
Indigenous Early Learning Collaborative (IELC) Project Brief, Volume 02, December 2022



Touchpoints Professional Development: Attitudes into Practice

The Touchpoints approach includes several tools for building and sustaining relationships with children, families, and other providers. One set of tools are called the Touchpoints Provider Assumptions. These assumptions offer each of us an attitude that we can choose and hold as our mindset for an interaction with another provider. In our work with the Indigenous Early Learning Collaborative (IELC) partner sites, we considered how these can align with IELC group and individual community goals of building equitable practices.

Recruitment for Touchpoints Training

Touchpoints Provider Assumption - “Providers need support and respect of the kind we are asking them to give parents.”

A reflective practice cycle begins with intentional recruitment. Each site coordinating team considers what they know about the community strengths, ties to their inquiry project, and participant background and diversity as they recruit trainees. Gathering and reflecting upon this information is the first step in the reflective practice process. As the training progresses, continued reflection assists the coordinator and facilitators in responding to emerging issues in the group. After the training, looking back highlights lessons learned. This collaborative process builds equity and the capacity to advocate for extending equitable practices in partnerships with families, organizations, and communities.

Building capacity within an organization – Some organizations choose to use Touchpoints training as an opportunity to build capacity within their organization. Programs utilize this dedicated professional development time together to practice creating space for conversations that can be educational, cultural, provocative, and challenging. In the recruitment process, the lead Brazelton Touchpoints facilitator thinks

together with the local coordinators about participants who would be important to include. Roles, time with the organization, cultural perspectives, and prior experiences with professional development are discussed. Ultimately, the local coordinators invite members of the organization whom they select to participate in the training.

Developing partnerships with community partners – Some organizations choose to use Touchpoints training as a chance to reach out to community partners. Local teams strategically consider community partners who are aligned with their work and practice. As they recruit, the team invites partners to join them in learning about Touchpoints and moving forward with some shared understandings and language about child and family engagement. The recruitment process requires teams and partners to think about diversity of roles and experiences in bringing partners in as participants in the training.

Ties to the Indigenous Early Learning Collaborative mission, vision, and goals – Each of the site teams recruited based upon their local inquiry project goals in connection with the overall IELC efforts. One team represents a large organization and dedicated their initial training to beginning the process of saturation of the Touchpoints Approach within their organization. To achieve this goal, participants were selected from many of the various programs and services within their umbrella organization. Trainees represented diverse children, families, and sectors that included home visiting, childcare, preschool, and behavioral health.

One site team comprises several programs/organizations throughout the community. They were dedicated to building their own team as well as breaking down silos in the community through collaborative partnerships. They were transparent in sharing their purpose with partners as they recruited from different sectors aligned with their goals and connected to the overarching IELC vision. Their participants represented home visiting, Head Start, health systems, and a tribal college preschool.

Looking forward, the sites are developing local Touchpoints training teams as part of their sustainability efforts in their communities. Team members are selected from the participants who have completed the foundational Touchpoints Training and are interested in facilitating local trainings as they continue to integrate Touchpoints into their individual practices and community partnerships.

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About the Indigenous Early Learning Collaborative:

Together, First Light Education Project and the Brazelton Touchpoints Center (BTC) lead the **Indigenous Early Learning Collaborative (IELC)**, a national initiative envisioned and designed in consultation with over 50 different tribal individuals, educators, and representatives from early childhood learning and care organizations and tribal departments of early childhood education. Launched in 2021, Native educators, early learning professionals, and leaders from four tribal/Native partner communities learn how to generate local solutions to historical and current dilemmas of practice. Community-Based Inquiry (CBI) — a process by which Indigenous communities engage in asking and investigating their own questions about their early childhood practices — is the driver and focal point of this project. The IELC was made possible by funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (Grant number: P0133104).

The Brazelton Touchpoints Center

(BTC) was founded in 1996 by world-renowned pediatrician T. Berry Brazelton, MD, and colleagues and is based in the Division of Developmental Medicine at Boston Children’s Hospital. Together with families, providers, and communities, BTC develops and applies knowledge of early childhood development to practice and policy through professional and leadership development, organizational learning and change, research and evaluation, advocacy and awareness, and serving as a resource for proven practices. BTC is home to the Touchpoints Approach, the Brazelton Institute (Newborn Behavioral Observations and Neonatal Behavioral Assessment Scale), Family Connections, and the BTC Research and Evaluation team. For more information, visit www.brazeltontouchpoints.org

About First Light Education Project, LLC

Guided by the principle, “Starting with What Works,” *First Light Education Project, LLC*, is a consulting and collaborative initiative providing leadership on projects of practice and inquiry in community and educational contexts. The company’s two founders and principals, Dr. Tarajeau Yazzie-Mintz (Diné) and Dr. Ethan Yazzie-Mintz, bring extensive expertise and experience working with and within communities, Tribal nations and Indigenous communities, K–12 schools, non-profit organizations and foundations, and higher education institutions across a variety of social, political, and educational domains. Conceptually grounded in the idea that education is a fountain of enormous possibility and immense potential from prenatal development and continuing through adulthood, First Light Education Project uses a strengths-based and question-driven approach to create relationships, processes, and knowledge that lead to collective, transformative outcomes. For more information, visit www.firstlighteducationproject.org

For more information about the IELC, contact:

Dr. Joshua D. Sparrow, Executive Director, Brazelton Touchpoints Center

Dr. Tarajeau Yazzie-Mintz, IELC Project Director, First Light Education Project, LLC

Or visit the Indigenous Early Learning Collaborative website:

<https://www.brazeltontouchpoints.org/programs-services/indigenous-early-learning/>