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Measuring and Supporting Child-Teacher Interactions: A State and Tribal Story

April 20, 2022

Webinar Series on

Measuring and Supporting Policy Changes: Lessons Learned by CCDF Lead Agency–Research Partnerships

OPRE Report #2022-262

Housekeeping

- The webinar is being recorded.
- The recording, slides, and transcript will be posted online. Links will be emailed to participants when the materials are ready.
- All participants are muted.
- Type your **questions** or **comments** into the chat box at any time. We will take clarifying questions at the end of each presentation with more discussion at the end of the webinar.

Center for Supporting Research on CCDBG Implementation

Supported through the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) in the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and managed through a contract with the Urban Institute

Alysia Blandon, OPRE Project Officer

Julia Isaacs, Project Director; Teresa Derrick-Mills, Deputy Project Director, Laura Wagner, Project Assistant

Goal: Support CCDF Lead Agencies in building research and evaluation capacity

Activities:

- Building Child Care Research Capacity through web events and written materials
- Supporting grant teams with CCDBG Implementation Research and Evaluation Planning and Implementation Grants

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Panelists

Brittany Suralta, Director for the Employment and Training Services Department at Cook Inlet Tribal Council

Connie Wirz, Senior Director, Clare Swan Early Learning Center at Cook Inlet Tribal Council

Hattie Harvey, Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Alaska Anchorage

Thea Stevens, Infant Toddler Program Manager, Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

Shayna Funke, Lead Policy and Business Operations Analyst, Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

Our Focus Today

Motivation for, key ingredients of, key partnerships, research approaches, and lessons learned for two policy-researcher partnerships

1. **Fostering Culturally Responsive Teaching In Early Learning for Indigenous Children in Alaska**
2. **Georgia's Lifting Infants and Toddlers through Language-rich Environments (LITTLE) Grants**

As you listen, think about why the teams have different approaches to measuring and supporting child-teacher interactions

Fostering Culturally Responsive Teaching In Early Learning for Indigenous Children in Alaska

COOK INLET TRIBAL COUNCIL

UAA Institute of Social and Economic Research
University of Alaska Anchorage

Policy - Practice- Research Partnership

- **Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC)**
  - Tribal CCDF lead in Anchorage
  - 200+ providers
  - Works with AK on licensing & monitoring
- **Clare Swan Early Learning Center**
  - CITC's tribally-operated Early HS center
- **University of Alaska Anchorage**
  - Institute of Social and Economic Research
  - Department of Psychology
- **thread/Learn & Grow**

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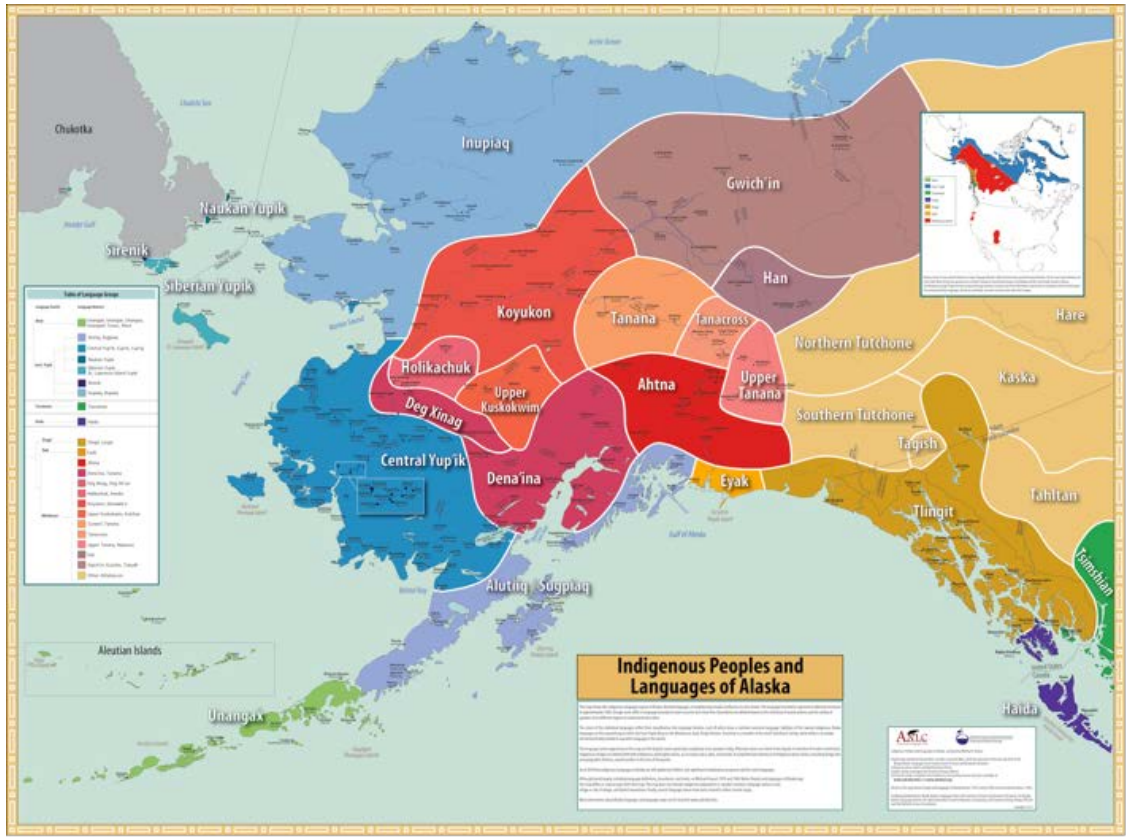
Alaska Context

- 231 federally recognized tribes
- 21 Indigenous Alaska Native languages
- 100’s of dialects, even more subdialects
- 5 Major Cultural Groups
- Anchorage is Alaska’s biggest village



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“Time is passing by us on little children’s feet” Clare Swan

Tsilqu – Together As One

- Cultural Programming
- Curriculum designed around six seasons, traditional values, and Head Start framework
- Multigenerational relationships with families

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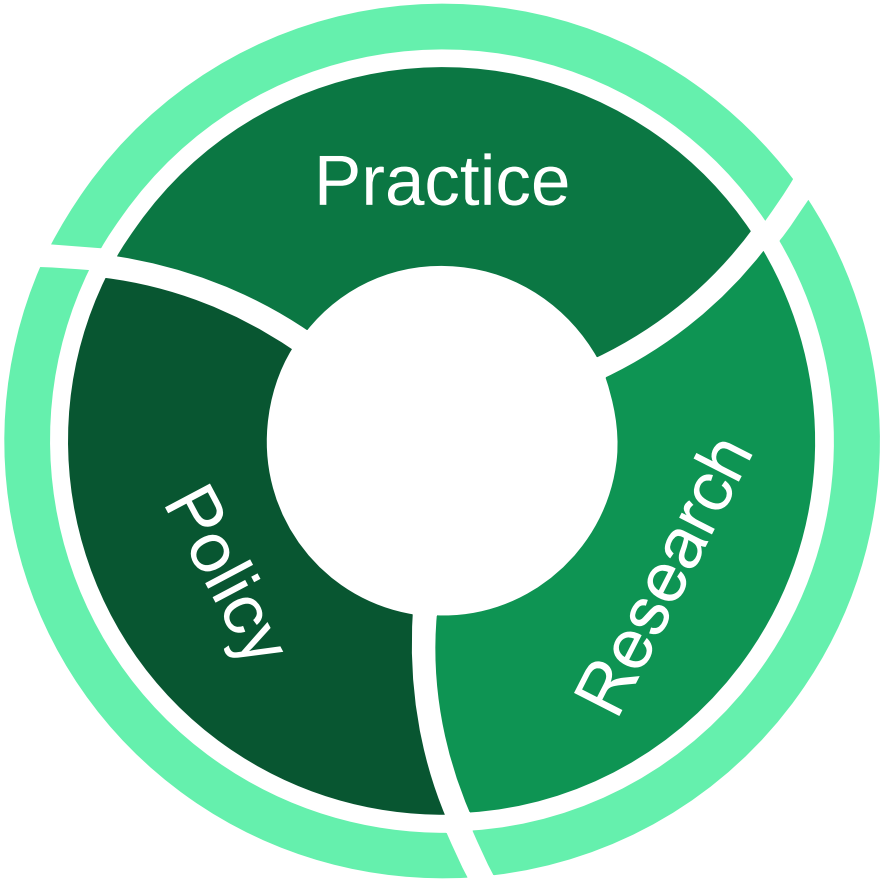
The Partnership: A Collaborative Inquiry Process

- **Research Question**
  - What is, and how do we measure culturally responsive practice in an Alaskan and Indigenous early care and learning context?
- **Research Activity**
  - *Guidelines for Culturally Responsive, Reflective Practice in Birth - Five Settings*
- **Application & Dissemination**
  - For whom does the research benefit?
  - What are the real-world applications for practice and policy?



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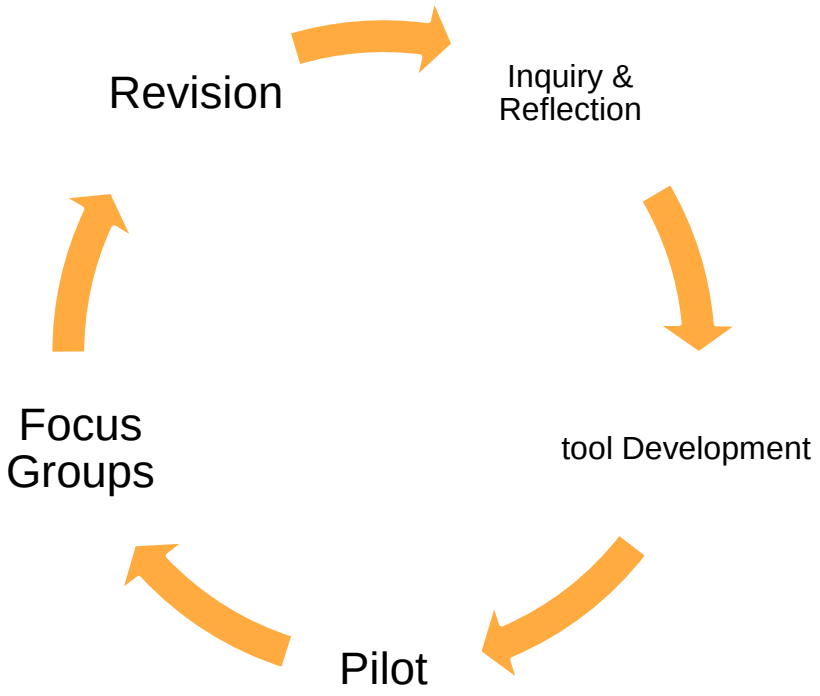
Research Activity: Co-Development Process

Multiphase and Reiterative Project

- Community-based research approach
- Community advisory board discussions
- Document reviews
- Content reviews
- Pilot studies
- Focus groups



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3 Focus Areas of the Guidelines

Culturally responsive early childhood educators **identify their own values and gain knowledge** about local ways of knowing and being

Culturally responsive early childhood educators **work closely with families** to build and promote home language and culture.

Culturally responsive early childhood **educators embed cultural values and traditional knowledge** in heir curriculum planning

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Real-World Meaning:
Application to Practice and Policy

- **Learn and Grow** is Alaska's Quality Rating Improvement System
- Hybrid Framework:
  - Levels 1 & 2 are fixed activity points
  - Levels 3, 4, & 5 are a combination of fixed activities and a choice menu
- *Guidelines for Culturally Responsive Reflective Practice in Birth to Five Settings* are on the choice menu for levels 3-5

Learn & Grow
Alaska's Commitment to Quality Early Care & Learning

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Reflection on Partnerships and Process

- Research Approach
- Practice & Policy
- Multigenerational Approach
- Partnership Relationships

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Questions and Funding Acknowledgement

Questions?

Acknowledgement

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Georgia's Lifting Infants and Toddlers through Language-rich Environments (LITTLE) Grants

Thea Stevens, Infant Toddler Manager
Shayna Funke, Lead Policy and Business Operations Analyst

Georgia Dept of Early Care and Learning
BRIGHT FROM THE START

Programs within DECAL

- Georgia's Pre-K
- Licensing and regulation
- Quality Rated, Georgia's Quality Rating and Improvement System
- Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS), Georgia's subsidy program
- Nutrition services
- Head Start State Collaboration Office
- Inclusion services
- Infant and toddler supports
- Several quality initiatives, professional development programs, and grants

What are LITTLE Grants?

***L**ifting **I**nfants and **T**oddlers **T**hrough **L**anguage-rich **E**nvironments*

LITTLE

Lifting Infants & Toddlers Through Language-Rich Environments

LITTLE Cohort	Program Applicants	Awarded Programs	Continuation Year Programs	Classrooms Served	Teachers Served
Centers	153	85	56	283	557
Family Child Care Homes	87	60			

About LITTLE: Grant Structure

Grant provides:

- Professional development sessions
- Weekly coaching sessions
- Data collection & evaluation
- Language and literacy classroom materials and supplies
- Stipends for participants

Center-based programs also receive:

- Funding for a peer coach
- Professional development or credential attainment
- Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)
- Monthly literacy forum with directors & peer coaches

Origin of LITTLE

- 2009 Georgia Quality Study
- In 2017, former Georgia Governor Nathan Deal set a goal that every child in Georgia should be reading on grade level by the end of the third grade
- The LITTLE Grant was created in response to data showing a need to increase the quality of infant and toddler care in Georgia
- This professional learning grant was funded by the Sandra Dunagan DEAL Center for Early Language & Literacy & the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement (GOSA)
- The name was changed to the LITTLE grant in 2018

Evaluating LITTLE: Policy-Research Partnership

DECAL's internal research team

- Works with programs to evaluate key initiatives like LITTLE
- Tracked and coordinated data

DECAL program leadership and infant/toddler specialists

- Determined what they needed to know about LITTLE
- Provides professional development to programs and collect Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) data

LENA team

- Developers of Language Environment Analysis (LENA) technology
- Trains participants on LENA devices and houses data collected

Child Trends researchers

- Conducted formal analysis of data collected through LITTLE

LITTLE Evaluation

Did child-teacher interactions improve as a result of participation in LITTLE?

Child Trends evaluated data collected from the first two years of the LITTLE grants (2017-18, 2018-19)

- CLASS-Infant and CLASS-Toddler observations
- LENA Grow data points
- Participant demographics

Did the teacher-child interactions, as measured by the CLASS-Infant and CLASS-Toddler, improve over the course of the LITTLE grant years?

CLASS-Infant

Responsive Caregiving

4 dimensions

CLASS-Toddler

Engaged Support for Learning

5 dimensions

Emotional and Behavioral Support

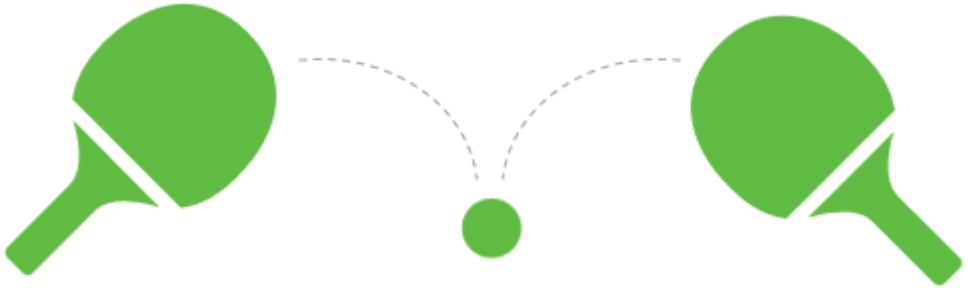
3 dimensions

- ✓ Responsive Caregiving in infant classrooms increased significantly
- ✓ Engaged Support for Learning and Emotional and Behavioral Support in toddler classrooms increased significantly

Did the number of words the adults spoke and the number of back-and-forth conversational turns between adults and children increase over the course of the LITTLE grant years?

Adult Word Count

Conversational Turns



No significant changes in the language environment.

Lessons Learned

Research

- Challenging to track and analyze data collected for professional development purposes

Policy

- Perception of the role of infant and toddler teachers
- Understanding of high-quality infant and toddler care

Practice

- Extension of the LITTLE Grant to previous LITTLE participants
- LENA Start opportunity for DECAL staff & Family Peer Ambassadors to build school readiness & strengthen families with parent-group classes

Georgia Dept of Early Care and Learning
BRIGHT FROM THE START

Questions?

This study was supported by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of the United States (U.S.) Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award (Grant #: 90YE0202) totaling $1,000,000 with 100 percent funded by ACF/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACF/HHS, or the U.S. Government. For more information, please visit the ACF website, Administrative and National Policy Requirements.

Questions and Reflections

- We welcome your **questions, reflections,** or **comments**
  - Drop them in the chat, or
  - Use the Reactions button to raise hand to be unmuted
  - We would love to hear from all, especially CCDF Lead Agency staff!

Resources

Check out the OPRE website for slides, audio recordings, and transcripts of webinars, (posted a few months after each webinar).

Check out the Building Child Care Research Capacity web page for slides from past webinars and other resources.

We are pleased to announce a new webinar series for CCDF Lead Agencies that we are beginning in June

- The first webinar will be on Developing Research Questions to Get Answers for Policy and Practice and will feature speakers from CCDF Lead Agencies

If you have questions, feel free to email me (Teresa Derrick-Mills) at tderrick-mills@urban.org.

Resources Shared in Chat During Webinar

- Building Child Care Research Capacity web page
- Center for Supporting Research on Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Implementation web page
- *Guidelines for Culturally Responsive Reflective Practice in Birth to Five Settings*
- Conversational Turns
- *Preliminary Analysis of Data Collected from Lifting Infants and Toddlers Through Language-rich Environments (LITTLE) Grants*