

TRIBAL LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION

FACT SHEET



CORE MESSAGE:

The earliest experiences that our children have set the stage for their entire lives. We build a stronger workforce full of talented innovators and inspiring leaders when we prioritize young children and families. We'll lay the groundwork for a stronger state and economy when every child in Montana can reach their full potential.

TALKING POINTS:

- Families who are enrolled tribal members or who reside on tribal land are more likely than non-tribal families to report a lack of affordable transportation, lack of infant care, lack of providers who speak their language, and a lack of child care providers who understand their culture as barriers to accessing child care.
- Helping native children understand their culture and language is key to positive self-identity.
- Child care providers need the support and resources to be able to integrate tribal language development in their programs and encourage families to use their tribal language.
- When child care providers include first or second home language and culture in daily routines, this can have a strong positive impact on that child's chances for success in school.
- 76% of Native American children in Montana are identified as English Learners (EL), this is due to the language barriers that begins in infancy.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Offer opportunities for dual language exposure (English and Indigenous Languages)
- Research efforts to design educational curricula and programs- modify subject areas to include tribal language.
- Educate community, parents, board members, public officials why language is important to cultural identity.
- Increase time of language teachers
- Expand at-home opportunities for families to utilize language.

References:

Watson, A. (2024a). *Child Care Deserts: An Analysis of Child Care Supply and Demand Gaps in Montana*. https://lmi.mt.gov/_docs/Publications/LMI-Pubs/Special-Reports-and-Studies/ChildCareDesertsWhitePaper-FINAL.pdf.

Stockwell, H., & McCracken, P. (2018). *HELPING MONTANA'S POOREST-PERFORMING STUDENTS: ENGLISH LEARNERS*. In State-Tribal Relations Committee, FINAL REPORT TO THE 66TH MONTANA LEGISLATURE. MONTANA LEGISLATIVE SERVICES DIVISION. <https://leg.mt.gov/content/Publications/Services/2019-agency-reports/2018-State%20Tribal%20Relations-EnglishLearners.pdf>.