



American Indian Parenting: Assessing the Teachings

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Abstract

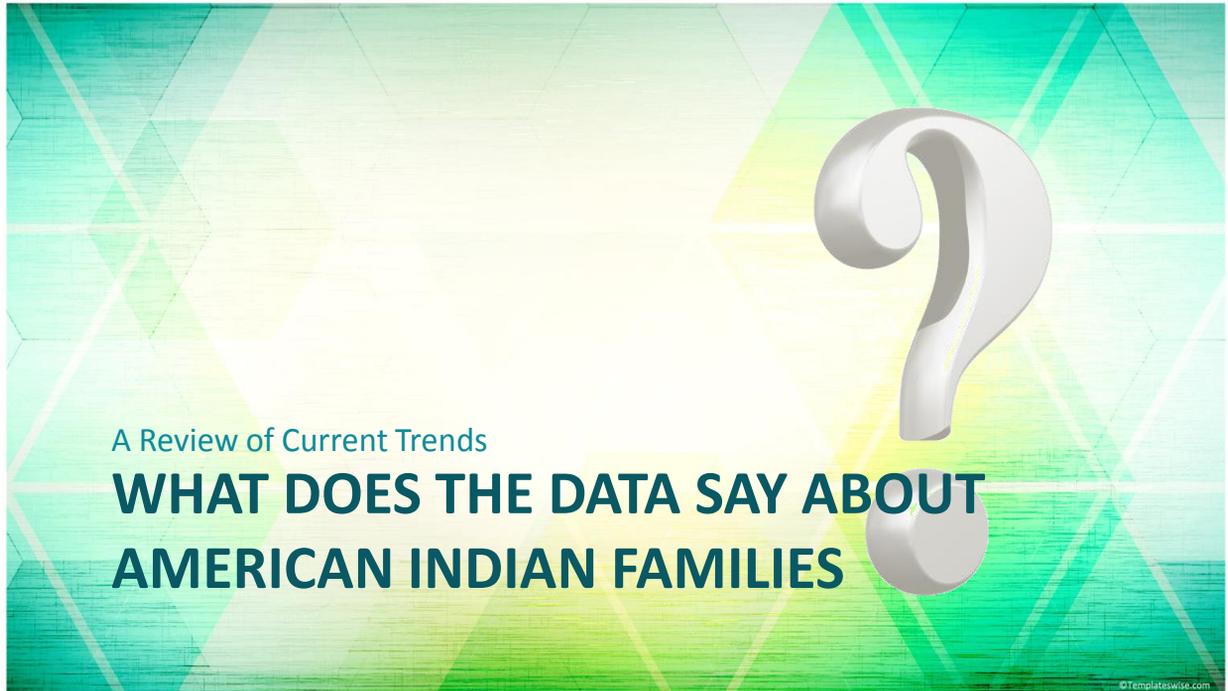
This pilot study was designed to determine the effectiveness of an 8-week parenting curriculum for Native American parents. During the pretest we found that most parents perceived themselves to have an active parenting style which indicated that they had a family atmosphere of mutual respect, trust, and teamwork that enabled them to parent children without the hurt or resentment that characterize permissive and autocratic styles. At the conclusion of the curriculum, we found that parents self-recalled the parental procedures they would implement more so than the actual lessons and provided feedback that indicated they had a high degree of confidence in their future parental practices.





The Nature of American Indian Parenting Presently

- Historical trauma: analyzing the issues generated by several years of federal Indian policy meant to dismantle the American Indian culture and family
- Current family preservation models do not address the interaction between the individual and community necessary to the betterment of American Indian mental health as they pertain to extended kin systems, tribe, and land base. These factors are important to the American Indian's sense of self.



The Nature of American Indian Parenting Presently

- Oklahoma's population as of 2010 is 3,814,820. American Indians account for 9%
- In the state of Oklahoma, out-of-home placement for American Indians is the 2nd highest in terms of race
- Of all substantiated child abuse and neglect cases in Oklahoma, American Indian children account for 18%

Methodology

A PARADIGM FOR POSITIVELY INFLUENCING AMERICAN INDIAN PARENTING

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Positive Indian Parenting Curriculum

- 8-session curriculum
- Can be used with individuals, couples, and groups
- Developed in the 1980's by NICWA, the curriculum is still used as a significant, culturally specific resource



Positive Indian Parenting Curriculum

- Session 1: Traditional Parenting
- Session 2: Lessons of the Storyteller
- Session 3: Lessons of the Cradleboard
- Session 4: Harmony in Child-Rearing
- Session 5: Traditional Behavior Management
- Session 6: Lessons of Mother Nature
- Session 7: Praise in Traditional Parenting
- Session 8: Choices in Parenting



Positive Indian Parenting Curriculum

- Other resources used to augment the curriculum
 - Parenting Worksheets from the Sheffield Safeguarding Children Board
 - Handouts
 - Discipline Techniques
 - Time-out procedures
 - Planned Ignoring and Attending
 - Ways to use Praise

Method Design/Data Collection

- The study followed a mixed method research design that was conducted in two parts
 - The first part involved administering a “What’s Your Parenting Style” survey developed by the Active Parenting Publishers during the first session.
 - The second part involved asking qualitative questions in a semi-structured interview during the last session in order to assess the parent’s ability to implement the lessons learned in their parenting practices.
 - The criteria for judging credibility and trustworthiness of the results were based on the parents being able to explain what they had previously learned and refer back to previous lessons being able to conceptualize that knowledge. Specifically, this included clients recalling lessons, client-directed recall of parenting procedures to be implemented, and the client’s self-impression of evolved parenting strategies.

Results

RESULTS OF THE TESTED PARADIGM

Sample Demographics

- Parents involved in the study were participants of the Positive Indian Parenting Classes offered at the White Eagle Health Center-Behavioral Health Department
 - 90% of the participants were court-ordered to participate in the classes
 - Sample consisted of 15 American Indian parents and 2 non-American Indian parents
 - 53% Female; 47% Male
 - Age of participants ranged between 19 and 53 years
 - Parents resided exclusively in rural areas
 - Sample yielded diverse tribal affiliation
 - Parents were seen in individual, couples, and group settings depending on timing and the context of their circumstances

Results (1 of 2)

- Of the parents who were administered the “What’s your parenting style?” survey, we found
 - 1 scored as having an Autocratic Style
 - 2 scored as having a Permissive Style
 - 14 scored as having an Active Style

Results (2 of 2)

- Parents were rated on a 1 to 5 Likert scale over three criteria: Lesson recall; Client-directed recall of parenting procedures to be implemented; Client self-impression of parenting strategies.
 - On average, parents recalled general lessons but did not elaborate on specific lessons from the curriculum
 - Parents performed better at recalling procedures they will implement in their parenting practices than they did recalling specific lessons
 - On average, parents rated themselves highly in terms of their parenting confidence

What is tradition? What is culture? Indians have to define and decide for themselves. We have the opportunity to do something... This could be a time of great promise or great disappointment. It all depends on what we do as a people. We make history today.

Quote from elder, American Indian
Research and Policy Institute (1998, p. 20)

Conclusion

THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN INDIAN PARENTING

Assessment of Outcomes

Given that most parents scored as having an active parenting style, it begs the question, why do their circumstances show them as not effective parents? In reviewing the circumstances that led the parents to be referred for our services (i.e. substance abuse, neglect), it appears that most of the parents have an innate understanding of how to be active parents. However, negative extraneous variables prevalent in the local community's life prevents parents from being more effective.

A follow up study of class participants should be conducted in order to evaluate the curriculum's effectiveness over long-term parenting.

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Parenting in two worlds: Urban Parenting
Curriculum

Strengthening the Families Curriculum

Family Spirit-John Hopkins