

Community Engagement in a Federally-Sponsored Center: The TRC

Jessica Barnes-Najor, TRC Leadership Team
Deana Around Him, TRC Leadership Team
Ann Cameron, TRC Steering Committee

*OPRE Methods Meeting: Enhancing Rigor, Relevance, and Equity in
Research and Evaluation through Community Engagement*

October 27, 2021



Acknowledgment



Learn more about Land Acknowledgements at: <https://native-land.ca/about/why-it-matters/>
TRC is supported by ACF/OPRE under cooperative agreement 90PH0030.

Agenda

1. Introduction to the TRC
2. In-depth Review of a TRC Community of Learning
 - Classroom Assessment Scoring System
 - Native Language and Culture
3. Lessons Learned

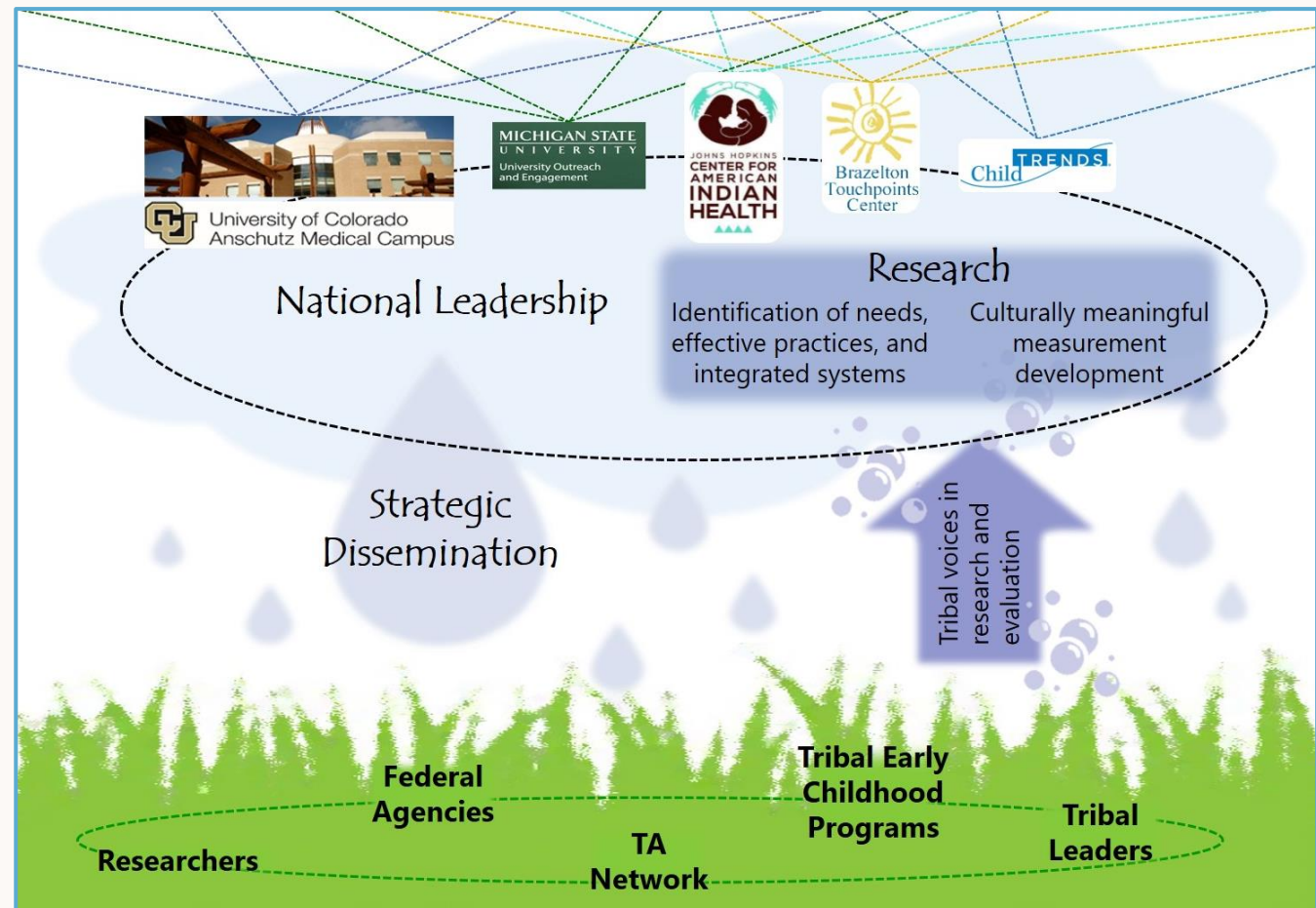


Who we are

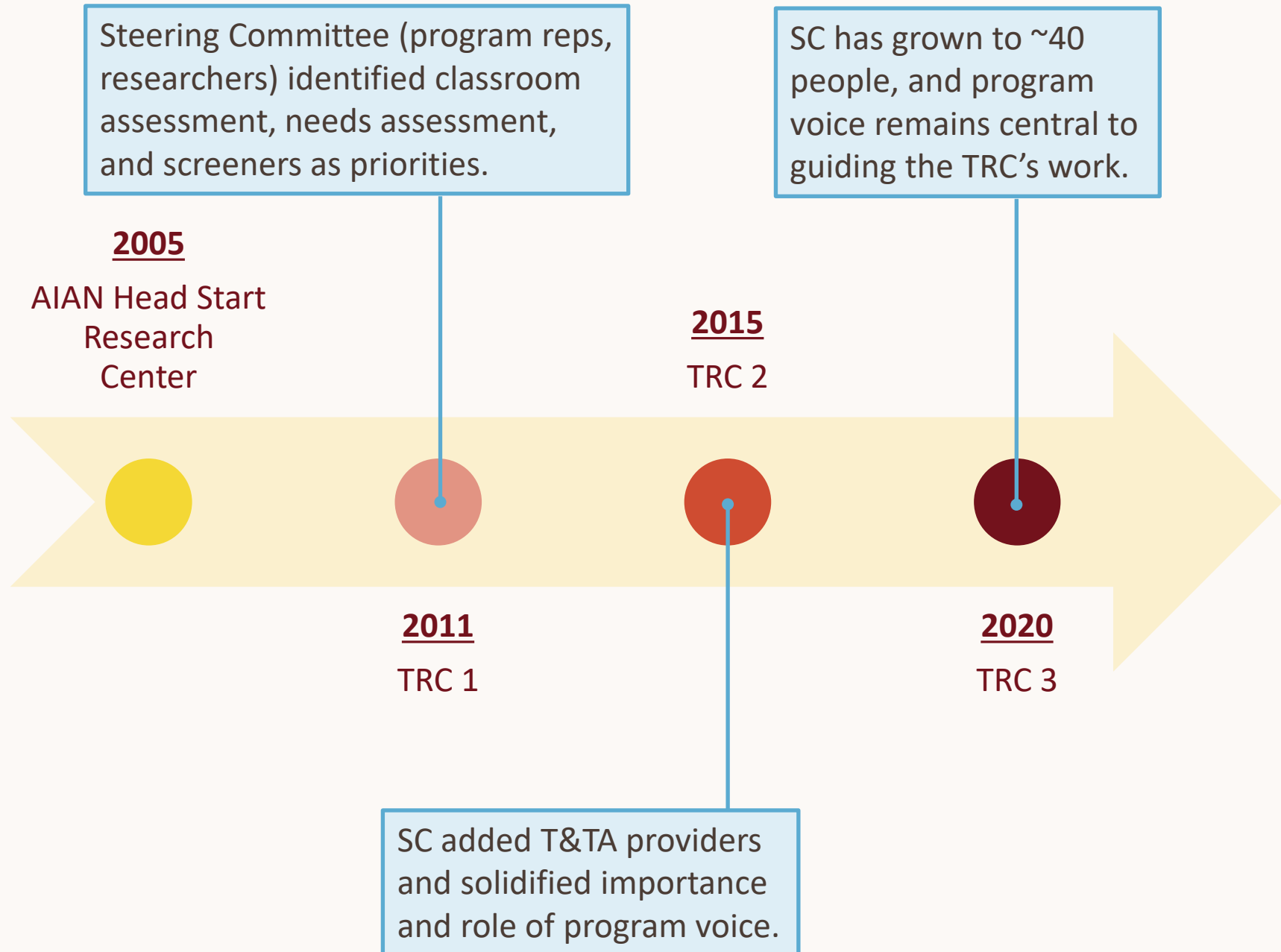


Mission:

Grow early childhood research in partnership with American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) Head Start, Home Visiting, and Child Care program leaders, AIAN community partners, early childhood researchers, ACF federal staff, and a broad network of early childhood initiatives and National Centers serving AIAN communities.

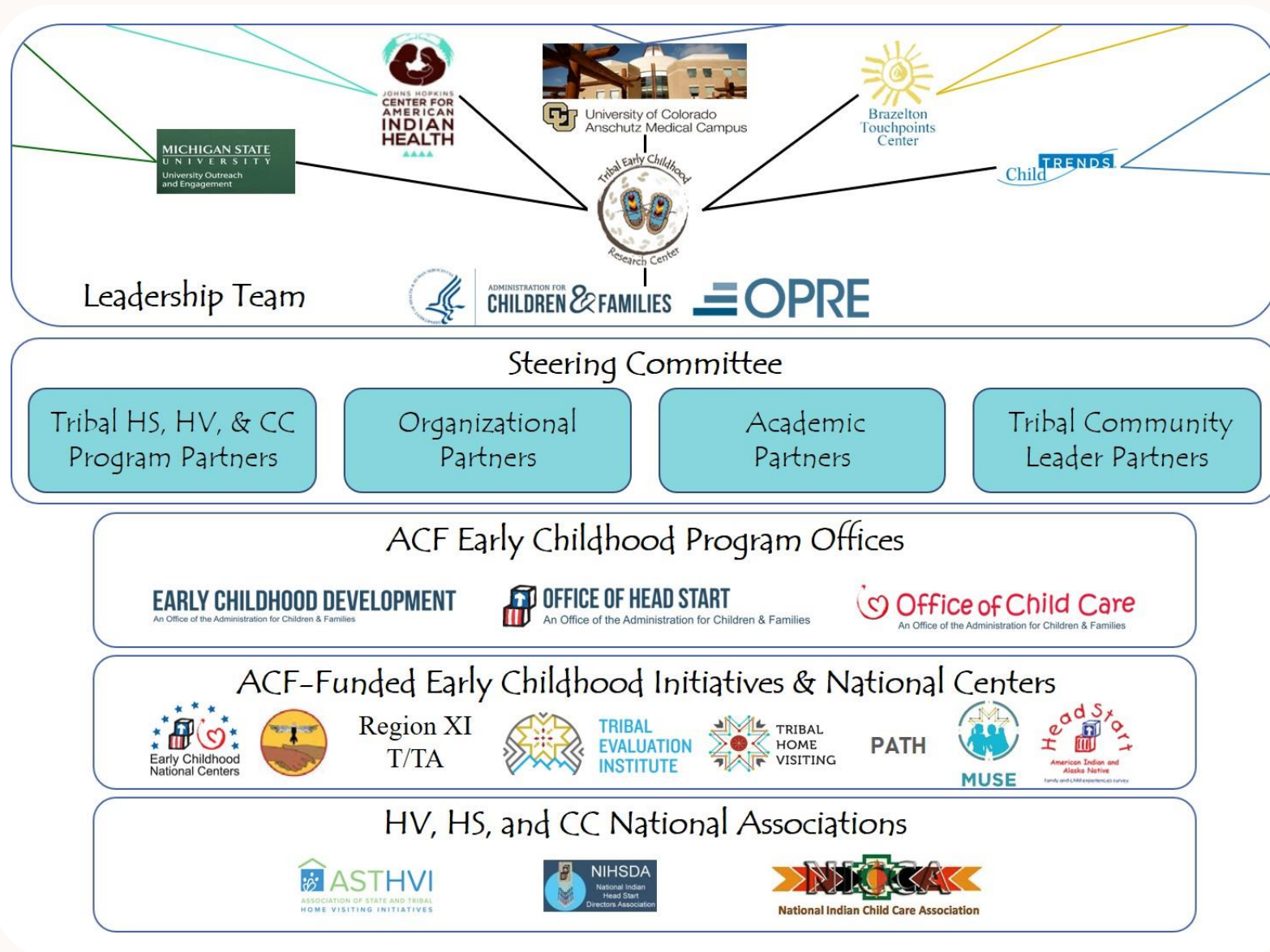


Our history



Our work

Partnerships



Our work

Communities of Learning



Community of Learning (CoL) Approach:

- Draws on extensive partnership network
- Engages partners in all phases of a project – development to dissemination
- Fosters multi-directional learning through respect and humility



Ann Cameron (Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan Head Start Director) and Lana Garcia (Pueblo of Jemez Walatowa) Head Start Language Immersion Program Manager), members of a TRC CoL, share laughs and knowledge of Head Start classroom experiences during an interactive session focused on interpreting study results.

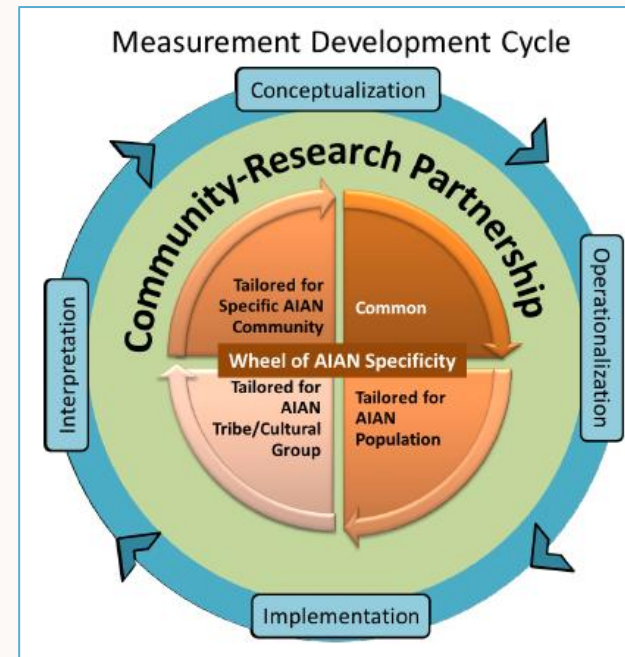
Our work

Research



Scientifically & Culturally Rigorous Research

- **Program needs, effective practices, and systems**
 - Needs Assessment
 - Review of Child Care and Development Fund Grantee Plans
- **Measurement**
 - Early Relational Health
 - Pilot Exploration of Developmental Screening in Tribal Communities
 - Classroom Assessment and Scoring System
 - Survey of Well-Being of Young Children
- **Language and culture in early childhood programs**



Walls, M., Whitesell, N., Barlow, A., & Sarche, M. (2017). Research with American Indian and Alaska Native Populations: Measurement matters. *Journal of Ethnicity in Substance Abuse*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15332640.2017.1310640>

Our work

Tribal PEDS CoL



Pilot Exploration of Developmental Screening in Tribal Communities (Tribal PEDS)

Nancy Rumbaugh Whitesell, PhD
Nancy L. Asdigian, PhD¹
Caitlin Trucksess Howley, MPH
Michelle Sarche, PhD¹
Carrie Clifford, PhD²

& the Tribal Early Childhood Research Center PEDS CoL

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³ Community of Learning members: Cyndi Anderson, Deana Around Him, Cathy Najor, Moushini Beltangady, Nicole Denmark, Cathy Ferron, Hiram Fitzgerald, Elizabeth Kushman, KyungSook Lee, Charmaine Lundy, Laura McKechnie, Elizabeth Novins, Myra Parker, Cyndi Pyatskowitz, Melina Salvador, Juli Skinner, Sarah Smith, and Melissa Walls



Partnering with American Indian and Alaska Native Families to Support Children's Development

The Tribal Early Childhood Research Center (TRC) visited urban, rural and reservation American Indian and Alaska Native communities to talk with families of young children and with early childhood professionals (home visitors, teachers, and health care providers).

The information below is based on what we learned from those conversations to help guide families through the developmental screening process.

We found that families need five things for effective screening: to **know** what to expect in the screening process; to **have confidence** in interpreting results; and to **get feedback** on screening results.

UNDERSTAND WHY SCREENING MATTERS

Explain that screening can help children reach their full potential

Screening can help families identify both children's strengths and areas for growth from developmental support.

Screening can help families catch little things they might otherwise miss. Early intervention – and early intervention can make a real difference in a child's development.

Explain that screeners are sensitive

Screeners are sensitive so they alert families when children's development is not on track and effective support. It helps keep their needs from being overlooked.

The trade-off is that there are some *false positives* – who do not actually need extra support.

Tell families about sensitivity *before* screening so that *false positives* always mean children need extra support.

Suggest that if children do screen positive, parents should take steps to best to support their development.

NOTE: This resource is a living document that the TRC is continually working to improve. Please email tribalearlychildhood@cuanschutz.edu with comments, questions, or suggestions.

TRC | Developmental Screening

1



Supporting your Child through Developmental Screening from Birth to Age Five

The Tribal Early Childhood Research Center (TRC) visited urban, rural and reservation American Indian and Alaska Native communities to talk with families of young children and early childhood professionals (home visitors, teachers, and health care providers).

The information below is based on what we learned from those conversations.

Developmental screening

- is an opportunity to learn about your child's physical, language, behavioral, and social-emotional development,
- involves you answering a questionnaire about your child,
- might involve your child being observed by an early childhood professional, and
- occurs regularly from birth to age five to check in on a child's development over time.



Screening can show areas where your child is doing well so you can celebrate growth and areas where your child may need help so you can work with others to find additional support.

Tips for successful screening

- ☒ Talk with your home visitor, child's teacher, or health care provider regularly about your child. Ask any questions you have about your child's behavior and development. Developmental screening is only one part of understanding your child's development.
- ☒ If a developmental screener asks if your child can do something, and you are unsure, try the task or activity with your child before you answer. Sometimes you may not have had the chance to observe a skill.
- ☒ When you answer screening questions, think about how your child behaves or acts when they are well-rested and healthy.
- ☒ Remember that it is normal for your child to be able to do things sometimes but not always, or in one place but not another as they are growing.
- ☒ After a developmental screening, ask for 1) the screening results, 2) what you can expect in the coming months, and 3) what you can do with your child to support their development.

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TRC | Developmental Screening

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Information for Families

In-depth Review of a TRC CoL

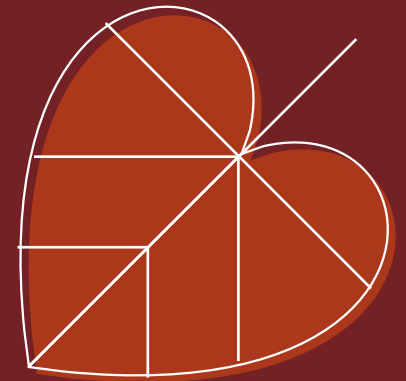
*Research to Support Native
Language and Culture in
Early Childhood Learning
and Development*



OUR JOURNEY

*Ann Cameron, TRC Steering Committee | Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan
Jessica Barnes-Najor, TRC Leadership Team | Michigan State University*

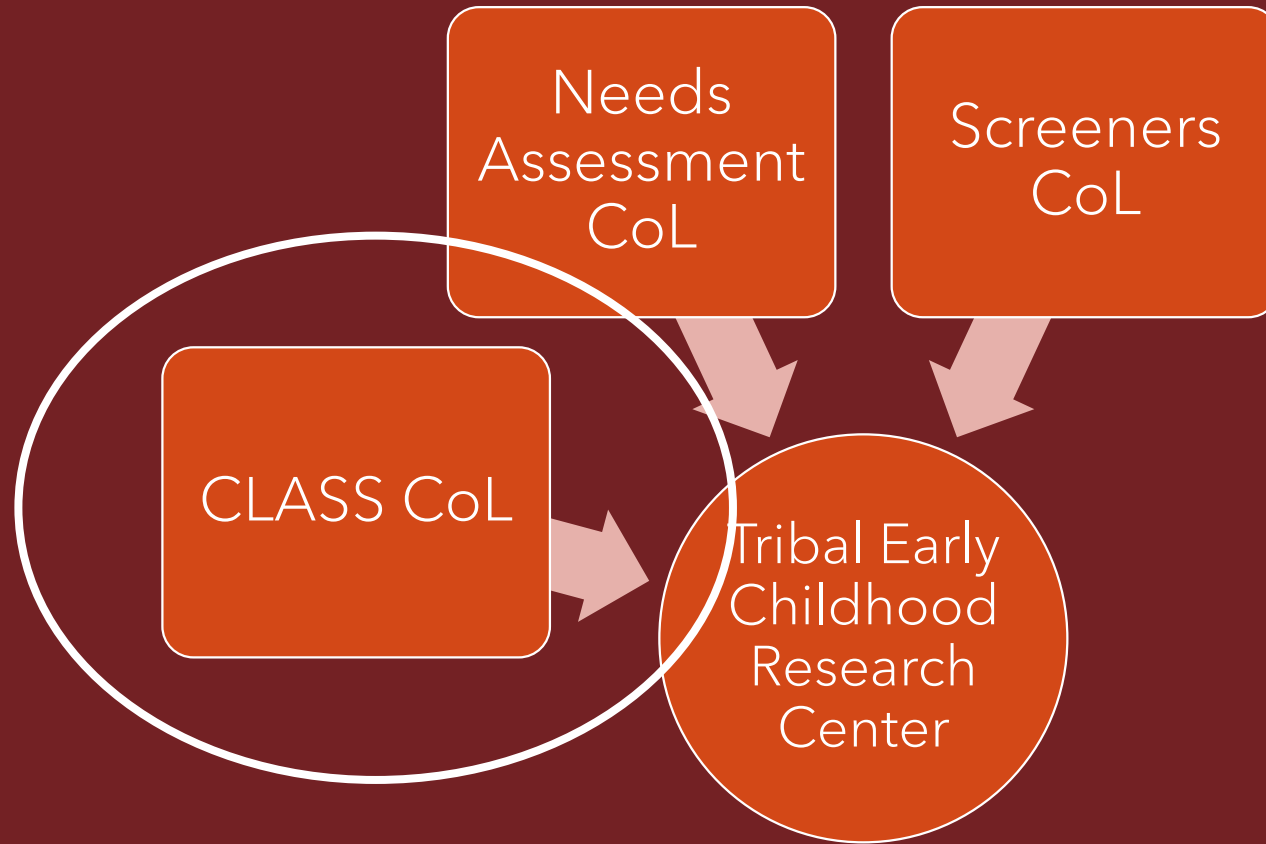
*Moving from examining cultural sensitivity of
early childhood research instruments to
developing culturally grounded early
childhood research instruments*







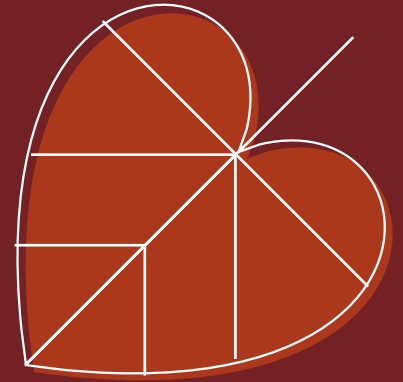
TRC COMMUNITIES OF LEARNING



CULTURAL AND PRACTICE PERSPECTIVES ON THE CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT SCORING SYSTEM: VOICES FROM AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE HEAD START PROGRAMS

Study 1:

Examining the CLASS for cultural sensitivity



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How do directors of
AI/AN Head Start
programs use the CLASS?

How do directors of
AI/AN Head Start
programs perceive the
CLASS and CLASS
training?

How do directors'
perceptions of the CLASS
inform our understanding
of the cultural
appropriateness of the
CLASS?

How do
directors'
perceptions
inform our
understanding of
the cultural
appropriateness
of the CLASS?

RQ1: How culturally aligned are the
Emotional Support (ES) and Classroom
Organization (CO) domains?

- H1: ES and CO domains and dimensions will
fit well within the cultural context,
given that these constructs are more
abstract and more apt to be universal.
- H2: There will be indicators and behavioral
markers that will not fit within the
cultural context.

How do
directors'
perceptions
inform our
understanding of
the cultural
appropriateness
of the CLASS?

RQ 2: How culturally aligned is the
Instructional Support domain?

H1: Culturally grounded ways of supporting young
AI/AN children's cognitive development do not
fully align with the Instructional Support
domain.

- Importance of non-verbal communication
- Patterns of verbal communication
- Learning by observing and pitching in

How do
directors'
perceptions
inform our
understanding of
the cultural
appropriateness
of the CLASS?

RQ3: What could be missing?

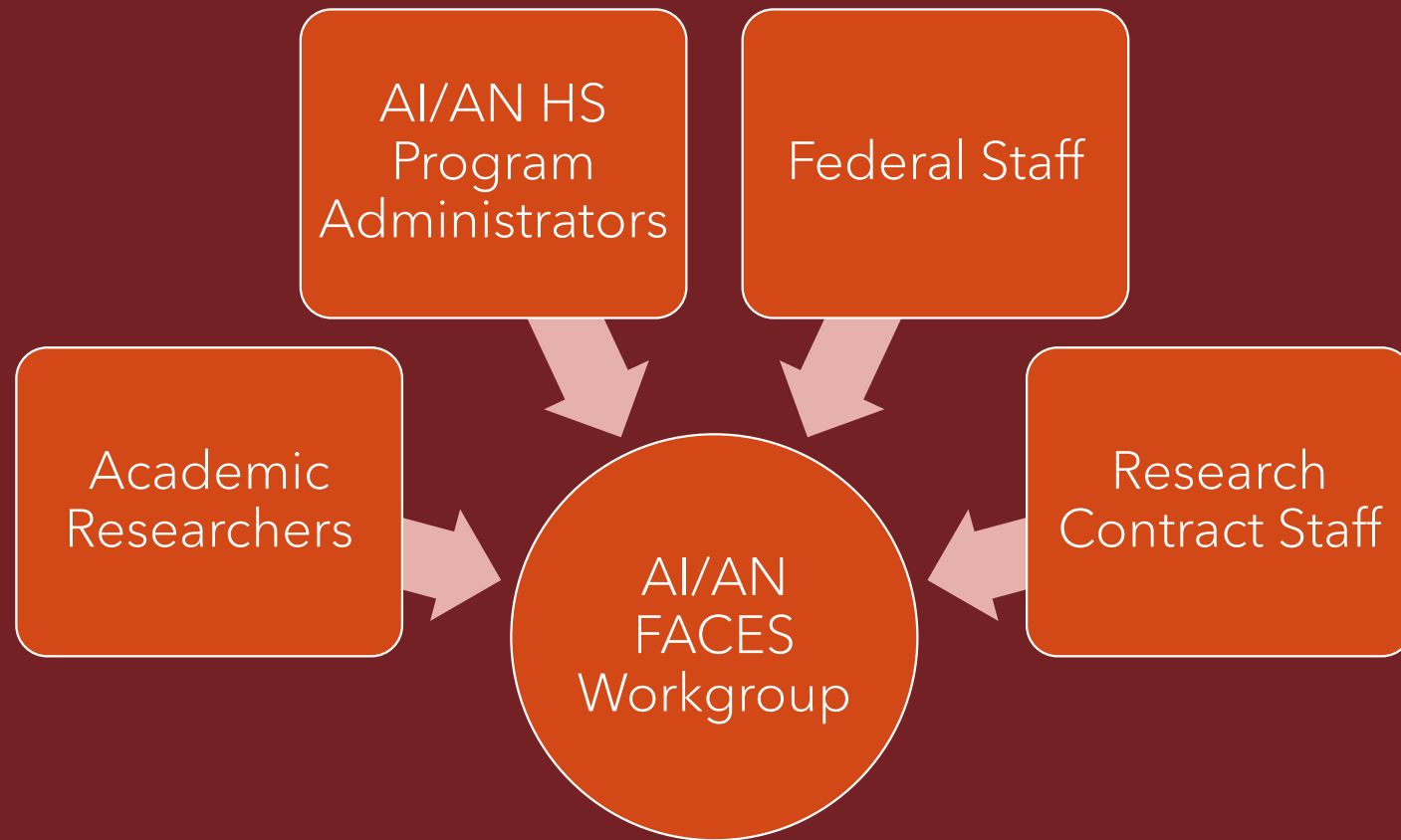
H1: Missing behavioral markers and/or indicators

- Example - Behavioral markers of respect, Indicators for Positive Climate like humor

H2: Missing dimensions and/or domains

- Learning by observing and pitching in
- Non-verbal exchanges

AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE FAMILY AND CHILD EXPERIENCES SURVEY (AI/AN FACES) WORKGROUP





CLASS COL

AI/AN FACES

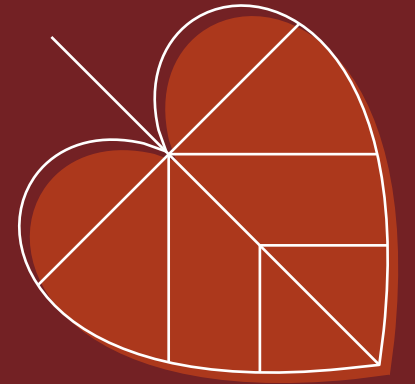
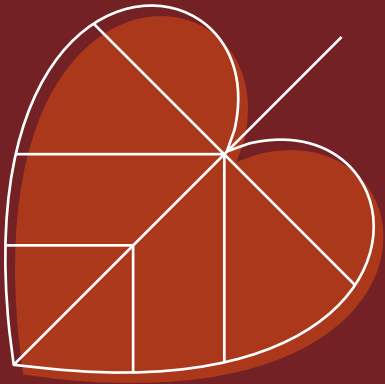
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TRC CLASS COL →

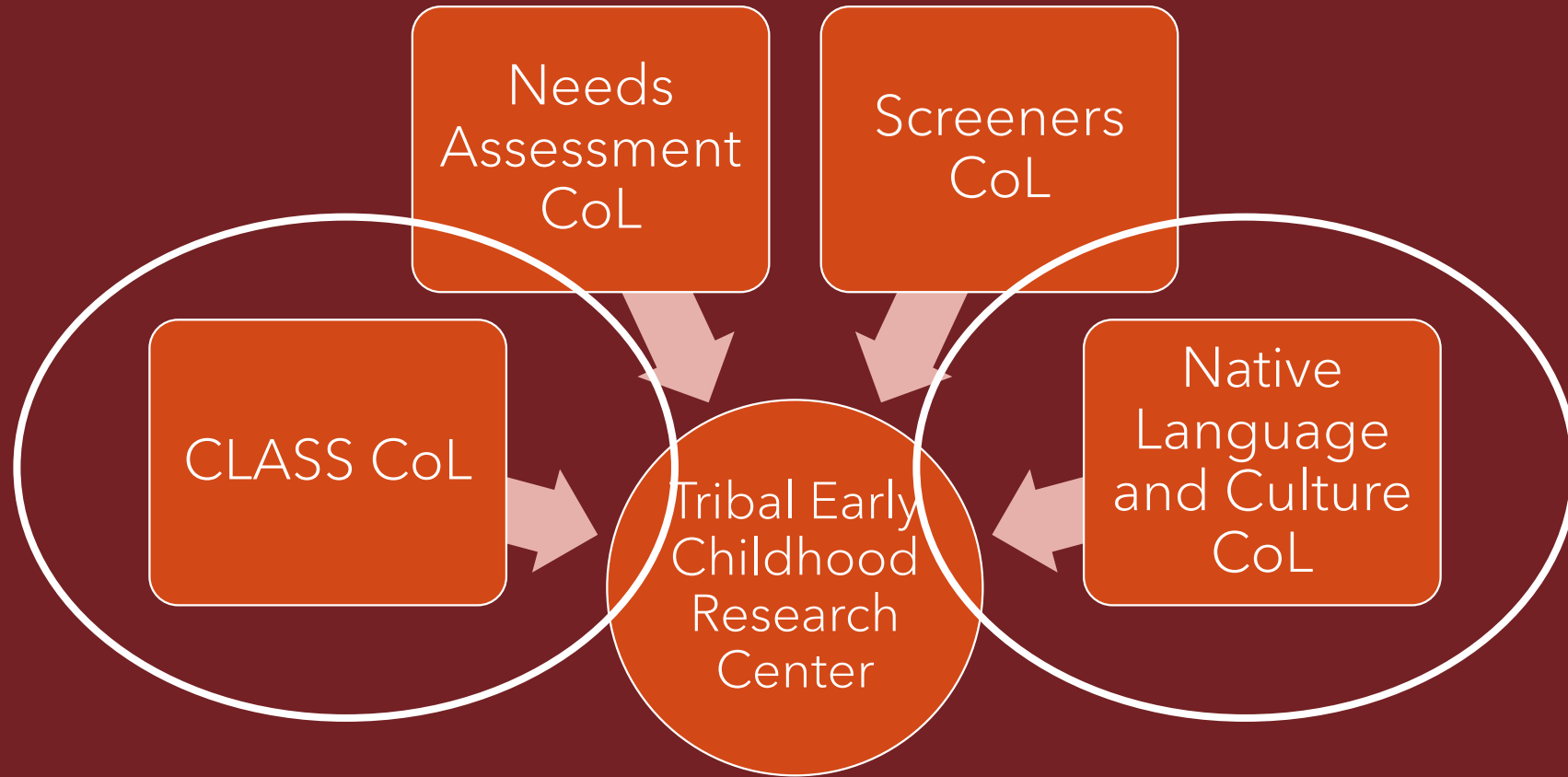
TEAM JUSTICE FOR
NATIVE CHILDREN →

SETTING THE STAGE: AI/AN FACES

- *Steps forward*
 - Native Culture and Language in the Classroom Observation Tool
 - Parent report of Native language and culture experiences at home and in the community
- *Areas of *potential* improvement*
 - Sending outsiders in to collect data
 - Not having flexibility to gather data on cultural practices in more depth
 - Child-level focus



TRC COMMUNITIES OF LEARNING





CLASS COL

AI/AN FACES

Native Language &
Culture COL

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TRC CLASS COL →

TEAM JUSTICE FOR
NATIVE CHILDREN →



CLASS COL

AI/AN FACES

Native Language & Culture COL

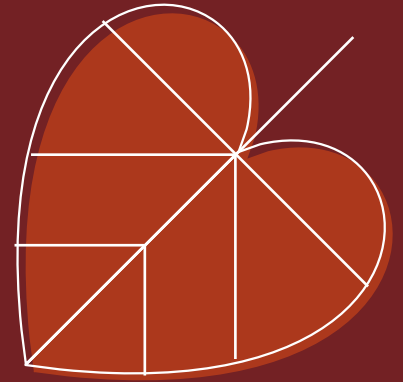
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TRC CLASS COL →

TEAM JUSTICE FOR NATIVE CHILDREN →

AN EXPLORATION OF METHODS FOR MEASURING THE IMPACT OF CULTURALLY GROUNDED INTERACTIONS ON THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF NATIVE CHILDREN

Moving toward a culturally grounded focus



Research Questions

How effective are our observation instruments in Native classrooms?

Are there significant differences in observation codes between local coders and coders from outside the community?

What are the relationships among classroom interactions, Native language and culture in the classroom, and children's development?

What supports are necessary for success when hiring local program staff to collect data?



CLASS COL

AI/AN FACES

Native Language &
Culture COL

Native Language &
Culture COL

TRC CLASS COL

TEAM JUSTICE FOR
NATIVE CHILDREN

OBSERVATION DATA

Classroom
Assessment Scoring
System (CLASS 2.0)

Native Culture and
Language in the
Classroom
(NCLCO-R)

New measure of
missing elements of
cultural interactions in
the classroom

Qualitative Review

OBSERVATION DATA

Classroom
Assessment Scoring
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Qualitative Review

OBSERVATION DATA

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the classroom

Qualitative Review

WORKING WITH SITES
TO FINALIZE METHODS
AND DEVELOP LOCAL
ADAPTATIONS



Summary of Lessons Learned

- Support for engaged process
 - Time commitment (in it for the long haul)
 - Funding commitment (pay community partners for their time)
- Relational opportunities
 - Build relationships with people from different cultural backgrounds
 - Build trust in communities that have been harmed by research
- Research processes
 - Think beyond current research and theory paradigms
 - Consider other ways to conduct research (community-based approach)
 - Use a Both/And versus Either/Or approach when considering alignment with existing research methods
- Dissemination
 - Share findings that contradict existing paradigms
 - Reaching all stakeholders requires commitment to producing multiple products/non-academic products



Thank you!

Questions & reflections?



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