

<p align="center">Cook Inlet Tribal Council: Improved Childcare Outcomes Research Planning</p>
<p>Project Team: Holly Morales, Director Brittany Suralta, Senior Manager Diwakar Vadapalli, External evaluation consultant William Weinfurter CITC' Database Developer</p>
<p>Grant or Contract Number: Child Care and Development Block Grant Implementation Research and Evaluation Planning Grants 90YE0195</p>
<p>Period of Funding: May 2017 – October 2018</p>

Project Description

Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc. (CITC), is a tribal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Lead Agency. CITC's Employment and Training Services Department (ETSD) operates both the CCDF and Tribal TANF programs in Anchorage, Alaska. These services play a critical role in the lives of Alaska Native and American Indian families and children living in Anchorage.

CITC currently serves:

- On average per quarter 295 children
- On average per quarter 186 families
- 183 active childcare providers in the community

This project brings together Lead Agency staff, researchers at the University of Alaska's Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER), and local stakeholders impacted by childcare policy decision making to plan an assessment of the efficacy of specific approaches to implementing policies called for by the CCDBG Act of 2014.

The goals of our planning grant are to: 1) address issues of current relevance to ourselves and other CCDF decision makers, 2) build our internal capacity for research and evaluation, 3) collaborate with research and policy-makers, and 4) actively communicate and network with prominent child-care researchers and policymakers across the nation on critical issues for childcare outcomes.

More specifically our focus is on the following policies identified as critical issues by ACF: 1) equal access to stable, high quality childcare for low-income children, and 2) improving the quality of childcare and the early childhood workforce.

Due to a unique partnership with the State of Alaska, many required changes needed in response to the CCDBG Act of 2014 have already been made. Our continued partnership with the State of Alaska allows us to be innovative in other areas of practice. We are particularly interested in enriching the cultural responsiveness of child care centers in our service area.

Research Questions

We are currently working towards formulating our research questions. Our preliminary ideas include the following questions:

1. What incentives can be offered to childcare providers that would encourage them to be culturally responsive to Alaska Native children and families in our region?
2. What additional factors can be leveraged to improve access to stable and higher quality childcare?

Progress Update

We have been working to develop a flowchart showing pathways and processes of our current

program. We are using this flowchart to identify potential required changes, and associated outcomes and pathways. Our research questions will be more specific after we complete this flowchart. This flowchart will lead to a logic model representing the components of the program we intend to evaluate. We will also be able to answer the following questions with more specificity.

- What are our intended outcomes?
- What specific input, intervening, and moderating variables impact the intended outcomes?

Implications for policy/practice

CITC works with more than a hundred child care centers and numerous individual service providers. Very few of them tailor their services to meet the cultural needs of Alaska Native children. Alaska Native children are disproportionately underprepared for kindergarten, and often disconnected from their culture. CITC is interested in encouraging child care centers and service providers to tailor their services to address this gap.

Implications for research

Cultural Responsiveness – Cultural responsiveness and its impact on school readiness is a relatively new and evolving area of research.

Institutions will be our units of analysis. We plan to incentivize institutions to make appropriate changes to be culturally responsive. We want to be able to assess

and compare the impact of such changes across institutions.

Contacts

Holly Morales
Director
Cook Inlet Tribal Council
hmorales@citci.org
(907) 793-3323

Brittany Suralta
Senior Manager
Cook Inlet Tribal Council
bsuralta@ctici.org
(907) 793-3330

Diwakar Vadapalli
Assistant Professor of Public Policy
University of Alaska Anchorage
dkvadapalli@alaska.edu
(907) 786-5422

Federal Project Officer:
Meryl Barofsky
Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation
Administration for Children and Families
202- 441-5541
meryl.barofsky@acf.hhs.gov

Project Specialist:
Alysia Bandon
Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation
Administration for Children and Families
202-205-8386
alysia.bandon@acf.hhs.gov