

NICWA NEWS

Quarterly Newsletter • Spring 2020

The **LATEST**

INSIDE

*Honoring Our Past, Present,
and Future Generations*





National Indian Child Welfare Association
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The National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) is a private, nonprofit, membership-based organization dedicated to the well-being of American Indian and Alaska Native children and families. Headquartered in Portland, Oregon, NICWA serves tribes, individuals, and private organizations throughout the United States and Canada by serving as the most comprehensive source of information on American Indian child welfare and acting as the only national Native organization focused on building tribal capacity to prevent child abuse and neglect.

Our Mission

The National Indian Child Welfare Association is dedicated to the well-being of American Indian and Alaska Native children and families.

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Sarah Kastelic (*Alutiiq*)

NICWA News is the quarterly newsletter for members and donors of the National Indian Child Welfare Association. Membership is available in multiple levels starting at \$35.

For reprint requests, additional copies, or other information, contact us at info@nicwa.org



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Message from the Executive Director

Dear NICWA Members, Sponsors, Donors, and Friends,

For 38 years, our board of directors, board of trustees, staff, partners, families, and allies have met in April, Child Abuse Prevention Month, to gather together and share our collective wisdom about how to draw on our cultural traditions and teachings to strengthen American Indian and Alaska Native families and children. The 38th Annual Protecting Our Children Conference theme, “Honoring Our Past, Present, and Future Generations: Living Our Tribal Cultural Values and Beliefs,” focuses on the opportunity we each have to exemplify our tribal values and beliefs in our attitude and conduct in the work we do in our communities for the benefit of children as well as in the way we carry ourselves in our own extended families.

At their core, Indigenous worldviews are relational. As Indigenous people, we orient ourselves to the world through our relationships with human beings, animals, and our environment. According to our worldview, all things are related to one another, and we make meaning of the world around us through holding these relationships in context.

One of the things I most look forward to each year is the NICWA conference. While I’m fortunate to travel to many tribal communities throughout the year, there are many dear friends and partners that I only see at our conference. This opportunity to reconnect with old friends and meet new ones motivates and sustains me for the work we do all year long. This chance to hear from you about the strengths and challenges of your work in your community helps me to be a better advocate and to bolster NICWA programming.

The NICWA conference gives us the opportunity to summon the collective power of our cultural values and traditions in service to our communities and families. We know best how to apply the wisdom encoded in our values and beliefs to nurture our children and support Native families.

I hope to see you at conference, and I hope this Spring newsletter is an additional opportunity for you to experience and be inspired by our culture in action.

Quyanaa on behalf of Alaska Native and American Indian children and families.

Sincerely,

Sarah F. Kastelic

Sarah Kastelic, PhD
(Alutiiq)



ICWA Supporters File Briefs in Rehearing of Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals Decision

The federal government, five intervenor tribes (Quinault Indian Nation, Morongo Band of Mission Indians, Cherokee Nation, Navajo Nation, and Oneida Nation), and a host of supportive amici parties filed amicus briefs to the Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals defending the constitutionality of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) as part of the court's en banc proceedings. The parties who filed amicus briefs make up a nationwide coalition of 495 tribal nations, more than 60 Native organizations, 26 states and the District of Columbia, 77 members of Congress, 31 leading child welfare organizations, and Indian and constitutional law scholars who agree ICWA is vital to the well-being of Indian children and the stability and integrity of Indian families.

In an en banc review, complex cases of broad legal significance are reconsidered by the entire court. On January 22 in New Orleans, Louisiana, 16 judges in the Fifth Circuit reheard oral arguments. We are confident the Fifth Circuit will affirm ICWA's strong constitutional grounding. NICWA and our Protect ICWA Campaign partners, the National Congress of American Indians, Native American Rights Fund, and the Association on American Indian Affairs, want to thank all

of the amicus brief parties for helping the litigation team present a strong showing of support for ICWA.

House and Senate Approve Spending Bill with New Funding for Tribal Child Welfare Services

At the end of 2019, Congress approved legislation that will provide tribes and tribal organizations operating a Title IV-B, Subpart 1 program (Stephanie Tubbs Jones Child Welfare Services program) with new funding for children in the child welfare system. The new funding was contained in H.R. 1865 (Further Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2020) that funded the federal government and programs for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020. The new funding is temporary and will be available in FY 2020 (October 1–September 30) with the opportunity to continue using the funds in FY 2021. The funding, \$15 million for tribes and tribal organizations, is only available one time unless Congress continues the funding in future legislation.

The Administration for Children and

Families (ACF) oversees the Title IV-B, Subpart 1 program and will distribute the funds. The funding comes as part of Congress's effort to assist tribes and states that are implementing the Family First Prevention Services Act (Family First).

With the passage of Family First earlier in 2019, a portion of Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance funding became eligible for use for prevention services to help keep families together instead of funding limited for use after children are removed from their families. Family First provides states and tribes that are approved to operate a Title IV-E Foster Care program with the opportunity to seek reimbursement for prevention services, such as parent training, individual and family counseling, and mental health and substance abuse treatment. Tribes that are currently Title IV-B, Subpart 1 grantees should contact their regional ACF office for more details on how they can receive the funds.

To listen to a recording of the oral arguments, to read copies of the amicus briefs, or to learn more information about new funding for tribal child welfare services, visit www.nicwa.org/policy-update/.



PIP Curriculum Evaluation

With the passage of Family First, prevention services programs funded by states and direct Title IV-E tribes are required to be “evidence-based practices.” Family First also established a clearinghouse at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to maintain information about evidence-based programs and services that are eligible for prevention services funding under the Act.

This important policy change set the stage for an evaluation of the effectiveness of NICWA’s Positive Indian Parenting (PIP) training, a curriculum that has been widely used in tribal communities and with urban Native populations throughout the U.S. and Canada.

NICWA has long aspired to evaluate our PIP curriculum, as we believe establishing evidence of effectiveness of the program will allow tribes to access additional funding streams to support local PIP implementation.

Fortunately, with the policy change in Family First, some private and government funders are interested in supporting evaluation of parenting, substance abuse, and mental health services as a way for states and tribes to secure additional federal funding for these prevention services. With support from Casey Family Programs and the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, NICWA has partnered with Child Trends to design and implement a pilot evaluation of in-home delivery of PIP (as opposed to a group setting) with Native families who are not mandated to receive parenting training.

An important resource to support the evaluation is the PIP Program Fidelity Checklist, a tool for trainers and observers to ensure that they are consistently delivering all the most important aspects of PIP. The checklist includes items for trainers to accomplish before they begin PIP implementation, either in-home/one-on-one or in a group setting, as well as instructions about the

format and content for each of the eight sessions.

While PIP was designed to be widely customized, it is important to ensure the fidelity of PIP’s key principles and content is maintained across different sites. Consistency in key content items and format will ensure the curriculum is delivered in the way originally intended and will allow PIP to be evaluated meaningfully related to well-being outcomes for children and caregiver-child relationships. Any community implementing PIP or trainer using the PIP curriculum with families can benefit from a “refresher” about the key elements of PIP. Find the free Fidelity Checklist on the NICWA online store under “Get Involved.” If you’re attending the NICWA annual conference, you can participate in a two-part workshop to review the Fidelity Checklist, which is offered during workshop sessions D and E.

Honoring Our Past, Present, and Future Generations: *Living Our Tribal Cultural Values and Beliefs*

Indian Country—including tribal nations, tribal consortia, and urban Indian centers—is incredibly diverse. Each tribal community and its history, culture, and set of beliefs and teachings is unique and requires culturally responsive best practice models to support children and families. Formal family services and supports are complemented by natural helpers and healers, culture bearers, and traditional medicine practitioners. Tribal communities facilitate intergenerational healing and wellness by recognizing that the teachings, ideas, and answers to the challenges our communities face are in the hearts, minds, and spirits of what has been, what is, and what is yet to come.

It is only through recognition, encouragement, collaboration, and nurturing that true healing can take place. Uplifting tribal elders, families, and youth is central to intergenerational healing and wellness. The healing and wellness we attain, surrounded and supported by our family and community, is our legacy for the generations to come. Future generations rely on us to shape the environment in which they will live and grow. Our creation stories, traditional teachings, and protocols instruct us in our relationships and appropriate behavior. By living out our tribal cultural values and beliefs, we honor past, present, and future generations.

This Year's Recipient of the Champion for Native Children

We are thrilled to announce this year's recipient of the 2020 Champion for Native Children Award, Cindy Blackstock. We will honor Cindy at our conference banquet on Tuesday, March 31.

Cindy Blackstock, PhD, is a member of the Gitksan First Nation and serves as the executive director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society and professor at McGill University's School of Social Work. She has over 30 years of experience working in child welfare and Indigenous children's rights and has published more than 75 articles on topics relating to reconciliation, Indigenous theory, First Nations child welfare, and human rights.

Congratulations, Cindy, and thank you for being an outstanding advocate for First Nations children, youth, and families.





Resilience

This year's conference artwork by Mark Light (*Mohawk*) is titled "Resilience" because it shows how Indigenous people are able to overcome the hardest of times—from the abuse of residential schools to where they are today. In the artist's own words, "The children's silhouettes in the background represent the broken spirits of the abused, raped, and murdered children who were forced to attend the residential schools. The artwork displays the survival as a people and the ability to defy all odds, while keeping language and traditional teachings intact."

Reflections on "Living Our Tribal Cultural Values and Beliefs" from conference emcee, Lindsay Early, NICWA deputy director

Question: How do you personally identify with this year's conference theme?

Answer: Our conference theme this year is especially close to my heart, as my Comanche values have instilled in me the belief that we should honor and care for our elders and share knowledge, love, and cultural values with the generations that follow. When I reflect on my own Indigenous values, I think of relationships, redistribution, reciprocity, and responsibility. NICWA's conference is an opportunity to see these values in action. At conference, we see child advocates from many different fields, communities, and backgrounds establishing new relationships and exchanging knowledge about best practices.

Question: What are you most excited about this year at conference?

Answer: I am most excited about the opportunity to network, visit with our members, and exchange successful strategies for developing effective services. Last year, I enjoyed hearing about how to involve youth, parents, and grandparents in the development of policies and services. The banquet dinner and entertainment are always excellent as well.

The Roles of Child Welfare Workers Working with Substance-Abusing Families

Parental substance use disorders are a factor in over 90% of tribal child welfare cases. In our training, Working with Substance-Abusing Families (WWSAF), we discuss the five essential roles of tribal child welfare workers when working with substance-abusing families:

1. Identifying alcoholism and other substance use disorders (screening)
2. Mobilizing treatment
3. Supporting treatment
4. Post-treatment casework
5. Assisting the child(ren)

Identifying alcoholism and other substance use disorders (i.e., screening): First and foremost, no specialized approach can be employed until a substance use disorder is recognized. It's important for a child welfare worker to ask good questions and know when to seek an assessment and how to begin helping children when they suspect a substance use disorder is hindering child safety. Collaboration between programs and agencies to achieve what no single agency can achieve alone is a key component in this process.

Mobilizing treatment: There are two important aspects: motivating the person to get help and making sure they have a place to go when they are willing. Treatment is only the beginning. It is an opportunity for rehabilitation and recovery; treatment in and of itself is not recovery. Treatment must be started without unnecessary delay. The WWSAF training covers how workers can develop relationships and collaborate on assessments, referrals, and intake processes with treatment providers.

Supporting treatment: A child welfare worker's support of treatment includes developing rapport with the parent, ensuring the relationship between the child and the parent remains intact, ensuring the child understands addiction and treatment at their developmental level, and ensuring that the child's needs that have been neglected are addressed while the parent is focused entirely on treatment.

Post-treatment casework: What happens after the initial treatment phase? How does a worker support rehabilitation and parenting at the same time? Timing of parent training, work on

child-parent attachment issues, life skills development, addressing safety issues, and implementing a realistic relapse plan are all part of post-treatment case work. WWSAF teaches how to maximize the value of a worker's support and services by understanding and leveraging behavioral health resources, both formal and informal.

Assisting the child(ren): Child welfare workers also learn how to help children understand addiction and recovery at each stage of the parent's process. Assisting the child also includes ensuring that the child's needs that have been neglected get attention, including medical, dental, vision, learning, and counseling needs, among others, while making sure the child's relationship with the parent is preserved and strengthened and that the child's own trauma, attachment, or substance use issues are addressed.

WWSAF training attendees come from tribal, state, and national agencies throughout the country. Join other child welfare workers at an upcoming WWSAF training by visiting www.nicwa.org/training-institutes/.

Grandfamilies Toolkit Coming Soon

In the last year of a the three-year project to improve culturally appropriate services to American Indian and Alaska Native grandfamilies (grandparents or other relatives raising their relative children), we are publishing a toolkit with Generations United as a resource to educate tribal and mainstream agencies on the unique strengths of grandfamilies and the challenges they face. Grandfamilies will also benefit from the toolkit as they can use it to educate service providers that may be able to help them address the complex needs of their family.

Here is an example to show the topics addressed in the toolkit:

Ray looked up from tending his small garden plot as the shiny black late-model Mustang came up the long dusty driveway. "PaPa, look! Can we eat it?" Brenda, soon to be four and the light of his life, had just discovered a zucchini that was the biggest she had ever seen. "Yes, it will be ready to eat soon, but not today," he told her as he watched the vehicle approach. Angela, his wife, stepped out onto the deck with a look of both worry and anticipation. He knew the look after 25 years of marriage. She always knew something was up before it happened. It's hard to describe the complexity of the feelings of relief, sadness, and fear that can come with seeing their opioid addicted daughter, Brenda's mom. Just five minutes before, they did not know whether she was safe or even alive. At the same time, they wonder what on earth was going to happen five minutes from now.

Grandfamilies assume emotional, financial, and even safety risks and responsibilities when they decide to provide care for their grandchildren. Where do they turn regarding their concerns? What role does the tribal child welfare department play in the decision to provide temporary care, guardianship, or customary adoption to grandparents? How does the grandparent deal with the demands of raising a grandchild and coping with the challenges presented by the parent? In reality, grandfamilies cannot do it alone. They need the full support of relatives and each of the various tribal or public safety net programs that can help families deal with challenges to meet their needs.



Developing a Mental Health and Wellness Framework: *First Nations Health Council and First Nations Communities*

This is the second part of a two-part story. The first article was published in the Winter 2020 edition of NICWA News.

Communities are experts in their lived experience. To learn what community-defined outcomes First Nations communities in British Columbia, Canada, would see and experience with a successful mental health and wellness initiative, NICWA worked with the First Nations Health Council (FNHC) to develop a community engagement plan.

Measuring these outcomes will be used to determine whether or not the FNHC's initiative to fund mental health in a more holistic, Nation-based way is successful. The FNHC worked with the Governments of Canada and British Columbia to provide \$30 million dollars over two years to support innovative models of integrated planning and service delivery related to mental health.

Last summer, NICWA staff engaged over 360 individuals across all five health service regions in BC. Six group activities engaged 295 people in table talks, focus groups, and group interviews. Individual interviews were conducted at an information table, on the phone, or in individual meetings. Everyone was asked a common set of questions:

- Describe a mentally and emotionally well child and family.
- List characteristics of mentally and emotionally well people.
- Describe services and practices that promote wellness or help people stay in balance.
- List traditional teachings that promote wellness.

Using the raw data collected, we found consistent themes that could be stated as desired outcomes of the mental health and wellness initiative and designated them as potential core outcome measures.

The findings were analyzed, summarized, and presented at the First Nations Health Authority Fall 2019 Regional Caucuses. To achieve comparability across communities, we recommended adopting a small set of core measures for community reporting. Twelve potential core measures were identified and submitted to the caucuses for prioritization. Supplemental outcomes identified were also presented for the caucus participants to designate as important (or not) to their community. In this way, we sought to double-check our results and listen to the communities so as to not miss important sentiments in the analysis. To account for closely related ideas, we proposed four core outcomes:

- Connection to Culture and Positive Cultural Identity
- Felt Safety
- Connection to Other People and Positive Relationship with a Caring Adult
- Connection to the Land

The prioritized supplemental outcomes show an important affirmation of the core measures. "Trust," the highest ranked item, is very similar to "Felt Safety" and "Connection to Other People." Two outcome measures that are closely related to the mental health and wellness initiative are "Readiness for, or in Process of, Healing from Trauma" and "Mental Health Awareness." These community level outcomes are also under consideration for use by communities:

- Trust
- Readiness for, or in Process of, Healing from Trauma
- Lateral Kindness/General Kindness in Community
- Engaged/Involved in Community, Activities, etc.
- Mental Health Awareness

Specific measures for each of the prioritized outcomes were presented to FNHC in a comprehensive final report. FNHC plans to share the report in a formal publication in 2020.

Common Themes in Requests for Information

Every day, NICWA staff provide telephone support and resource materials for families through our requests for information (RFI) program. We provide compassionate support and help relatives and community members navigate the child welfare system, access meaningful services, and advocate for their relatives. We offer referrals to a variety of resources and provide training on ICWA best practices for tribal and state caseworkers, attorneys, and judges.

Just in the last three months we have received hundreds of RFIs, and we've compiled some of the most common questions with our responses below:

How does ICWA protect American Indian/Alaska Native children and their families?

When ICWA applies to a child's case, the child's tribe and family will have an opportunity to be involved in decisions affecting services and placements for the Indian child. A tribe, parent, or Indian custodian can also petition to transfer jurisdiction of the case to the tribal court of the child's tribe. ICWA sets out federal

requirements regarding removal and placement of Indian children in foster, guardianship, or adoptive homes and allows the child's tribe to intervene in the case. Foster placements under ICWA also include residential or group care home placements.

What specific protections does ICWA provide to keep American Indian/Alaska Native children connected to their family, community, and culture?

Caseworkers handling an ICWA case must:

- Provide active efforts to prevent child removal and/or facilitate reunification to the family
- Notify the child's tribe and the child's parent(s) in a timely manner of the child custody proceeding
- Work actively to involve the child's tribe, the child's parents, and the child's extended family in the proceedings and other important casework decisions
- If necessary, identify an out-of-home placement that fits within the hierarchy of ICWA placement preferences

How does one trace their Native heritage and enroll in an American Indian or Alaska Native tribe?

1. Research and identify as many members of a family tree as possible.
2. Search Indian-specific records to confirm relationship to tribe.
3. Seek assistance from the tribe to establish a relationship or enroll.

For more detailed information, please use "Tracing Native Ancestry" found at www.nicwa.org/families/.

Find these common questions and responses and more online under Frequently Asked Questions at www.nicwa.org/families-service-providers/.

Meet Jeremy

Jeremy Chase-Israel Member Relations Manager

Jeremy Chase-Israel joined NICWA as the member relations manager in the winter of 2020. He grew up in Boston, Massachusetts and has lived up and down the East Coast. He attended Goucher College in Baltimore City, where he received his bachelor's degree in history. While in college, he applied and was accepted to the International Partnership for Service-Learning's Lakota Nation Service-Learning program. While living on the Lake Traverse Reservation in South Dakota, Jeremy worked for the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate's Tribal Historic Preservation Office and as an afterschool teacher at the Veteran's Memorial Youth Center. After graduating from Goucher, Jeremy worked for Catholic Relief Service as a major giving analyst. While at Catholic Relief Service, he obtained his master of fine arts in creative writing from University of Southern Maine's Stonecoast Writing Program. Jeremy has worked for environmental nonprofits as a development generalist; has served as an art teacher, after school program director, and special education assistant; and ran debate and mentorship programs in partnership with Baltimore City Public Schools. Education, social justice, and environmental advocacy define his work, and he's excited to combine his skills in service to NICWA's mission.



New and Renewing Members

Individuals

Abalone

Lanna Allen
Anna Anguiano
Arthur Argomaniz
Moses Ayagallia
Keli Ballou
Melonie Boord
Aaston Burrows
Terri Burrows
Shonta Chaloux
Linda Red Cloud
Karrie Colegrove
Stephanie DeCoteau
Michaela Demmert
Jeff Dion
Kathleen Fox
Roger Golec
Cheryl Hartshorne
Sarah Henry
Evelyn Huf
Miranda Johansson
Trisha Johnson
Ella Kane
Kyla Karcz
Kelsey Keogh
Jeri Kosechequetah
Lupe Luna
Samala Maloney
Hilary McKinney
Ramalda Miguel

Anna Miller
Loren Miller
Lucy Mochin
Kay Mopope
Anita Morales
Janese Mousseaux
Jennifer Muskett
Jason Pablo
Myra Pearson
Rozette Pegues
Charlotte Pfeiffer
Sylvia Pitner
Lynn Little Plume
Darlene Rainey
Hallie Riggs
Melissa Rininger
Agnes Roland
Pearl Semaken
David Seres
Daphina Shirley
Kimberly Smith
Frankie Snider
Ashley Stetson
Nancylee Stewart
Tahnisha Sungino
Beverly Sutton
Jean Swanson
Wendy Thomas
Tristan Tipps-Webster
Virginia Tolento
Sophinnia Tsosie
Evelyn Turner
Kassandra Urabe
Lonna Valdez

Miranda Vele
Raven Weatherston
Starlene Wheeler
Augusta Williams
Kevin Wimsatt
Jacqueline Yalch
Joseph Young

Turquoise

Julia E. Jaakola
Ezekiel Kaufman

Coral

Monica Roth Day

Tribes

Cedar

Seminole Nation of Oklahoma
Pueblo de San Ildefonso

Sage

Quartz Valley Indian Reservation
Susanville Indian Rancheria
Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians

Organizations

Carlton County Public Health
& Human Services

You're Invited!

NICWA Membership Welcome Reception

Sunday, March 29, 2020
7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Evergreen C-F

Join us for our member event of the year!
Help us kick off conference with
a welcome celebration of cultural
performances, coffee, and dessert!
This is a great opportunity to relax and
network with fellow NICWA members
while enjoying local community
performances welcoming us to Denver.



NICWA News

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NICWA

National Indian Child Welfare Association
Protecting Our Children • Preserving Our Culture

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2020-2021 Training Institutes



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National Indian Child Welfare Association



June 2-4, 2020

Portland
Oregon



September 22-24, 2020

Niagara Falls
New York



February 9-11, 2021

Palm Springs
California



April 14-16, 2021

Seattle
Washington