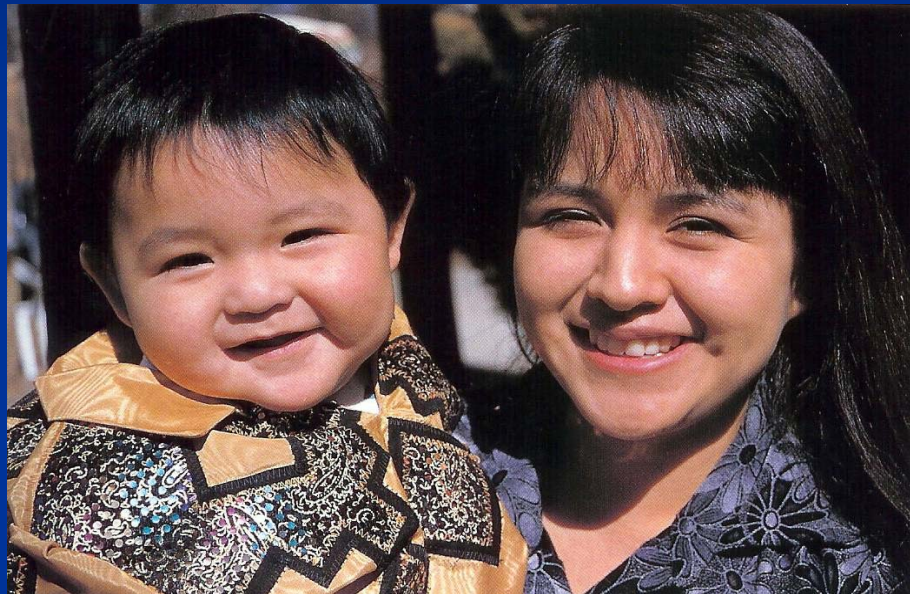


Indigenous Language, Literacy and Identity: Addressing Challenges and Maximizing Opportunities for Academic Achievement



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Language and Literacy Development in Young Language Minority
Children: Research Policy and Practice
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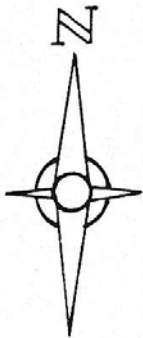
There is no resource that is more vital to the continued existence and integrity of Indian tribes than their children.

(Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978)

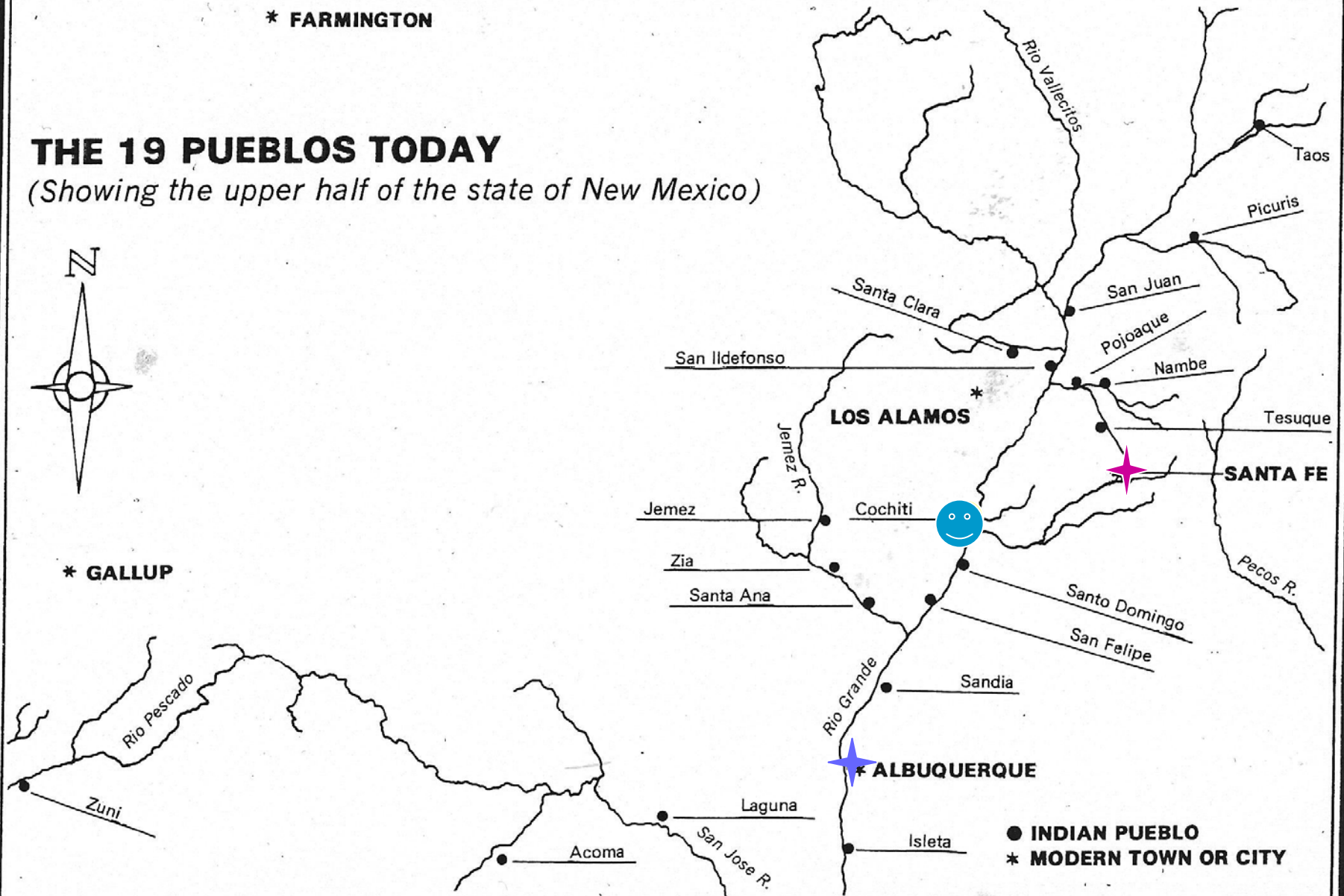
* FARMINGTON

THE 19 PUEBLOS TODAY

(Showing the upper half of the state of New Mexico)

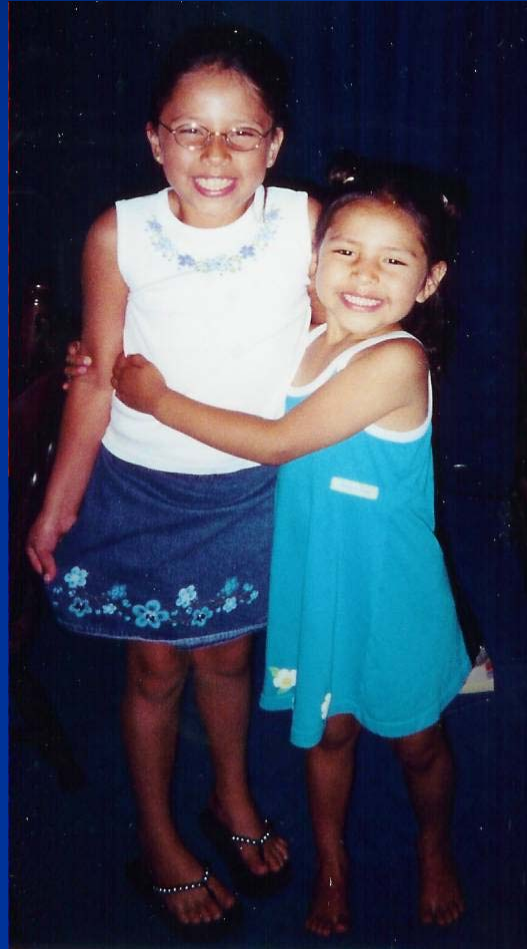


* GALLUP



● INDIAN PUEBLO
* MODERN TOWN OR CITY

Whitney and Dominique
Ages 7 and 5



What are they learning?
What is *Dauu* teaching them?

- Politeness, manners
- Social values
- Sociocultural connections, i.e., their caretakers/teachers/socializers
- The importance of the heritage language

What are they learning?
What is *Dauu* teaching them?

- that they are members of a community that has special social, cultural and linguistic codes
- the essential information such as values, precepts and the belief system of their Indigenous family and community.
- that they are Cochiti, '*Kuchite-me*.

Cochiti Kodak Moment

- Socialization process
- Cultural and self identity
- Linguistic change
- Cultural survival

Addressing Language and Literacy Development

What do we need to know?

Addressing Language and Literacy Development

What do we need to know?

Dual Challenge:
Indigenous language renewal-
maintenance and English language and
literacy development

Cultural Repatriation of Indigenous Education: The Link to Cultural Sovereignty

Pivotal to Indigenous peoples' efforts to reclaim their culture are their current efforts at language and spiritual restoration and their dedication to establishing *tribal educational systems that are responsive to traditional values and intellectual traditions*. These [Indigenous] teachings are the building blocks of our collective future. (Coffey & Tsosie, 2001, p. 208)

Current State of Affairs

- Indigenous languages are endangered.
- California indigenous languages—98 originally
 - 45 (or more) have *no* fluent speakers
 - 17 have one to five speakers
 - 36 have only a few elders speakers who “remember their languages”
- In 1970 almost 90% spoke Navajo as L1 at the time they entered Head Start. In 1991 that figure changed to 55% in favor of English (Platero, 2001).
- NLPs varies among parents, families and communities.

Current State of Affairs

- 34 (16%) of the 210 existing indigenous languages in the U.S. and Canada are still being acquired by children.
- 176 of the 210 existing Indigenous languages are *moribund*, they are not being transmitted to children.
- NLPs varies among parents, families and communities.

What else do we need to know?

Rethinking Our Approaches and Practices

Nature of Indigenous languages—

For example, many of our current initiatives of ILR & M focus primarily on heritage language literacy, yet we fail to consider that the majority of Indigenous speech communities remain highly oral society in which the essential aspects of these worlds continue to be acquired through our oral traditions and social interactions, including the ways we teach our children.

Rethinking Our Approaches and Practices

New questions for All of Us

Inclusion of Parents, Families and
Communities:

What should children learn?

When do they learn these things?

How do they learn them?

Who are the teachers?

U.S. Mainstream Societies

“Socialize for School”


- “ready to learn” or “readiness”
- Prime responsibility of families and schools
- Promotion of valued activities, e.g. early literacy, number, letter, and shape recognition, engagement in verbal expression

Language Socialization

imparting to children the intellectual traditions, ways of interacting, and the belief system through exposure to and participation in language-mediated interactions (Ochs, 1986)

...children come to know who they are in relation to others in their world. Thus, the acquisition of language entails the *acquisition of a self-identity* in a social world.
(Vygotsky, 1978)



A photograph of ancient stone ruins built into a sandstone cliffside. The ruins consist of several rectangular structures made of stacked stones, some with visible doorways. Above the ruins is a large, dark overhang of the cliff face. The overall scene is set in a desert environment with warm, reddish-brown tones.

Like others around the world,
the Indigenous people have
developed distinctive ways to
socialize their children; to
teach them *cultural literacy*.

Cultural Plans for Pueblo Children



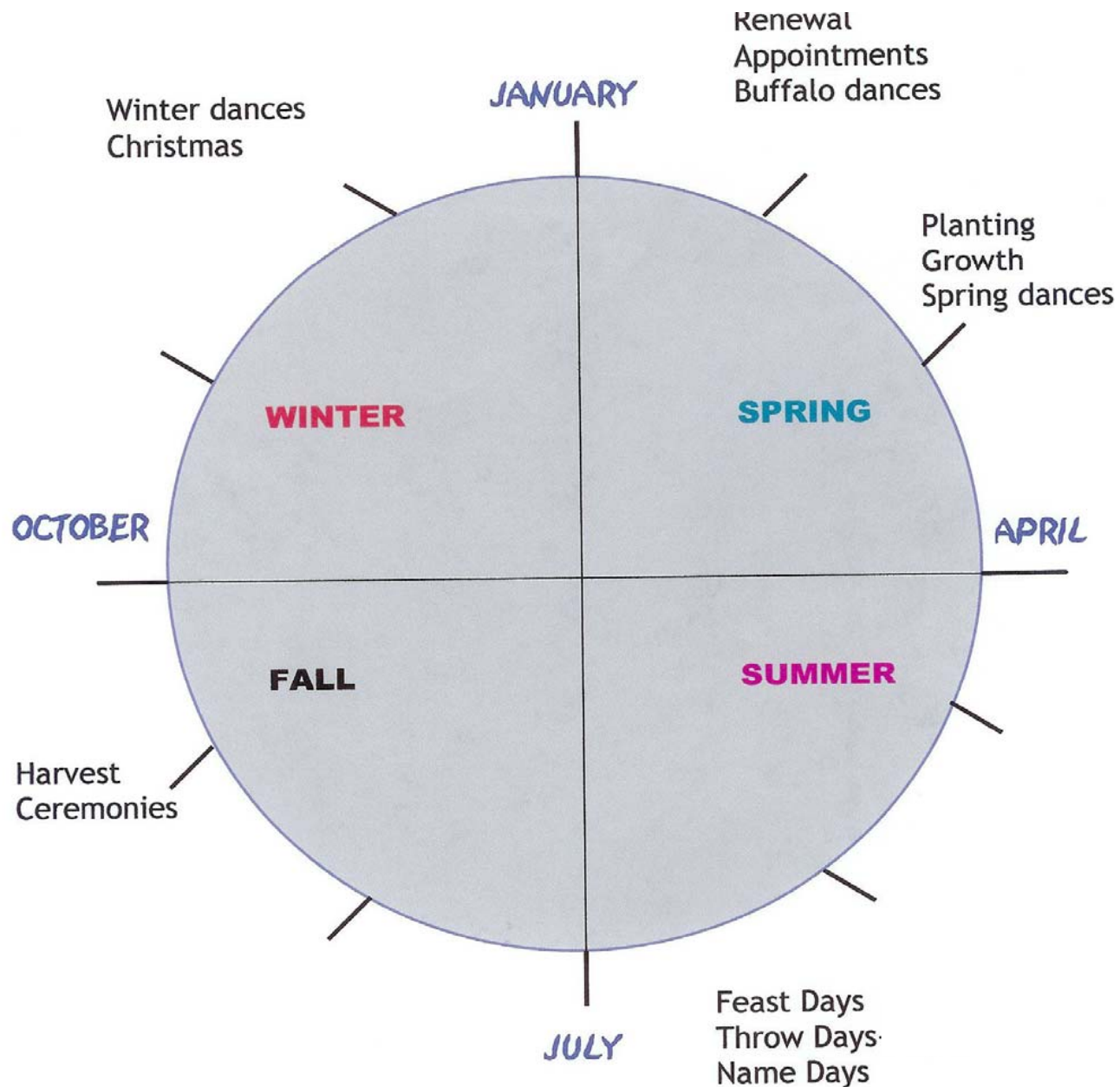
- Subsistence Living
- These children have acquired an enormous storehouse of knowledge about the natural world and are to talk about it intelligently with outsiders who need to have things explained to them. They know the rules about what can be hunted and what must be protected. The children in these communities are as observant as any group of children we have ever encountered.

Cultural Plans for Pueblo Children

- The unwritten language
- “Cultural symbols and intellectual traditions” (Benjamin, Pecos, & Romero, 1997), socio-cultural and sociolinguistic patterns, including beliefs, attitudes, practices, values, behaviors, emotions...

PUEBLO CALENDAR

Pueblo Traditional Calendar



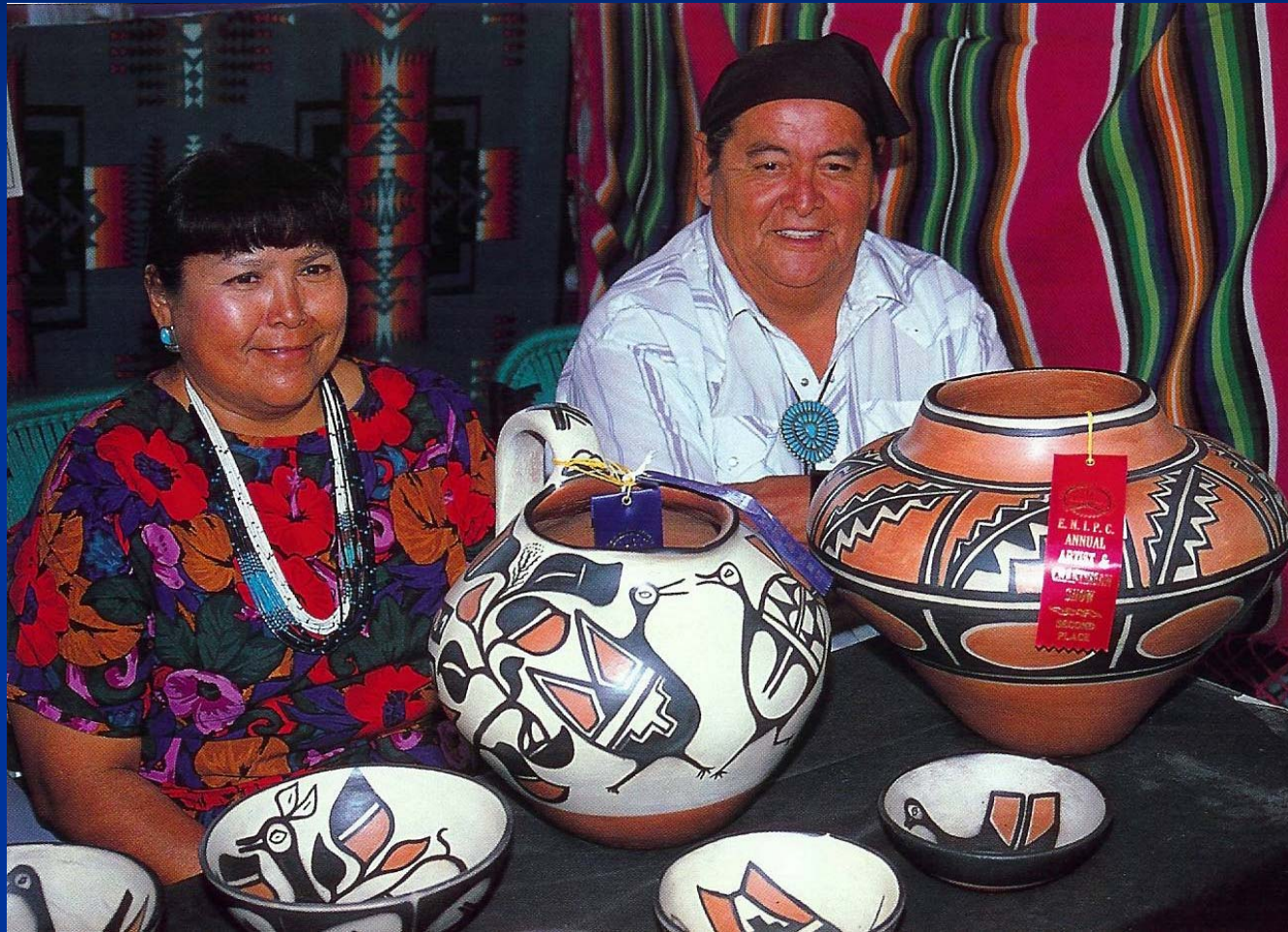


Buffalo Winter Dance

The Unwritten Language



The Unwritten Language



The Unwritten Language



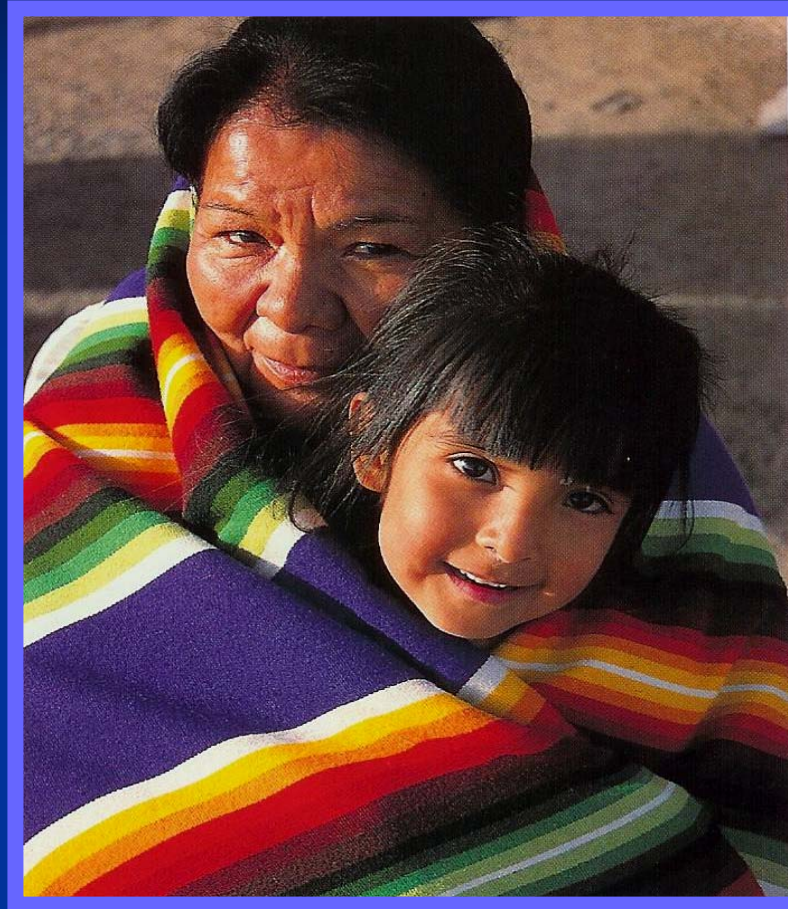


Pueblo Corn Dance

Who are the Socializers/Teachers of Pueblo children?

Whereas in mainstream families, parents are the central socializers, in the Pueblo world, a child's world is filled with caretakers. Their primary socializers and teachers of cultural literacy are...

Grandparents



Teachers of Cultural Literacy

Teachers of Cultural Literacy--Grandparents

In the first two years of life, grandparents take a minor role in the care of grandchildren, but begin to play a major role when the children are two or three years of age. (Romero, 2003)



Primary socializers include grandparents, parents, and siblings

Secondary socializers include extended family--uncles, aunts, “Indian” parents, godparents, cousins, etc.

What should Pueblo children know?

- *Kinship* is the heart of Pueblo society.
- One must know how you are related to others (including spiritual beings) and how to interact with them
- One must be aware of the social, familial, religious (Native/Catholic), and cultural webs connecting individuals in the community

Pueblo Ways of Teaching and Learning

- T/L through Direct Instruction
- T/L through Engaged Observation
- T/L Reminding (upcoming communal event)
- T/L through Independent Practice
- T/L through Guided Practice
- T/L through Active Participation (dances, ceremonies)
- T/L by Example/Role Modeling
- T/L by Mentoring (pottery making)

What are some things that you want to make sure your grandson learns?

Well, course, I want him to learn the language, very much so. The other is that I want him to participate and really be a part of the community as early as possible. And, I want him to learn proper relationships with his elders, and his peers.

What are some things that you want to make sure your grandson learns?

I want him to know his place in the world, to be responsible, and to be even more than that. Hopefully, he can be giving as well. You know, he can contribute [to the community]. I know that there is the other part or the other world, English, writing, science and all that. I think that's gonna happen.

What are some things that you want to make sure your grandson learns?

I think if a child like my grandson has the basic of being a good Pueblo person, you can't help but have the other come along. That's where my major concern is—that the Pueblo world won't happen because the other seems to be more and more earlier in life.

What are some things that you want to make sure your grandson learns?

It overpowers the kids to the point where that's all they have in some cases. I think if he has both, he can always come back. So even if he chooses to go off to college and make a career away from here, he'll have that [Pueblo] foundation.

Meeting the Challenge

What Can Indigenous Families and Communities Do?

- Change our thinking; Value our Values
- Take on our role: Value and promote the teaching and learning of language and cultural knowledge.
- Work with schools and educators to assist in developing an understanding, acceptance, and incorporation of different forms of “literacy”.
- Also, recognize and remember that learning is a two-way street.
- Speak and promote the Indigenous language.

Meeting the Challenge

What Can Schools and Educators Do?

- Promoting understanding and acceptance of different forms of “literacy”.
- Learning is a two-way street.
- Recognize and value the various kinds of linguistic and cultural “gifts, talents, and wisdoms” children bring from their homes and communities to the school context.
- Recognize and understand the challenges that Indigenous people and their communities face; become our allies.

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