



TRC Steering Committee E-Newsletter August 2022

Greetings

I hope you are finding time to revel in the joys of summer—fresh fruits and veggies, outdoor sports and relaxation, and powwows and music festivals! The TRC team has squeezed in some of those things in between conference and networking sessions, publication planning, and making progress on Community of Learning activities. I invite you to continue reading to learn more about our many recent and upcoming activities. We look forward to connecting with many of you at our next Steering Committee meeting, which we're planning to hold in-person on Wednesday, September 14, 2022, prior to the Native Children's Research Exchange Conference in Denver, CO!



Miigwech (Thank you),
Michelle and the TRC Leadership Team

TRC Mission & Priority Areas

Our mission and priorities are provided here to build a shared understanding of the TRC's work across our Steering Committee members.

Mission: The TRC's mission is to grow the field of early childhood research in partnership with American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) Head Start, Home Visiting, Child Care, and soon, TANF program leaders, AIAN community partners, early childhood researchers, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) federal staff, and a broad network of ACF and other early childhood initiatives and National Centers serving AIAN communities.

Priority areas: Our work is organized in three areas: 1) National Leadership, 2) Scientifically & Culturally Rigorous Research, and 3) Strategic Dissemination. Please read on for updates in each of these areas!

National Leadership

The TRC works with AIAN communities and early childhood partners to continually inform and refine TRC activities through partnership and consultation, and to provide training, professional development, and networking opportunities.

Learning Circle on Indigenous Food Sovereignty and Early Childhood



Our Virtual Learning Circles hosted in collaboration with TRC partners at Brazelton Touchpoints Center continue to be a hit! Plans are underway for the next series, which will take place in spring 2023. Invited speakers will help us consider how Indigenous food sovereignty initiatives connect to culture and language, economic development, and school and program policies to support early childhood development. We'll share more information by email and our social media accounts as details are finalized, so stay tuned! In the meantime, we encourage you to [visit our website for resources from past Learning Circles](#), including the participant guide from our series on Indigenous research methodologies and recordings for each session of our May 2022 Learning Circle focused on land-based learning in early care and education. For questions about our Learning Circles, contact Michelle Sarche (michelle.sarche@cuanschutz.edu).

Mentorship & Networking with the TRC

We need your help promoting an upcoming professional development opportunity! The TRC will provide a limited number of travel awards for the [Native Children's Research Exchange \(NCRE\) Conference](#) in September to undergraduate and graduate students, early career scholars, and community scholars interested in early childhood development research and practice in Tribal communities. **Applications are due August 5**; however, if you know someone who cannot make this timeline, please have them contact michelle.sarche@cuanschutz.edu. The NCRE STARS program will also provide travel awards to graduate, undergraduate, and advanced high school students for the conference. More information and applications are available [here](#). Please share this opportunity with your networks!

In addition to the above NCRE professional development opportunities, the TRC also recently supported early career scholars by partnering with the [National Research Center on Hispanic Children and Families](#) and the [National African American Child and Family Research Center](#) to host mentoring and networking events at the Research and Evaluation Conference on Self-Sufficiency (RECS) and the National Research Conference on Early Childhood (NRCEC). Each center drew from their networks to encourage mentors and mentees to sign up for the events, which took place in June. TRC mentors facilitated discussions with early career scholars interested in working with American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian populations on critical research needs and tips for having a fulfilling career.

Informing National Efforts & Scholarship

Outside of our regular Community of Learning activities, TRC team members often add their perspectives and knowledge of Tribal early childhood development, programs and services, and strengths and needs to national efforts and scholarly activities. A few recent and ongoing activities are described below. Please visit the links and reach out to Michelle Sarche (michelle.sarche@cuanschutz.edu) to learn more about any of these activities.



- Participation in the 2021 NCRE workgroup meeting and 2022 conference planning committee, which helped shape the upcoming conference theme [Lifting up Solutions Grounded in Indigenous Culture and Wisdom to Address Substance Misuse and Disorder and Support Indigenous Children's Development in the Face of Intersecting Challenges of our Time](#) and inform the development of a related conceptual framework and call for papers for a special issue of Adversity and Resilience Science.
- Submission of a paper proposal on understanding and conceptualizing racism in Indigenous communities and its impact on early childhood development in response to a call for proposals from the [Center on the Ecology of Early Development](#) and [Equity Research Action Coalition](#) as part of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation project entitled *Racism in the Early Years: How Racism Influences Development from Prenatal to Age 5*.
- Participation in an upcoming trans-NIH workshop, "Reframing the word gap: Equity-based approaches to supporting early language development." The one-day workshop will occur on September 22 from 11am to 5pm ET. Dr. Michelle Sarche will chair a panel on applying an equity lens, Dr. Deana Around Him will chair a panel on seating research in a broader context, and Dr. Jessica Barnes-Najor will serve on a panel discussion about policies, practices, and systems.
- Service on two National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine committees, including: [A New Vision for High Quality Pre-K Curriculum](#) (Dr. Deana Around Him) and [Addressing the Long-Term Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Children and Families](#) (Dr. Michelle Sarche). The Pre-K committee will research and analyze pre-K curriculum quality to develop recommendations to guide policymakers, early childhood administrators, educators, and others and the Long-Term Impact of COVID-19 committee is writing a report on the consequences of, and solutions to, the long-term effects of COVID-19 on children living in high-risk communities.
- Participation in the Aspen Ideas Festival. Dr. Michelle Sarche was selected as an Aspen Institute Health Fellow for this year's Aspen Ideas Festival, June 25-July 1. Sessions covered topics on the world, the US, environment, technology, science, health, education, arts, society, and the economy. You can watch sessions at the [Aspen Ideas 2022 session website](#). Here are two recordings of sessions that Dr. Sarche enjoyed, which relate to our work supporting children and families: "[The Kids are Not Alright – But We Can Help](#)" and "[Is our Ethos of the American Independent Spirit Hurting Us?](#)," on which Dr. Sarche's fellow Ascend Fellow, Dr. Joe Hobot (Hunkpapa Lakota), talked about lessons learned on interdependence from Tribal communities that offer hope for our collective way forward.

Scientifically & Culturally Rigorous Research

In consultation with partners and using a Community of Learning (CoL) approach, the TRC conducts research that aims to: 1) identify needs, effective practices, and integrated systems that acknowledge the challenges AIAN children face as well as the incredible resources provided by culture, community, and family, and 2) inform

culturally meaningful measurement that is reliable and valid for understanding AIAN children's development and for use by the programs that serve AIAN children and families.

Tribal PEDS Community of Learning

The Pilot Exploration of Developmental Screening in Tribal Communities (Tribal PEDS) CoL held its final meeting last fall, and outputs of this work continue to be shared! Two manuscripts have been published:

- Whitesell, N. et al. *Community perspectives on developmental screening of American Indian and Alaska Native children.*
- Asdigian, N. et al. *Exploring the feasibility of validating early developmental screening tools for American Indian and Alaska Native children.*

The Tribal PEDS CoL also drew on lessons from their work to submit comments in response to the recent ACF Request for Information on Technical Assistance Needs and Priorities on Implementation and Coordination of Early Childhood Development Programs in American Indian and Alaska Native Communities and shared their work at two recent conferences:

- Dr. Nancy Whitesell presented, "Increasing equity in early developmental screening of American Indian and Alaska Native children through community engagement in research" at the Society for Prevention Research annual meeting in May 2022.
- Caitlin Howley shared a poster, "Enhancing early developmental screening of American Indian and Alaska Native children through community engagement in research" at the National Research Conference on Early Childhood (NRCEC) in June 2022.

For questions about the Tribal PEDS CoL, contact Nancy Whitesell (nancy.whitesell@cuanschutz.edu).

Early Relational Health Community of Learning

The Early Relational Health (ERH) CoL has been sharing their work and continuing to develop their understanding of ERH through data collection and analysis. In June, Chelsea Wesner presented a poster at NRCEC entitled, "Toward understanding and measuring early relational health in American Indian and Alaska Native communities through a Community of Learning: A strengths-based approach to advancing and prioritizing first relationships in early childhood programs." The ERH CoL has also started to gather additional information on relational practices that support early childhood development via administration of a survey through GroupWisdom, a tool to facilitate group concept mapping and development of an Indigenous ERH measure. Early analysis of AIAN FACES 2019 data to support this work has also started. The next CoL meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 22nd from 12-1pm MT. Please contact Nancy Whitesell (nancy.whitesell@cuanschutz.edu) if you have questions about this work.

Understanding Early Childhood Needs, Effective Practices, and Implementation Supports Amidst and Looking Beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic

This CoL restarted meetings this month! It will build on past TRC CoL work to identify Tribal early childhood needs and priorities, but with careful consideration for young child, family, and early childhood workforce needs in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has exacerbated existing challenges, brought on new challenges, and presented new opportunities. Please stay tuned for more updates! Contact Michelle Sarche (michelle.sarche@cuanschutz.edu) if you are interested to learn more or join us in this effort.

The CLASS & Native Language and Culture Communities of Learning

The Classroom Assessment and Scoring System (CLASS) CoL formed nearly ten years ago to examine AIAN Head Start program administrators' cultural and practice perspectives on the CLASS. CLASS CoL members have continued to collaborate, define new research questions, and participate in the TRC's Native Language and Culture CoL, which is exploring the Native Culture and Language in the Classroom Observation Tool

(NCLCO) used in the AIAN Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (AIAN FACES). CoL members have recently shared their work at several events, including:

- A training on Cultural Considerations When Using the CLASS in Region XI Head Start Programs at the National Indian Head Start Directors Association Conference
- Convenings of the Administration for Children and Families' Equity, Inclusiveness, and Cultural and Linguistic Responsive Practices Tribal Subcommittee
- An Administration for Children and Families [webinar on Native Language Revitalization and Native Language Immersion Curricula in Tribal Early Childhood Programs](#) (presentation by TRC collaborator, Dr. Melody Redbird-Post)

Two manuscripts on psychometric analyses of NCLCO data from AIAN FACES are also moving along—one has been accepted for publication in the Journal of Indigenous Early Childhood Education and a journal is being identified for the second. The CoL has also been instrumental in a pilot study, supported by the [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Interdisciplinary Research Leaders program](#). The pilot study team has revised the NCLCO for use with video and live observations, and they are participating in trainings to prepare for data collection in the fall. To learn more or join the Native Language and Culture CoL, contact Jessica Barnes-Najor (barnes33@msu.edu).

Family Economic Well-being (FEW) Community of Learning

The Family Economic Well-being (FEW) CoL is focused on understanding family economic well-being within AIAN communities and early childhood settings. The FEW CoL's primary goals are to conduct a scoping review and implement a process for understanding and measuring FEW in ways that are culturally and contextually aligned with the needs of AIAN children and families. The initial approach and plans for this work were recently shared by Chelsea Wesner in an emerging scholar flash talk at RECS and a poster at NRCEC. To incorporate expertise on Indigenous economic issues and programming into our overarching TRC structure, we have also recruited two new TRC Steering Committee members:

- Dr. Randall Akee, who is the Chair of American Indian Studies and an Associate Professor in the Department of Public Policy at UCLA. Dr. Akee will officially join us next summer after completing a special appointment as Senior Economist at the Council of Economic Advisers in the White House.
- Ryan Howard, who is the Executive Director of the Owens Valley Career Development Center (OVCDC). OVCDC administers a Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) grant and operates a center-based Early Head Start program that serves families in four Tribal communities.

To learn more about the FEW CoL, contact Chelsea Wesner (chelsea.wesner@cuanschutz.edu).

Strategic Dissemination

The TRC leverages multiple communication channels to share resources and research on AIAN children's development in the context of family, community, culture, and Tribal early childhood programs to facilitate research-to-practice and practice-to-research knowledge transfer.

Updated TRC Website

As noted in our previous newsletter, [TRC website](#) has been updated! We'll continue to make minor adjustments and add resources and publications as they are available. If you have any feedforward to offer, please send it to Deana Around Him (daroundhim@childtrends.org).

Recent Presentations & Events

In addition to the many presentations, webinars, and events shared above, Dr. Michelle Sarche recently served as a panelist for the opening plenary of NRCEC, "Addressing Historical Inequities in Early Care and

Education: Strategies to Support Workforce Equity.” Following a presentation by researchers from Child Trends that explored the [history of early care and education compensation, policy, and solutions](#), Dr. Sarche (TRC) and Dawn A. Yazzie (Center of Excellence for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation) provided remarks on ECE workforce equity within Indigenous contexts. NRCEC conference sessions are typically archived [here](#), so check back soon to view sessions from 2022.

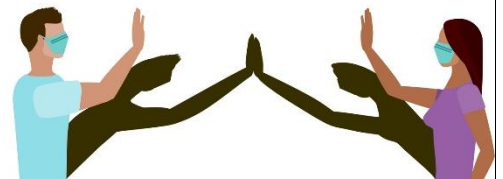
Upcoming Events & Activities

There are several upcoming conferences and events that we will present at or attend in the future. Please consider submitting your work and look for our team members if you attend!

- [Native Children’s Research Exchange Conference](#), September 15-16, 2022, in-person at Aurora, CO
- [National Indian Education Association Annual Convention](#), October 5-8, 2022, in-person at Oklahoma City, OK
- [Society for Research in Child Development](#), March 23-25, in-person and tentatively at Salt Lake City, UT
- [Society for Prevention Research](#), May 30-June 2, 2023, in-person at Washington, DC

TRC Steering Committee Meetings

If you happened to miss our virtual Steering Committee meeting on April 14, 2022, you can view the recording [here](#). Our next meeting is scheduled to take place **in person on the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus on September 14, 2022** prior to the [Native Children's Research Exchange](#) conference, which will take place September 15-16, 2022. TRC Steering Committee members should have received an email from Michelle on July 28th with information about travel and NCRE registration. Please email Michelle Sarche (michelle.sarche@cuanschutz.edu) with questions and complete travel and registration steps by August 5th. The TRC Leadership Team and NCRE Conference Planning Committee have been working hard to create a safe and productive environment for the gatherings. It will be so wonderful to see you all *in person* again!



Learn with Us

We wanted to share two items that have recently made their way onto our reading list that may also be of interest to you:

- In May, the Department of the Interior released [Volume 1](#) of the investigative report called for as part of the [Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative](#), a comprehensive effort to address the troubled legacy of federal Indian boarding school policies. Acknowledging and sharing this history is an important part of healing. For more information and educational resources related to boarding schools, visit [The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition](#).
- Members of our TRC Leadership Team and several scholars affiliated with our broader TRC network recently published an open access article entitled [Centering Indigenous Knowledges and Worldviews: Applying the Indigenist Ecological Systems Model to Youth Mental Health and Wellness Research and Programs](#). The authors reconceptualized the order and meaning of nested environments included in Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Model to create the Indigenist Ecological Systems Model and apply it to strengths-based case examples of Indigenous youth mental health and wellness work.

Stay in Touch



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