

TRIBAL EARLY LEARNING INITIATIVE GRANTEE PROFILE

Grantee:	Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
Project Period:	September 30, 2012 – September 29, 2015

Program Goals and Activities

- Inform each other of and invite each other to existing training opportunities in the community.
- Cooperatively develop a shared list of training opportunities for the community, Childcare, Home Visiting and Head Start programs.
- Fund joint professional development trainings for all staff and child care providers.
- Provide all training participants with training materials and memberships to the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Community Context

State	Montana
Rural or Urban Reservation or Non-Reservation	Rural Reservation
Geographic Area, Characteristics, Demographics	The Flathead Reservation currently includes 1.317 million acres in Northwest Montana. 471 children ages birth to 5 live on the reservation. The Flathead Reservation has a tribal college, is home to major tourism destinations including Flathead Lake and the Mission Mountains, has a Salish Language Immersion School and both a Salish and a Kootenai Culture Committees.
Other TELI Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project LAUNCH • Lake County Best Beginnings



Description of Early Childhood System

Since the mid-1960s, the Flathead Indian Reservation has had an active Head Start Program. In FY 91 there were 137 children and by FY 94, that number had risen to 177. Early Childhood Services Head Start Program continues to serve 177 three to five year olds and Early Head Start (added in 2002) serves 40 children from birth to three years old. Together Early Childhood Services provides Head Start/Early Head Start services to 217 children. Head Start has 13 classrooms and Early Head Start has 3 sites. All Head Start and Early Head Start Centers are located in five communities within the boundaries of the Reservation.

The Early Childhood Program implements Creative Curriculum that helps prepare children with school readiness. The families that are currently being served are benefitting from the services and are encouraged to actively be involved with their children, and participate with family activities. A recent community needs assessment indicated that the overall populations in the community have a positive attitude and willingness to look for solutions and improve the early childhood systems.

Through the Child Care and Development Fund Program, Families can choose their child care provider from a list of state licensed child care centers. Families can also choose a Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes Registered Only (CRO) provider.

The Tribal Maternal, Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program is a federally funded grant being fulfilled through the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes Social Services Department. The Goal of the Home Visiting Program is to provide parents with child development knowledge and parenting support that focuses on family well-being. Parent educators provide information, support and encouragement to parents to help their children develop optimally during the crucial early years of life. Services include: one-on-one personal home visits; group connections; health and developmental screenings for children; a resource network for families.

Cross communication is an integral part of the way the programs operate. Each of the programs regularly communicates with each other with an understanding of what types of services are offered. Better understanding has led to joining forces and resources with regard to joint professional development opportunities and appropriate and timely referrals. Overall, the early childhood community is stronger because people are more informed and can help connect children and families to the appropriate resources.

Results

CSKT TELI participants built relationships across their Head Start, Child Care, and Tribal Home Visiting programs. CSKT also concentrated on creating joint professional development opportunities for providers, as well as holding community events focused on building parenting skills of parents with young children. Topics of the joint trainings included the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) and the Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning (DIAL).

Because the programs developed better understanding of each other's services, the quality and timeliness of referrals also improved. Programs became more willing and interested in sharing resources with each other.