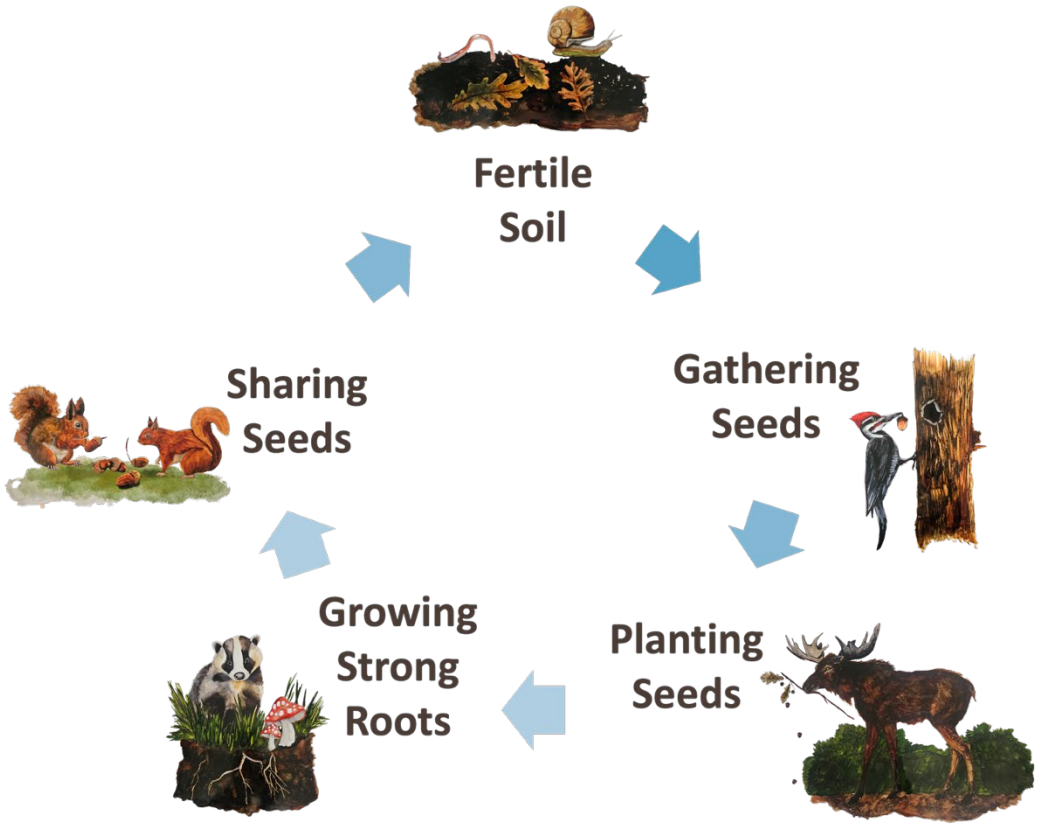
2. What is your primary relationship to this child or these children? **You may select more than one answer.**
   - ☐ Mother
   - ☐ Father
   - ☐ Stepmother
   - ☐ Stepfather
   - ☐ Mother's boyfriend
   - ☐ Mother's girlfriend
   - ☐ Father's girlfriend
   - ☐ Father's boyfriend
   - ☐ Grandmother
   - ☐ Grandfather
   - ☐ Brother
   - ☐ Sister
   - ☐ Aunt
   - ☐ Uncle
   - ☐ Cousin
   - ☐ Niece/Nephew
   - ☐ Friend
   - ☐ Other PLEASE specify relationship(s) _____

3. Does this child or do these children live with you?
   - ○ Yes, all of them
   - ○ Yes, some of them
   - ○ No, none of them

4. Who else plays an active role in raising or caring for this child or these children? **You may select more than one answer.**
   - ☐ Mother
   - ☐ Father
   - ☐ Stepmother
   - ☐ Stepfather
   - ☐ Mother's boyfriend
   - ☐ Mother's girlfriend
   - ☐ Father's girlfriend
   - ☐ Father's boyfriend
   - ☐ Grandmother
   - ☐ Grandfather
   - ☐ Brother
   - ☐ Sister
   - ☐ Aunt
   - ☐ Uncle
   - ☐ Cousin
   - ☐ Niece/Nephew
   - ☐ Friend
   - ☐ Other please specify relationships? _____
   - ☐ No one else plays an active role in raising or caring for this child or these children.

Next, we'd like to know a little about your child or children's experiences and connections with family, multiple generations, community, and the environment. We'll ask you to respond using a visual response scale that shows different stages of connection with each practice – from fertile soil to sharing seeds with others.

Each stage is valuable and unique to every family. Please take a moment to look over these different response options, as you'll use these options to respond to each question in the survey.





Fertile Soil

Our children haven't connected to this practice



Gathering Seeds

We want to connect our children to this practice



Planting Seeds

Our children are beginning to connect to this practice



Growing Strong Roots

Our children are connected to this practice



Sharing Seeds

Our children are involved in helping others connect to this practice

Subscale 1: Connections to Cultural Foods and Practices

Below is a list of practices that connect young children to cultural foods that might happen within your family, in a program, or in the community.

What best describes your child(ren)'s connection to each practice?



Fertile Soil

Our children haven't connected to this practice



Gathering Seeds

We want to connect our children to this practice



Planting Seeds

Our children are beginning to connect to this practice



Growing Strong Roots

Our children are connected to this practice



Sharing Seeds

Our children are involved in helping others connect to this practice

Our children are:	**Fertile Soil**	**Gathering Seeds**	**Planting Seeds**	**Growing Strong Roots**	**Sharing Seeds**
a. involved in hunting and fishing activities.	○	○	○	○	○
b. included in preparing food for ceremonies or gatherings (e.g., feasts, wakes, potlatches).	○	○	○	○	○
c. taught how cultural foods nourish us.	○	○	○	○	○
d. included in meal planning and preparation.	○	○	○	○	○
e. involved in preserving cultural foods (e.g., canning, smoking, etc).	○	○	○	○	○
f. involved in growing and harvesting food.	○	○	○	○	○
g. involved in foraging or gathering cultural plants and medicines (e.g., berry picking).	○	○	○	○	○

If you selected 'Fertile Soil' for any of these practices, please share the reason(s) why your children have not yet connected to the practice(s). You may select more than one answer.

- ☐ I'm not aware of opportunities for this where I live.
- ☐ This practice is not appropriate for my child's age.
- ☐ This is not a priority in my family.
- ☐ This is not relevant to my culture or Tribe.
- ☐ This practice is not appropriate for my child based on cultural gender roles.
- ☐ I don't know how to connect my child with opportunities to do this.
- ☐ My family would like to participate but we don't have the resources to do this.
- ☐ Other (Please write in.): _____
- ☐ I prefer not to answer.

Would you like to know more?

- ☐ Yes, I would welcome support identifying opportunities or resources related to this practice.
- ☐ No, not at this time.

If you selected 'Growing Strong Roots' or 'Sharing Seeds' for any of these practices, please share where or how your children are connected to the practice(s). <u>You may select more than one answer.</u>

- ☐ Within our family.
- ☐ Within an early childhood program (e.g., Head Start, Home Visiting, Child Care).
- ☐ In the community (e.g., a family program, cultural program, culture camp, gatherings).
- ☐ Other (Please write in.): _____
- ☐ I prefer not to answer.

Subscale 2: Connections to Land and the Environment

Below is a list of practices that connect young children to the land and environment that might happen within your family, in a program, or in the community.

What best describes your child(ren)'s connection to each practice?



Fertile Soil

Our children haven't connected to this practice



Gathering Seeds

We want to connect our children to this practice



Planting Seeds

Our children are beginning to connect to this practice



Growing Strong Roots

Our children are connected to this practice



Sharing Seeds

Our children are involved in helping others connect to this practice

Our children are:	**Fertile Soil**	**Gathering Seeds**	**Planting Seeds**	**Growing Strong Roots**	**Sharing Seeds**
a. given opportunities to learn about the seasons.	○	○	○	○	○
b. given opportunities to learn how to care for plants.	○	○	○	○	○
c. given opportunities to learn how to care for the natural environment.	○	○	○	○	○
d. given opportunities to learn about themselves and the world around them.	○	○	○	○	○
e. given opportunities to learn how their wellbeing is connected to the environment.	○	○	○	○	○
f. given opportunities to help understand tribal connections to land.	○	○	○	○	○
g. told stories about family connections to places and land.	○	○	○	○	○
h. taught to care for our non-human relatives (e.g., land, water, plants, animals).	○	○	○	○	○
i. taught to care for animal relatives.	○	○	○	○	○
j. given opportunities to observe how our non-human relatives work together.	○	○	○	○	○
k. given opportunities to be immersed in a natural environment (e.g., playing, learning, watching, listening in a forest, prairie, desert, near water).	○	○	○	○	○

If you selected 'Fertile Soil' for any of these practices, please share the reason(s) why your children have not yet connected to the practice(s). You may select more than one answer.

- ☐ I'm not aware of opportunities for this where I live.
- ☐ This practice is not appropriate for my child's age.
- ☐ This is not a priority in my family.
- ☐ This is not relevant to my culture or Tribe.
- ☐ This practice is not appropriate for my child based on cultural gender roles.
- ☐ I don't know how to connect my child with opportunities to do this.
- ☐ My family would like to participate but we don't have the resources to do this.

- ☐ Other (Please write in.): _____
- ☐ I prefer not to answer.

Would you like to know more?

- ☐ Yes, I would welcome support identifying opportunities or resources related to this practice.
- ☐ No, not at this time.

If you selected 'Growing Strong Roots' or 'Sharing Seeds' for any of these practices, please share where or how your children are connected to the practice(s). <u>You may select more than one answer.</u>

- ☐ Within our family.
- ☐ Within an early childhood program (e.g., Head Start, Home Visiting, Child Care).
- ☐ In the community (e.g., a family program, cultural program, culture camp, gatherings).
- ☐ Other (Please write in.): _____
- ☐ I prefer not to answer.

Subscale 3: Connections Through Everyday Activities

Below is a list of practices that connect young children to everyday activities that might happen within your family, in a program, or in the community.

What best describes your child(ren)'s connection to each practice?



Fertile Soil

Our children haven't connected to this practice



Gathering Seeds

We want to connect our children to this practice



Planting Seeds

Our children are beginning to connect to this practice



Growing Strong Roots

Our children are connected to this practice



Sharing Seeds

Our children are involved in helping others connect to this practice

Our children are:	**Fertile Soil**	**Gathering Seeds**	**Planting Seeds**	**Growing Strong Roots**	**Sharing Seeds**
a. given opportunities to laugh with others.	○	○	○	○	○
b. given hugs.	○	○	○	○	○
c. given opportunities to experience both verbal and non-verbal communication.	○	○	○	○	○
d. involved in crafting (e.g., sewing, drawing, weaving, beading, making tools or instruments).	○	○	○	○	○
e. given opportunities to play music, songs, or instruments.	○	○	○	○	○
f. given opportunities to sing cultural songs and drum.	○	○	○	○	○
g. given opportunities to dance.	○	○	○	○	○
h. given opportunities to build upon their interests.	○	○	○	○	○
i. given opportunities to experience focused time with caregivers or family (e.g., going for a drive, playing a game).	○	○	○	○	○
j. given opportunities to share meals with others.	○	○	○	○	○
k. given opportunities to spend time with elders.	○	○	○	○	○
l. involved in family gatherings (e.g., parties, feasts, ceremony).	○	○	○	○	○

If you selected 'Fertile Soil' for any of these practices, please share the reason(s) why your children have not yet connected to the practice(s). You may select more than one answer.

- ☐ I'm not aware of opportunities for this where I live.
- ☐ This practice is not appropriate for my child's age.
- ☐ This is not a priority in my family.
- ☐ This is not relevant to my culture or Tribe.
- ☐ This practice is not appropriate for my child based on cultural gender roles.
- ☐ I don't know how to connect my child with opportunities to do this.
- ☐ My family would like to participate but we don't have the resources to do this.
- ☐ Other (Please write in.): _____
- ☐ I prefer not to answer.

Would you like to know more?

- ☐ Yes, I would welcome support identifying opportunities or resources related to this practice.
- ☐ No, not at this time.

If you selected 'Growing Strong Roots' or 'Sharing Seeds' for any of these practices, please share where or how your children are connected to the practice(s). <u>You may select more than one answer.</u>

- ☐ Within our family.
- ☐ Within an early childhood program (e.g., Head Start, Home Visiting, Child Care).
- ☐ In the community (e.g., a family program, cultural program, culture camp, gatherings).
- ☐ Other (Please write in.): _____
- ☐ I prefer not to answer.

Subscale 4: Connections with Family and Community

Below is a list of practices that connect young children to family and community that might happen within your family, in a program, or in the community.

What best describes your child(ren)'s connection to each practice?



Fertile Soil

Our children haven't connected to this practice



Gathering Seeds

We want to connect our children to this practice



Planting Seeds

Our children are beginning to connect to this practice



Growing Strong Roots

Our children are connected to this practice



Sharing Seeds

Our children are involved in helping others connect to this practice

Our children are:	**Fertile Soil**	**Gathering Seeds**	**Planting Seeds**	**Growing Strong Roots**	**Sharing Seeds**
a. celebrated by our family and community for their growth and development.	○	○	○	○	○
b. involved in community events.	○	○	○	○	○
c. involved in community cultural gatherings and events.	○	○	○	○	○
d. given opportunities to experience supportive and positive relationships with adults in their lives.	○	○	○	○	○
Our family …	**Fertile Soil**	**Gathering Seeds**	**Planting Seeds**	**Growing Strong Roots**	**Sharing Seeds**
e. is supported by others in the community.	○	○	○	○	○
f. and others are involved in helping raise my child(ren), including teaching lessons.	○	○	○	○	○

If you selected 'Fertile Soil' for any of these practices, please share the reason(s) why your children have not yet connected to the practice(s). You may select more than one answer.

- ☐ I'm not aware of opportunities for this where I live.
- ☐ This practice is not appropriate for my child's age.
- ☐ This is not a priority in my family.
- ☐ This is not relevant to my culture or Tribe.
- ☐ This practice is not appropriate for my child based on cultural gender roles.
- ☐ I don't know how to connect my child with opportunities to do this.
- ☐ My family would like to participate but we don't have the resources to do this.
- ☐ Other (Please write in.): _____
- ☐ I prefer not to answer.

Would you like to know more?

- ☐ Yes, I would welcome support identifying opportunities or resources related to this practice.
- ☐ No, not at this time.

If you selected 'Growing Strong Roots' or 'Sharing Seeds' for any of these practices, please share where or how your children are connected to the practice(s). <u>You may select more than one answer.</u>

- ☐ Within our family.
- ☐ Within an early childhood program (e.g., Head Start, Home Visiting, Child Care).
- ☐ In the community (e.g., a family program, cultural program, culture camp, gatherings).
- ☐ Other (Please write in.): _____
- ☐ I prefer not to answer.

Subscale 5: Connections Through Birth and Early Child Care Practices

Below is a list of practices related to birth and early child care that might happen within your family, in a program, or in the community.

What best describes your family's connection to each practice?



Fertile Soil

Our children haven't connected to this practice



Gathering Seeds

We want to connect our children to this practice



Planting Seeds

Our children are beginning to connect to this practice



Growing Strong Roots

Our children are connected to this practice



Sharing Seeds

Our children are involved in helping others connect to this practice

Our family…	**Fertile Soil**	**Gathering Seeds**	**Planting Seeds**	**Growing Strong Roots**	**Sharing Seeds**
a. is mindful of language, actions, and thoughts (e.g., positive thinking, interactions with the environment) as soon as pregnancy is known.	○	○	○	○	○
b. is involved in cultural ceremonies or protocols before, during, or after birth (e.g., Hozho ceremony, cedar bath, burying placenta in special/sacred place, placing baby's feet on the ground/earth, cleaning of baby's mouth by relative at birth, catching of the baby, storing baby's umbilical cord in a special pouch).	○	○	○	○	○
c. is given opportunities to work with doulas or birth workers who use cultural practices to support the family's health.	○	○	○	○	○
d. values breastfeeding when possible.	○	○	○	○	○
e. focuses on protecting children after birth by waiting to take them out in public for safety, cultural, or ceremonial purposes.	○	○	○	○	○
f. practices waiting until baby reaches a certain age before sharing gifts with family to honor family and baby's life.	○	○	○	○	○
g. has been offered cultural foods and other forms of care (e.g., materials, time) when expecting a baby or having a young infant.	○	○	○	○	○
h. practices eating specific cultural foods that promote postpartum healing and mental health.	○	○	○	○	○
i. involves children in naming ceremonies to connect them to family, land, or place.	○	○	○	○	○
j. celebrates cultural milestones during early life (e.g., first foods, first walk, first laugh).	○	○	○	○	○

k.	is given opportunities to create or receive items of cultural significance for baby/child (e.g., moccasins, cradleboard, regalia, quilt).	○	○	○	○	○
l.	practices co-sleeping with infant/child.	○	○	○	○	○

If you selected 'Fertile Soil' for any of these practices, please share the reason(s) why your family has not yet connected to the practice(s). You may select more than one answer.

- ☐ I'm not aware of opportunities for this where I live.
- ☐ This practice is not appropriate for my child's age.
- ☐ This is not a priority in my family.
- ☐ This is not relevant to my culture or Tribe.
- ☐ This practice is not appropriate for my child based on cultural gender roles.
- ☐ I don't know how to connect my child with opportunities to do this.
- ☐ My family would like to participate but we don't have the resources to do this.
- ☐ Other (Please write in.): _____
- ☐ I prefer not to answer.

Would you like to know more?

- ☐ Yes, I would welcome support identifying opportunities or resources related to this practice.
- ☐ No, not at this time.

If you selected 'Growing Strong Roots' or 'Sharing Seeds' for any of these practices, please share where or how your children are connected to the practice(s). <u>You may select more than one answer.</u>

- ☐ Within our family.
- ☐ Within an early childhood program (e.g., Head Start, Home Visiting, Child Care).
- ☐ In the community (e.g., a family program, cultural program, culture camp, gatherings).
- ☐ Other (Please write in.): _____
- ☐ I prefer not to answer.

Subscale 6: Connections Through Cultural Identity and Spirituality

Below is a list of practices that connect young children to cultural identity and spirituality that might happen within your family, in a program, or in the community.

What best describes your child(ren)'s connection to each practice?



Fertile Soil

Our children <u>haven't connected</u> to this practice



Gathering Seeds

We <u>want to connect</u> our children to this practice



Planting Seeds

Our children are <u>beginning to connect</u> to this practice



Growing Strong Roots

Our children <u>are connected</u> to this practice



Sharing Seeds

Our children are involved in <u>helping others connect</u> to this practice

Our children are:	**Fertile Soil**	**Gathering Seeds**	**Planting Seeds**	**Growing Strong Roots**	**Sharing Seeds**
a. exposed to regular smudging at home.	○	○	○	○	○
b. given opportunities to make cultural crafts (e.g., beading, weaving, sewing).	○	○	○	○	○
c. given opportunities to make cultural toys (e.g. cornhusk dolls, rattles, drums).	○	○	○	○	○
d. given opportunities to connect with ancestors (e.g., sharing dreams, meals, practices, ceremony, prayer, other ways).	○	○	○	○	○
e. exposed to others regularly expressing prayer and gratitude out loud.	○	○	○	○	○
f. given opportunities to experience cultural child caregiving practices informed by language, ceremony, and cultural practices.	○	○	○	○	○
g. given opportunities to learn and use kinship terms.	○	○	○	○	○
h. involved in creating extended family relationships through adopting relatives.	○	○	○	○	○
i. given opportunities to connect with family members throughout their extended family.	○	○	○	○	○
j. given opportunities to learn about Tribal creation stories.	○	○	○	○	○
k. involved in ceremony so they can understand its importance and meaning.	○	○	○	○	○
l. exposed to books, videos, cartoons, or movies centering Indigenous characters, languages, and communities.	○	○	○	○	○
m. given opportunities to watch or play cultural sports and games.	○	○	○	○	○

n. involved in learning and using Native language(s) to build respect and knowledge of environment (e.g., plants, water, fire, animals, place names).	○	○	○	○	○
o. given opportunities to learn and share their Native language(s).	○	○	○	○	○
p. given opportunities to learn by listening and observing.	○	○	○	○	○
q. given opportunities to learn from elders.	○	○	○	○	○
Our family…	**Fertile Soil**	**Gathering Seeds**	**Planting Seeds**	**Growing Strong Roots**	**Sharing Seeds**
r. provides or seeks opportunities for culture, language, and identity to be supported in our children's school, daycare, or learning environment (e.g., volunteering to share culture in child's classroom, finding programs or child care that include local culture).	○	○	○	○	○

If you selected 'Fertile Soil' for any of these practices, please share the reason(s) why your children have not yet connected to the practice(s). You may select more than one answer.

- ☐ I'm not aware of opportunities for this where I live.
- ☐ This practice is not appropriate for my child's age.
- ☐ This is not a priority in my family.
- ☐ This is not relevant to my culture or Tribe.
- ☐ This practice is not appropriate for my child based on cultural gender roles.
- ☐ I don't know how to connect my child with opportunities to do this.
- ☐ My family would like to participate but we don't have the resources to do this.
- ☐ Other (Please write in.): _____
- ☐ I prefer not to answer.

Would you like to know more?

- ☐ Yes, I would welcome support identifying opportunities or resources related to this practice.
- ☐ No, not at this time.

If you selected 'Growing Strong Roots' or 'Sharing Seeds' for any of these practices, please share where or how your children are connected to the practice(s). <u>You may select more than one answer.</u>

- ☐ Within our family.
- ☐ Within an early childhood program (e.g., Head Start, Home Visiting, Child Care).
- ☐ In the community (e.g., a family program, cultural program, culture camp, gatherings).
- ☐ Other (Please write in.): _____
- ☐ I prefer not to answer.

Subscale 7: Connections Through Cultural Knowledge

Below is a list of practices that connect young children to cultural knowledge that might happen within your family, in a program, or in the community.

What best describes your child(ren)'s connection to each practice?



Fertile Soil

Our children haven't connected to this practice



Gathering Seeds

We want to connect our children to this practice



Planting Seeds

Our children are beginning to connect to this practice



Growing Strong Roots

Our children are connected to this practice



Sharing Seeds

Our children are involved in helping others connect to this practice

Our children are:	**Fertile Soil**	**Gathering Seeds**	**Planting Seeds**	**Growing Strong Roots**	**Sharing Seeds**
a. given opportunities to hear stories about the history of their tribal community or communities.	○	○	○	○	○
b. taught to be thoughtful and considerate of others.	○	○	○	○	○
c. taught how to be a good relative.	○	○	○	○	○
d. taught who their relatives are.	○	○	○	○	○
e. taught how to introduce themselves in a cultural or tribal way (e.g., tribal name, relatives, clans, ancestry, community).	○	○	○	○	○
f. taught to respect elders.	○	○	○	○	○
g. taught when to listen and observe.	○	○	○	○	○
h. given opportunities to make choices for themselves when appropriate (not forcing anything).	○	○	○	○	○
i. taught how to identify emotions in themselves and others to help them cope with their feelings in a good way.	○	○	○	○	○
j. exposed to storytelling to teach them about cultural values and knowledge (e.g., honor, respect, reciprocity, relationality, love, humility, generosity).	○	○	○	○	○
k. given opportunities to develop responsibilities to care for themselves and others from a young age.	○	○	○	○	○
l. told they are important contributors to community wellbeing.	○	○	○	○	○
m. taught about generosity by involving them in doing things for others.	○	○	○	○	○
n. given opportunities to learn about cultural values and ways at an early age.	○	○	○	○	○

Our children receive …	Fertile Soil	Gathering Seeds	Planting Seeds	Growing Strong Roots	Sharing Seeds
o. support when working through hardship, loss, or sadness.	○	○	○	○	○
p. support when working through conflict (e.g., difficulties with others).	○	○	○	○	○

If you selected 'Fertile Soil' for any of these practices, please share the reason(s) why your children have not yet connected to the practice(s). You may select more than one answer.

- ☐ I'm not aware of opportunities for this where I live.
- ☐ This practice is not appropriate for my child's age.
- ☐ This is not a priority in my family.
- ☐ This is not relevant to my culture or Tribe.
- ☐ This practice is not appropriate for my child based on cultural gender roles.
- ☐ I don't know how to connect my child with opportunities to do this.
- ☐ My family would like to participate but we don't have the resources to do this.
- ☐ Other (Please write in.): _____
- ☐ I prefer not to answer.

Would you like to know more?

- ☐ Yes, I would welcome support identifying opportunities or resources related to this practice.
- ☐ No, not at this time.

If you selected 'Growing Strong Roots' or 'Sharing Seeds' for any of these practices, please share where or how your children are connected to the practice(s). <u>You may select more than one answer.</u>

- ☐ Within our family.
- ☐ Within an early childhood program (e.g., Head Start, Home Visiting, Child Care).
- ☐ In the community (e.g., a family program, cultural program, culture camp, gatherings).
- ☐ Other (Please write in.): _____
- ☐ I prefer not to answer.

Here are a few final questions about you.

13. How old are you? _____ years

14. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
    - ○ Less than high school
    - ○ GED
    - ○ High school
    - ○ Some college, vocational, or technical training
    - ○ Associate's degree
    - ○ Bachelor's
    - ○ Advanced degree
    - ○ I prefer not to answer

15. What is your race/ethnicity? **You may select more than one answer**

    - ☐ American Indian
    - ☐ Alaska Native
    - ☐ Asian or Asian American
    - ☐ Black or African American
    - ☐ Hispanic or Latino
    - ☐ Middle Eastern or North African
    - ☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
    - ☐ White, Caucasian, European
    - ☐ Other (Please specify_____)
    - ☐ I prefer not to answer

16. Are you:
    - ○ Female
    - ○ Male
    - ○ Transgender, non-binary, or another gender
    - ○ I prefer not to answer

Many thanks!

You have finished this survey on practices that support relational wellbeing among young Indigenous children.

About the Visual Response Scale

This survey was developed with a Community of Learning comprised of Tribal early childhood practitioners, researchers, and funders. We collaborated with Chiffon Lark, an Indigenous artist, illustrator, and children's book author, to show different stages of connectedness with relational practices. Every stage is valuable and experiences are unique to each family, child, and community. We think of engaging in these relational practices as "planting seeds of connectedness" that help young children understand who they are, where they come from, and how they belong. Here are some stories behind each picture.

Northeastern Woodlands



Fertile Soil
Earthworms and snails help fertilize rich forest soil by breaking down dead leaves, recycling nutrients, and improving soil structure.



Gathering Seeds
The pileated woodpecker stores an acorn / oak tree seed in the trunk of an adult tree.



Sharing Seeds
Red tree squirrels share and cache acorns/oak tree seeds together.



Growing Strong Roots
A North American badger forages for insects alongside a fly agaric mushroom and network of roots underground.



Planting Seeds
An adult moose sowing seeds/acorns by eating the bark of an oak tree branch.



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Learn More & Stay Connected

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