



American Indian and
Alaska Native

family and child experiences survey

Native Culture & Language in the Classroom Observation (NCLCO)

June 2019

The AI/AN FACES 2015 Workgroup*

Submitted to:

Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation

Administration for Children and Families

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OVERVIEW

The American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey 2015 (AI/AN FACES 2015) is the first national descriptive study of children and families enrolled in Head Start programs operated by federally recognized tribes (known as Region XI AI/AN Head Start¹; see Bernstein et al., 2018, for an in-depth description of the study). Region XI programs incorporate their unique history, community traditions, and beliefs into their operations and integrate language and culture into the delivery of services to children and families. AI/AN FACES 2015 was informed by a workgroup comprised of Region XI Head Start directors, researchers from universities and Mathematica Policy Research (which conducted the study), and federal officials from the Administration for Children and Families (which funded the study).

Children's Native culture and language are important components of the Head Start experience in Region XI, and therefore a particular focus of the study was to document the Native language and cultural experiences that children attending Region XI programs have in their classrooms. The Workgroup, in particular the Region XI Head Start directors, urged that the study capture the cultural experiences in the classroom in addition to using more common measures of classroom experiences. An observational measure of culture and language in Native classrooms did not exist, so the study team collaborated with Workgroup members to develop an observational measure of Native culture and language in the classroom. The Native Culture & Language in the Classroom Observation (NCLCO) records the types of culturally significant materials that surround children in Region XI Head Start programs and classrooms and can capture information on materials' use. The Workgroup provided suggestions and feedback on types of items to include in the NCLCO, as well as examples of each item type listed in the final measure.

It is important to note that the NCLCO does not detail the quantity or depth of use of items existing within a classroom, but instead records the presence or absence of a particular item. For example, a classroom may have 100 cultural books, which would score the same as another classroom with one book. The language and cultural practices questions ask whether Native language use occurred in the classroom and, if so, whether it was used in instruction or in conversation. The questions also ask if storytelling following a Native oral tradition occurred. These items capture only whether or not these experiences occurred and not how frequently they occurred. Therefore, if Native language was used in all lessons, it would be recorded the same as for a program that included Native language in just one lesson. To our knowledge, AI/AN FACES 2015 is the only study so far to have used the NCLCO, but other studies have adapted the measure to capture the unique cultural and language experiences in classrooms.² The

¹ In this document, we use the terms American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN), tribal, tribe, and Native to refer inclusively to the broad and diverse groups of American Indian and Alaska Native tribes, villages, communities, corporations, and populations in the United States, acknowledging that each tribe, village, community, corporation, and population is unique from others with respect to language, culture, history, geography, political and/or legal structure or status, and contemporary context.

² The Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Study created the Cultural Items and Language Use Checklist (CILU, Barrueco, Layzer, & Caswell, 2017) based on the NCLCO.



measure may be further refined before the NCLCO is used in the next round of AI/AN FACES in 2019.

For more information about the NCLCO, including findings from AI/AN FACES 2015, please see [insert link to OPRE brief]. Information about the AI/AN FACES 2015 study design and instruments can be found in the study User’s Manual (Malone et al. 2018). The User’s Manual is available at www.researchconnections.org. Technical reports, data tables, and briefs based on the AI/AN FACES data may be found at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/american-indian-and-alaska-native-head-start-family-and-child-experiences-survey-faces>.

References

- Barrueco, S., Layzer, C., & Caswell, L. (2017). *Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Cultural Items and Language Use Checklist (MSHS CILU)*. Developed for the MSHS Study. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Bernstein, S., Malone, L., Kopack Klein, A., Bush, C., Feeney, K., Reid, M., et al. (2018). *Descriptive data on Region XI Head Start children and families: AI/AN FACES fall 2015–spring 2016 data tables and study design*. OPRE Report 2018–26. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Malone, L., A. Kopack Klein, S. Bernstein, B. Carlson, S. Albanese, A. Bloomenthal, J. Baker, M. Cavanaugh, M. Reid, K. Feeney, R. Sutton-Heisey, M. Hepburn, A. Kelly, and G. Lim. “American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey 2015 (AI/AN FACES 2015) User’s Manual.” Report submitted to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation. Washington, DC: Mathematica Policy Research, 2018.



Native Culture & Language in the Classroom Observation

- For each row a-j, please indicate whether you observed any items in that category by checking “yes” or “no” in column 1.
- For any row a-j where you checked “yes” in column 1, please complete column 2. Check “yes” in column 2 if you observed children or staff using these items. Otherwise, check “no” in column 2.
- For any row a-j where you checked “yes” in column 2, please complete column 3. To complete column 3, enter clear and legible notes describing how items in the category were used, and by whom.

	1		2		3
	Item present?		If present, did children or teachers use item during observation?		If used, please describe.
	YES	NO	YES	NO	
a. Cultural books (e.g., native teachings or teachings from elders; books about traditional or native food; tribal history, customs and practices; books that reflect oral tradition, including imparting lessons about how one should act in the world or how the world came to be – themes might include creation, seasons, nature, animals, spirits/trickster figures, and human relations)	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="checkbox"/>	
b. Tribal language labels (e.g., objects labeled in tribal language)	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="checkbox"/>	
c. Cultural displays (e.g., posters or photo collages that represent the community, baskets, dream catchers, cradle boards, medicine wheels)	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="checkbox"/>	
d. Native music and instruments (e.g., audio recordings of flute, drums or other traditional music; drums and flutes; ribbon twirlers)	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="checkbox"/>	

	1		2		3
	Item present?		If present, did children or teachers use item during observation?		If used, please describe.
	YES	NO	YES	NO	
e. Natural objects (e.g., tree bark, berries, mud, stone or rocks, leaves, pinecones, animal parts or bones such as feathers, shells, snake skins, animal skins or pelts, or antlers; traditional medicines such as sage, tobacco, or sweet grass; gourds; rattles; corn pollen)	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="checkbox"/>	
f. Animal puppets (native to area or community, such as an eagle or bear, depending on the area)	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="checkbox"/>	
g. Native architecture (e.g., dwellings and structures such as teepee, wigwam, hogan, pueblo, longhouse, cave or cliff dwellings)	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="checkbox"/>	
h. Native dress or regalia (such as moccasins, shawls, blankets, tunics, beaded clothing and jewelry, jingle bells, headdresses, bandolier bags, button blankets)	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="checkbox"/>	
i. Native food (for example, wild rice, fish, corn, deer, mutton, fry bread, squash, beans, whale – all can be fake/plastic or real)	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="checkbox"/>	
j. Other items (specify)	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="checkbox"/>	
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.....					

1. Was a tribal language spoken during your observation?

- 1 Yes
- 0 No → **GO TO 2**

1a. If yes, was it informal (for example, as part of a conversation)?

- 1 Yes
- 0 No → **GO TO 1b.**

1ai. If yes, describe what you saw (e.g., who was there, who spoke the language and in what context/during what activity, was it used alone or in combination with English).

1b. If yes, was it formal (for example, as part of a lesson)?

- 1 Yes
- 0 No → **GO TO 2**

1bi. If yes, describe what you saw (e.g., who was there, who spoke the language and in what context/during what activity, was it used alone or in combination with English).

2. Did you observe any storytelling (either with or without a book)?

- 1 Yes
- 0 No → **GO TO 3**

2a. If yes, describe what you saw (who did the storytelling, was tribal language and/or English used, and what the story is about).

3. Did you observe any other activities that demonstrate how children are exposed to culture in this program (for example, prayer circle; beading; children using a talking stick or feather as a method of taking turns while speaking; dancing to traditional music; song with pictures of children dressed in traditional clothing and message “I am thankful for being me.”)? Please only include observations you have not already listed.

- 1 Yes
- 0 No

3a. If yes, describe what you saw (e.g., who was there, what was the context and activity, what if any materials were used).
