

Experiences and Needs of Underserved Groups in Wisconsin Early Care and Education

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Tribal Communities

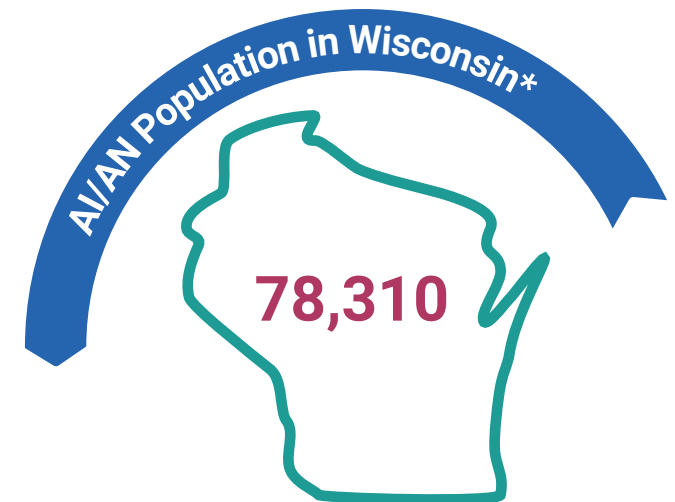
As part of the Statewide Needs Assessment for the Preschool Development Grant (PDG), the University of Wisconsin-Madison Center for Community and Nonprofit Studies interviewed families (e.g. parents, grandparents, foster parents) and child care providers from Wisconsin's underserved populations. The interviews were conducted to better understand the specific context, needs, and challenges families and providers face when navigating Wisconsin's early childhood system.

Key Takeaways From the Interviews



- » Early care and education needs a holistic approach to care, learning, and teaching.
- » Tribal language integration into early care is important for cultural connection and the preservation of the language.
- » Child care providers do not have the resources or time they need to build professional relationships.
- » There is a lack of coordination and alignment between the many systems and agencies that tribal child care providers and families must navigate.

10 Interviews Conducted with Tribal Community Members



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*2010 US Census data of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN)



Wisconsin Department of Children and Families



Center for Community and Nonprofit Studies
SCHOOL OF HUMAN ECOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Tribal Family and Provider Perspectives

Equity and inclusion are central to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) framework for evaluating and transforming early care and education. Questions were developed based on this framework and the core areas of access, affordability, quality, and workforce. Here is a summary of Tribal family and provider experiences and perceptions related to each of the four areas. For more information, visit [DCF's webpage](#).

- » It can be hard to find child care that is near home and work in rural areas, and a lack of transportation makes travel harder.

"If it's a young mom or a young dad who's trying to get a job but they don't have transportation, trying to figure out how they're going to get their child to a child care place and then get themselves to work, that has been a huge issue."

- » The use of child care subsidies can negatively impact other benefits, including those provided by tribal governments.

"Folks might be qualified for child care subsidies, but if the provider they're using can't receive that subsidy, then those payments can't be made. You have an awful lot of jumping through hoops to get the funding."

- » Healthy development starts with quality prenatal care, which includes both physical care and mental care, as well as family health interventions.

- » The family care model, including care by extended family, friends, and neighbors, is connected to cultural traditions and values.
- » In the current system, tribal child care providers cannot make a living wage.

"They are raising children, and we're paying them \$10 an hour. That's not even livable."

- » The current state system, including regulations and quality standards, conflicts with culturally-rooted models of care and lacks cultural sensitivity.

"The process almost feels disrespectful. I know our elders have great stories and knowledge—how can I ask them for a background check and not disrespect them?"

"I often see [culture] as a tourist approach, where it's just added on... and I'm really trying to get our staff to incorporate. So, with our first language grant, we made children's books ourselves."

- » Mentorship and training are often inaccessible for tribal providers due to cost, distance, and lack of available resources.

