Voices and Choices for Children

Recommendations for the Wellbeing of Families of Color and American Indian Families in Minnesota

A Review of Practice-Based Evidence, Research and the Lived Experience

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This report is a tribute to the deep knowledge, courage, and sacrificial service of those whose work, now or in the past, has contributed to the wellbeing of children and families of color and American Indian families in Minnesota. Thanks to the many people who offered suggestions and insightful critiques, who attended the convenings that help shape and guide the report, and who generously donated time to review this report in its various stages. Too numerous to include here, they are listed in the appendix. A special, heartfelt thanks to Start Early Funders and the St Paul Foundation whose financial support made this initiative possible.

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Section I: Summary

Why this Review

This literature review, sponsored by Children's Defense Fund-Minnesota (CDF-MN) in partnership with the Minnesota Office of Early Learning, is the first step in a pre-planning process to engage communities of color across the state in developing a legislative agenda that will help shape the policies and practices affecting their children, prenatal to grade 3. The purpose of the literature review is help to inform specific recommendations for policies and practice, including a legislative agenda, which are supported by a broad coalition of communities of color and Minnesota tribal nations. It will also inform a strategic roadmap for ensuring that the voices of communities of color and Minnesota tribal nations are consistently heard, and that steps are taken to align human and financial supports across agencies to promote healthy child development.

> Culturally rooted organizations and institutions that serve communities of color and American Indian communities have produced both new knowledge and effective practices. However, their work has not been sufficiently utilized to shape the policies and practices that most affect the well-being of children of color and American Indian children and their families.

The literature review consists of abstracts and recommendations from practice-based evidence, research, and the lived experience. Isaacs, Huang, Hernandez, and Echo-Hawk, define practice-based evidence as "a range of treatment approaches and supports that are derived from, and supportive of, the positive cultural attributes of the local society and traditions." Unlike reviews that focus primarily on scholarly articles and formal research initiatives, this review seeks to capture the recommendations made primarily by community-based organizations of communities of color and Minnesota tribal nations that are based upon knowledge and expertise, and grounded in practice. In addition to American Indian scholars and scholars of color, this literature review includes unpublished reports, articles, and evaluations from culturally rooted organizations, institutions and agencies.

Culturally rooted organizations and institutions that serve communities of color and American Indian communities have produced both new knowledge and effective practices. However, their work has not been sufficiently utilized to shape the policies and practices that most affect the well-being of children of color and American Indian children and their families. Distressing statistics attest to the results of this omission.

The purpose of the literature review is to highlight some of the work generated by organizations, researchers, institutions and agencies rooted in these cultural communities whose voices have been overlooked. Most of these publications are not found in bibliographies and data bases.

In Minnesota communities of color and tribal nations, nonprofit organizations and agencies have developed many innovative learning models, anecdotal stories of success, and a long history of effective approaches to early care and education under the most difficult circumstances. Relatively few,

however, have been adopted or taken to scale through public contracts. This review is a compendium of recommendations that have been made as early as 1997.

How Sources were Chosen

The review focuses on recommendations lifted and summarized from 42 reports, articles, papers and websites. Many were suggested by participants who attended two convenings by the Office of Early Learning and CDF-MN to explore how communities of color and American Indians can have a sustained voice in shaping policies and practices that affect the well-being of their children. Others were identified in the course of conversations with thought leaders in early education, subject specific meetings, a search of specific websites, and other online research.

> The Implicit Bias Review 2013 analyses the impacts of implicit bias on racial and ethnic disparities in education, criminal justice, and health. –All of which have an outsized impact on the wellbeing of Minnesota children of color and American Indian nations.

While the overwhelming majority were generated in Minnesota, a few articles from out of state were included because they addressed unique concerns expressed in Minnesota sources. For example, The Kirwan Institute "State of the Science: Implicit Bias Review: 2013" is included, because it addresses some of the contributing causes of structural racism. Structural racism has been identified as a major factor in health disparities by the Minnesota Department of Health and by many thought leaders in communities of color and Minnesota American Indian nations. The Implicit Bias Review 2013 analyses the impacts of implicit bias on racial and ethnic disparities in education, criminal justice, and health. –All of which have an outsized impact on the wellbeing of Minnesota children of color and American Indian nations.

Criteria for Selection

Articles and reports were selected for inclusion based upon the following criteria:

1. An asset-based frame and an orientation toward solutions which recognize that:
   → Every community and its diaspora have multiple models of success that can be tapped for best practices and solutions.
   → Pathologies are deviations among of people of color and American Indian nations, not their identity.

2. Models in which community institutions deliver services in ways that reflect the solutions and best practices identified by those communities

3. Solutions in which both experiential and theoretical knowledge are incorporated in their development, strategies, and evaluation.

4. Deep understanding of cultural nuances as a priority when:
   → setting agendas,
   → developing models and methods of inquiry
   → acquiring and retaining knowledge
   → assessing outcomes

5. Understanding that Euro-Centric conventional research methodologies and practices can be inadequate for capturing critical aspects of the knowledge and experiences of people of color and American Indian nations.

6. Making power dynamics a central factor when choosing a methodology or solution to replicate.

7. Utilizing community-based research in which community members:
   → are co-investigators with researchers
   → play an active role in setting the research agenda
   → develop/adapt methods and protocols of inquiry, and
   → interpret results

Each source in this literature review met at least 4 of the 7 criteria.

A Living Document

Due to limitations of time and resources, many worthy scholars and organizations are not included in this first phase of the literature review. Regard it, in its current form, as an example of the types of information and sources that are important in hearing the voices of communities of color and Minnesota tribal nations. It is a work in progress, a living document that will become more comprehensive and refined as the planning process moves forward. Our hope is that, in time, it will become a reference compendium available to all.

How the Review is Organized

This literature review is organized into two sections: Section I includes an introduction; a summary of key issues and themes that emerged across all of the recommendations; and a set of recommendations based upon current opportunities and conditions. Section II includes 30 reviews organized into 5 categories: sources that make recommendations from a cross cultural perspective; sources that make recommendations focusing upon African American children and families; sources that make recommendations focusing upon American Indian children and families; sources that make recommendations focusing upon Latino/Mexican/Chicano children and families; and sources that make recommendations focusing on Hmong/Asian Pacific children and families. The reviews in each section are arranged alphabetically by author or source.

Key Issues

Remarkably, similar issues have been identified across cultural communities at least since 1996 (See Voices and Choices, Part 1: Report to the Departments of Children, Families, and Learning and the Department of Human Services) and recommendations made to improve the wellbeing of children of color and American Indian children and their families. Yet few of them have been implemented systemically. This reality suggests that something more or different may be needed by institutions and agencies of the state in order to better utilize information from communities of color and American Indian nations.

> Remarkably, similar issues have been identified across cultural communities at least since 1996 and recommendations made to improve the wellbeing of children of color and American Indian children and their families.

1. Many community rooted organizations have produced valuable knowledge that can improve the wellbeing of Native American children, families, and communities of color. There are, however, few resources that support these organizations in:
    → Disseminating the knowledge they produce
    → Replicating effective practices
    → Creating sustainable pathways to connect their knowledge and experience to policy making, shaping research agendas, and educating practitioners

2. Community-rooted organizations are funded most often to provide services rather than to advocate for more effective policies. Without support for advocacy, however, their effective practices are seldom recognized or institutionalized, and if adopted by others, seldom done so with fidelity.

3. Children are embed in families and communities. When there is insufficient alignment across state and county agencies, policies and practices can be implemented in ways that:
    → Undermine the economic and social stability of families by penalizing them for small increases in income, even when those increases are insufficient to support a family.
    → Compete with and weaken community-based institutions that offer assistance rather than partnering with and strengthening them
    → Undermine family strategies to address complex and difficult issues while maintaining family bonds.

4. Policies and practices in the criminal justice system need to be reviewed for their impact on Native American children, families, and communities of color. Well documented disparities in the criminal justice system have outside impacts on children, whose lives are disrupted when parents and older siblings are embroiled in a system that is rife with inequities and expensive to affect.

5. While scholarships and Parent Aware ratings are valuable additions to an early education system, many Native American and licensed caregivers and centers of color are pushed into an unsustainable business model. Scholarships and CCAP payments do not cover the costs of quality care. If licensed caregivers and centers serve a high proportion of low-income children, they must continually subsidize costs out of operations, which few can afford to do, or go out of business. With insufficient scholarships and CCAP payments over time, caregivers of color and Native American caregivers and centers will be left behind.

6. Families show a marked preference for caregivers who share their culture and values for good reason. Research has documented the critical importance of positive identity formation and protective factors for children. As scholarships and CCAP payments are currently structured, caregivers of color and Native American caregivers and centers will not have sufficient support to serve families in their communities. An unintended consequence will likely be the removal of children of color and Native American children from settings rich in protective factors and the weakening of family and community bonds. Families will have to choose between getting financial help and having the full range of culturally authentic protective factors for their children.

Overarching Themes

People of color and American Indians must have an active and *sustained* voice in setting policy, research, and practice agendas that affect the wellbeing of children and their families.

State agencies must recognize the value and significance of family and community knowledge systems (including intergenerational learning and community-based organizations and institutions) as evidenced in their design and implementation of programs, service delivery strategies, contracts, data collection, job performance evaluations, and staffing across departments, tiers, and levels.

State agencies need a more culturally diverse staff at all levels to better serve children and families of color and American Indian children and families.

Services must be aligned across departments for greater accessibility and their requirements simplified, consistent, and appropriate to support the wellbeing of children and families of color and American Indian children and families.

Criteria, rewards, incentives, and contracts within state programs must be analyzed to determine if they weaken families and the protective social fabric of communities.

Racial and equity impact analyses must be done on policies *before* they are enacted.

State agencies should contract with community-based organizations and institutions to design and deliver programs and services, rather than competing with and displacing them.

Recommendations for Action Now

These draft recommendations represent a highly focused, targeted response to pervasive and persistent issues common across the cultural communities of children of color and American Indian children and their families. They were synthesized and distilled from discussion at two forums, conversations with thought leaders, and a review of recommendations from communities of color and American Indian Nations made as early as 1997. While they do not address all of the issues, if implemented they can impact significant aspects of several of them.

Increase resources specifically for children of color and American Indian children through:

- Scholarship set asides that are intentionally used to connect families of color and American Indian families to early learning resources that are culturally supportive
- Supporting increased CCAP reimbursements rates to close cost-of-care gaps
- Targeted quality improvement resources for providers of color and American Indian providers so they are not left behind

To make Parent Aware more effective in meeting the needs of children of color and American Indian families:

- Place a stronger emphasis on family and community engagement
- Place a stronger emphasis on cultural competency
- Award a star for staff that do not test positive for implicit biases[1] against children of color and American Indian children

Establish Community Solutions Funds for communities with high levels of child and family poverty. The purpose of the funds will be to improve measures of well-being for children and families. The funds will be used to fund community based solutions for issues that are identified by and for the affected community. The funds will be administered by community-rooted institutions with demonstrated capacity and a transparent accountability process.

Make available a mix of private sector high quality care and public universal pre-K that is responsive to the cultural needs and preferences of families and communities of color and American Indian families and communities.

Ensure that Universal Pre-K programs:

- Are developed in partnership with families and communities[2]
- Incorporate equitable contracts with community-based, culturally appropriate individuals, businesses, organizations, and institutions for the design and delivery of services
- Hire staff free of implicit biases against children of color and American Indian children

Ensure that a sufficient portion of state, county, and municipal funds for early care and education will be used to contract with culturally appropriate organizations to provide culturally specific training, program design, curricula, coaching, and research-based, culturally informed materials to ensure high quality care and education for children prenatal-third grade and their caregivers.

Ensure that services to infants, toddlers, and their care givers:

- are delivered through community-based, culturally appropriate organizations and institutions, and
- build upon the indigenous best practices that already exist in those communities.

The community engagement process and the solutions that are identified and implemented will be documented and evaluated so the information can be made available to policy makers, researchers, practitioners, and the general public for the purpose of strengthening families and communities, and improving the design and delivery of public services, including education, health, and social services.

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[1] As measured by Harvard University's Project Implicit on-line association test. The test is free.
[2] Communities can be geographically or culturally based, depending upon the characteristics of the children and families who are served.

Section II: Literature Review

Sources and Recommendations from a Cross Cultural Perspective

Children's Defense Fund-Minnesota, *Asset Limit Reform: Removing Barriers to Achieving Self-Sufficiency*. **(St. Paul, MN: CDF-MN, 2010). http://www.cdf-mn.org/multimedia-and-news/news-from-cdf-minnesota/2010/asset-limit-reform-removing.html.**

Produced by Children's Defense Fund-Minnesota (CDF-MN), a nonprofit organization that advocates on behalf of children's health and well-being, *Asset Limit Reform: Removing Barriers to Achieving Self-Sufficiency* is a plea for the state of Minnesota to significantly change its policy of using asset limits to determine eligibility for public support programs. Asset limits are restrictions on the total monetary value of the resources a household can have before losing eligibility for assistance. The article argues that they are, on balance, unjust, counterproductive, and expensive to administer.

CDF-MN cites research demonstrating that asset limit tests discourage low-income households from accumulating savings that would actually make them more financially stable and *less* likely to rely on public programs in the future. These limits are also often unfair in their handing of different types of resources. Home equity, for example, is rarely counted, while cash resources are; this can cause wealthier households to be unfairly prioritized, while the renting poor are prevented from saving to acquire the same stable assets as their home-owning peers. They also do not account for debts, which can again cause public support to be distributed unfairly.

To make matters worse, asset limit tests—unlike income-based eligibility limits—are not indexed for inflation. They are typically defined at a specific amount directly by legislators, so adjustments also require a law to be passed. As legislation is a slow and laborious process, the actual limits quickly become outdated, and are almost always poor reflections of the legitimacy of a household's financial need.

Based on these findings, CDF-MN recommends:

→ Ideally, that asset limit tests be eliminated entirely, and that determinations of household need be based purely on income compared to costs of meeting basic needs.

Barring that, states can make asset limits less destructive by:

→ Indexing the limits to inflation

→ Considering liabilities (debts) along with assets and setting figures on net worth rather than liquid resources available, and/or

→ Raising the asset caps to a reasonable level, allowing for at least four to six months' worth of living expenses to be saved, as financial planners recommend households do to prevent unexpected economic misfortunes from having catastrophic impacts on family self-sufficiency.

Children's Defense Fund—Minnesota. *Minnesota Kids Count 2014: Budgeting for Better Child Outcomes.* **(St. Paul, MN: Concord Printing, 2014).**

Children's Defense Fund-Minnesota (CDF-MN), founded in 1985, is a state partner of the national organization with a unique focus on the needs of Minnesota's children and families. CDF-MN is the only policy organization in Minnesota to focus solely on the needs of children. To achieve its goals, CDF-MN advocates at the local, state and federal levels on behalf of children, and conducts research, outreach and youth development initiatives.

Minnesota Kids Count 2014: Budgeting for Better Child Outcomes was written by the Minnesota contingent of CDF on a grant from KIDS COUNT, a national effort to track the status of children nationwide, in order to provide policymakers and citizens with data about child health and well-being. The goal of presenting this information is to illustrate the tough choices families make to meet their needs on low incomes, and to demonstrate how public assistance programs and tax credits can fill the gap between these incomes and basic expenses.

The report describes the consequences children and families face when their basic needs go unmet, and it describes some of the social costs of those sub-par outcomes. Children who grow up in financial insecurity have poorer academic success, poorer health, higher rates of arrest, and higher rates of food-stamp dependency as they grow into adulthood. They earn less, work fewer hours, and have fewer desirable skills as adults. Each section details a specific need that must be met to avoid these negative outcomes—food, housing, child care, transportation, and other necessities—and describes how state-funded investments in helping low-income families to meet these needs can boost children into lifelong economic self-sufficiency, saving costs and improving long-term results for society as a whole. The report also devotes a section to the subject of asset-building, demonstrating the ways certain state programs can help families develop their assets and achieve real, sustainable economic stability.

CDF-MN collects and transmits data on the effectiveness of state resources for low-income families. The document argues for the value of existing programs. The document presents, as its major recommendation, that these crucial state programs be fully funded. When programs are not fully funded, eligible families spend months or years on wait lists instead of receiving much-needed support, and potential is lost for improving later-life outcomes for those families' children.

Emarita, Betty. *High Impact Opportunities for Action: Perspectives of Cultural Communities of Color.* **Early Care and Education Business Plan, April 10, 2009.**

High Impact Opportunities for Action is the report of Betty Emarita, a member of a consulting team hired by a collaboration of nine Minnesota foundations to develop a business plan to guide their investments in early education. Other members of the team were Stacy Becker (lead), Richard Chase, and Yvonne Cheek. Betty Emarita and Yvonne Cheek conducted design sessions in five key cultural communities—African American, Hmong, Latino, West African, and Somali. The findings from those design sessions form the basis of high impact opportunities for action that can most impact children in cultural communities of color.

The plan's goal has two major outcomes. For each outcome, there are recommendations synthesized from the ideas and suggestions that participants from the five cultural communities of color made in the design sessions.

Outcome #1. That families be recognized and strengthened as the primary provider of early development and learning for children

Session participants clarified and expanded on this goal, saying they want programs to ensure that:

- Children learn about their home culture—values, language, social and family networks— but also become proficient in English and knowledgeable about the dominant culture and about the cultures of other minority groups
- Information and services are delivered in ways that build, rather than weaken, their communities and their social capital by working through organizations, institutions and networks that are authentic to the community, accessible, and responsive
- Their intergenerational wisdom and knowledge is recognized, respected, and incorporated into the practices of institutions and agencies working with their children
- Professionals from their own cultures also deliver services that integrate culturally appropriate practices
- Public policies and practices affecting them are based upon healthy families, not the assumption that dysfunctions in their cultural groups are representative of the whole

Outcome #2. That all parents who choose on out-of-home child care have access to their choice of developmentally and culturally appropriate care

Session participants clarified and expanded this goal also, explaining that they want:

- Access to the full range of child care settings, and the right to determine when, how, and which services to use for their own purposes
- To help define quality in each of these settings
- Agencies that impact early care and education in all settings to accommodate communities that are more communal than individualistic
- For those agencies to recognize the value of social capital in cultural communities and seek opportunities to strengthen it
- For research on their communities, framed and lead by researchers of color with intimate knowledge of the culture, to be incorporated into Early Care and Education policies and practices.

The author presents six strategies along with questions to consider:

1. **Develop a culturally sensitive system of quality standards or goals appropriate for each type of care: center based, family home care, and family, friend, and neighbor care**

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    a. How can elements related to the issues and concerns of communities of color for their children be incorporated into quality rating standards?

    b. How can feedback loops be designed that will enable families to rate their child care settings for qualities that are important to them?

2. **Create a system for early childhood development screening and assessment that recognizes the culturally-specific ways in which skills and knowledge are taught by families and exhibited by children.**

    a. How will institutions and agencies conducting developmental screening and assessments ensure that the processes and protocols are culturally appropriate?

    b. How will home visitors be trained to build upon the strengths of the families they observe and to document areas in which children excel and in which help is needed?

3. **Provide maternal depression screening and related services that are appropriate to the mother's culture.**

    a. How will mental screening processes and related services ensure assessments and treatments are culturally appropriate at every level (practitioner, practice network or program, community)

4. **Provide financial support for families in a way that avoids creating penalties and disincentives for families to increase their incomes.**

    a. How can income supports be administered in such a way that disincentives for families with two parents and families that begin to increase their incomes are eliminated?

5. **Make provider training and support more accessible and affordable for minorities, and include recognition and incorporation of cultural communities' values in training.**

    a. How can training be made more accessible and affordable for people of color?

    b. How can knowledge and skills valued in communities of color be recognized, valued, and incorporated into formal training, credential, and degree programs?

    c. How can training be delivered in ways that strengthen communities of color and their social capital?

6. **Create new community grants for access and quality improvements in child care and well-being services for children and their families.**

    a. How can funding initiatives, grant applications, and selection processes for community-based applicants be designed to take into account culture and strengthening the social capital of communities?

Emarita, Betty. *Home Visitation Curricula Guide for Family, Friend, and Neighbor Caregivers.* Minneapolis, MN: Development and Training Resources, 2008.

Developed in consultation with the Early Childhood Resource and Training Center (ECRTC) and Resources for Child Caring (RCC), the *Home Visitation Curricula Guide* is designed to direct reflection and planning for members and supervisors of home visitation teams working with social support organizations whose goals are to improve early childhood education.

The Guide consists of questions, exercises, and examples which encourage home visitation professionals to reflect upon key principles and to apply them in their outreach.

Outreach professionals should:

→ Build and maintain positive, respectful relationships with providers and families.

→ Be aware of and honor cultural values and differences.

→ Recognize the challenges providers and families face.

→ Use their position as mediator between providers and private funding agencies to advocate for families and caregivers.

→ Recognize and build upon the strengths and assets already present in the home environment (the many things the parents are already doing right).

→ Design their delivery of information to be "user-friendly."

→ Understand the relationship between agency and provider as a partnership, and act accordingly.

→ Model the reality that play is a learning experience.

→ Tailor referrals and services to the individual family, making interventions personal.

The workbook's questions promote these principles by guiding home-visit team members to consider some major themes and practices before each interaction with parents or providers:

→ **Building relationships**
  - sharing personal information or stories to build trust and connection
  - breaking bad news and "no" answers in tactful and hopeful terms; providing alternate routes to assistance when the team member's own agency cannot provide it
  - keeping promises and scheduling visits at times convenient for the provider
  - balancing the agency's need to maintain contact with respect for the provider's autonomy and schedule

→ **Addressing the individual, not the demographic**
  - identifying information that will be helpful to the specific provider, parent, or family
  - identifying specific challenges the family faces and tools they could use to surmount them
  - considering cultural issues and values relevant to the family
  - adapting topics or units to the provider's and/or the children's interests

→ **Supporting private agencies' data-collection**
  - …but *not* at the expense of the relationship with the family (questions and examples encourage forethought with regard to whether certain types of data collection would be uncomfortable or offensive to the provider and insist on careful consideration regarding which stage of the relationship is appropriate for a particular level of inquiry)
  - tracking and documenting information discreetly and sensitively

→ **Introducing concepts of school readiness in the family's context**
  - pointing out children's present activities that are learning experiences

- demonstrating elements of play that build on specific school readiness skills

→ **Affirming the parent or provider's strengths**
- complimenting specific successes in the home and achievements of the children
- listening to the parent or provider's observations about children's areas of excellence
- complimenting the provider's use of strategies taught on earlier home visits
- recognizing areas in which the outreach professional can learn from the parent/provider; seeking the provider's knowledge and expertise.

→ **Equipping providers to "pay it forward"**
- leaving materials with providers that can be passed on to parents or other caregivers
- affirming the provider's knowledge and their right to speak as an authority

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Gibson, Priscilla .A, Singh, Shweta. *Let's Help Caregivers and Children in Informal Kinship Care: De Facto Custodian Legislation* **(Journal Article, University of Minnesota, 2010).**

Informal kinship care is an agreement between birthparents and caregivers that is exclusive of the public child welfare system (CWS) or court proceedings. This informal agreement is increasingly occurring across the United States, with legislation varying from state to state. Generally the agreement occurs when birthparents are unable to provide for their children as a result of factors such as; drug abuse resulting in mistreatment, incarceration, domestic violence, divorce and low income. When family members take on the primary caregiver role, they face a number of stressful issues including; no legal relationship with the children and finding ways to provide for the children without assistance from social systems. Furthermore, in some cases, informal caregivers must prove parental neglect by birthparents in order to gain legal rights over their kin's children.

Patricia Gibson and Schweta Singh, from the University of Minnesota, wrote a review on the legislative options available to informal kinship caregivers. Their report highlights areas of concern for caregivers and provides insight on de facto guardian legislation, including its benefits and shortcomings.

The authors state that legal relationship options for caregivers in the United States are dependent on the statues of the state they are being considered in, but include:

 Legal Adoption – an irreversible legal determination in which caregivers are given full legal rights of parents, and the courts remove all rights from the birthparents.

- **Guardianship** -- depending on the state, this ruling may be reversed, and it grants caregivers rights to child services.
- **Legal custody** – caregivers are given less rights than guardianship status.
- **De facto custody** – An option granted to informal caregivers, upon providing proof of caring for the child (each state has its minimum length of care provisions), and having the right to child services in order to continue caregiving.

Gibson and Singh highlighted the definition of a de facto guardian in Minnesota's legislation "*as a person who has been the primary caregiver and financial supporter of a child who has resided with the person for at least six months if the child is less than 3 years old or one year if the child is at least 3 years old.*" The authors review stated that de facto guardianship is the preferred caregiver relationship for informal caregivers and outline the benefits of incorporating this option into all states across the nation.

Benefits of De Facto Guardianship

→ Less intrusive on the child's life than other forms of caregiver relationships.
→ The approach focuses on the child's best interests and not on allegations against the birthparents
→ A less expensive option than the other approaches
→ Caregivers are given rights to access the resources needed to provide for the children
→ Caregivers are granted the option to claim a legal stance with birthparents in a custody hearing.
→ Raises awareness in the social work industry to minimize children's experiences of out-of-home drift

Limitations of De Facto Guardianship

→ Birth-parent rights are given to the caregiver and cannot be reversed without a court proceeding.
→ Caregivers must financially support children for a determined period before applying for custody rights
→ De facto custodians do not receive financial benefits immediately
→ Determining the rights and status' of custodians differs from state to state and legal information for caregivers are not always easy to find

Conclusion

The authors concluded that despite imperfections in the legislation, the de facto approach provides a more impartial view towards caregivers, which is ultimately in the child's best interest.

Minnesota Department of Human Services, Cultural and Ethnic Communities Leadership Council. (2014). *Cultural and Ethnic Communities Leadership Council Annual Report, 2014.* **Minnesota Department of Human Services. http://archive.leg.state.mn.us/docs/2014/mandated/140212.pdf.**

The Cultural and Ethnic Communities Leadership Council 2014 Annual Report was produced by the members of the Cultural and Ethnic Communities Leadership Council, an advisory council for the Minnesota Department of Human Services. The Council was created (via legislative act) in order to

advise the human services commissioner on reducing disparities between racial and ethnic groups in the state. The CECLC is comprised of minority members of human-services-related committees in the Minnesota House of Representatives, supplemented by a commissioner-appointed group of community leaders representing racial and ethnic groups affected by disparities.

The report is a record of their initial conversations regarding ways to reduce inequality, especially with regard to the availability and impact of services from the Minnesota DHS. It records the Committee's first explorations of potential action steps to improve the DHS's cultural sensitivity and relevance, thereby improving its effectiveness in addressing the needs of the diverse, vulnerable communities the DHS exists to support.

The members of the committee express their intent to provide recommendations on a few major issues which contribute to the DHS's failure to reach marginalized groups in an impactful way. The organization's demographics, for example, do not reflect broader community demographics; policies are often out of tune with the traditional cultures of certain ethnic groups; administrative policies and practices are often rife with systematic biases that hinder equal access to DHS services; and many communities lack awareness of the services DHS provides, largely due to language barriers that make the department's outreach unsuccessful.

Though it was drafted after only the third meeting of the CECLC, at which point little data had been collected for analysis and few conclusions could be drawn, the council provided the following general recommendations to move the DHS toward breaking down ethnic and cultural disparities in their dealings:

→ Recognize that economic instability and education are daily, pressing issues in marginalized communities, and that this is a major factor in overall health
→ Encourage policies that address mental health, access to healthy food and other basic needs, and social contexts as interdependent issues
→ Increase cultural competence, sensitivity, and awareness; involve diverse groups in key conversations
→ Move toward DHS leadership demographics that match broader community demographics
→ Increase the number of minority health care providers, thus increasing the availability of culturally specific care
→ Position equity in access and outcomes as a major goal.

The council acknowledges that these recommendations are not yet fully developed, and the members look forward to supplementing them with more specific action steps as their analysis deepens and grows to include more data on the communities they seek to serve.

Moodie, Shannon, and Manica Ramos. "Executive Summary." *Culture Counts: Engaging Black and Latino Parents of Young Children in Family Support Programs.* **Publication #2014-44A. (ChildTrends and the Alliance for Early Success: October 2014).**

Culture Counts is a product of two nonprofit organizations, Child Trends and the Alliance for Early Success, which research and publish information on the status of children and youth. *Culture Counts* is an exploration of the factors that affect the engagement of black and Latino parents in programs and services available to provide early childhood well-being. The document organizes the barriers to their participation into three categories—structural, such as lack of time or transportation; attitudinal, such as questions about the value of the services or beliefs about the practitioners; and cultural, or barriers resulting from a mismatch in the cultural beliefs of practitioners and parents—and then presents potential solutions for removing these barriers (especially the latter two, which require somewhat more careful intervention to correct).

Some strategies that program developers can implement to increase engagement are:

→ Involving cultural informants in the process of creating new programs
→ Designing programs to be consistent with parents' values
→ Framing advertising to parents to reflect culturally-specific goals and issues
→ Offering multiple opportunities for engagement
→ Revisiting cultural considerations often

Some strategies for policymakers to consider are:

→ Promoting a shared understanding of what is meant by parent engagement
→ Partnering with community organizations as bridges to parents
→ Fostering a culturally and linguistically diverse workforce
→ Demanding rigorous research on the effectiveness of employed strategies

Northside Achievement Zone Collaborative. *Northside Achievement Zone 2013 Annual Report.* **(Minneapolis, MN: NAZ, 2013).**

The Northside Achievement Zone is a nonprofit that has established a geographical area in the financially struggling Northside neighborhood of Minneapolis on which to focus efforts to improve the prospects of a community. It provides programs to improve the health, housing stability, educational attainment, and overall well-being of disadvantaged families. Their plan is to make their collaborative replicable for other communities, creating "a roadmap for sustainable community transformation."

The intent of the Annual Report is to report on NAZ's success and techniques rather than to instruct in how to create a similar program, so it does not make recommendations, as such. Nevertheless, below

are some of the techniques the organization describes in its report that have allowed it to achieve the improvement in outcomes for the families it supports:

→ NAZ makes its families into its leaders to build achievement from within the community. One of the levels of leadership is an Advisory Board comprising 11 parents of children in the program.

→ NAZ involvement is continuous, "cradle to career." Each family has a dedicated "NAZ Connector" who coordinates all of the efforts of the program and is available to guide the family in any step of the process.

→ NAZ takes a holistic approach, supporting academics through early childhood education and after-school programs, but also with developing housing stability, behavioral health, money-handling skills, career development, and parenting skills. The approach addresses both generations of a nuclear family across a wide range of basic needs.

→ NAZ's strategies are data-driven and extensively tracked so that results can be used to tweak their approaches to produce more reliably positive outcomes.

→ NAZ has extensive partnerships with organizations and services across the spectrum of care. They partner with nine area schools, twelve early childhood care and education centers, six "expanded learning" centers, three mentorship organizations, three health centers, three housing organizations, two colleges, and two career and finance training organizations.

→ NAZ develops financial support from a huge range of nonprofits, individuals in the community, and also engages the private sector, securing donations and partnerships from local businesses, as well. (76% of their funding, however, still comes from a federal grant.)

→ Through their Friends of the Future program, they also develop champions for their cause among their donors.

A graphic on page four provides a pretty succinct summation of the web of support they build around each family. Their successes appear remarkable, though the program is new enough that long-term results are difficult to discern as yet. Still, their early childhood education programs produce kindergarten readiness at a rate of 59% of students, compared to 35% in the community at large. Their K-12 students, who attend innovative schools and receive after-school support, see significant growth in reading ability and are more likely to participate in other after-school programs than the surrounding community.

Staats, Cheryl and Charles Patton. "State of the Science: Implicit Bias Review 2013." (Columbus, OH: The Kirwan Institute, 2013).

The report's publisher is the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, an organization at Ohio State University, states that its purpose is to work toward "a just and inclusive society where all people and communities have opportunity to succeed."

As the Kirwan Institute recognizes the importance of implicit biases as part of the complex comprising systematic racism, they present "State of the Science," intending for it to be the first in a series of annual reports that will highlight the latest research and illuminate trends in the field, condensing the findings into a concise, accessible resource and stimulating public awareness and conversation on the subject.

Implicit biases are tendencies to associate certain concepts, usually based on mental models which are used to make quick judgments about the world around us. This report focuses on implicit associations and stereotypes around racial categories. The introduction notes that "stereotypes and personal beliefs are conceptually different structures" (12) and that there is often a clear distinction between a person's consciously held beliefs about the salience of race-based judgments and their implicit biases. The report describes several methods by which implicit biases can be measured, most of which involve imposing time constraints or occupying the subject's conscious mind with other tasks, thereby preventing them from altering their judgments with conscious, explicit cognition.

Using these methods, the various studies cited in "State of the Science" produced the following analysis of the impact of implicit biases in three major facets of life in society:

Education

→ **Teacher expectations of student success**—Teachers tend to expect less of students of color, and the manifestations of biased expectations may have lasting effects on students, serving as self-fulfilling prophecies for their poor performance.

→ **Teachers' perceptions of student behavior**—Teachers were more likely to interpret black facial expressions as angry or aggressive. The authors of the cited studies suggest this bias may contribute to the disproportionate punishment of students of color and/or disparities in teachers' willingness to reach out to Black students with additional assistance and support.

→ **Students' self-perceptions**—"Stereotype threat" is a well-documented phenomenon; the term describes the effect in which an individual, after being told that their group tends to do poorly at a task, performs worse compared to similar individuals of the same group whose beliefs about their group's abilities were not influenced beforehand.

→ **Culturally appropriate curriculum**—Teachers with high implicit bias may fail to make adjustments to curriculum necessary to maintain cultural relevancy for students of color because they perceive these students' culturally imprinted verbal tendencies or body language as indicative of low intelligence, low investment and effort, and/or higher aggression.

Criminal Justice

It's important to note that any criminal justice action comprises a series of individual processes; over the course of apprehension, trial, sentencing and incarceration, even small biases can snowball to create profound disadvantages for people of color.

- Bias in Police Officers

→ **Greater Suspicion of Criminality**—Implicit biases have been demonstrated which may make police officers more likely to judge Black people's behavior as suspicious or aggressive, even when the behaviors themselves are neutral.

→ **Shooter/Weapon Bias**—People implicitly associate Blackness with possession of weapons; that is to say, research subjects were more likely to judge a Black person holding an ambiguous object to be an armed threat. This bias was immune to intent. "Even someone who is consciously and explicitly committed to being fair and unbiased may display this bias anyways" (38).

● Bias in Judges

→ **Judges were demonstrated to have an "illusion of objectivity"**—they were over-confident in their ability to remain unbiased.

→ **This overconfidence actually makes their biases worse**—"When people feel that they are objective, rational actors, they act on their group-based biases more rather than less" (40).

● Bias in Jurors

→ **Jurors tend to show biases against defendants of a different race**—In-group bias (a preference for one's own group) affected both verdicts and sentencing (albeit with relatively small effect sizes).

→ **Jurors' racial biases affected their recall of details as well as their judgments**—Jurors were more likely to recall details of a case if those details aligned with their implicit biases (for example, given the same story about two defendants, one of whom was White and one of whom was Black, the jurors were more likely to recall details about the aggressiveness of a black defendant).

→ J**urors in racially charged cases were *less* affected by racial biases.** This was likely due to their being more thoughtful about their judgments with regard to race.

→ **The racial composition of the jury impacts the influence of racial bias**—"The distorting influence of race is minimized in a racially mixed jury" (42).

● Bias in Sentencing

→ Research found that "people hold associations between stereotypically Black physical traits and perceived criminality" (42)

→ Though it was found that sentencing of Black and White subjects with similar criminal histories was similar, the cited research demonstrated that within races, **inmates with facial features that looked more stereotypically African were likely to receive longer, harsher sentences. They were also more likely to be sentenced to death**.

● Bias in Prosecutors—The literature reports three main areas in which prosecutors' work may be influenced by implicit biases:

→ **Charging decisions**—"Implicit biases color how offenders are perceived, thereby affecting whether a suspect should be charged, and if so, what severity of a crime should be charged." (44)

→ **Pretrial Decisions**—Stereotypes of African Americans as lazier and less trustworthy may cast unfounded doubt on employment records as evidence of lowered flight risk, affecting bail decisions. Stereotypes may also make Black defendants more likely to be

judged as hardened criminals, and thus be denied plea bargains lighter-skinned defendants would likely receive.

→ **Trial Strategy**—Prosecutors' implicit biases can affect trial strategy in such elements as jury selection and argument rhetoric. Cited research shows that many people still connect Black people with apes, and prosecutors' use of animal imagery has been shown to increase the likelihood of a defendant being sentenced to death.

● Bias in Defense Attorneys—The literature suggests two main areas where the implicit biases of defense attorneys can affect the process:

→ **Within the Attorney-Client Relationship**—"biases can influence how attorneys perceive their clients, such as seeing an 'angry Black man' rather than a Black man who became frustrated when unable to understand the choices and consequences his attorney was outlining." (45)

→ **During Jury Selection**—An author of a cited study cautions against "relying on stereotypes to make assumptions about how a prospective juror may respond to the attorney's client and associated case" because jurors may "return the favor" by making assumptions about the client on the same basis.

Health Care

The research on this field yielded three notable conclusions:
1. The doctors' implicit and explicit attitudes were, more or less, consistent with those of the general population.
2. On average, African American doctors do not display any implicit racial preference.
3. On average, female doctors tended to hold fewer implicit racial biases than male doctors.

The report identified two areas in which doctors' implicit biases are likely to affect their work, despite the fact that physicians generally reported having no explicit bias on race or gender:

● **Differential Treatment**

→ In an experiment where physicians were asked to recommend treatment for hypothetical patients, Black patients and female patients who reported chest pain were less likely to be referred for cardiac catheterization than their white, male counterparts with similar symptoms and histories.

→ Male physicians were likely to give higher doses of painkillers to White patients than Blacks, while female physicians did the opposite. Male and female doctors were also more likely to prescribe higher dosages to patients of their own gender than to opposite-gender patients.

→ Implicit testing measures recorded "a preference for White patients and a belief that Black patients were less likely to cooperate with medical procedures" (49).

→ Physicians with higher levels of implicit pro-White bias were more likely to prescribe more pain medication to White patients than to Black patients with the same complaints, even for youths and children.

● **Patient Interactions**

→ White physicians' implicit racial biases led to less positive interactions with Black patients, particularly those doctors who displayed low *explicit* bias but high *implicit* bias.

→ Black patients described physicians with higher measured levels of implicit bias as less friendly, and the patients described feeling less respected in the interactions.

● **Fostering Cultural Competency**

→ "Contributing to the perpetuation of implicit biases in health care is the fact that medical professionals are not necessarily formally trained or well-versed in cultural competency" (50).

Potential Steps to Reduce and Eliminate Implicit Bias

Research has produced evidence that biases are malleable, and that it may well be possible for implicit associations to be unlearned. Some interventions that may successfully help to debias an individual include:

● **Counter-Stereotypic Training**

→ "By juxtaposing ordinary people in counter-stereotypic situations, such as depicting young White and Black males in scenes that included a church and a graffiti-strewn street corner," researchers "found compelling evidence that counter-stereotypical imagery yielded notably weaker implicit stereotypes" (55).

→ This affect was noticed when subjects were asked to imagine counter-stereotypic individuals, but the researchers also suggest the effect could be invoked through the use of posters, pamphlets and other materials picturing counter-stereotypic images.

● **Exposure to Counter-Stereotypic Individuals**

→ Unsurprisingly, this affect was also noticed when subjects were exposed to real individuals whose traits contrast with the stereotypes typically associated with their categories. However, to be effective, these individuals "must be viewed as not merely an exception" but as a natural part of the environment (56). Exposure to counter-stereotypic individuals does not, however, need to take place in person.

● **Intergroup Contact**

→ The opportunity to interact with people outside one's own group has also been shown to produce positive debiasing effects, as long as the intergroup contact includes "sharing common goals, interacting in a cooperative rather than competitive setting, and being supported by authority figures, laws, or customs" (58).

● **Education about Implicit Bias**

→ Making subjects consciously aware of the phenomenon of implicit bias has been demonstrated to reduce its impact on their judgments. This is especially effective when the existence of *their own* biases is demonstrated to them (through interactive exercises and undergoing implicit bias measurement), rather than evidence for implicit bias in general simply being presented.

- **Accountability**
  → Defined as "the implicit or explicit expectation that one may be called upon to justify one's beliefs, feelings and actions to others," a sense of accountability can be a powerful measure to combat bias.
- **Fostering Egalitarian Motivations**
  → "When activated, egalitarian goals inhibit stereotypes" by drawing them to attention on a conscious level, cutting stereotypes off before they are brought to mind (61).
- **Taking the Perspective of Others**
  → Asking participants to take the perspective of someone who is different from them has shown some promising debiasing effects, increasing the expression of positive evaluations of people of that type and reducing the expression of stereotypes.
- **Deliberative Processing**
  → Meaning to engage in "effortful" thinking on a subject rather than to rely on spontaneous judgments, this method asks that individuals constantly monitor their behaviors in an effort to offset implicit stereotyping, and has proven effective.
  → Methods include having the subject focus on a common identity that they share with another individual in order to reduce the prevalence of stereotype categories in the subject's mind.

Using a combination of these techniques was demonstrated to be especially effective at producing long-term effects on subjects' expression of implicit bias.

Voices and Choices of People of Color for Their Children **(November 18, 1996).** *Voices and Choices of People of Color for Their Children* **was written by representatives from a number of organizations that provide culturally-relevant child care, including Cultural Beginnings, Cultural Dynamics, the Early Childhood Resource Center, Greater Minneapolis Day Care Association, and Resources for Child Caring.**

Without solicitation or funding from the state, representatives from a number of organizations that provide culturally-relevant child care, including Cultural Beginnings, Cultural Dynamics, the Early Childhood Resource Center, Greater Minneapolis Day Care Association, and Resources for Child Caring took the initiative to assemble this recommendation "as a strategy with which to begin the development of an over-all plan that will help create a more culturally relevant child care system" (p. 7). The document is addressed to the Department of Children, Families and Learning (CFL) and the Department of Human Services (DHS) and is meant to inform decisions about the handling of the Department's 1997 budget.

The coalition authoring the document raises as a key issue the fact that, at the time of its writing, the CFL comprised a handful of white leaders charged with making decisions for communities of color. Its membership was not reflective of the vulnerable populations it sought to serve. Furthermore, though the CFL has asked for *and received* specific advice from communities of color, members of those

communities do not feel their advice has been implemented. The authors of the recommendation also call the CFL to account for its undue prioritization of projects that are designed *for* communities of color but *by* White professionals; this "drains funding" for projects designed and staffed by people of color.

The report warns that this is "not an exhaustive list," but presents the following as goals that should guide the development of a comprehensive plan for a culturally relevant childcare system in Minnesota:

→ **Give people of color the leadership of plans affecting their communities.** Hire people of color to lead and staff these projects.

→ **Constantly solicit community input in defining goals and objectives and in evaluating outcomes**. Do not simply *hear* the community's advice—implement it. Involve parents, childcare providers, and community councils at all levels of CFL and DHS administration.

→ **Compel staff in the Early Childhood field to undergo training to illuminate and dispel biases and racism and help them understand the issues communities of color face.** Staff should also spend significant time actually *in* communities of color so they can learn to think of those issues in holistic terms and understand the interconnectedness of child care issues with economic struggles, violence, transportation issues and so on.

→ **Make the CFL, the DHS, and their programs accountable to communities of color**. Compel programs to demonstrate how they will improve outcomes for children of color.

→ **Develop a foundation to monitor systemic change in the CFL and DHS.**

→ **Do not relegate projects benefiting people of color solely to the "diversity" cut of funding**. Put a high priority on outcomes for people of color when considering distribution of limited funding for *all* programs.

Way to Grow. "What We Do: Great by Eight." Accessed January 21, 2014, http://mplswtg.org/what-we-do/.

Originally a program of the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board, Way to Grow developed into an independent nonprofit organization in 2004. They specialize in early childhood education, supporting children with and through their families from birth to third grade.

Their core program, Great by Eight, is described as a highly scalable, holistic program, which uses members of the communities it serves as liaisons to young children. Its services and interventions are centered on home visits, the cornerstone of the program. Way to Grow volunteers work at home with parents to show them how to be their child's first teacher. Volunteers come from the family's community, so this intervention is in the parent's native language and is culturally sensitive. Curriculum focuses on evidence-based methods for teaching literacy, math, and health curriculum and on ensuring the child meets developmental and school readiness expectations. Home visits are supplemented with an entire framework of programs and interventions, including:

→ Center-based early education—Offered four days a week, the out-of-home preschool program's curriculum is designed to complement home instruction.

→ Parent engagement activities—Game Nights based on educational play and parent-child learning time during center-based instruction get parents involved early and often.

→ Family services—Provided directly to parents in order to foster a stable, healthy environment for the program children, these include:

- Recommending and referring to community services—In home visits, volunteers identify health and wellness needs the family may have that could be met by partner agencies (churches, medical and dental clinics, food pantries, charities, etc.) and provide referrals to make it happen.
- The FATHER program—A joint project with the Goodwill/Easter Seals organization, this program teaches fathers how to be role models for their children, encouraging them to provide emotional and financial support.
- Financial training—Helps families to make the most of limited resources by teaching basic financial skills.
- Cooking classes—Professional chefs teach parents skills for healthy cooking, eating, and shopping, including recipes and meal-planning techniques.
- New parent support groups—Creates a space for new parents (with children up to one year old) to share experience and get information on difficult topics like nutrition and sleep issues, all while participating in guided teaching-through-play with their babies.
- Dream Tracks—A program for teen parents, Dream Tracks encourages young parents to develop ambitions for developing their lives and their children's, and then to plan and work for those outcomes. The program teaches healthy parenting skills and assists with academic goals, career planning, building job skills, and gaining work experience through volunteering and community engagement.
- The Parent Leadership Council—Guides parents to step up and teaches them how to be advocates for their children's success in the school system. It also connects them with resources to further their education and grow their careers.

The program's interventions have generated significant returns for the families they work with. In the 2013 program year:

→ Of the teen parents working with the program,
- 95% did not have additional pregnancies
- 50% graduated high school on time
- 71% of the teens found employment after graduating high school

→ Of the young children served,
- 64% enrolled in an early learning program
- 88% in the center's own early childhood education program met literacy and school preparedness benchmarks

→ Among the elementary-age children,
- 96% had *all* of their parent-teacher conferences attended by their parent

- 66% were read to by their parents at least 3 times per week
- 71% read at or above grade level
- 73% met or exceeded their grade-level benchmarks
- 89% had school attendance of 90% or more
- 88% were up-to-date on annual physicals

→ In families who received health education interventions,
- 84% of children entered kindergarten up to date on their immunizations
- 92% of full-term newborns were born at a healthy birth weight

Sources that Make Recommendations Focusing upon American Indian Children and Families

Hestness, Andrew, and Huenemann, J. *American Indian Community Blueprint: Building a 21st Century American Indian Community.* **(Minneapolis, MN: Native American Community Development Institute, April 30, 2010).** http://www.nacdi.org/default/index.cfm/blueprint/

The *American Indian Community Blueprint* defines a vision for the urban American Indian community of the Twin Cities. The first of its kind in the country, the document was developed by and for the community and published by the Native American Community Development Institute (NACDI). NACDI is an American Indian community development intermediary organization - the first of its kind in the Twin Cities metropolitan area—which invests in cross sector development for the American Indian Community. The *Blueprint* was written for three purposes: first, to synthesize and present the results of research and planning in community improvements; second, to describe the vision of the American Indian community in the Twin Cities for itself and nationally; and finally, to identify strategies to move the community toward achieving that vision.

As have many other minority communities, NACDI reports that its constituents believe previous development efforts have failed because they were done in a top-down fashion without the input or cooperation of American Indians. They have seen much information-gathering, but relatively little action. The *Blueprint* addresses this issue with a hefty collection of strategies, ideas, and goals to guide the improvement of the community.

The Blueprint was assembled through extensive discussions with community members. The goals and strategies fall into three major visions:

→ **Community Wholeness:** Communities are physically healthy and highly value their cultural and spiritual development. Specific ideas for developing this vision include:

- Creating spaces for appreciation of shared culture (Pow Wows grounds, native art galleries, restaurants serving traditional dishes, stores selling genuine native products)
- Increasing the availability of spiritual training and for learning native languages
- Ensuring access to affordable, quality health care
- Increasing training opportunities for health care careers
- Expanding the availability of healthy food in area stores and providing classes in healthy cooking and eating
- Expanding accessible substance-abuse treatments and follow-up care

→ **Community Economic Vitality:** Communities grow their own entrepreneurs, have living-wage jobs that build assets to create self-sufficiency, and have access to quality, affordable housing and education programs. Strategies include:

- Creating a community financial center and/or credit union to provide low-interest business and home loans, financial planning services, and credit repair classes
- Expanding housing support opportunities like co-ops and land trusts
- Recruiting and supporting American Indian community-based realtors and brokers
- Increasing the availability of early childhood education programs and childcare
- Increasing student support by engaging families and school staff and making quality tutoring available
- Fostering American Indian community relations with metropolitan colleges to create partnerships and internship opportunities
- Creating an education research institute to document proven methods specific to the community

→ **"Community Prosperity":** Communities nurture social and political leaders from within, are served by a social service network that fosters self-sufficiency, have access to clean, safe transit systems, are safe and valued in their home communities, and have a geographic center in the

Twin Cities that provides political clout and a sense of community pride. Strategies include:

- Increasing the number of (and support for) American Indians holding political office
- Building community relationships with governmental institutions
- Fostering grassroots civic engagement and understanding of the political process
- Encouraging healthy relationships between community members and police by advocating for culturally aware officers, creating guidance systems to help American Indians into police jobs, and encouraging youth/police interaction
- Developing ex-offender programs to support re-integration into the working community after a prison sentence
- Reducing redundant overhead by encouraging American Indian organizations to share office space and staff, work together on purchasing contracts, and so on
- Using an asset-building approach with social programs in order to reduce dependency
- Advocating for expansion of public transit options for native communities
- Planning and supporting the development of bike lanes

Finally, NACDI unifies all of these goals and aspirations under one project: the Cultural Corridor. The last section of the *Blueprint* describes in depth the vision of creating a metropolitan cultural center for American Indians after the style of New York City's "Little Italy." Anchored by several major developments like a hotel, a business center and even a planetarium for native cosmology and star knowledge, the authors dream that it could be a source of pride and significant economic uplift for the metropolitan native community. The document does not put forward any immediate plans to move on these developments, which are still in the planning and visioning phases.

ICF International. *The Way Forward: US Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning Research and Evaluation, Research with American Indians and Alaska Natives.* **Fairfax, VA: ICF International, 2014.**

This document is a report on the meeting between the Office of Planning Research and Evaluation (OPRE) and experts who work in program development and evaluation and who collaborate with American Indian and Alaskan Native (AIAN) communities.

The Administration for Children and Families recognizes that use of experimental research designs involves significant challenges, especially when working with American Indian tribal communities, but emphasizes the importance of rigorous measurement, which is critical to ACF's ability to make a persuasive case to Congress. The purpose of the two-day meeting was to discuss with American Indian and other researchers and thought leaders the current state of research and evaluation related to programs implemented by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to serve AIAN communities. The goals to accomplish this purpose included: discussing ongoing efforts to facilitate collaboration between departments and between the ACF and tribal leaders; and discussing efforts to include AIAN community participation in the research process.

The following recommendations to the ACF were developed by the presenters and discussants:

→ **There is a need for capacity-building in native communities with regard to implementation and evaluation.** Interventions are usually intended to seed a program which is then to be sustained by the community; communities need training and technical assistance to keep the programs running once the overseeing organization has stepped out of the picture.
  - In AIAN communities, capacity building means nation building. Programs must utilize the untapped resources within tribal communities (e.g., indigenous knowledge of tribal experts, the workforce of tribal paraprofessionals, etc.).

→ **Flexible funding options** that respond to the needs of the community are needed, including those that provide longer time periods for planning and evaluation.

→ **Sustainability** must be a cornerstone goal of programs under Federal grants. Programs must consider how to help participants move toward self-sufficiency.

→ **Alternatives to Random Control Trials must be considered** when designing tests of efficacy for programs. RCTs require the use of a control group, which is an unethical practice in many cultural contexts. Other options proposed include:
  - *Roll-out designs*, such as dynamic wait-listed designs and stepped wedge designs, which roll out interventions group by group until all groups are included. Groups are assessed along the way and results compared.
  - *Interrupted time series designs*, which involve a series of observations interrupted by an intervention; this design can be used with or without a control group.
  - *Regression point placement design*, which compares new results with archival data.

→ **Engage the tribes in a research capacity.** Presently, tribes are involved with program implementation but not with collecting information. Discuss with tribal stakeholders what is feasible, realistic and acceptable in their communities.

→ **Tribal universities** have collected large amounts of data and need capacity-building support to analyze it effectively.

→ **Research** on the following subjects, as specific to the AIAN community, is badly needed:

- *Preventative and protective factors*. Much is known about what goes wrong and causes social ills in native communities. More information is needed about what protects individuals from falling victim.
- *Urban Indian populations* and how non-tribally focused programs support them.
- *Language programs* and their benefits
- *Early education programs* and *child welfare programs*

→ **Include discussion of AIAN male identity** in future discussions of this type.

→ **Include critical partners for establishing culturally competent research** in Indian Country in future discussions of this type (e.g., the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Health Services, and the Department of Education).

The ACF concluded with its own recommendation to reauthorize promising approaches such as home visiting and the Health Profession Opportunity Grants.

Metropolitan Urban Indian Directors, Minneapolis School Districts. "Memorandum of Agreement"
(Memorandum of Agreement, 2006)

The failure of the Minneapolis education system to educate American Indian children predestines those children to poverty and fewer life prospects. The Minneapolis Public School (MPS) district and the Metropolitan Urban Indian Directors (MUID) entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on November 16 2006, in an effort to eliminate this issue. The agreement recognizes a cross sector responsibility lies with the federal and state governments, the MPS district, the Indian community and Indian families to remove this failure. The MOA was undertaken in order to outline an advanced education model that acknowledges indigenous "best practices."

Recommendations

The MOA outlines that a cross sector approach is required to tackle this issue, with Indian educators and communities assisting the school districts in understanding Indian cultural values.

The signatory parties will assign a monitoring committee to ensure the objectives of the MOA are achieved. The committee will be made up of members from school district staff, parent committees, Indian education committees, American Indian parents, Indian students and community members. The committee will meet quarterly with the school board to provide insight on their progress.

The MPS will implement three American research based Indigenous Best Practice schools that are academically thorough and culturally receptive. Signatories to the agreement will work together to

secure funding for the schools, which will be comprised of one each; elementary, middle and secondary level institutes.

The best practice schools will include:

→ **American Indian continuous improvement tool** – a section within school improvement plans will be developed to monitor academic achievement and the progress of American Indian and Alaskan Native students.

→ **Continuous improvement site teams** – each school will form a team of American Indian students, parents, teachers, principals and a minimum of two Indian educators or community members. The team will use the continuous improvement tool and suggest ways of improving Indian education and environment in the schools.

→ **Professional development program** – creation of a program that provides academic services that are culturally receptive through the MPS staff development committee and the Phillips Indian Educators.

→ **Document what works** – implement a way for teachers to share strategies and successes in relation to American Indian students.

→ **American Indian Family Involvement Center –** create an institution that uses best practices of the American Indian culture and develop; workshops, training and other activities for American Indian parents and community.

→ **Stable teaching force –** establish solid teaching staff at each school by utilizing the recommendations of the MOA monitoring committee and ensuring that staff is trained in best practices.

The MUID will implement education subgroups to ensure all groups involved with the MOA are kept informed by monthly updates. The MUID will also partner with Native community organizations to supplement educational programs and highlight the best practice institutions for American Indian students.

To ensure and maintain adequate records of the MOA progress, the MPS will create an American Indian Student database with students' academic records, achievements and progress. District protocols will be enforced on data accessibility and alterations in line with the MPS system.

Poupart, John, and Lanesse Baker. "Incorporating the American Indian Experience into Current Practice: Building Knowledge to Generate Appropriate Responses to Contemporary Challenges." Saint Paul, MN: American Indian Policy Center, 2008.

American Indian Policy Center President John Poupart and Master of Public Health Lannesse Baker are both active members of their American Indian tribes and regular advocates for their communities in public policy and research. Coming together to write this article, their goal is to provide "a framework

for social scientists, practitioners, and researchers to begin or enhance dialogue with American Indian communities around research and practices".

The authors recognize that current interventions are an attempt to rectify the current situation, in which American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) children suffer neglect, abuse and foster-care placement at dramatically higher rates than almost every other racial or ethnic group, but assert that these efforts have largely failed. The authors describe a range of cultural disharmonies between the AIAN and Western mindsets that have been major hindrances to the effectiveness of previous programming.

An understanding of these perspectives is crucial in creating partnerships with AIAN communities because the culture of these communities is "the spiritual, mental, and social framework of American Indian existence; it is the basis of American Indian identity". The authors then present some potential solutions for agencies wishing to create positive outcomes in these communities.

Among the major cultural attributes that have been largely ignored by Western government programs are:

→ Spirituality is part of daily life; the Western way of compartmentalizing spirituality away from practical pursuits or political life is not acceptable among traditional Indians.

→ The AIAN worldview is often at odds with the scientific-inquiry attitude that motivate government programs and the validation process of that inquiry.

→ Language is a crucial part of Indian worldview and central to the traditional way of life; as the authors say, "Certain things can only be expressed and understood in the native languages".

→ AIAN culture is based in oral history; this is the tool used to transmit the languages, songs, rituals, ceremonies and stories from generation to generation. Consequently, hearing, observing, and memorizing are important skills for learning one's culture. Western culture confers greater validity on written work, and has little regard for this kind of tradition.

→ Communication styles in AIAN communities are strongly influenced by the high value traditionally placed on silence, patience and listening without interference; native speakers are therefore more likely to speak little and softly, and may avoid direct eye contact. In a Western world where assertiveness is valued, communication styles are more direct and aggressive.

→ Child-rearing is regarded as a community responsibility in traditional AIAN society. Families comprise an extended kinship system that includes grandparents, aunts and uncles, and so on.

→ AIAN culture places a high value on the wisdom of elders, using their experiences as a "blueprint for life".

Previous research projects conducted within American Indian communities have been designed according to an outsider's perspective; AIAN communities have been dissatisfied with the work because:

→ The social context of the issue has been underrepresented.

→ Communities are treated as laboratory subjects instead of partners in the work.

→ Frameworks, methods and tools used for data collection are not designed or adapted to represent AIAN perspectives.

→ Interventions designed from the research do not reflect community priorities (i.e., health issues).

→ Information is not made available to the community for its *own* use and purposes.

→ Communities do not receive direct benefits from the research.

Programs and policy designed with these flawed methodologies are highly likely to marginalize communities, lack cultural appropriateness, and create dependence on outside actors. The authors present as an alternative a method called community based participatory research (CBPR), which is motivated by the following core values:

→ Recognizing the community as a unit of identity

→ Building on strengths and resources within the community

→ Facilitating a collaborative, equitable partnership in all phases of research

→ Fostering co-learning and capacity building among all partners (not just the AIAN partners! Organizations should look to build their own abilities with wisdom from the community partners.)

→ Focusing on local relevance of public health problems and on environmental influences, spiritual care, care for native ecology, and all other determinants of health

→ Developing systems through a cyclical process, where each cycle informs and improves the next

→ Making results available to all partners and involving them in the wider dissemination of results

→ Incorporating a long-term process and commitment to sustainability; focusing on equipping program participants to become self-sufficient and independent of the program.

It is, however, easy for this approach to be honored while still basing it on a set of Western goals and expectations. To ensure that a CBPR approach is effective, indigenous knowledge and community values must be acknowledged by incorporating:

→ Community definitions of expectations and success; Incorporating AIAN community members in each phase of the research process.
- Identifying the issue
- Defining terms, strategies, outcomes, and goals
- Designing data collection instruments
- Analysis of information and data
- Development of strategies or activities
- Evaluation of outcomes

→ AIAN identity such as history, culture, language, place and living in two worlds

→ Realistic expectations of available resources

→ Tribal sovereignty

→ Community conceptions of wellness

→ Tools and instruments designed for AIAN communities
→ Mechanisms for community engagement
→ Strategies to repair trust between community and non-community partners

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Romero-Little, Mary Eunice. "How Should Young Indigenous Children Be Prepared for Learning? A Vision of Early Childhood Education for Indigenous Children."

Romero-Little's article is a response to recent government initiatives for early childhood education in historically under-performing communities on standardized tests and, at entry into the public school system, on measures of school readiness. The author disagrees with the thinking that motivates this goal. It assumes that groups whose children have not been successful in school have not prepared their children properly. This thinking concludes—erroneously, in the author's view—that it is therefore necessary to get their children into school as early as possible where they can be properly prepared. Romero-Little argues that a larger problem is the schools' inability to "recognize the validity of other ways of preparing children for life and learning".

Moreover, Romero-Little argues that cultural groups have much to lose when their children enter "mainstream" early-learning programs. She expresses her own concerns and those of tribal leaders that engaging in mainstream-value, English-speaking early learning programs will interfere with young children's acquisition of their native culture and hasten the decline of indigenous languages. She argues that early education can be beneficial for all children, but that the programs in cultural communities must be grounded in "cultural self-determination": that is, designed by that community and created to act in harmony with the cultural values and indigenous languages that are central to it.

As a solution, Romero-Little proposes that indigenous communities create their own early-learning programs, partially or entirely conducted in their native languages, and cites two examples of successful programs of this type—one in the Maori community of New Zealand, and one among the indigenous people of Hawai'i. To emulate their success, she proposes that indigenous communities plan their early education programs by:

→ Engaging in a "self-study" effort to identify important considerations that their community must consider in the creation of their program, including:
  - philosophy and goals for the program;
  - how the program will reflect their culture;
  - what resources are available and what needs to be obtained;
  - what the needs are among their young population, and
  - what language ideologies will be prioritized.
→ Identifying instructional approaches that will give children what they need to succeed in school—genuine curiosity, foundations for English literacy and mathematics, etc.

She asserts that a program designed by the community in such a way will give indigenous children "the kind of early-education experiences [they need], in a language they understand … They need experiences that build on the linguistic and intellectual resources they already have".

Tsethlikai, PhD, Monica. *Setting the Stage: An Overview of Human Development Research Relevant to ACF Programs Serving American Indian/Alaskan Native Children, Families, and Communities.*

Dr. Monica Tsethlikai has her PhD in Psychology and a Master's degree in Indigenous Nations Studies. *Setting the Stage* is a PowerPoint document presenting the results of various studies in developmental research and health that may have applications in the effort to improve academic performance for American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) children and youth.

Based on the US Census and other data, the current picture of AIAN health and wealth is below-average when compared to the rest of the country. They have lower home ownership rates, lower income (with median annual income more than $15,000 lower than the national median), and higher poverty rates than the country at large (at almost 30%, they have the highest poverty rate of any racial group). Women in the group experience violence at a rate 2 to 3 times higher than women of any other race, and young men report high rates of substance abuse issues. She also reports that historical trauma may have an impact on biology through epigenetics, further contributing to the poorer health outcomes experienced by American Indians. All of these factors have negative effects for children, as the exposure to early life adversity increases the likelihood of developmental delays and poor health throughout life.

Tsethlikai reports research showing that participation in traditional spirituality practices and a strong sense of cultural identity are associated with increased self-esteem, academic success, and prosocial behavior in young people, and that cultural participation predicts better verbal IQ scores, attention development, and memory. She also reports that cultural engagement may correlate with higher development of executive functions like self-control.

Based on these results, she says those who would intervene on AIAN children's behalf must:

→ Make intervention and prevention efforts that are long-term and address the impact of historical trauma and continued environmental factors (e.g., low-quality housing, high incidence of family violence, etc.)

→ Integrate studies across multiple levels of analysis; consider how cultural, historical, environmental and biological factors influence development and contribute to individual differences

→ Form multidisciplinary teams to address the complexity of the above issues; develop community collaborations to fully understand the context of these issues and address them in context.

Sources and Recommendations Focusing upon African American Children and Families

Gibson, Priscilla A. and Carolyn Cornils Scherer. "Social Construction of Success for Grandchildren by African American Grandmothers." *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering* **7, no. 6 (2005).**

"Social Construction of Success for Grandchildren …" is a qualitative study by Dr. Priscilla A. Gibson, an associate professor in the School of Social Work at the University of Minnesota, and Carolyn Cornils Scherer, a coordinator with Big Brothers, Big Sisters of the Greater Twin Cities.

The study authors express desire to document the experience primary-care-giving grandparents because they face unique obstacles even as they support a group that faces disproportionate challenges, as African American youths are more likely to be suspended, encounter the juvenile justice system, and have a negative encounter with law enforcement. African American youth are also disproportionately represented in foster care and other out-of-home placements, where expectations for them have been demonstrated to be significantly lower than in family-care environments.

Despite the valiant effort of these grandparents, formal research studies have "generally ignored parenting in alternative family forms such as grandmother caregiving and [have] focused on parenting by biological parents" (3). Gibson and Cornils Scherer seek to remedy this situation by examining an aspect of the parenting experience for grandparents: the ways grandparents define and support success for their grandchildren. The study found four major themes expressed by its participants in recorded interviews. The grandmothers wanted children to:

1. **Gain knowledge and apply themselves to learning.** Doing well in school and learning from their biological parents' mistakes were major goals under this theme.
2. **Develop self-esteem.** This was both because they viewed it as necessary to enable success-producing behaviors and because they saw it as key to gaining the respect of others in the community.
3. **Take responsibility and plan for the future.** Setting goals, choosing friends wisely, treating women with respect, and meeting obligations without prompting were described as major tests of this quality.
4. **Separate the idea of "success" from financial gain.** They "overwhelmingly wanted to discourage" the idea that income was the best or only measure of success (8). Grandmothers described material wealth as "good to have," but emphasized that personal virtues—honesty, kindness, pride in one's achievements, independence, etc.—and the respect of upstanding members of the community were more important.

The authors also noted that the study participants overwhelmingly demonstrated knowledge of the success-defeating temptations their grandchildren faced, including substance abuse, dropping out of school, and engaging in premature sexual activities. The grandmothers' language also demonstrated that they had reflected significantly on what they wanted for the children and how to help them achieve it.

Based on their findings, Gibson and Cornils Scherer make the strident recommendation that parenting grandmothers should be regarded as a knowledgeable, competent resource by those seeking to reach African American youth with social programs. They assert that developing effective, collaborative relationships with parenting grandchildren, who are "experts of their grandchildren's situations" (11), is likely to be effective in improving interventions.

Gray-Hall, LLP. *NdCAD's Sankofa Reading Tutorial Program and "Parent Power" Literacy & Advocacy Training Workshops: Evaluation Report*. **St Paul, MN: Gray-Hall, LLP, 2010.**

Through comparison of pre-program baseline tests and post-program evaluations, Gray-Hall (a data collection and analysis firm) evaluated the reach and effectiveness of the Network for the Development of Children of African Descent (NdCAD) Sankofa reading program and their "Parent Power" workshops. NdCAD is a family education center in Saint Paul, Minnesota. The findings were favorable. Gray-Hall determined that, over the past six years, the Sankofa program enabled significant growth in reading skills among its students. Two thirds of graduating students met the Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) reading targets for their grade level, and most of those who did not meet the targets still demonstrated an increase in their reading levels while participating in the program. The programs were regarded by participants and observers as highly successful (as determined through interviews with participants).

The recommendations for growing and improving the NdCAD programs were generated in part through discussion with participants of the programs, and are as follows:

→ Improve awareness of the programs.
   o The programs were, at the time of the report, only known to a small population of community and school leaders, whose positions are short term (meaning they depart and their knowledge of the programs disappears from their organizations).
→ Increase the breadth of available programs and explore ways to scale the programs up.
   o Changes to NdCAD staffing, management, and decision-making structures may be necessary to accomplish this.
→ Create greater interconnectedness between Sankofa and the regular school day.
   o Doing so would increase program visibility and make new data available for future evaluations.
→ Measure Sankofa's impact on additional markers of achievement.
   o e.g., overall academic achievement, attendance, and classroom behavior.
→ Measure data on boys and girls separately, not just in the aggregate.
   o Educational disparities across genders is a subject of great interest in schools and communities. Having this information available to present to them would be beneficial.
→ Improve the program's data management systems to increase consistency and accuracy of reporting.

→ Consider implementing a control-group study; this would make a stronger case for the program's impacts.

→ Evaluate again in three years to ensure continued growth and success.

Hassan, J.A, Mahmoud, E., Mahmoud, E. (2011). A Crisis in Our Community: Closing the Five Education Gaps. Report.

The Minneapolis and St. Paul public school districts are faced with a significant duality within their system. Caucasian children are excelling in schools across the state, whereas African American children are more commonly falling behind throughout the stages of development. African American children represent a growing number of students of color in Minnesota, with their future potential determined by their educational success. The African American Leadership Forum and the Education and Life-Long Learning Work Group (AALF/ELL) presented a report on the achievement gap for African American children. The AALF identified five separate gaps that comprise the achievement gap as; preparation, belief, time, teaching and leadership. The report outlines that the achievement potential of African American children was impeded due to the five gaps and outlines that it is necessary to close all gaps to ensure an increase in educational development.

The Preparation Gap

The report states that the preparation gap begins before and child enters the school system and is described as school-readiness. It involves the child's home environment, economic status, emotional and social development, health and cultural identity. The AALF outline the major contributing factors to the preparation gap as; parenting, child's health, maternal breast feeding, maternal depression, the quality of Head Start programs and low birth weight.

The Belief Gap

The expectations and the belief system of a child's surrounding community contributed significantly to the achievement gap. Often times within the child's community, individuals are not convinced that the achievement gap can be closed until they witness it. The authors highlight that within society, expectations for African American students are less than those of Caucasian students. Furthermore, the AALF state that the expectations teachers have for their students heavily influence the performance of the students.

The Time Gap

African American children that have fallen behind in school will take time to rise to their expected grade level. The time needed to bring the children up to speed is significant, as the report highlights in a quote by CEO of the Harlem Children Zone Geoffrey Canada –" Simple physics tells us that if African American

children enter kindergarten already behind, if they spend the same amount of time on tasks in school as everyone else, they'll never catch up."

The Teaching Gap

The AALF identifies teaching excellence as the most valuable asset to a child's academic success. Despite family circumstance, children that have effective teachers consecutively will excel. Alternatively, students with as little as two inadequate teachers consecutively will seldom recover. Students that have fallen behind or are at risk of doing so, critically need effective educators.

The Leadership Gap

The authors state that principals and education leaders have an influence on students in an indirect fashion. Strong leadership in the academic system has proven most successful in diminishing the achievement gap, with effective leaders setting an example for educational achievement.

Recommendations for Closing the Gaps

The Preparation Gap

→   Ensuring access to high-quality, certified, early childhood education
→   Family support systems must be ensured
→   Implementing community resources and social services into schools
→   Ensuring that parents receive education and training

The Belief Gap

→   Implementing a laser-like focus on student achievement
→   African American students must be offered more rigorous curriculum choices
→   Success stories must be widely publicized to dispel the myth that our children cannot succeed

The Time Gap

→   There must be more time focused on learning during the school day
→   Implementing a longer school day and school year are necessary
→   Ensure there is adequate time for teaching and learning
→   Incorporate more afterschool and summer programming

The Teaching Gap

→   The best teachers must be placed where the greatest need exists
→   Be certain that educators are culturally competent
→   Effective teacher evaluation and coaching must be implemented
→   Traditional teaching preparation must be transformed

The Leadership Gap

→   Use a "one table" leadership approach from all cross-sectors
→   Implement or improve evaluation and professional development of school leaders
→   Ensure leaders are familiar with and implementing best practices for success
→   Principals must also be able to choose their teachers

Summary

The report concludes that it is essential to use a leadership approach that encompasses all aspects of a child's surrounding environments, including; education, business, government, philanthropy and community. The authors believe that a cradle to career academic continuum must be implemented in order to improve the academic success of children of color in the Minneapolis-St. Paul areas. They highlight that there is economic, moral and social importance for closing the achievement gap and that it is necessary for everyone to come together to ensure that it is eliminated.

Lozenski, Brian D., and Gevonee Eugene Ford. "From Individualism to Interconnectedness: Exploring the Transformational Potential of a Community-Generated Methodology." In *Six Lenses for Anti-Oppressive Education: Partial Stories, Improbable Conversations***, 2nd ed., edited by Bic Ngo and Kevin K. Kumashiro. (Peter Lang International Academic Publishers, 2007).**

The authors of "From Individualism to Interconnectedness" write from their experience in working with The Network for the Development of Children of African Descent (NdCAD), a non-profit founded in 1997. Its mission, quoted in the introduction to this chapter, is (among other things) "to strengthen the cultural connections within communities of African descent that promote, sustain and enhance the healthy development" of children of African descent (294). This chapter details a community- and culture-centered education plan developed by the authors as an answer to the question they heard from their communities: "how do we strengthen and build healthy African-descent communities, which can then support and nurture healthy individuals?" (294)

The authors see much of the degradation of their communities as the result of their children's participation in a school system that has been entirely divorced from their community and from the context of their lives. Before desegregation, the authors contend, Black students were taught by Black teachers who understood the critical role of education in empowering the students to deal with a

system that was, frankly, rigged against them in more ways than not. The teachers understood education as fundamental to the students' exercise of freedom, and saw that the students were the future of the local communities. Forcibly integrating Black students into schools run by Whites put them in a better economic climate, but it divorced their education from this lived-reality context, robbing it of its sense of meaning for these students, who were simultaneously thrust into a world of images of their culture that were deeply and subtly coded with a sense of inferiority to White culture.

To reverse this damaging process and bring a sense back to these students of their culture's value, the authors propose a methodology based on the following processes, each of which is accomplished by various strategies, examples of which are also listed.

→ Combating self-doubt
→ Demythologizing prevalent educational and social narratives of black life (that is, recognizing them *as* narratives, so as to remove them from their air of natural or objective truth).
  - Using counter-narratives or "counter-storytelling" (based on the cultural practice of African oral tradition) to challenge mainstream narratives that were previously assumed to be obvious or unworthy of critical thought
  - Leading the students to conduct interviews with significant members of the community who have challenging ideas; this puts them temporarily in the position of accepting a different set of basic assumptions in order to explore the ideas presented by the interviewee and examine them critically. This mindset of critical examination can be used to deconstruct the mainstream mythology of African inferiority.
→ Distributing educational responsibility widely across community networks and sources
  - Give students the chance to learn from community members who, unlike most public school educators and administrators, understand the student's experience and can put cultural- and self-worth lessons in terms that are relatable to the student of African descent
  - These community members are furthermore motivated by community ties to be invested in the development and education of the *whole child*, rather than interested primarily in imparting factual information

The authors conclude by suggesting that public-forum educators can encourage this process and the holistic well-being of their students by

  - Examining their own frameworks of images and associations with the students' culture
  - Inviting community educators (coaches, pastors, community leaders, elder family members) into formal educational spaces, and/or taking their students into the spaces of those community educators

Rose, PhD, Jonathan. *Community Voices On The Issues Survey* **(The Council on Black Minnesotans).**

Created by the Minnesota Legislature in July 1980, the Council on Black Minnesotans' primary purpose is to advise the Governor and the legislature on issues confronting the state's Black population.

This presentation is a report on the results of an issues survey taken among professionals who had contact with the Council on Black Minnesotans or who had worked with or had a relationship with a Black organization or community, though it also includes data from an earlier, more limited survey. The survey was performed to help determine the Council's social and economic priorities for 2014.

The issues of concern for constituents, ranked in order of importance according to their responses, are as follows:

1. Jobs and Economic Opportunities
    a. Address underemployment because of race, age, and sex discrimination.
    b. Address the inequitable share of State contracts going to Blacks.
    c. Encourage Blacks to move into leadership in State governments/agencies.
    d. Install racial quotas to restore system to wholeness.
    e. Treat pay equity as a human right.
    f. Increase the minimum wage.
2. Education
    a. Cost
        i. Increase tuition assistance.
        ii. Control escalating costs of public post-secondary education.
        iii. Encourage corporations to fund minority higher education.
        iv. Lower student loan interest rates.
        v. Adjust income limits for financial assistance to help those near the cut-off points.
    b. Cultural relevance
        i. Create non-traditional paths to certification to gain more minority teachers.
        ii. Acknowledge alternative systems of learning.
        iii. Focus on inner-city students and urban-specific challenges to education.
3. Criminal Justice
    a. Profiling
        i. Audit police contact with Black people; decrease rates of contact with minorities at all levels, not just traffic stops.
        ii. Address the news media's biased coverage and stereotyping.
        iii. Institute mandatory cultural and diversity training for police and other justice officials.
    b. Mass Incarceration and Systematic Bias in the Criminal Justice System
        i. Address the disproportionate number of Black men in prisons.
        ii. Address the adversarial feeling between police and Black communities.
        iii. Increase the number of black police officers and Criminal Justice System leaders.
        iv. Address the need for fair and equal treatment by police and courts.
4. Human Rights
    a. Systemic Bias
        i. Address inequity in policies and racism in government systems.

      ii. Address Black community's reinforcement of human rights issues by abuse of each other's rights.

      iii. Address White feeling of racial superiority.

  b. Positive Enforcement of Rights

      i. Create equal access to economic opportunities, health, education, and housing.

      ii. Enable the Department of Human Services to fulfill its obligations to minority communities and prosecute human rights complaints promptly.

5. Health Care

  a. Access

      i. Make basic health care available to all, regardless of income.

      ii. Involve the Governor in development of better access.

  b. Information

      i. Improve information systems and resources for community health advocates.

      ii. Make communities aware of their health-care rights.

      iii. Provide better information on preventative care.

6. Housing (Not Elaborated)

7. Other (Not Elaborated)

Sources that Make Recommendations Focusing upon Latino/Mexican/Chicano Children and Families

Chicano Latino Affairs Council, State of Minnesota. *Report to Governor Mark Dayton & the Minnesota State Legislature*. **(St. Paul, MN: CLAC, 2014).**

The Chicano Latino Affairs Council was established by the Minnesota Legislature to advise the governor and legislators on matters pertaining to the Latino community in Minnesota. The Council serves as a liaison to the Latino community, informing its constituents of relevant policy matters and simplifying and delivering information back to governmental bodies, nonprofits and the private sector. Their goal is to improve the social and economic well-being and solidarity of Minnesota's Latino community.

This document is their Annual Report for the 2013 legislative year. In it, they describe their many successful political projects and discuss their priorities for legislative action in 2014. Among these priorities are: seeing legislation passed to permit undocumented immigrants to attain driver's licenses; improving ESL programs and recognizing the value that bilingualism brings to Minnesota; improving access to home ownership conditions for Latinos in the state; improving the business environment for Latino entrepreneurs; and improving access to quality health care for Latinos. Their highest priority, however, is to address educational disparities affecting Latino students in Minnesota. This is a reflection of the results of their Community Forums, in which education was rated a first- or second-priority issue by constituents in every survey.

The CLAC presents four major recommendations for proceeding to disrupt the systematic, cyclical educational disparity:

→ Increase access to academically rigorous coursework
  ● Encourage Latino students to participate in post-secondary education, Advance Placement courses, and International Baccalaureate programs.
→ Improve the quality and cultural competency of instruction
  ● Recruit and retain effective Latino educators
  ● Make teacher preparation programs more competitive
  ● Increase pay for beginning teachers and improve policies to help districts keep truly effective teachers
  ● Train and support teachers in culturally responsive curriculum and instruction
→ Use student testing to improve teaching and parental engagement
  ● Help teachers interpret data to differentiate instruction
  ● Make the results of state tests easier to understand for Spanish-speaking students and their parents, thus encouraging parental oversight and support
→ Reinforce the value of the foreign language and culture that Latinos bring to Minnesota, which was formally recognized by legislative act during the 2014 session

Communidades Latinos Unidas En Servicio - CLUES 2014 – 2016 Strategic Plan (Strategic Plan, CLUES, 2014)

The Communidades Latinos Unidas En Servicio (CLUES) is a non-profit organization that provides programs and services to Latinos in Minnesota and the United States. The organization provides resources, skills and programs that advance Latinos to be healthy prosperous and involved in their communities. The CLUES 2014 – 2016 Strategic Plan adds to the organizations programs and suggests improvements for health, education and economic equity for the Latino community. The strategic plan outlines the challenges faced by Latinos and suggests ways to increase opportunities and collaborations that benefit Latinos and their immigration challenges. The plan highlights the importance of CLUES in amplifying the voice of the Latino community, building strategic collaboration and promoting resources for Latino children, youth, families and the Latino community. The authors outline recommendations to strengthen CLUES and to strengthen the Latino community.

Strengthen and advance the greater community

→ Increase marketing to deliver resources and potential engagement to advance wellbeing for Latinos.
→ Increase collaboration and partnerships with nonprofit, private companies and government to discuss policy solutions for healthcare, education and equality for Latinos.
→ Act as ambassadors for CLUES community engagement, by working closely with advisors and volunteers.
→ Implement better data collection systems to ensure that CLUES can hear the Latino community's opinions on serious issues affecting them.

Recommendations for a Strong Community

→ Boost Latino employment and homeownership
→ Encourage equal opportunities for Latinos in the labor and housing markets
→ Provide access for Latino adults and youth to employment opportunities, education, career and skills training which equate to continued employment.
→ Eliminate barriers to homeownership and promote availability to funds.
→ Assist Latinos in becoming knowledgeable consumers

Advance health, education and economic equity for Latinos

→ Assist in reversing inequalities and promoting programs that highlight Latino cultural values and economic factors.
→ Focus on removing institutional barriers, whilst advocating for policies that improve health, education and economic inequalities.

Promote and preserve Latino culture

→   Encourage Latino pride and heritage through artistic and cultural programs

→   Increase support for cultural engagement and support of efforts that promote the Latino traditions for children, youth and families.

Lift Latino voices

→   Promote community programs and efforts to lift Latino voices locally and nationally and focus on promoting naturalization, citizenship, voter engagement and support for policies that focus on immigration systems.

CLUES provides resources and possibilities for Latinos to prosper, with the family centric model that connects and promotes clients assets. The authors state that this leads to sustainable partnerships and opens up a wider assortment of available services and strategies. The report outlines that the aforementioned recommendations will promote greater culturally beneficial lives for Latinos living in the United States.

Garcia, Hector, and Robert Wedl. "A New Educational Definition of Achievement for the 21st Century." March 2014.

In this article, Hector Garcia, the executive director of the Chicano Latino Affairs Council, and Robert Wedl, of the Center for Policy Design and Education Evolving, a think tank on education reform, make an argument for revamping the way Minnesota schools define academic achievement.

They argue that current definitions, including the Common Core standards, rely heavily on English proficiency (which they believe to be a skewed measure) and exclude other measures of intelligence, proficiency, and literacy that deserve to be included in the evaluation.

The authors advocate including other achievements in the standards for success, including:

- fluency in other world languages;
- proficiency with the digital platform;
- problem-solving skills;
- "teaming" skills, and;
- emotional skills like persistence, motivation, grit and hope for the future.

Hispanic Advocacy for Community Empowerment through Research (HACER). *Latino Realities: A Vibrant Community Emerges in South Minneapolis* (Minneapolis, MN: HACER, 1998).

The results of a qualitative study of the experiences of Latino people in Minneapolis are presented in this article. The results were gathered by HACER, a collaborative of the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) of the University of Minnesota, the Social Work Department of Metropolitan State University, the Ramsey County Community Human Services Department, and Chicanos Latinos Unidos en Servicio (CLUES), a Latino support and advocacy organization.

Using a combination of prior research and Census data, HACER estimates that the Latino/Chicano population in Minneapolis is between 31,600 and 37,920. The views and experiences of this community were measured through discussion within four focus groups convened in Latino-serving church congregations; the four groups comprised 46 individuals. Participants in each group were asked questions on five major subjects related to their quality of life, experiences, and perceptions.

Summary of Questions and Themes:

→ **Why did you come to Minneapolis?** A strong economy, high job availability, the presence of family in the area, high-quality schools and the quality of life in Minnesota were all major draws.

→ **What made the transition easier?** Spanish-speaking churches and Latino organizations provided language and job-search services and made them feel welcomed and included in a community. Family support was also a huge factor in facilitating a successful transition.

→ **What difficulties did you face?** Learning the new language was a serious challenge, and having poor English skills exacerbated the discrimination they felt from outside the community. Respondents also said that life in Minnesota feels much more fast-paced than in their home countries; many participants reported working multiple jobs daily. Struggles with transportation, immigration issues, and loneliness also complicated the transition, as did tensions between ethnic and national groups within the Latino community.

→ **What strengths does the group have?** The focus groups and local business owners described the Minneapolis Latino community as very committed to working hard to get ahead, deeply connected to their families and other community members, and committed to their Christian faith. They also recognized the group's cultural contributions to the richness of the social environment in Minneapolis.

▪ **What does the community need, and how could we help members improve their situations?**
  – **Education** was the most frequently mentioned need.
    □ More, better, and more accessible English-as-a-Second-Language education opportunities.
      • More ESL classes for parents and Spanish classes for kids would help to close the gap of understanding between Latino parents and their kids
      • Improving English understanding among parents and Spanish understanding among School administrators and teachers would facilitate parents' effective involvement in their child's education.
  – **Employment** needs were also high on the list.

- □ While most of the Latino population felt there were enough jobs for those who wanted to work, they were concerned with the quality of jobs and with finding "real opportunities, not just minimum wage jobs" (55).
- □ Participants requested employment training that includes job skills as well as career-search and interview skills.
- – Participants also requested help in dealing with **Immigration issues**.
- □ Even those who were in the country legally found the citizenship process "torturous and bureaucratic" (56).
- – **Housing and Health** needs followed.
- □ The lack of decent housing at affordable prices was a frequently mentioned problem; discrimination was cited as a contributing factor.
- □ Health care coverage is beyond affordability for many members, and language barriers exist in hospitals and clinics.
- • Community members need Spanish-speaking specialists and mental health providers.
- • Having more available interpreters would be helpful.
- – **Cultural needs** were also expressed.
- □ A central cultural space for appreciating Latino culture was a common desire.
- • Such a space would address the need for a way to deal with cultural/ethnic friction that exists between factions of the community.
- □ Help for parents struggling to deal with the cultural divide between themselves and their children, especially on the subject of sexuality, was desired.

Hispanic Advocacy and Community Empowerment through Research: "Opportunities and Challenges: The Education of Latinos in Minnesota." (Report to the Chicano Latino Affairs Council, 2012)

This report was prepared by the Hispanic Advocacy and Community Empowerment through Research (HACER). The report reviews the opportunities offered to Latino students at secondary education level as well as the challenges they face in the education system of Minnesota. The goal of the report is to identify ways in which the state of Minnesota can improve the well-being of these students. The Latino community is currently the second largest minority group in Minnesota.

The study focuses on the impact of linguistic and cultural assets on the success of the Latino students with regards to the avenues that the education system has used these assets to increase the students' knowledge. The data for the study was obtained from previous literature and a survey of both the school staff and students of selected institutions in Minnesota. The study found that the education inspirations of the immigrant students were influenced by the social stature, income of the parents and education of the parents. The background and structure of the family, the investment of the parents into the education of the student, availability of the learning environment at home were some of the impacting factors highlighted in the study. Improving the attainment of educational achievement by Latino students decreased the gap in the advancement of education for all students.

Incorporating the cultural and linguistic assets in the education system had a positive impact on the academic success of the Latino students. The success of the students in the selected schools was directly

attributed to improved strategies: more profound staff-student relationships with individualized attention to every student; motivating students by guiding them to achieve their goals; exposing the students to career and education opportunities; encouraging excellence in the education system; providing a conducive learning environment to the students; protecting and promoting cultural needs and identities of the students, involving families in the education program; and involving communities to ensure the students' engagement in the education program.

The author identifies recommendations to the education system of Minnesota as well as families seeking to aid the Latino students achieve academic excellence.

The education system of Minnesota can support the Latino students by:

→ Changing public policy to take into consideration current institutional systems in introducing pedagogical approaches that promote diversity in the education system.
→ Using the legal system to provide equal academic opportunities to all students.
→ Improving teacher/student relationships to ensure each student is given individual attention.
→ Promoting community involvement in the learning process to encourage the community to embrace education and engage students even at home.
→ Providing students with exposure and information about higher education to motivate them to perform better in their academics.

Engaged parents can help Latino students excel in their education by:

→ Working hand in hand with educators; parent involvement in the learning process ensures that the students are engaged in the learning process.
→ Providing good mentorship to the students to encourage them to pursue education and achieve excellence.
→ Providing a much-needed additional support for the student to gain literacy in both their English and their native language.
→ Ensuring that the student has a conducive learning environment while at home. Parents can achieve this by providing a computer and a place to study.

The gap in the achievement of Latino students and other students is more apparent in the state of Minnesota than in other states. The paper supports previous literature on the issues that affect the academic performance of Latino students in high school. Despite the small scale of the research, the findings by the author are an actual reflection of the effectiveness of the recommendations in schools. The author relates the effect of implementing these recommendations into school programs to promote academic success of Latino students as well as the other students. The report provides certainty that in the near future, the Latino graduates will provide a highly skilled workforce that is culturally competent to uplift the economy provided the education gaps are eradicated.

Sources and Recommendations Focusing on Hmong/Asian Pacific Children and Families

Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans. *Asian Pacific Students in Minnesota: Facts, not Fiction*. **St. Paul, MN: Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans.**

The Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans, a state agency that advises the Minnesota state legislature on issues relevant to the Asian Pacific community and advocates for their well-being. The Council wrote this report to highlight the necessity of disaggregating data collected on Asian Pacific students. Data that are disaggregated by ethnic group would provide more accurate information and can inform better education policies.

Through their own analysis of current statistics, the Council asserts that significant achievement gaps do exist between Asian Pacific and White students, and recommends the following changes to state policy to address the disparity:

→ **Disaggregate data on Asian Pacific students.**
  - It is common practice to collect data on "Asian Pacific" students as a single unit, when in fact this is an umbrella term; this super-group actually comprises many separate, dramatically different racial, socioeconomic, and ethnic groups. In order to understand the individual needs of these groups and address them appropriately, *agencies must standardize the practice of collecting data on each group individually, not on the aggregate.*

→ **Tailor monitoring and intervention efforts toward specific subgroups with additional challenges**.
  - e.g., recently-immigrated, refugee-experienced, low-income, or highly mobile students.

→ **Increase cultural competency and awareness among educators.**
  - Teach the strengths, interests, and needs of specific groups.
  - Move away from a deficit view of diverse populations; acknowledge and cater to cultural strengths.

→ **Seek input from refugee-experienced and socioeconomically disadvantaged Asian Pacific people on educational goals and policies.**
  - Acknowledge community members as powerful partners, and recognize their expertise in determining the viability and effectiveness of programming/interventions.

Moua, Mai. "Hmong American Partnership: Results from the 2007 Community Engagement Process" (Leadership Paradigms Inc., Community Engagement Report, 2008).

Hmong American Partnership (HAP) assists Hmong people in establishing fruitful lives in America and maintaining cultural strength and identity. Of the 209, 866 Hmong persons in the United States, it is estimated that 45,443 live in the state of Minnesota and half of these in the St. Paul area. This is a review of the HAP community engagement report which it used as a foundation for increasing its capacity to serve the Hmong population.

In an effort to understand the opinions of the Hmong people of Minnesota, their needs and what they wanted from Hmong American Partnership (HAP), staff undertook a review of the organization in the form of community engagement and consultation. The HAP Community Engagement Report outlines the findings of the consultation process and highlights recommendations for improvements, changes and an overall assessment of the process outcomes.

The authors organized their recommendations into five areas:

→ Structural – outlines the structural design of the organization
→ Human Resources – focuses staff needs and builds positive dynamics in the institution.
→ Political – focuses on issues dealing with power, conflict, partnerships, and negotiations
→ Cultural – provides knowledge of cultural practices, language, and purpose to the institution.
→ Community – identifies key issues the community would like addressed

Recommendations

Structural

→ Reassess the organization's objectives, mission, and vision.
→ Identify how tasks are undertaken and managed within the organization and sustain the processes that are successful.
→ In an effort to promote commitment, identify the values of staff to ensure they align with the institutions values.
→ Implement a structural audit that aligns the goals of the organization from top to bottom and across all departments.
→ Identify potential structures that have been successful for other establishments or have been beneficial to HAP in the past, while acknowledging potential needs for the future and their impact on organizational design.
→ Implement clear and concise job descriptions and staff responsibilities within the organizations to ensure individuals know their roles.

Human Resources

→ Implement methods that promote staff empowerment, recognition and incentive.

→ Ensure that systems in place are aligned with the organizations values and culture.

→ Promote methods that sustain staff that are beneficial to the organization

→ Understand how to invest in employees and implement appropriate avenues for staff learning/betterment.

→ Learn what motivates staff and identify their basic needs.

→ Implement and promote an educational outlet where staff can share knowledge, resources and support.

→ Provide avenues for employees to build relationships and trust with one another through activities and discussions.

→ Promote team work and performance across all departments and roles.

→ Enquire what staff believe are beneficial characteristics in leaders and management to implement effective dynamics between employees.

Political

→ Grow connections with additional and new partners to establish relationships that benefit the organization, its values, goals and the needs of clients.

→ Engage an outside source to facilitate the exploration and discussion of each department's interests, choices and use of authority.

→ Implement dialogue systems to promote discussions regarding issues within the organization

Cultural

→ Implement change management to assist the organization with transitions and letting go of irrelevant values.

→ Understand the organization's culture to gain knowledge of the vital characteristics of its culture and determine issues that promote distrust.

→ Understand and promote the organization's niche so that community members will know its role. This would discourage the duplication of services in the community and promote a sense of added service.

Community

→ Step forward as a community leader to form solutions and responses to issues that affect Hmong people

→ Identify what the organization's role is in the community, and know what its position should look like as a community member.

→ Identify and promote the organization's strengths and address issues that hinder them. This will add value to the establishment and increase leverage for partnerships.

→ Listen to clients and partners to assess the organizations resources and services. Hold quarterly consultations with agencies, clients and partners to discuss the quality of services and issues that may arise.

Conclusion

The report outlines the current issues and trends that face the HAP organization, based on feedback from their community engagement workshops, programs and consultation processes. At the time the report was written, the HAP had implemented some changes to structure and addressed some issues within the Hmong community. However, as indicated from the community consultation the authors recommended that HAP increase its presence within the community and refine its mission, values, and vision. Furthermore they recommended that HAP increase its capacity with more resources, programs, finances and staff, while engaging all participants to develop a unified future vision.

Thao, Dang. "Hmong Parents' Perceptions toward Their Children' Education in Minneapolis, Minnesota." Graduate Research Paper; University of Wisconsin-Stout, 2000.

This graduate research paper reports the results of a study which measured the attitudes of Hmong parents in Minneapolis, Minnesota toward their children's education. Attitudes were measured by a self-reported survey of 93 Hmong parents, who had lived in the United States for varied lengths of time. Impressions were recorded by gauging agreement to statements using a Likert scale (one to five, strongly disagree to strongly agree).

The results were collected and analyzed both to get a picture of overall attitudes within the group and to compare and contrast attitudes across gender, education level, employment level and length of time living in the United States. Levels of participation with school practices and events was also gauged by self-reporting.

The study concluded that Hmong parents have, overall, a very high opinion of the role education plays in their children's lives, responding positively to statements like "a strong K-12 background is needed for college success," "I want my children to finish high school and go on to college," and "A good income comes from having a higher level of education." Hmong parents were also generally unconcerned that school experiences would have a negative impact on their children's cultural learning, responding strongly in opposition to the statement "My children are learning values that I do not approve of in school." The majority of Hmong parents—60 percent of study participants—also reported that they are actively involved with their child's education, engaging in activities like parent-teacher meetings, helping with homework, and communicating with teachers.

Comparing responses across gender, education level, employment level and length of time in the country, the study found the following:

→ Fathers tended to express stronger feelings regarding the value of education and desire to see their children succeed than did mothers, and parents who had less than full-time employment responded with stronger positivity than did parents who were employed full time.

→ Mothers were more likely to report spending time working directly with their children on school activities (helping with homework, talking with the child about school performance and difficulties, accompanying to school functions, etc.), while fathers were more likely to report engaging in conversation with teachers and visiting the school.

→ Parents with less than a high-school education tended to express stronger positive feelings about the value of education for their children, but parents with higher levels of education reported greater ability to help their children with school work and interact with school administration.

→ Parents with lower levels of education, parents who had fewer years living in the United States, and parents who were un- or under-employed were more likely to report needing a translator in order to effectively participate in school meetings **and** to need assistance securing transportation to get to those meetings.

→ Parents with full-time employment were more likely to call teachers to discuss their child's success than were parents with no or part-time employment. Parents who had spent more years in the country were also more likely to contact teachers than were parents with fewer years in the United States.

The study's Implications sections recommends that schools intervene to provide transportation and translation assistance to facilitate parent involvement in school meetings. It also recommends that further research be conducted on the following subjects:

→ Hmong parents' reasons for not participating in school meetings
→ Schools' ability and/or willingness to provide transportation and translation interventions
→ Gauge the effectiveness of the above interventions with research after their implementation.

Xiong, Zha Blong, Daniel F. Detzner, and Michael J. Cleveland. "Southeast Asian Adolescents' Perceptions of Immigrant Parenting Practices." *Hmong Studies Journal* **2004–05, vol. 5: 1–20.**

The authors undertook this study to examine Southeast Asian adolescents' perceptions of their parents' behaviors. The study is an attempt to shine light on the factors that create the high level of conflict in parent/adolescent relationships in immigrant families.

The study takes as its starting point the National Extension Parent Education Model, which sorts parenting behaviors into six categories. Then, through focus groups led by members of the cultural group participating, the study authors examined adolescents' evaluations of the categories and their parents' behaviors with regard to each. Focus groups were conducted in four distinct Southeast Asian

diaspora groups: Cambodian, Hmong, Vietnamese and Lao. The NEAP categories and their corresponding attitude responses from the adolescents are:

Caring for Self

→ The participants: Cambodian adolescents described such behaviors as eating well, getting regular exercise, taking necessary medications, meditating, and spending time with friends. Hmong, Lao, and Vietnamese adolescents tended to focus more on parents' management of stress levels through delegation of responsibilities and seeking support from the community.

→ Study discussion: The authors note that "most adolescents want more autonomy than their parents are willing to grant" (13), but that the adolescents' displeasure was likely due to their acculturation to the middle class American style of parenting which values independence over obedience.

Understanding

→ The participants: To all of the adolescents, understanding parents are those who are flexible, approachable, adaptable, and open to communication. Most adolescents in this group felt their parents were too inflexible, and they expressed that they had little hope of changing their parents' minds when they disagreed. Many reported that their parents were deeply suspicious that their children would become involved in gang activity.

→ Study discussion: The authors note that gang activity is a significant problem in many Southeast Asian urban communities, and that the parents' reactions are likely based on a rational fear.

Guidance

→ Participants described parental guidance as setting limits, providing direction, participating in children's activities, teaching, protecting, and being positive role models. Adolescents thought that parents should avoid criticizing them, instead taking the time to explain why the adolescent's actions were wrong and what the consequences would be and why.

Nurturing

→ The participants: According to the adolescents, nurturing parents are warm, involved, and supportive. Adolescents in all groups felt that their parents seldom told them that they loved them or showed overt affection. They thought their parents preferred to show love by providing for their children's needs.

Motivating

→ The participants: The adolescents believed motivating parents are those who demonstrate the consequences of poor or no education, connect them to resources for success (e.g., tutors, older siblings, other studious teenagers), and recognize their achievements. Many adolescents

reported their parents' use of their own situations—which, for many of them, was working very hard for very little money—to drive their children to excel in school and attain a better life for themselves.

Advocating

→ The participants: Parents who advocate are well-enough informed of the adolescent's life and environment that they will know when help is needed, and they are involved enough to provide help acquiring those resources. To be an advocate, a parent must be familiar with the resources are available outside of the ethnic group. Advocacy-building activities the adolescents described included knowing and networking with other parents, attending organization meetings, and seeking help from relatives or other community members. One teen noted that it was difficult for the adolescents to offer on the subject of advocate parents because they themselves did not know what resources were available if they should need them. Adolescents felt strongly that their parents' social and systematic isolation put them at a disadvantage, and they thought their parents should be more proactive.

→ Study discussion: Adolescents in this study indicated that their parents lacked the appropriate knowledge to connect their children to community resources. "Educators, human service providers, and others who work with these populations should develop culturally appropriate programs that link these parents and adolescents to resources" (15), which would benefit families in two ways: First, parents would become more familiar with the resources in the community, gain credibility with their adolescents, and be empowered by their knowledge; Second, such programs would give help the parents to realize that their problems are common and normal rather than pathological and unique, which may incentivize them to pursue further knowledge and alternative parenting strategies with other parents to whom they are exposed.

Yang, Pa Nhia D., and Catherine D. Solheim. "Financial Management in Hmong Immigrant Families: Change and Adaptation." *Hmong Studies Journal* 8:1–33.

Nationwide, 9 percent of families live below the poverty line; among Hmong families, the number is 35 percent. Minnesota has similar numbers, with 5 percent of the total population in poverty compared with 32 percent of Hmong citizens. With the intention of addressing these high poverty rates among the Hmong population, this study's authors—a professor and a doctoral candidate at the University of Minnesota–Twin Cities—conducted a study into the financial management behaviors of Hmong families in Minneapolis. The study's purpose was to "examine how Hmong families managed financial resources in their new environment" (6) across three generations: generations 1 (those who immigrated as adults), 1.5 (who immigrated as children 12 or under), and 2 (who were born and raised in the United States).

Their findings were generated by conducting interviews with "key informants"—Hmong individuals who work as financial experts with the Hmong community. Their responses generated the following insights:

- **First generation immigrants:**
  − lost much of their savings when coming to the United States; silver bars carried high value and were the main form of currency in their home country, but they are nearly worthless in the US market.
  − make a very clear distinction between *needs* and *wants*, tending to live very frugally.
  − put a high moral value on thrift, delaying gratification, and self-sufficiency.
  − define "self-sufficiency" in a wide sense that *includes the extended family*. A Hmong family does not consider itself self-sufficient unless it can provide for unmet needs throughout the family system.
  − often create credit systems and mutual savings plans by pooling their money with other Hmong families.
  − struggle at interacting with banks. Many do not speak English, so even simple withdrawals and deposits can be cumbersome experiences. Many first-generation immigrants prefer to keep their money in cash, hidden in their homes.
- **Immigrants in the 1.5 generation:**
  − have retained many of the savings- and family-oriented values of the first generation.
  − have better English language skills and more American formal education than the first generation.
  − can, therefore, interact more easily with banks to safeguard their wealth and make wise investments that allow their savings to generate more growth than those of their parents.
- **Immigrants in the second generation:**
  − tend, having been raised in the United States' consumer culture, to lose some of their parents' and grandparents' frugality, struggling to make a clear distinction between *wants* and *needs.*
  − tend to have more debt and struggle to save as much as the previous generations.
  − utilize bank services as a way to access their money conveniently.

Recommendations:

The authors note that, because Hmong families of the earlier generations often pool their resources outside of the recorded banking system, the statistics that show them living in poverty at a rate 28–3% higher than average may not accurately reflect reality, as Hmong families may have access to more resources than wage statistics record.

The authors recommend that:

→ Subsequent research examines the generational differences in money-management skills in greater depth. It should also investigate generational differences in credit- and debt-related beliefs and behaviors.

→ Future projects interview family members directly, rather than appraising their situations from secondary sources.

→ financial institutions who would like to reach the Hmong community as a consumer base
  o Hire employees who speak Hmong, thus facilitating ease of use and understanding for first-generation immigrants.
  o Make ATMs usable in the Hmong language.

- o Consider offering group savings plans to replicate the money-pooling practices with which Hmong families are already familiar. (The authors do not address how the individualistic US system of financial laws would function in this collective-ownership model.)

Section III: Appendix

Recommendations for the Wellbeing of Families of Color and American Indian Families in Minnesota
Children's Defense Fund and the Minnesota Office of Early Learning

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