

Field Guide

*For Program Leaders and
Early Childhood Education Specialists*

Making It Work!



Office of Head Start National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness

**Connecting Cultural Learning Experiences in
American Indian and Alaska Native
Classrooms and Communities with
The Head Start Child Development and
Early Learning Framework**



Making It Work! benefits American Indian and Alaska Native Programs in supporting:

- School readiness using culturally relevant activities
- Self-identity
- Enhancement of cultural awareness
- Connection to the past, present, and future
- Community connectedness
- Cultural identity
- Empowerment

This document was prepared under Grant #90HC0001 for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, by the National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness.

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Contents

Acknowledgments i

Section 1: *Making It Work!*—What It Is 1

Section 2: Why *Making It Work!* Matters 3

Section 3: *Making It Work!* and School Readiness 4

Section 4: *Making It Work!* at a Glance 7

Section 5: A Tool for Refining Cultural Instructional Practices in Classrooms 13

Sections 6: Parent, Family, and Community Engagement and *Making It Work!* 18

Section 7: Implementing *Making It Work!*—A Multi-Year Journey 20

References 31





Acknowledgments

Making It Work! was developed by the Office of Head Start National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness in collaboration with representatives from American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs and other experts from throughout the country. The Head Start National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness (NCCLR) wishes to acknowledge and thank the following groups and individuals who contributed to the development of ***Making It Work!***

Head Start Leaders and Teachers from the following:

- Cherokee Nation Early Childhood Unit Head Start
- Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians Head Start
- Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan, Inc. Head Start, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi
- Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians Head Start
- Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians Head Start and Early Head Start
- Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate of the Lake Traverse Reservation Head Start
- Walatowa Head Start, Pueblo of Jemez

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Hello American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) Program Leaders and Early Childhood Educators!

You are in the amazing and challenging position of supporting AIAN Head Start staff to provide high-quality, comprehensive services to children and families. These services can

- lead to school readiness and school success for every child,
- ensure the continuation of native languages and cultures,
- identify and implement high-quality instructional practices and environments, and
- comprehend and implement new regulations.

Language and culture tell children where they came from and who they are. Because birth to 5 is the time of developing an identity and a sense of self, it is essential that AIAN Head Start programs give children positive, rich, comprehensive, and affirming educational experiences grounded in the unique culture and language of the children.

Making It Work! was designed to help you accomplish this goal. It is a tool every tribal and native community can use to connect their own unique traditional cultural skills, values, beliefs, and lifeways to school readiness and the research-based Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework (HSCDELFF).

Please Note: As presented here, *Making It Work!* is designed for children ages 3 to 5. However communities can adapt the process for infants and toddlers by aligning their efforts to the five essential domains of the HSCDELFF:

- Physical development and health
- Social and emotional development
- Language and literacy development
- Cognition and general knowledge
- Approaches to learning

Making It Work! is a tool and a process. It can only come alive in individual AIAN programs after the entire program reflects on its own unique traditional cultural skills, values, beliefs, and lifeways and engages in an in-depth effort to

- identify the key skills children learn when engaged in their community's traditional activities;
- align these skills with their school readiness goals, curriculum, and the HSCDELFF;
- engage families and the tribal community in supporting children's learning;
- group children to maximize their learning;
- intentionally teach children in ways that promote their learning;
- assess children's progress and make adjustments as needed; and
- record and document children's progress.

How *Making It Work!* Works

- ***Making It Work!*** provides each AIAN program with the opportunity to teach children their culture and traditions and become ready for school success.
- ***Making It Work!*** places leaders in the unique position to engage staff over time and help them gradually build their skill at using multiple levels of learning by:
 - Making connections between traditional ways and the HSCDEL and the Head Start Learning Standards
 - Developing cultural lesson plans
 - Promoting and supporting family and community engagement

Accomplishing this requires a sustained, program-wide commitment with an extended training cycle. It will take several years to fully integrate ***Making It Work!*** into the fiber of instruction in your program.

This *Field Guide* provides you with some tools to begin.

We hope this first installment of the *Field Guide* will help you to

- respond to questions about implementing ***Making It Work!*** in your program;
- engage your program in a multi-year effort to embrace, adopt, and implement ***Making It Work!*** in your community;
- confirm your current knowledge about research and promising practices for AIAN children and their families;
- lead your program toward developing high-quality services and systems for AIAN children and their families; and
- begin a process whereby communities teach key values and skills to the next generation.

You are the ones who hear the questions and see the day-to-day reality that AIAN/HS staff and families experience. Please share your ***Making It Work!*** experiences with the NCCLR. Keep us informed about what challenges and successes you experience. That way we can share your lessons learned to help other programs.

Please contact the NCCLR staff at any time. Our job is to help you do your job!

—*The Staff of the NCCLR*

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Section 1: Making It Work!—What It Is

Culture: A Building Block for Teaching and Learning

The development of one’s relationship to culture is a unique and individualized process. It can be very personal, spiritual, and deeply meaningful.

Children use cultural knowledge to develop their own understanding of the world around them. They learn this best in the context of community. It’s also important for children to understand the cultures and values of others, to recognize the similarities to their own and to respect the differences. Therefore, it is with the utmost care and commitment that we support children and families in a culturally relevant and meaningful way.

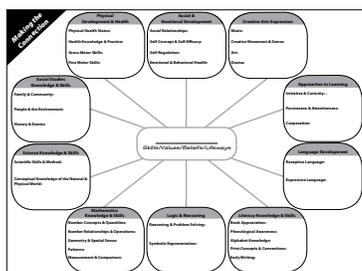
Making It Work! is a tool that supports Head Start AIAN programs to

- teach American Indian and Alaska Native children their culture;
- ensure that The Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework and school readiness requirements are achieved by teaching their traditional cultural skills, values, beliefs, and lifeways; and
- preserve tribal languages with the help of Elders and other native speakers, revitalize language when there are just a few speakers remaining, or reclaim (or reconstruct) language when no speakers remain.

Making It Work! involves teams of Head Start staff and others in a three-step process.

Step 1: Making the Connection

connects traditional cultural, skills, values, beliefs, and lifeways to The Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework.



Step 2: Making It Happen

creates cultural lessons for HSCDEL F learning domains, aligns with assessment indicators, and provides strategies for family and community engagement.

Step 3: Making It Real

identifies children’s interests and needs to create individualized cultural lesson plans.

To access all forms and examples for **Making It Work!**, go to <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic>

Making It Work! complements and connects each program’s research-based curriculum and ongoing assessment process to local cultural lifeways.



One Program's Experience

All the children belong to the same tribe, and many are cousins. All speak English; a few are also fluent in their Seminole tongue. The Head Start program reflects a deliberate effort by the tribe to prepare their children for success in a modern world, while also reinvigorating their traditional culture and language. Traditional culture does not rely on the written word. Communication is often nonverbal. Adults, especially women, do not traditionally talk much while they work. Yet the tribe recognized that their children have to be both verbal and literate—in English.

The classrooms have been carefully designed to promote conversation and support emergent literacy, while bringing in their culture and environment. Upon entering the classrooms one sees the large mural, made by the children, showing a typical “river of grass” environment, with a small island of dry land and trees. The children pasted cutouts of animals in the grass, water, trees, and sky, and happily show you the painted turtle, alligator, egret, heron, deer, and anhinga. Instead of the house corner, there is a traditional open-sided thatched hut, or Chicki, with a communal cooking fire pit, traditional cooking implements, a doll-sized hammock, and an adjacent fish pond where the boys catch magnetic fish that the girls cook for dinner. A poster depicts the clans with their animal totems; each child's name is written under the clan she belongs to. Tribal Elders visit regularly to share their language, traditional stories, and crafts with the children (Bardige, 2005).

Section 2: Why Making It Work! Matters

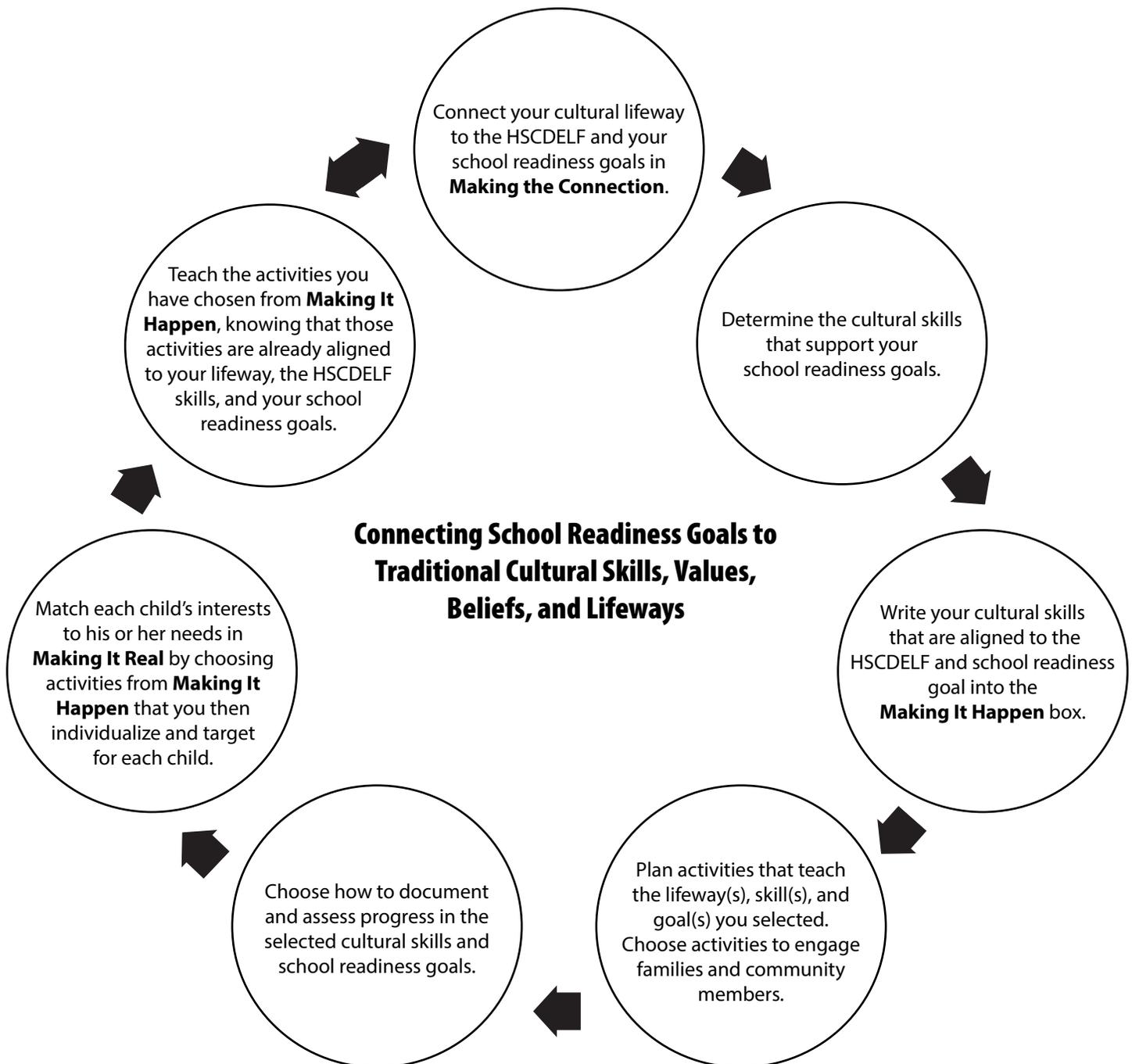
The wisdom of the ages and current research agree that culture and language are integral to learning and identity formation. Below is a sample of the research.

Culture, Language, and Identity Formation	<p>“Children’s identity and sense of self are inextricably linked to the language they speak and the culture in which they have been socialized, which takes place in a specific family context” (Crago, 1988, as cited in California Department of Education, 2008).</p> <p>“Culture also influences young children’s developing sense of self, as many cultures emphasize collective or group worth rather than worth based on individual accomplishments” (Rogoff, 2003, as cited in Tomlinson & Hyson, 2009).</p>
Value of Supporting Culture and Language in the Classroom	<p>“Research about the influences of culturally based education on the academic performance of Native American children shows that interweaving cultural topics with daily activities strengthens their identity and leads to better outcomes for all students” (Demmert & Towner, 2003).</p>
Children’s Capacity for Learning Two Languages	<p>“Research data from prenatal and preverbal infants suggests that they have innate capacities that allow them to learn two languages without significant costs to the development of either language, provided that they receive consistent and adequate exposure to both languages on a continuous basis” (Paradis, Genesee, & Crago, 2011).</p>
Family, Community Engagement and Children’s Learning	<p>Engaging parents in their child’s preschool experience is essential, in particular, for culturally, linguistically, and socio-economically diverse families (Fantuzzo, McWayne, Perry, & Childs, 2004).</p> <p>When people in the child’s primary environments—family, preschool, and community—work together, as partners, it is better for the child’s developmental and learning outcomes (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).</p>
Community, Family, Cultural Values and Later Success in School and Life	<p>Community, family, and cultural values promote the resilience and well-being of American Indian youth. “Many American Indian youth who become engaged in pro-social activities successfully avoid problem behaviors. It is the presence of these positive outcomes, in the face of substantial adversity, that points to the resilience of American Indian youth” (La Fromboise, Hoyt, Oliver, & Whitbeck, 2006).</p>

Section 3: Making It Work! and School Readiness

When families and skilled Head Start staff teach young people their traditional lifeways, language, and cultural heritage they *are* developing school readiness. **Making It Work!** supports AIAN early childhood staff to achieve school readiness goals through children’s mastery of traditional cultural skills, values, beliefs, and lifeways.

Making It Work!



Making It Work! School Readiness, which is posted on the NCCLR website, is divided into two parts. Below is a summary of those parts.

I: Culturally Responsive School Readiness examines

- each of The Head Start Child Development and Early Learning (HSCDEL) domains,
- some of the research that shows why this area of learning is important for young children’s overall development, and
- some sample learning guidelines from various states that clarify learning expectations for children in the preschool years.

II: Culturally Responsive Parent, Family, and Community Engagement examines

- parent, family, and community engagement to support school readiness and close the achievement gap,
- some of the research that shows why family and community engagement is crucial to all aspects of young children’s development, and
- strategies for working with children and families to support school readiness and close the achievement gap.

Making It Work! School Readiness also helps staff and families clearly explain

- **what** they are teaching (the domain elements);
- **why** it matters for a child’s development of his/her physical, emotional, mental, and/or spiritual well-being (the research);
- **how** their traditional cultural skills, values, beliefs, and lifeways align with state and local school expectations (examples of state early learning standards); and
- **how** family and community engagement supports children’s learning at home and in the classroom, with strategies that help close the achievement gap for children living in poverty.



To access the entire *School Readiness* document, go to **Making It Work!** at

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic>



One Program's Story

Integrating *Making It Work!* With School Readiness Goals

Malinda Besett, Director of Kawerak Head Start, attended her first *Making It Work!* training in Alaska in September 2011. Malinda saw that she and other members of her program could use this tool to align their cultural activities to the concepts outlined in their curriculum. After sharing the process with her coordinators, she realized they would need to know *Making It Work!* more thoroughly if they were to teach it to their team. Malinda attended three more trainings. She became much more familiar with the process and prepared to lead her team forward.

At the same time, a team of administrative staff, teachers, local education agency (LEA) representatives, community members, and Elders were working with a consultant to draft their school readiness goals and submit them for approval to the Policy Council and the Tribal Board of Directors. To continue their working relationship with the LEA's, Malinda and her team invited LEA teachers, aides, and coordinators to their preservice *Making It Work!* training.

Throughout the training, the training consultant regularly connected the program's approved school readiness goals to what the program was doing with *Making It Work!* Training participants used

- **Making the Connection** to list the skills of their goals;
- **Making It Happen** to describe how they would teach, document, and assess their school readiness goals as well as how parents, Elders, and the community would support the goals; and
- **Making It Real** to see how to use assessment data to individualize and create targeted lessons for children to achieve school readiness goals.

At the end of the two-day training, the group completed Making the Connection and Making It Happen for nine lifeways! When they worked on Making It Real, they used the assessment data from the previous year for four returning 4-year-olds. They identified one cultural lifeway they could teach and use to address the needs of those four children.

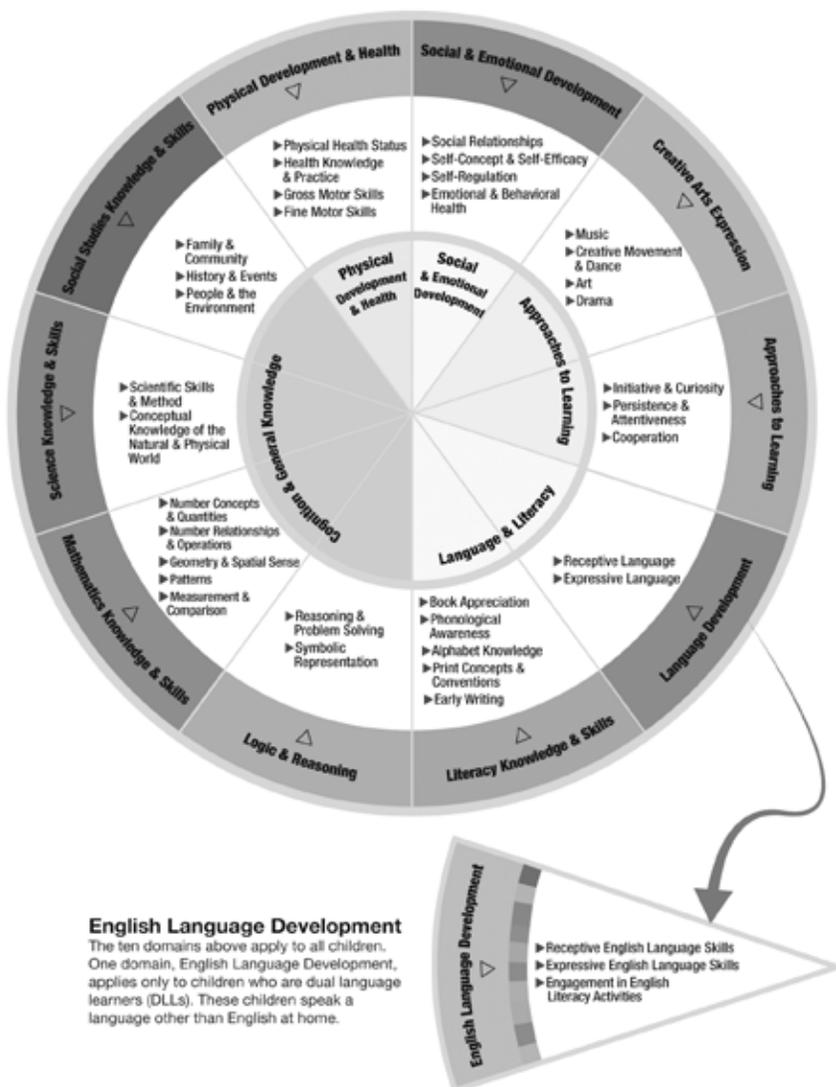
The Kawerak Head Start program ensured that there was community buy-in and ownership of their cultural learning and school readiness efforts by including families, community members, and LEA partners as well as the full Head Start team in discussions of school readiness goals and *Making It Work!* They are providing culturally appropriate curriculum that supports solid expectations and school readiness for all Head Start children!

Section 4: Making It Work! at a Glance

Making It Work! is a three-step process.

- Step 1: Making the Connection** connects traditional cultural, skills, values, beliefs, and lifeways to The Head Start Child Development Early Learning Framework (HSCDELF).
- Step 2: Making It Happen** creates cultural lessons for HSCDELF learning domains, aligns with assessment indicators, and provides strategies for Family and Community Engagement.
- Step 3: Making It Real** identifies children’s interests and needs and uses this information to create individualized cultural lesson plans.

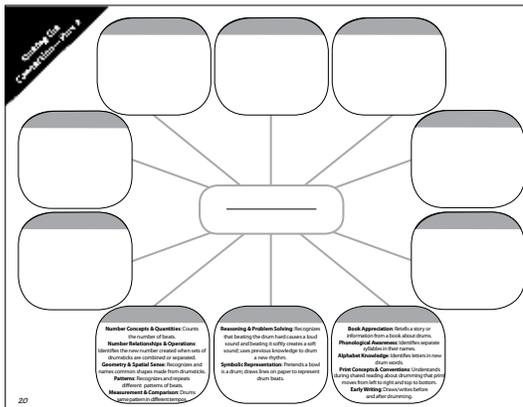
The Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework:



Head Start teams are encouraged to work through the steps together and over time. Your team may choose to develop only one cultural lifeway a year; but as you add new cultural lifeways, you are building a substantial resource.

As one Pilot Program participant said:

Now that we've done this as a program, we can use it year after year and add to it as we want; but the core of the work is done forever!



STEP 1: Making the Connection

From the beginning of time, adults in all cultures have taught their children the skills and values they need to succeed as adults in world they knew. The research-based HSCDEL calls these skills and values the “domains of early learning.” For the most part, they do not differ from the skills that all children need to know. For example, the distance and force needed to shoot an arrow into a deer require what the HSCDEL calls math, collaboration and communication with other hunters, gross motor skills, and so forth. The

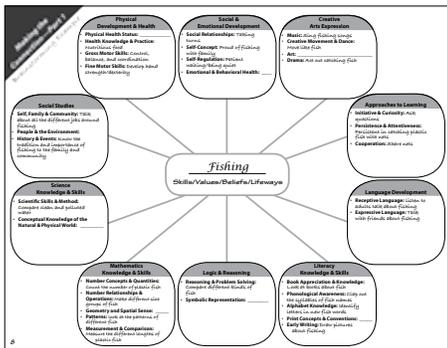
ability to tan a hide and make clothing requires knowledge that we now call science, fine motor skills, and more.

Making the Connection enables us to easily identify the connections between age-old traditional cultural skills, values, beliefs, and lifeways and the Head Start domains and research-based domain elements in the HSCDEL. Making the Connection also gives early childhood staff the words they need to explain precisely how teaching young children their traditional cultural skills, values, beliefs, and lifeways directly supports their school readiness.

The purpose of Making the Connection is to show that cultural skills directly align with the HSCDEL domain skills. It also helps sharpen teachers’ ideas of how to teach these skills to support the children’s cultural development as well as their school readiness.

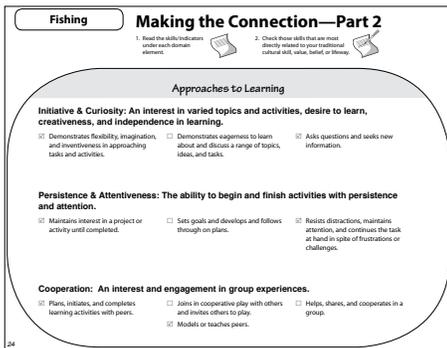
Section 4: Making It Work! at at Glance

Making the Connection has three parts.



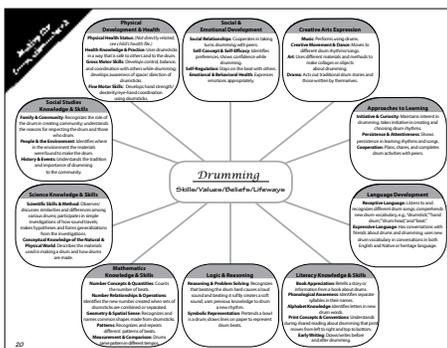
Part 1 includes:

- Selecting one traditional cultural skill, value, belief, or lifeway
- Figuring out which domain elements relate to the skill



Part 2 includes:

- Reviewing the HSCDEL indicators for each domain
- Selecting the indicators—exactly what the children will know and be able to do after they've worked on this activity and have learned the skill of the cultural lifeway



Part 3 includes:

- Recording the skills that you found in Part 1 and Part 2
- Working with these skills as you develop cultural lesson plans

To access forms and examples for **Making the Connection**, go to <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic>

STEP 2: Making It Happen

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Making It Happen</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Write traditional cultural skill, value, belief, or lifeway here</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Fishing</p>	
<p>Activities and Strategies to Teach This Skill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have children discuss the process of preparing for a fishing trip, catching the fish, processing the fish, and then sharing the catch with family/friends. Discuss how it takes team work and cooperation to accomplish this task. Have the children work with a partner(s) to act out preparing, catching, processing, and sharing a catch in order to practice cooperation, turn taking, and sharing of resources. Have children discuss their responses on the purpose of fishing rules, routines and directions, and the importance of following them. Write down and post their responses. Have children share how their family respects and values fishing as a way to gather food and how they share the resources they have with family/friends. Support children to refrain from disruptive or angry behaviors during fishing activities and throughout the day by assisting them in stating their feelings and needs and in negotiating disagreements. <p>How We Know the Child is Learning</p> <p>Documentation: <input type="checkbox"/> Anecdotal record <input type="checkbox"/> Checklist <input type="checkbox"/> Picture <input type="checkbox"/> Child's/group's work <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</p> <p>Assessment Tool Indicators Teaching Strategies GOLD: 1a. Manages feelings. 1b. Follows limits and expectations. 2. Establishes and sustains positive relationships. 2c. Interacts with peers. 3. Participates cooperatively and constructively in group situations. 3a. Balances needs and rights of self and others.</p>	<p>Activities and Strategies for Parent and Community Engagement</p> <p>Families:</p> <p>Share fishing stories with their children, emphasizing the importance of sharing the catch and how everyone works together to catch and process the fish.</p> <p>Elders and/or Community Members:</p> <p>Tell a traditional story and talk with the children about how they show respect for the fish and the importance of fish to the community.</p> <p>Parents, family members, Elders, and/or community members will:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Share knowledge/skill/stories <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Extend learning at home</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Assist with a specific activity <input type="checkbox"/> Provide materials</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Assist in the classroom <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Help select cultural activities for the year</p>

Making It Happen is the second step in the *Making It Work!* process. Within this step, you do two things:

- Align lesson plans, documentation, assessment, and family and community engagement activities to the skills you identified in Making the Connection. When you connect all of these pieces, children learn better.
- Use this process to target your lessons and to make them more highly effective.

Making It Happen leads staff through a process in which they:

- Develop cultural lessons for teaching each domain
- Engage parents, families, and the community in their efforts
- Choose type(s) of documentation to record progress
- Identify assessment indicators
- Connect classroom activities to activities families can do at home
- Invite families to be part of the process at home and at the center
- Engage Elders and community members in planning, teaching, and supporting their efforts

To access forms and examples for **Making It Happen**, go to <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic>

Skills and Activities

As staff work with the Making the Connection and Making It Happen forms, they become familiar with the skills of the HSCDELDF. As they connect their traditional cultural skills, values, beliefs, and lifeways to the HSCDELDF skills, the domains and domain elements become more meaningful. Programs in the pilot study reported that teaching staff had a better understanding of the HSCDELDF skills and how to create cultural activities for children after completing the two forms.

The difference between a skill and an activity is important. Understanding this difference enables teachers to provide higher-quality, intentional instruction and successfully support children's progress. The following handout, which explores the difference, was created with input from the Pilot Program.



Skills and Activities: Examples for Drumming

Definitions:

- Skill: What the child is learning
- Activity: What the child does to practice and develop the skill

Examples for Drumming

Physical Development and Health

- Skill: Develops hand strength and dexterity
- Activity: Have children drum different rhythms/patterns using different sizes of drum sticks.

Social and Emotional Development

- Skill: Recognizes and regulates emotions, attention, impulses, and behavior
- Activity: Have children drum to music, stopping and starting whenever the music starts or stops.

Creative Arts Expression

- Skill: Music—Participates in music activities, such as listening, singing, or performing
- Activity: Have children perform drumming for their families and the community.

Approaches to Learning

- Skill: Begins and finishes activities with persistence and attention
- Activity: Support children to become more persistent and attentive by having them gradually drum for longer periods of time.

Language Development

- Skill: Uses increasingly complex and varied vocabulary
- Activity: Have children use new drum vocabulary in both languages during activities and in conversations throughout the day.

Literacy Knowledge and Skills

- Skill: Identifies and discriminates between separate syllables in words
- Activity: Have children identify sounds by beating out the syllables of their names and words in chants or songs.

Logic and Reasoning

- Skill: Recognizes cause-and-effect relationships
- Activity: Have children recognize that beating the drum hard causes a loud sound and beating it softly creates a soft sound.

Mathematics Knowledge and Skills

- Skill: Recognizes, duplicates, and extends simple patterns
- Activity: Have children experiment with drumming the same pattern at different tempos (speeds).

Science Knowledge and Skills

- Skill: Observes and discusses common properties, differences, and comparisons among objects
- Activity: Have children identify the similarities and differences of various drums.

Social Studies Knowledge and Skills

- Skill: Has an understanding of events that happened in the past and how these events relate to one's self, family and community
- Activity: Provide children with opportunities to hear Elders speak about the importance of drumming to the community in the past and present.

Making It Real: Brainstorming to Identify Interests and Needs, page
TRADITIONAL CULTURAL SKILLS-VALUES-BELIEFS/LIFEWAYS
 Identify Common Interests and Needs for Individualized Lesson Plans

Child	Their Interests or Strengths	How They to Grow	Traditional Cultural Skills-Values-Beliefs/Lifeways	Learning Activities	Fielding Activities	Goaling Activities
Marion	Love soccer with her friends	Let them enjoy soccer	Learning (Disciplined) Making (Hardworking) Learning			
Madison	Likes to read books	Reading	Learning (Disciplined) Making (Hardworking) Learning			
Madison	Love soccer with her friends	Let them enjoy soccer	Learning (Disciplined) Making (Hardworking) Learning			
Theresa	Love soccer with her friends	Let them enjoy soccer	Learning (Disciplined) Making (Hardworking) Learning			
Theresa	Love soccer with her friends	Let them enjoy soccer	Learning (Disciplined) Making (Hardworking) Learning			
Theresa	Love soccer with her friends	Let them enjoy soccer	Learning (Disciplined) Making (Hardworking) Learning			
Theresa	Love soccer with her friends	Let them enjoy soccer	Learning (Disciplined) Making (Hardworking) Learning			
Theresa	Love soccer with her friends	Let them enjoy soccer	Learning (Disciplined) Making (Hardworking) Learning			

Recent Interests are Reading, Drawing, Cooking, Gardening, Reading, and Sewing. Program Topics are Health and Safety, Mental Health, Nutrition, Parenting, and Education.

STEP 3: Making It Real

Making It Real gives staff members two approaches for organizing the way they group children when individualizing instruction. Making It Real is most helpful after staff are thoroughly comfortable with the first two steps in *Making It Work!*

Making It Real enables teachers to:

- Create individualized cultural lesson plans by matching children’s interests and needs
- Identify interests and needs by either brainstorming or using children’s assessment data
- Match each child’s interest and need to one of the activities from Making It Happen
- Highlight common interests and needs (using color, different fonts, etc.) to create small learning groups
- List the traditional cultural skills, values, beliefs, and lifeways that interest families
- List the program topics that relate to the cultural lifeway

Making It Real: Using Assessment Data to Identify Interests and Needs
TRADITIONAL CULTURAL SKILLS-VALUES-BELIEFS/LIFEWAYS
 Identify Common Interests and Needs for Individualized Lesson Plans

Child	Interests/Strengths/Personal/Behavioral/Assessment Data	Results Three Level Assessment System	Traditional Cultural Skills-Values-Beliefs/Lifeways	Learning Activities	Fielding Activities	Goaling Activities
Adrienne	1. She likes to read books 2. She likes to draw 3. She likes to play with her friends	1. Knowledge of traditional culture 2. Knowledge of traditional culture 3. Knowledge of traditional culture	Learning (Disciplined) Making (Hardworking) Learning			
Madison	1. She likes to read books 2. She likes to draw 3. She likes to play with her friends	1. Knowledge of traditional culture 2. Knowledge of traditional culture 3. Knowledge of traditional culture	Learning (Disciplined) Making (Hardworking) Learning			
Theresa	1. She likes to read books 2. She likes to draw 3. She likes to play with her friends	1. Knowledge of traditional culture 2. Knowledge of traditional culture 3. Knowledge of traditional culture	Learning (Disciplined) Making (Hardworking) Learning			

To access forms and examples for **Making It Real**, go to <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic>

Most programs have systems and forms for planning and individualization. Programs may be happy with their current system. If programs want to adjust what they have in place or are searching for a new system, Making It Real offers two approaches to consider.

Section 5: A Tool for Refining Cultural Instructional Practices in Classrooms

Making It Work! is a process for developing a cultural curriculum plan. It inspires and shapes all aspects of curriculum—from the learning environment to assessment. This section discusses how *Making It Work!* can be

- integrated into all the components of your curriculum, and
- used as a tool for refining cultural instructional practices in the classroom.

Making It Work! Promotes Children’s Learning!

Making It Work! provides teachers in AIAN programs with an approach to intentionally focus on traditional cultural skills, values, beliefs, and lifeways to build and maintain positive relationships and engage in high-quality interactions that support children to learn.

Children learn best when they feel safe and valued and when their physical needs are met. So it is important that programs take time to consider the quality and cultural responsiveness of their

- learning environments,
- teaching strategies,
- approaches to learning,
- adult-child interactions (including child guidance), and
- assessment processes.

Learning Environments

A developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate environment mirrors the ideas, values, attitudes, and cultures of the children it serves. Including a child’s culture and language into the classroom positively influences a child’s sense of self and the child’s social and cognitive development. (Gestwicki, 1995). When the culture and language of the children are included, those children are more likely to be eager to learn, take initiative, be curious, and explore.

Children’s culture and language should be reflected throughout the classroom in

- every interest area,
- photos and pictures,
- materials chosen, and
- games played.

When a tribe’s language is a written language, classroom materials should be labeled in both the heritage language and English.

Strategies for Teaching and Approaches to Learning

Making It Work! does more than support staff to connect traditional cultural skills, values, beliefs, and lifeways to the HSCDEL. It also supports the process of teaching by utilizing successful strategies and approaches to learning.

Making It Work! guides a program through the study of one traditional cultural lifeway in depth over time. In this way it is like the Project Approach curriculum, which has been proven to support learning because children

- learn concepts more thoroughly,
- connect concepts that create a knowledge base for further learning, and
- practice applying concepts in various contexts (Neuman, 2006).

The strategy of webbing, which is used in *Making the Connection*, is integral to developing a project. As one pilot study participant stated,

The webbing is familiar. The form makes you think about all the domains and identifying activities for them. We saw how it could help when we do our lesson plans. It simplifies the curriculum process and provides lots of small group activities.

When teachers are intentionally planning for children to learn a specific skill, children learn better. *Making It Happen* supports teachers to be intentional when they

- develop a cultural activity for every skill in *Making the Connection—Part 2*, and
- choose the type of documentation and assessment indicators that will best track progress before they begin to observe and assess.



Questions to Ask When Creating a Learning Environment

To ensure they are fully supporting children's learning, teachers must understand what is valued, honored, and expected in each child's home culture and be able to explain exactly how and what they are doing to support and take advantage of each child's optimal ways of learning. For example, teachers need to know:

- What enthusiasm for an activity might look like in each child's culture and in different situations:
 - Between children
 - Between a child and an adult
 - Within a family
- What respectful language between adults and children looks and sounds like
- How irritability, anger, and negativity are/are not expressed
 - If teasing is ever appropriate; and if so, with whom
- How adults acknowledge children's emotions
 - How adults empathize with and support children who are experiencing frustration or another difficult emotion (e.g., do they observe, ask leading questions, offer physical help, praise the **process** not the **product**?)
- How children openly express themselves
 - What verbal, non-verbal, and/or tone-of-voice cues would children use at preschool
 - How children's ideas are incorporated into the classroom
- How children can be redirected (e.g., through visual cues, verbal support, suggestions, directions) in ways that are respectful
 - What subtle cues can be used to redirect children
- How the classroom environment and schedule maximize learning time
 - What are considered to be clear instructions
- How materials in the classrooms reflect the values and frame of reference of the community (e.g., does the alphabet list on the wall have familiar references, such as vegetables or birds; or strange ones, such as "Queen"?)
 - What questions can be asked respectfully
- The extent to which local examples are used to teach concepts
 - Why, how, and when questions are asked
- The intended goal of providing information (e.g., setting a secure routine, setting the stage for the day; leading a child to the "right" answer or to figuring out the answer for herself)
- How student persistence is encouraged and affirmed
- How (or if) back-and-forth exchanges are encouraged when adults:
 - Support Home Language and vocabulary
 - Plan vocabulary to support concepts
 - Intentionally expand and extend vocabulary

Assessment and *Making It Work!*

Ongoing assessments provide regular benchmarks for early childhood education. They enable teaching staff to

- identify the strengths and needs of individual children,
- inform their teaching to guide children’s progress,
- monitor progress for instructional planning, and
- promote the engagement of family members in the education of their children.

A teacher’s observations are a vital part of ongoing assessment. There are many additional methods of assessment, including anecdotal notes (short, on-the-spot notes), checklists, child portfolios (work samples), and standardized methods of assessment. All of these methods show what and how each child is learning.

Making It Work! supports teaching staff in implementing the ongoing assessment process of

- observing and recording what the child is learning,
- analyzing and aligning observations to the assessment tool,
- planning and individualizing curriculum,
- reporting children’s progress periodically, and
- using the results.

After staff complete the Making It Happen form, they will find that their assessment tool aligns with the HSCDEL and cultural skills, their lesson plans, and documentation (observations). This ensures that the assessment tool is measuring skills of the children’s culture and the domains of the HSCDEL. Staff can then use the results to adjust their teaching and plan more targeted lessons.

Assessment involves:

1. **Collecting** information to identify a child’s strengths and needs from three sources: families, observations, and instruments
2. **Analyzing** the data to identify the child’s strengths and needs and then using that data to select materials and to plan specific learning activities

After child assessment data is collected, it is used to plan and individualize activities in Making It Real—Using Assessment Data. This second approach utilizes assessment data to identify interests and needs that are then used to select activities from Making It Happen—activities that are targeted for the individual child and small groups. Making It Real supports teachers to link child assessment data to their planning process.

Making It Work! and Curricula

Making It Work! is a process in which each tribal program selects the traditional cultural skills, values, beliefs, and lifeways they want to align to the HSCDELFF and their own cultural and/or commercial curriculum. It connects cultural lifeways to the skills of the HSCDELFF domains and helps staff develop targeted learning experiences and activities.

The purpose of a curriculum is to guide programs to

- develop goals and objectives for children’s development and learning;
- provide experiences and activities that have been proven to help children achieve their goals;
- engage with families to promote children’s learning;
- choose materials, equipment, and space that promotes children’s development and learning; and
- implement sound child development principles, the Head Start Program Performance Standards, and the HSCDELFF.

The alignment between the HSCDELFF and different curricula and assessment tools may not always be exact. For example, many curricula do not yet include a social studies domain in their Pre-K curriculum. Sometimes different names are used for the domains; for example, “approaches to learning” is sometimes referred to as “process skills.” Programs need to take the time to ensure that all staff understand any apparent discrepancy between the HSCDELFF and their curriculum. The same is true for assessment tools. There may not be an indicator to assess “following safety routines,” but there is usually one that assesses the ability to follow rules and expectations and that could be used to assess children’s ability to behave safely.



Section 6: Parent, Family, and Community Engagement and Making It Work!

Since the beginning of time parents, families, and communities have taught their children everything they need to know to prepare them to become successful members of society. Children are active learners and take in this kind of information, including cultural knowledge, through their physical and social experiences. So it is important that programs develop methods of teaching and create learning environments that are reflective of the culture(s) and language(s) of the children they serve. Culturally and linguistically responsive environments can only be created by engaging and partnering with families, Elders, and the community.

Establishing a partnership with families and the community is crucial for children's learning and later success in life. *Making It Work!* suggests ways teachers can intentionally create cultural activities for children, families, Elders, and community members and align these efforts with their program's Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework.

The framework identifies seven family outcomes, all of which are part of *Making It Work!*

1. **Family Well-being**—Preserving and supporting families' cultural identities and languages
2. **Positive Parent-Child Relationships**—Building upon children's interests and extending learning at home and school
3. **Families as Lifelong Educators**—Sharing knowledge/skills/stories
4. **Families as Learners**—Assisting with a specific activity or field trip
5. **Family Engagement in Transitions**—Sharing cultural and linguistic background to support transition to Kindergarten
6. **Family Connections to Peers and Community**—Assisting in the classroom and community events
7. **Families as Advocates and Leaders**—Helping select and plan cultural activities

See the *Making It Work! School Readiness* document for specific strategies for working with families and communities at <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic>





One Program's Approach

Parent Engagement That Keeps Giving Back to the Community

There is a group of teenage Hoop Dancers from the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa who are “stepping out” as young leaders in their community—and it all started when they were very young! In their homes and at Head Start, the girls learned the importance of their family, community, and culture. They developed social relationships while participating in the traditional, cultural music, dance, and art of their community. They learned to share, discuss, and compromise; and they developed confidence and expressed pride in their accomplishments and their culture.

Their parents, families, and community encouraged and supported them and continue to do so. Each family makes sure that their child attends drum and dance practice, that they have beautiful regalia to wear, and that family members are present to watch their daughter, granddaughter, niece, or cousin dance.

The dancers practice and perform under the guidance and leadership of Gretchen Morris, a mother of one of the girls who began teaching them when they were in Head Start. Each October, the dancers share their cultural skills and knowledge of the hoop, fancy shawl, jingle, and grass dances during the annual Apple Festival in Bayfield, Wisconsin. These young women know and take pride in their language, culture, and the ways of the community. This knowledge is the foundation for their success in school and life.

During a recent Summer Gathering Event, the dancers returned to share their gift of dance with the young children who now attend Head Start and Early Head Start at the Red Cliff Early Childhood Center. Under the guidance and support of their families and dance teacher, this group of young dancers is already contributing to their community and succeeding in school and life!



Section 7: Implementing *Making It Work!*— A Multi-Year Journey

Good things take time, especially developing lasting partnerships and implementation plans—**and** they yield amazing results!

To make your efforts work, you'll want to gather information and develop a broad network of support. This section lays out a six-step process to assist you.

The steps:

1. Form a team.
2. Gather Information.
3. Integrate language and culture into your Head Start systems and services.
4. Link *Making It Work!* to Head Start program management systems.
5. Assess organizational capacity and financial resources.
6. Develop an intentional, well-organized plan.

1. Form a Team

Team Members

- Education Manager
- 1–2 classroom teachers who have a strong knowledge of child development
- 1–2 cultural experts; perhaps an Elder or a staff or community member who is a native speaker or is knowledgeable of traditional ways, values, stories, teachings, etc.
- Parent or family members

Team Member Qualities

Each team member should

- work well on her own (be self-motivated) and as a part of a group,
- value the importance of culture-based learning,
- desire that classrooms utilize culturally relevant activities and teachings daily and across all areas of the curriculum, and
- be able to commit the time and energy necessary to produce material and products for implementation.

2. Gather Information

Community Elders, leaders, and families are the best resource and the place to begin when planning to teach a traditional skill, value, belief, or lifeway. Engage them in helping you plan; and, if they are interested, invite them to participate in working with the children. Building relationships with Elders, other culturally knowledgeable community members, and families ensures that the children are learning as much as they can from the ***Making It Work!*** experiences.

The more prepared the teaching staff are, the more the children will learn. One program found a “Story Sharing” or “Information Gathering” guide helpful when staff spoke with Elders, community members, and families and gathered information from them. The guide below was developed out of their positive experience.

The three tools that follow were used in one program’s approach to gathering information and developing a network of support:

- Gathering Stories
- Getting Started:
Developing a Network Checklist
- Questions to Ask After
Developing a Network



Gathering Stories

1. Take time to explain why you're interested in gathering cultural information.

Explain, "At our Head Start Program, your knowledge will help the children learn

- their heritage,
- the traditional teachings,
- the importance of language and culture,
- traditional stories,
- traditional ways, and
- traditional arts, music, and dance."

"This is an important way to make learning more meaningful for our children and have them excited about their culture and who they are."

2. Topics for conversation and story sharing might include, but are not limited to

- your experiences when you were growing up;
- what you liked to do as a young child, teenager, adult, and Elder, including traditional ways of living;
- lessons or teachings that your parents/grandparents taught you;
- stories that you remember; and
- any additional information that you think is important to share regarding language and culture that will help children develop a strong sense of cultural identity.

Getting Started: Developing a Network Checklist

- Gather information on the cultural skill.
 - We have enough local knowledge on cultural traditions, ways, teachings, stories.
- Select team/committee members, including Cultural and Child Development experts.
- Form relationships and build partnerships with the following entities:
 - Policy Council
 - Tribal Council
 - Indian Health Service (Tribal Health Center)
 - Education Division
 - Indian Child Welfare
 - Tribal School
 - WIC
- Engage Parents, Families, Elders, and Community Members.
- Build partnerships with local, regional, and national agencies, colleges, and universities.
- Use a computer spreadsheet to develop a system to keep track of contacts.

Questions to Ask After Developing a Network

- Do we need more information about cultural topics to proceed?

- Have we accessed all of our local cultural resources?

- Have we utilized our families and community members as resources for cultural knowledge?

- Have we partnered with tribal colleges to seek cultural knowledge and gather information?

- Do we need to continue gathering information?

- Do we need to look outside of our community for more information/knowledge?

- Do we need to look regionally for information? Do we need to share information or ask for help from a neighboring tribal community?

- Do we need to look nationally for information?

3. Integrate Language and Culture into Head Start Systems and Services

Without language, the canoe, paddle, water, seat,
the birds you hear are different than what our ancestors
experienced. If you know the language, then you know
what our ancestors heard, saw, felt, and experienced.

—Zalmi “Zeke” Zahir, University of Oregon

Many AIAN programs first started their Head Start programs to ensure the continuation of their culture and language. Tribes and native communities have always known what research now tells us: when programs integrate culture and language into the daily activities of the classroom and engage families in those activities, children are supported in

- developing a positive sense of self;
- achieving successful child outcomes;
- learning two languages; and
- knowing their community, family, and cultural values, which promotes their resilience and well-being.

When programs integrate language and culture into their Head Start systems and services, they are ensuring the continuation of their culture and language. They are also creating the foundation necessary to support the planning and implementation of *Making It Work!*





One Program's Experience

Integrating Language and Culture

We were always trying to integrate culture into the curriculum—the science domain, the math domain, etc. Then we realized that culture should be at the base, serving as the foundation, the building block for curriculum development. It was an amazing paradigm shift! We are now making huge gains in integrating language and culture into our early childhood programming.

—The Red Cliff Early Childhood Center

These are the steps that the Red Cliff Early Childhood Center developed to ensure that culture is the building block for curriculum development:

- Write a program mission statement that reflects the importance of language and culture.
- Create goals that reflect cultural values.
- Develop benchmarks (small steps) to achieve the culturally relevant program goals.
- Track your program's progress (monthly/quarterly) in meeting those benchmarks.
- Design classroom activities that are culturally appropriate.
- Use community resources and cultural experts to plan cultural activities that support the curriculum.
- Form a strong relationship with tribal council liaison.
- Encourage tribal council liaison to share culturally-relevant information/program's cultural activities with the tribal council.
- Invite tribal council members to participate in program activities (family nights, field trips, Pow Wow's, ceremonies, etc.).
- Invite community members to share their cultural knowledge or a cultural activity in the classroom.
- Design family nights, socializations, and field trips around culture and language.
- Gather information from parents and community members on cultural topics that they feel are important.
- Ensure that both management and teaching staff receive professional development related to language and culture.

4. Link *Making It Work!* to Program Management Systems to ensure successful implementation

- Communication
- Planning
- Record-Keeping and Reporting
- Human Resources (Professional Development)
- Ongoing Monitoring
- Self-Assessment

5. Assess Organizational Capacity and Financial Resources for Implementing *Making It Work!*

- Will you need to reorganize responsibilities for teachers to attend meetings and implement *Making It Work!* in their classrooms?
- Will extra staff support be needed? If so, how will the program provide it? By reorganizing? Reassignment? Through volunteers? Interns?
- Explore different funding sources, including small grants, if extra funding is needed to implement *Making It Work!*

6. Develop an Intentional, Well-Organized Plan

Outlines for three years of planning follow.



YEAR 1 Implementation Plan

Planning:

- Gather information.
- Select a team.
- Develop a network of support.
- Provide professional development.
- Choose a cultural lifeway.

Making the Connection

- Connect your cultural lifeway to the HSCDELf.

Making It Happen

- Align teaching, documentation, and assessment.
- Teach the cultural lifeway activities.
- Engage parents, families, Elders, and community members in teaching and supporting the activities.

Review Process

- Assess strengths, needs, and progress.
- Make necessary adjustments and changes.
- Continue developing new cultural lifeways, time permitting.

YEAR 2 Implementation Plan

Continue teaching Year 1 cultural lifeways:

- Add new cultural lifeways.

Making the Connection

- Connect your cultural lifeway to the HSCDELf.

Making It Happen

- Align teaching, documentation, and assessment.
- Teach the cultural lifeway activities.
- Engage parents, families, Elders, and community members in teaching and supporting the activities.
- Repeat the process if there is time.

Making It Real (including the cultural lifeways in the previous year)

- Choose an approach.
- Plan targeted individual and small-group lessons.
- Implement lesson plans.
- Track children's progress.

Review Process

- Assess strengths, needs, and progress.
- Make necessary adjustments and changes.
- Continue developing new cultural lifeways.

YEAR 3 Implementation Plan

Continue teaching cultural lifeways from Year 1 and 2:

Making the Connection

- Connect your cultural lifeway to the HSCDELf.

Making It Happen

- Align teaching, documentation, and assessment.
- Teach the cultural lifeway activities.
- Engage parents, families, Elders, and community members in teaching and supporting the activities.
- Repeat the process if there is time.

Making It Real

- Choose approach.
- Plan targeted individual and small-group lessons.
- Implement lesson plans.
- Track children's progress.

Review Process

- Assess strengths, needs, and progress to guide full implementation.
- Make necessary adjustments and changes in your systems and services for full implementation.
- Continue developing new cultural lifeways.
- Expand, enhance, and sustain the buy-in of staff, families, Elders, and the community.

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