A Report on Tribal Language Revitalization in Head Start and Early Head Start

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Table of Contents

Executive Summary of the Report on Tribal Language Revitalization in Head Start and Early Head Start

INTRODUCTION

The Office of Head Start (OHS) has long supported the cultural and linguistic diversity of the families and children in its programs. This commitment includes support for language revitalization in tribal programs. In early 2015, OHS commissioned a project to learn directly about the efforts underway in the field, and the findings are presented in this report. Under a National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness contract, visits were made to 17 tribal Head Start or Early Head Start (HS/EHS) programs. Visits also were made to four other early childhood programs that are considered leaders in language revitalization with young children. The programs were selected to ensure diverse representation of geographic region, community language situation, language goals, resources and teaching methods. Tribal leaders, elders, program staff, parents and community members provided information during the visits. Academicians, researchers and other experts were consulted, along with participants at conferences and workshops. The information in this report is drawn from these visits and contacts, unless otherwise indicated by references to published materials or websites.

BACKGROUND

OHS has developed numerous resources to support Native language and teaching, including the *Head Start Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness Resource Catalogue, Volume 2*, and *Making It Work!* (MIW!), a tool to connect culture, language and curriculum. In general, the materials are designed for preschool settings, though some can be adapted for infants and toddlers. The *OHS Tribal Language Report 2012* highlighted a misperception among some tribal programs that the integration of tribal language and culture was inconsistent with the *Head Start Program Performance Standards*. In an effort to clarify this issue, OHS then issued an Information Memorandum (IM), *Native Language Preservation, Revitalization, Restoration, and Maintenance in Head Start and Early Head Start Programs: ACF-IM-HS-15-02*, affirming its ongoing support for tribal language revitalization. In addition, OHS has conducted a series of conference sessions and tribal consultations on language revitalization and compliance with OHS standards. Federal legislation also supports Native American language teaching in public schools.

This report addresses the context of language in tribal communities. The traditional language may be endangered in some communities, meaning that it is not spoken widely and eventually may cease to be spoken at all. Written records may help revive some languages; in other tribes, there may be adult speakers, but children are no longer learning the language. All of these situations pose challenges for tribes. When a community decides to try to stop or reverse these processes to ensure that future generations will speak their heritage language, this effort is referred to as language revitalization. Families often do not know the tribal language and therefore, children do not hear it spoken at home, which is a different situation than in families where a home language is spoken regularly. The endangered status of tribal languages can be traced to U.S. government policies and practices that focused on assimilation of Native American people. Many children were forced to attend boarding schools where speaking the tribal language was prohibited and considered "backward." Intergenerational ties also were severed between adult speakers and young children.

Many young parents who had been through the boarding schools believed their children's success depended on their speaking only English in the family. They also held negative perceptions about their tribal language. These views sometimes resulted in a tribe's having few speakers and in a community's disconnection from its heritage and culture. Because of this history and the associated feelings of shame, anger and fear, language revitalization can be complex and challenging, but it also can help heal historical trauma. Children and adults report feeling more complete or connected through their language work. Research also indicates that when children are exposed to the tribal language in school, there are academic gains and improved physical and mental health.

This report notes that multilingualism has been the norm throughout much of the world, including tribal communities in North America. Research indicates cognitive and other benefits of exposure to more than one language. However, some believe that a tribal language is harder to learn than English or is not as "good" as English. These are myths. In fact, programs report that children learn their tribal language quickly and with pride, including Native children with special needs. They also report that children learning their tribal language continue to develop strong English skills. Staff and parents need to understand the course of child language development and recognize that children may initially show uneven progress in two languages. They also need to know that young children learn language by hearing and using it in the course of everyday life. Didactic, lesson-based approaches for older students are inappropriate for young learners.

PREPARING FOR TRIBAL LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION

Many tribal programs and communities report that they are unsure where to start with their language revitalization efforts. Participants in the project had a number of suggestions and affirmed that there is no one right answer. The planning process can be thought of as a series of questions that lead to discussion and decision making.

- **Who to involve?** Community involvement and strong leadership are essential.

- **What are your resources and challenges?** Information about the status of your language; teaching resources; and about community perceptions, attitudes and interest is useful. For example, it is important to know if people still speak the language, if early childhood teachers need to learn the language, if other language efforts are under way in the community and if funding and training resources are available. Challenges may include staff turnover, poor relationships among stakeholders and long distances between and among communities.

- **What are your goals?** Programs state that goal setting at the outset is critical because it enables development of strategies that lead to success. Goals vary, based on family and community input. There may be an overarching community goal for the language as well as specific goals for young children. Programs advise focusing on specific goals for children, which may range from fluency to knowing basic greetings. A series of questions can help programs identify their goals and steps to reach them.

DEVELOPING A STRATEGY

A specific strategy or multiple strategies for achieving each language goal include these elements.

- **Timeline.** For both long-term and short-term goals, a timeline helps set realistic expectations.

- **Language teachers.** Staff may need to be identified or developed. They need to have knowledge and skills in the tribal language, language teaching and child development. Most programs must provide education and training to the language teachers; depending on the language model implemented and the goals for the children, teachers' skill levels may vary, as well as their daily schedule. OHS does not require early childhood training if the language teacher is working with two qualified classroom staff.

- **Skill building.** Professional development, training and mentorship are key strategies. A professional development plan for staff is key to improving the quality of instruction and increasing language fluency in the program and community. Ongoing training for staff, volunteers and families builds confidence and promotes

language usage throughout the community. Mentoring from other programs within and outside the tribal community can provide guidance and support.

- *Language teaching.* Selecting a model of instruction for the early childhood setting based on your language goals for children is critical. Also, the language skills of staff and available time during the day are important considerations. The model you select will guide your teaching in the classroom and your language training for teachers.

  - *Models of instruction.* Three models are described in this report—**immersion**, **dual language** and **structured language lessons**—and the goals, key elements and teaching requirements of each model are presented. **Immersion** develops strong language skills and involves using the tribal language in a normal, conversational way. Teachers must be proficient. Use of English is avoided, and strategies can be put in place to guide children to use the tribal language. One immersion program for young children is the language nest, which is defined in the Esther Martinez Native American Languages Preservation Act of 2006. In the **dual language model**, at least one teacher is fluent in the tribal language, and both the tribal language and English are used equally for instruction and communication. **Structured language lessons** involve short, developmentally appropriate lessons, usually several times a week. Children's language progress is slower, but this is a viable option when teachers are building their skills. Whatever model is implemented, programs emphasize the importance of using the language with children as much as possible.

  - *Supporting language learning for adult learners.* Many approaches are used in tribal communities. The Master-Apprentice method places fluent speakers, often elders, with younger apprentices, using only the tribal language in activities for at least 20 hours a week. The Internet can be used. Other approaches discussed briefly in this report are the Total Physical Response (TPR), Accelerated Second Language Acquisition (ASLA) and Where are Your Keys (WAYK).

- *Assessment.* Assessing progress toward your language goals allows you to make changes and to celebrate your achievements. Ongoing assessment of children's language development through observation is appropriate, but language testing is not. Bilingual children need to be assessed in both languages. Other assessments of the program's progress (apart from the children's progress) may include assessing teachers' language skills to ensure that they are delivering high-quality input to the children; examining language attitudes and use in the community; and assessing family support and engagement. Some strategies used by project participants are listed in this report.

The programs used a variety of strategies to support language teaching and overcome challenges. The most important strategy, applicable to any model, is to use the tribal language as much as possible, even if you think you do not know much or if you make mistakes. Children need wide exposure to the language in many situations and in everyday conversations.

Common challenges to implementation include anxiety and shame, especially for adult learners who may feel historical trauma and also feel overwhelmed by the complexity of the language. Learners need to be reassured that it is normal and acceptable to make mistakes. Another challenge revolves around the use of dialects, and specifically which one(s) to use in programs. Most communities have responded with different solutions that affirm multiple dialects, as was done by their ancestors. Programs have encountered other challenges, such as: decision-making about teaching literacy in the tribal language and using technology; working with elders who are new to teaching; and supporting the solo efforts of a few individuals. Having a language plan and supportive leadership have helped programs meet these challenges.

The programs visited shared a number of their language teaching tips along with examples.

- *Create a culturally focused environment.* This approach strengthens language teaching and the learning environment in general. Cultural practices, art, stories and knowledge are woven into the curriculum, and children have an opportunity to interact with the tribal community outside of the classroom.

- *Build up to immersion.* These strategies allow programs to use the limited language skills of teachers while still following some of the principles of immersion. For example, teachers may use common phrases in routines, such as "Brush your teeth," and conduct familiar classroom activities with the children in the language.

- *Use games and songs.* These activities may be traditional or translated from English and often teach cultural values and knowledge.

- *Extend the language.* Programs have found a number of different ways to reinforce the language, including describing what the children are doing and playing fun, active games.

- *Show children the logic of the language.* Children's attention can be drawn to characteristics of the tribal language that are similar to and different from English in a developmentally appropriate way.

BUILDING SUPPORT FOR LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION

There are many ways to support and promote your language, both while you are developing your strategy and after you begin to implement it. Programs mentioned these aspects that have helped them build support:

- **Leadership.** A leader's inspiration and advocacy contribute to the success of the program and to the ongoing commitment of the community.

- **Communication and education.** Regular communication about the effort is vital to support children's language development within and outside the early childhood program and to educate the community about language loss, revitalization and government support.

- **Increased access to language.** Expanding opportunities for children to hear the language and speak it means reaching out to local media; coordinating with language efforts in the schools; and creating a welcoming, active "culture of revitalization."

- **Collaboration.** Family engagement is a crucial part of revitalization. Families often want to learn the language alongside their children and help their children learn. Many programs have partnered with other tribes, schools, media, institutions of higher education and other organizations to support their revitalization efforts.

- **Sustainability and funding.** Finding resources to create and sustain a language revitalization effort can be challenging. Funds within existing HS/EHS budgets can be used to support a third person in the classroom and training linked to program goals. Other funding sources include federal agencies, private foundations and partnerships.

CONCLUSION

Tribal language revitalization is a complex and long-term process that can bring immense rewards to children, their families and communities. The report shares some of the experiences and recommendations of HS/EHS and other early childhood programs. This information, along with resources listed in Chapter VIII. Where to Get Help, can assist you in developing a plan that works for your program and community.

Acknowledgments

The Office of Head Start extends its thanks to the National Center for Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness (NCCLR) for conducting this project on tribal language revitalization. Ruth Rouvier took the lead in visiting programs, interviewing, and drafting the final report. Other NCCLR staff provided support with logistics, editing, and graphics.

The report has benefited from the contributions of countless individuals and organizations. While it would be impossible to list all who have graciously shared their wisdom and expertise, we would like to recognize the tribal communities and programs that allowed us to visit and learn from them. We also are grateful to their partners who supported our project.

COMMUNITIES AND PROGRAMS

Cherokee Nation
- Early Childhood Unit Head Start: Head Start and Early Head Start
- Cherokee Nation Immersion School

Cochiti Pueblo
- Keres Children's Learning Center

Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
- Head Start Early Childhood
- Inchelium Immersion Childcare Program
- Hearts Gathered Waterfall Immersion School

Cook Inlet Native Head Start
- Early Head Start and Head Start

Grassroots Indigenous Multimedia
- Ojibwe/Dakota Immersion games and songs workshop

Hoopa Valley Tribe
- Early Head Start and Head Start

Jemez Pueblo
- Walatowa Head Start: Early Head Start and Head Start

Karuk Tribe
- Head Start

Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians

- Waadookodaading Ojibwe Language Immersion School

Makah Tribe

- Early Childhood Education: Early Head Start, Head Start and Childcare

Mille Lacs Band Of Ojibwe

- Head Start Immersion Classroom

Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

- Red Cliff Early Childhood Center (ECC): Early Head Start and Head Start

Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe

- Early Childhood Development Program: Early Head Start and Head Start

Smith River Rancheria

- Howonquet Head Start

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe

- 0–5 Head Start: Early Head Start and Head Start

Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska

- Sitka Head Start Center
- Juneau Head Start Centers
- Glacier Valley Elementary School Cultural Enrichment immersion class

White Earth Nation

- White Earth Head Start/Early Head Start Programs

PARTNERS

American Indian/Alaska Native Head Start Collaboration Advisory Council

Cherokee Language Master/Apprentice Program

Cherokee Language Technology

Colville Confederated Tribes Language Program

Hoopa NDN Center – NohołDiniłayding-Niwho:ngxw (Johnson O'Malley)

Hupa ECE Language Program

Karuk Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

Makah Cultural and Research Center

Sitka School District

Sitka Tribe of Alaska Education, Employment, and Training

Standing Rock Tribal Department of Education

Among the many individuals who have shared their ideas, expertise and resources with us, we would like to especially thank the following: Phil Albers, Jr., Daryl Baldwin, Dode Barnett, Joe Horse Capture, Kayla Carpenter, Jenny Davis, Haley De Korne, Marianna Di Paolo, Lisa Enos, Susan Gehr, James Gensaw, Sr., Mary Hermes, Leanne Hinton, Vina Leno, Wesley Leonard, Mary Linn, Wilhelm Meya, Wendy Phillips, Maymi Preston-Donahue, Conor Quinn, Keren Rice, Micker Richardson, Michelle Sauve, Christine Sims, W.J. Strickland, Nacole Walker, Alvin Warren, Jennifer Weston, and the participants in numerous conference workshops and presentations over the past year. We are grateful for your time, passion and wisdom!

Unless otherwise indicated by references to published materials or websites, the information and recommendations presented in this report come directly from the communities and programs visited or consulted as part of this project.

I.   Introduction

The Office of Head Start (OHS) has long supported tribal languages in Head Start and Early Head Start (HS/EHS), in both center-based and home-based programs. As noted in a recent Information Memorandum (IM), OHS understands that "language revitalization and continuation are fundamental to preserving and strengthening a community's culture" and that "use of Native language builds identity and encourages communities to move toward social unity and self-sufficiency" (*Native Language Preservation, Revitalization, Restoration and Maintenance in Head Start and Early Head Start Programs*, ACF-IM-HS-15-02, http://eclkc. ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/standards/im/2015/resour_im_002_031215.html). At the same time, OHS knows that maintaining and revitalizing tribal languages is a complicated and at times difficult task. It requires commitment, resources and expertise within the tribal community and strong relationships among partners, and it may require financial support beyond the Head Start grant.

OHS commissioned the project summarized in this report to learn directly from existing language revitalization efforts in HS/EHS programs. In early 2015, OHS's National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness (NCCLR) visited 21 early childhood language revitalization programs, 17 of those in communities with HS/EHS programs. The additional four programs were chosen because of their leadership in language revitalization with young children. NCCLR staff also spoke with program staff at language revitalization conferences and meetings convened by OHS and the Administration for Native Americans (ANA) and with leading language revitalization scholars and practitioners. The many contributors to this report included tribal leaders, elders, program directors, teachers, parents, family advocates and language and culture specialists. Programs contacted were carefully selected to ensure diversity of representation in terms of geographic region, community language situation, language goals, resources and teaching methods.

These visits provided insight into the challenges and successes experienced by programs working to bring their tribal languages into HS/EHS. Although the visits offered only a small window into the wide range of language revitalization activities and experiences in HS/EHS programs, they provided a wealth of wisdom and many promising practices. This report shares these experiences and expertise, as well as related research-based practices and recommendations. The report offers suggestions for programs that want to develop new language revitalization efforts or improve or expand existing projects.

II. Background

TRIBAL LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION IN HEAD START AND EARLY HEAD START

The Office of Head Start (OHS) has developed a number of resources over the years to support Native language teaching and learning. Many are more appropriate for preschoolers than infants and toddlers, though some resources can be adapted for younger children.

In 2010, OHS's National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness (NCCLR) developed the *Head Start Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness Resource Catalogue Volume Two: Native and Heritage Language Preservation, Revitalization, and Maintenance* (Second Edition). It catalogues resources related to tribal language. It is designed to provide programs with evidence-based materials, research, promising practices and other information to help develop culturally and linguistically responsive systems and services. It includes books, articles, videos and other useful resources—most of which are available free of charge. It can be found at http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/fcp/docs/resource-catalogue-main-book-4.pdf.

The NCCLR also developed *Making It Work! (*MIW!), a tool for programs to use to connect traditional cultural skills, values, beliefs and lifeways to the *Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework* (2010). While this tool has a cultural focus, the ties between culture and language are strong, and many programs have used MIW! to bring more language into their classrooms. MIW! is available for download at http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/making-it-work.

In 2012, OHS released the *Tribal Language Report* which provides information on the success, progress and challenges experienced by tribal programs as they work to preserve, revitalize and maintain their tribal languages. The report has helped guide OHS's support of tribal language programs. The report is available at http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/states/aian/tlr.

The report also highlighted a misperception among some tribal programs that the full integration of tribal language and culture into HS/EHS programs was inconsistent with the *Head Start Program Performance Standards* (2009). In an effort to clarify this issue and reaffirm support for Native American language teaching in tribal HS/EHS programs, OHS then issued an IM, *Native Language Preservation, Revitalization, Restoration, and Maintenance in Head Start and Early Head Start Programs*, ACF-IM-HS-15-02, on March 17, 2015. This IM does not represent a change in policy. Rather, it clarifies OHS's support for language revitalization activities and addresses common concerns and questions regarding implementation of language revitalization. In addition, OHS has held a series of conference sessions and tribal consultations focused heavily on the IM and on language revitalization in HS/EHS. The IM and these sessions have helped programs understand how they can make language revitalization part of their work while complying with OHS standards. The IM is available at http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/standards/im/2015/resour_im_002_031215.html.

Federal legislation supports Native American language teaching in public schools. Section 102 of the Native American Languages Act of 1990 *(Public Law 101-477) stated that a "lack of clear, comprehensive, and consistent Federal policy on treatment of Native American languages . . . has often resulted in acts of suppression and extermination of Native American languages and cultures."*

The act affirms that the policy of the United States is to "preserve, protect, and promote the rights and freedom of Native Americans to use, practice, and develop Native American languages" and to "encourage and support the use of Native American languages as a medium of instruction." The act is available at http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-104/pdf/STATUTE-104-Pg1152.pdf.

LANGUAGE AND TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

In many tribal communities in the United States, the tribe's traditional language is endangered. This means that the language is not spoken as widely as it once was, and if current trends continue, it may eventually cease to be spoken at all. When a language is no longer spoken, it is often said to be extinct, although in some cases where the language has been documented or recorded, it may be referred to as sleeping or dormant. In some tribes—for example, Myaamia and Wampanoag—languages that were not spoken for decades or even centuries were revived or "woken up" through written records, and now have speakers again. Other languages may still have thousands of speakers, but children are no longer learning the language.

Several researchers have developed scales of language endangerment, which can help predict the risk that a particular language will become dormant (Fishman, 1991; Florey, 2009). The Resource Network for Linguistic Diversity has created a list of resources that can help assess whether a language is endangered, available at http://www.rnld.org/assessing_vitality. UNESCO also offers guidance on assessing language vitality at http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/endangered-languages/language-vitality.

Wherever their language falls on the scale of language endangerment, a community may decide to try to stop or reverse this process to ensure that their language will continue to be spoken by future generations. These efforts can be referred to as language revitalization, reclamation, revival, preservation, restoration, maintenance or stabilization (among other terms). In this report, we will use the term *language revitalization*.

Although language revitalization is sometimes confused with efforts to support a child's home language, these two activities differ in important ways. In most tribal communities, the tribal language is no longer spoken at home, so it is not the child's home language. Instead, it is the child's heritage language – a language spoken by the ancestors. This means that children coming into a revitalization classroom in Head Start or Early Head Start (HS/EHS) may be hearing the tribal language for the first time in their lives. It also means that families generally need training in order to support their children's tribal language use outside of the classroom. In many cases, families are learning the language at the same time as their children. This aspect of language revitalization is quite different from supporting a home language, which is usually the primary means of communication used by the child's family. For these reasons, approaches to language revitalization need to be fundamentally different from those that have worked for children whose families still speak their home language regularly and who hear the language in their daily life.

It is not an accident that so many tribal languages in the United States are endangered. Although there are many reasons for their decline since European arrival, a significant factor has been a series of colonial and U.S. government policies and practices designed to suppress Native American people and their languages and cultures. Beginning with European colonization of North America in the 16th century, and continuing through much of the 20th century, these policies and actions were part of an effort to assimilate Native people into mainstream European-American society (Hinton, 2001a).

Beginning in the 19th century, many children in tribal communities were forced to attend boarding schools where they were discouraged and often physically punished for speaking their tribal languages. In addition to these brutally repressive measures experienced by children, tribal communities were often told, incorrectly, that their languages were "backwards" or "primitive." They were told they would never succeed in the modern world unless they abandoned their tribal languages for English. The boarding school experience often severed intergenerational relationships between children and their parents or grandparents, isolating them from the history, traditions and knowledge that had sustained their communities for thousands of years. Although some children had different, more positive experiences in boarding schools and did not receive these damaging and incorrect messages about the value of their tribal languages and cultures, these widespread policies and practices were devastating to many tribal communities (Hinton, 1994, 2001a).

Many young parents who had been through the boarding school system felt that by speaking only English with their children, they were protecting them from possible harm and abuse or ensuring their success in life. These children had no opportunity to learn their language. They also may have internalized negative perceptions of their tribal language and cultural traditions, and of people in their communities who still practiced those traditions. These attitudes often are reinforced by mainstream society and its institutions, including schools, media and local, state and federal agencies. After several generations, this process can result in a language that has few speakers and a community that is largely disconnected from its language, history and cultural traditions and knowledge (Hinton, 1994, 2001a; McCarty, 2009).

Because of this history, supporting tribal languages can be a complex and challenging process. The language teachers and adult learners we spoke with reported that they often struggle with feelings of guilt, shame, anger and fear as they confront this legacy of colonialism and reclaim their cultural and linguistic heritage. Some are frustrated with their elders for not sharing the language with them or think that as Native people they should already know their heritage language. They also may feel intense grief and anger because of the violence and destruction their communities have faced and may still struggle with today.

These feelings are understandable. If they are not addressed, they can be obstacles to language revitalization, but they can also be an important part of revitalization. It is critical to prepare for and recognize these emotions, but also to keep in mind that language endangerment is not the fault of individuals or of tribal communities. Language revitalization is very much a process of healing this historical trauma.

One program reported that after a very emotional and tear-filled meeting about the language, an elder speaker said that he was no longer worried about the language disappearing. Because of the emotion and passion displayed during the meeting, he saw how much it still meant to the community. In fact, many language teachers and learners have reported that their "community heals through language." By approaching language revitalization in an open, gentle, supportive way, they are able to strengthen relationships within their community and instill a greater sense of identity, confidence and pride in children, their families and their teachers.

For children, the impact of revitalization can be profound. Through their language they learn about their tribal culture and history and develop strong identities as members of their communities and as Native people. Children and adults report feeling more complete or connected through their language work. They express a sense of accomplishment and joy when they speak their tribal language.

Studies indicate that these children also tend to excel academically, compared to their peers who are not exposed to the tribal language in school. They have higher high school and college graduation rates (Bacon, Kidd & Seaborg, 1982; McCarty & Dick, 1996; Rosier & Holm, 1980). Recent research has shown that they also may have better physical and mental health and lower rates of chronic disease, substance abuse and suicide (Goodkind et al., 2011; Hakuta, 2001; Kativik School Board, n.d.; Mmari, Blum & Teufel-Shone, 2009).

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND MULTILINGUALISM

Babies and young children are the best language learners. Even before they are born, they are learning to recognize the sounds of their mother's language—or languages! Over half of all people in the world are bilingual (Crystal, 2002). In many parts of the world, it is normal for children to learn two, three or even four languages before they reach adulthood, for use at home, school, work and the marketplace. This pattern also was common in many tribal communities in North America before Europeans arrived. For much of human history, multilingualism has been the norm and still is today.

Sometimes teachers and families worry that babies and young children will be confused, or even have learning problems, if they hear and learn to use more than one language at school or at home. For many years, families and educators were told that bilingualism could prevent children from succeeding in school. However, we now know that this is incorrect. In

fact, the opposite is true. Children are experts at figuring things out, and it seems that the more varied the language information they receive, the better they are at paying attention and learning.

Hearing and learning to speak multiple languages at an early age has many benefits for children and the adults they become. Bilingual people have higher standardized test scores, do better in school and experience onset of dementia later in life (Adelman, 1981; Alter, 1970; Bialystok, Craik & Freedman, 2007; Greene, 1998; Hofstadter & Smith, 1961; Sachs, 1982). A recent study showed that children who hear multiple languages, even if they do not become bilingual, have improved social skills and are better at communicating and understanding others than children who are exposed to only one language (Fan, Liberman, Keysar & Kinzler, 2015).

Some people also believe that tribal languages are either harder to learn than English, or are in some way not as "good" as English. Neither of these beliefs is true. Tribal languages are often very different from English, but for a baby or toddler, they are no more difficult to learn. We also know that tribal languages, like all human languages, are rich and complex systems for organizing and understanding the world, expressing human experience, and developing and strengthening relationships between individuals and within communities. In fact, scholars believe that each of the 7,000 languages spoken in the world today contains a wealth of information that is unique to that language and its speakers. This is just one reason that many people are working to support tribal languages.

HS/EHS teachers who are teaching tribal languages in their classrooms report that the children are language "sponges." Not only do they learn the tribal language quickly, but they are also excited and proud to speak their tribal language. They also enjoy teaching others, such as parents and siblings, what they have learned in the HS/EHS classroom. It is important to support their natural abilities and enthusiasm for the language with focused and developmentally appropriate opportunities to build and enhance their language skills.

Parents and teachers of children with special needs are often told to use only one language—English—with the children. However, this advice is misguided. Research, as well as reports from families and teachers, shows that children with special needs are able to

benefit from exposure to multiple languages (Bruck, 1982; Paradis, Crago & Genesee, 2003; Paradis, Crago, Genesee, & Rice, 2003). In some cases, HS/EHS teachers report that children with special needs communicate more effectively in the tribal language than they do in English, and the children have become more social and verbal after exposure to the tribal language.

At the same time, it is important to realize that children who are learning two languages may develop language skills at a different pace than monolingual children. It is common for children to learn certain words or skills first in one language, while at the same time developing other strengths in the second language. With enough exposure to both languages, eventually the child will be able to communicate effectively in either one. Understanding child language development is important for all HS/EHS teachers, but it is especially critical for those who are working with bilingual children.

Families and program staff often worry that children will not develop strong English skills, especially if they only hear the tribal language in their early childhood setting. However, in the great majority of tribal communities in the United States, children hear plenty of English at home, on TV, with friends and in the community. Their English skills are as strong or even stronger than their peers who are not in language revitalization programs. A much more common challenge for language revitalization is that children are not hearing enough of the tribal language to become strong speakers of that language.

These misperceptions and concerns about child language development may be present among families, program staff and others in your community. They can pose challenges for using tribal language in HS/EHS. Everyone wants the best for the children, and if families and program staff do not know that learning their tribal language will benefit children and help them succeed in life, they may not understand and support efforts to bring the language into HS/EHS. It is important to share information about child language development and the benefits of bilingualism with tribal officials, families, educators and other members of the community.

Babies and young children learn language differently than older children and adults. So tribal language teaching must be done in a way that fits with the way young children learn

and learn language in particular. For older learners, language is often taught as a lesson, where students memorize words and verb "paradigms"—I am, you are, she is—in order to form sentences. While this approach may work for some older learners, young children learn best by hearing and using language—lots and lots of language! The very best way for children to learn language is for the people around them to speak it as they are going about their day. This is how children learn English, or whatever language is spoken in their home, program or school. Tribal language is no different. Adults who are teaching tribal language to babies and young children may need to adjust their teaching methods and content, especially if the approach was developed for older learners. HS/EHS teachers, language teachers and elder speakers need opportunities to learn about and share information on developmentally appropriate language teaching.

An excellent introduction to raising bilingual children, focused on parents, has been developed by the Linguistic Society of America: http://www.linguisticsociety.org/files/Bilingual_Child.pdf.

SUMMARY

II. Background

Over the years, OHS has developed a number of policy statements and practical resources to support Native language teaching. These materials are available to all tribal programs. Many tribal communities feel a sense of urgency to initiate language revitalization efforts because their languages are endangered and there are few, or no, remaining speakers. Programs for young children are appropriate starting points because young children are fast language learners. Research indicates that there are academic, social and emotional gains when young children learn their tribal language and deepen their cultural knowledge. Young children learn differently from older students, so tribal language teaching must be done in developmentally appropriate ways. It is important that tribal communities know that children can build strong skills in both their tribal language and in English (or other languages) before they reach adulthood.

III. Preparing for Tribal Language Revitalization

When communities or programs are considering including their tribal language in their goals and activities, they often report that it can be difficult to know where to start. Although the task can seem overwhelming, the good news is that there are many resources, organizations and people who can help.

The programs we spoke with found that taking the following steps improved the experiences of everyone involved and helped them achieve a positive outcome:

- Discuss and reach consensus on language goals and implementation strategies.
- Reach out to those who have expertise or resources to support the effort.
- Learn about what has worked—and what has not worked—for others.
- Understand what your own community's resources, goals and challenges are.
- Make a plan that is realistic and represents the wishes of the community.
- Don't worry about making everything "perfect" before starting.
- Once you begin your project, be prepared to make adjustments.

Because every tribal community is different, there is not a single solution that will work for all communities. The planning process can be thought of as a series of questions a community or program asks itself. By discussing these questions, you will find a path that is right for you. It is to be expected that there will be modifications and detours along the path as well.

You will probably not know the answers to many of these questions—in fact, at first you may not have any idea *how* to answer the questions. The point is that you will start to learn about and discuss them with your program and community. These discussions will guide and strengthen your tribal language revitalization efforts.

WHO TO INVOLVE?

Language revitalization is something that affects the entire community and requires high levels of dedication and leadership. Programs have found the greatest success when they involve the whole community in all stages of the planning process, and at the same time have a strong, effective and passionate champion for language revitalization within the tribal government or HS/EHS program.

A strong leader will help you establish and maintain trust and strong relationships between and among key individuals and programs, both within and outside of your tribe. A respected leader will help ensure that the program you develop for your children is supported by stable and well-trained staff and that families and others are engaged and included in the revitalization effort.

By including your community in planning, you can help families, tribal leaders and others understand what you are trying to do. You may also learn about existing language resources, as well as community concerns and goals related to the tribal language. Consider involving the representatives from the following groups:

- Families of children in your program
- Language speakers, teachers and learners
- HS/EHS staff
- Tribal leaders
- Community members
- Tribal administration
- Outside organizations (such as schools or colleges) that have an interest in language revitalization or that will be a part of the project

WHAT ARE YOUR RESOURCES AND CHALLENGES?

In order to set a direction, it is critical to know where you are starting from. This includes information about the status of your tribal language and resources to support learning and teaching it, as well as community perceptions, attitudes and interest about the language. Also, think about issues or resources in your community that are not directly related to language revitalization, but might impact your work. The questions below can get you started.

Language Resources

- How many people still speak our language? Are these people willing to teach the language?

- Will other people, such as current HS/EHS teachers, need to learn the language?

- How can we ensure that language teachers understand and will use information about language development and learning in young children?

- Are there recordings of our language?

- Is our language written? Are documents or other materials written in our language?

- Do we have dictionaries, children's books or other resources to help language learners?

- Are these materials appropriate for the ways young children learn language?

Attitudes Toward Language Revitalization

In addition to understanding what language resources you have, you also should find out how people in the tribal community and your HS/EHS program feel about the language.

- Are there any other language efforts in our community, or policies advocating for language learning or use? How can we collaborate with existing efforts?

- Is there a strong interest in creating more speakers of our language in our community? Who is interested? Are they, or can they be, part of our project?

- Do our families and Policy Council support language revitalization?

- Do people in our community, and outside of our community, value our language?

- What does our community know about why our language is endangered? Do they understand the effects of historical trauma? Should we provide education about that?

- Does our community understand the benefits of bilingualism for children and of learning about our tribal language and culture?

- How can we ensure that teachers understand and will use the new information about how very young children develop language?

- What goals does our community have for the language? Be as specific as possible. For example:

  - Children will know words and songs.

  - Children will be able to have simple conversations in the language.

  - Children will be able to speak the language as well as or better than English.

  - Everyone in the community will use the language.

Other Resources

Financial or other kinds of support from the tribe, outside organizations and other partners are critical. These resources can take a variety of forms. Some of the support received by the programs we visited includes:

- Financial
- Facilities
- Transportation
- Salary supplements for highly qualified teachers
- Staff services to support language efforts
- Permission and encouragement for tribal staff to attend language classes during work hours
- Advocacy for the language within the community or with non-tribal organizations or agencies

Challenges

At the same time, these programs and their communities have encountered many challenges that have gotten in the way of their efforts. A high rate of turnover among program staff was frequently mentioned as an obstacle. This poses a special problem for language revitalization, as staff often require years of language instruction and language teaching training in order to be effective in the early childhood program. Other challenges include these:

- Lack of transportation and long distances between and among communities, language speakers, teachers and learners
- Substance use within the community that affects children, families and staff, and decreases family engagement
- Poor relationships and lack of trust between key participants, such as tribal government, program staff, outside organizations and families
- Limited resources for additional training and materials
- Policies or practices that discourage tribal language use at the tribal, local or federal level

Common challenges and possible solutions are described in more detail in Chapter V. Language Teaching Tips and Examples section.

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS?

The communities who have been most successful in their language revitalization efforts have developed clear, community-wide goals at the outset. Goal-setting is critical because it allows you to choose a strategy that builds the specific skills needed to achieve that goal and gives you the best chance of success. For example, if your goal is for all HS/EHS children to speak the tribal language as well as they speak English (and to have a community to speak with), you will need a very different strategy, and resources to implement that strategy, than if your goal is for the children to know a basic greeting and how to introduce themselves in the language.

Based on family and community input, you should decide on goals at the beginning of the effort. It can be helpful for people to think about what they would want "in a perfect world," if anything were possible. Then you can talk about specific, achievable goals that move the community toward that vision. There is no "correct" goal. In fact, different individuals in the community may have different goals, and a community may have a series of intermediate goals that build to a final, long-term goal. It is important to think about the community's overarching goal for the language, as well as specific goals for your HS/EHS program.

There are many possibilities. Focus on specific skills you want children—and others—to have and language behavior and attitudes you hope to see. These can range from greeting classroom visitors and introducing themselves in the language to using the language for all of their activities in class, at home and in the community. The questions below may help.

- How well will the children speak our language? Will they know words? Songs? Will they be able to have conversations?

- What will the children be able to talk about in our language?

- With whom will the children speak?

- Where will our language be used?

- Why do we have these particular language goals? Is there a larger purpose that we think these language goals will support, such as a greater understanding of culture, a stronger sense of identity, or improved school success?

No matter what your goals, it is critical to keep in mind that in order for children to learn to speak and understand their tribal language they need to hear and practice using the language in conversation as much as possible. Also, it is important to understand that families and communities need to support and inspire their children by learning and using the language alongside them. Children learn from all of the adults and older children around them, and they need to see that language is important and valued by everyone in their community. As you develop your strategy, ask if the steps you are taking are the right ones to help accomplish your goals.

SUMMARY

III. Preparing for Tribal Language Revitalization

Many tribal programs and communities report that they are unsure where to start with their language revitalization efforts. Program staff and community members have a number of suggestions and affirm there is no one right answer. The planning process includes discussion and decision making about who to involve and what the resources, challenges and goals are. Setting language goals for your program and for the children is critical and leads to developing strategies to reach them.

IV. Developing a Strategy

When you have assessed your strengths, identified potential challenges and set one or more language goals, you will be ready to develop your strategies. This will include deciding which of the identified needs you will address first and which will have to wait for a later date. Think about your plan as a series of steps and decide which step you want to (or can) tackle first. For many HS/EHS programs, this process is similar to developing an action plan to improve their systems and services.

Choosing a specific strategy or strategies for achieving each language goal will probably include the following interrelated elements:

- **Timeline.** Decide on key steps and when you expect to achieve them.

- **Language Teachers.** Identify existing language teachers or create new ones.

- **Skill Building.** Provide ongoing professional development and support for staff and families.

- **Language Teaching.** Choose a teaching method and find or develop language resources.

- **Assessment.** Assess your progress to ensure that you are moving toward your goal.

TIMELINE

It is important to establish a timeline for implementing your strategy. The programs we spoke with took a very long view of their language work. Many communities have 10-, 20-, 50- or even 100-year plans!

Setting a realistic timeline that includes both your long-term goal and intermediate steps is critical. It lets your staff, families and community know what progress to expect, and when they can expect it. Having reasonable expectations helps prevent frustration, discouragement and burnout among staff and families. It also allows tribal leadership and funders to understand the importance of long-term and stable support for your project.

Different strategies will allow you to move forward at different rates. Generally, the more resources you have (including language expertise) and the more intensive language teaching you provide, the faster the learners will progress. Based on your planning conversations, you can determine if you will need to do any of the following:

- Develop materials in or about our language?

- Change attitudes toward our language?

- Train or certify speakers and teachers of our language?

- Find or build facilities for our language activities?

It can be very helpful to visit or learn about approaches other programs have used, what they have achieved, and how long it has taken them. See Chapter VIII. Where To Get Help for suggestions.

LANGUAGE TEACHERS

One of the first questions programs need to answer is who will teach the language to the children. You will need to find or develop qualified language teachers who fully understand and support the language revitalization effort and can teach and use the language with the children. It may take time to build the language skills of the children's teachers, especially if they are learning the language along with the children.

Language teachers in HS/EHS need to have skills in three key areas:

- Tribal language

- Language teaching

- Knowledge of child development including how children learn language

A few programs are fortunate enough to already have proficient tribal language speakers within their program or community who are also skilled language and early childhood teachers. However, this is relatively rare. More often, programs must develop new language teachers by providing education and training in one or more of the three key areas.

Depending on the language instruction model you choose, your teachers will need different levels of expertise in the three skill areas. For instance, immersion teachers must be highly proficient in the tribal language. However, structured language lessons can be taught by teachers who have a more limited knowledge of the language.

Your teachers may come from existing staff within your HS/EHS program, be added to your team specifically to support your language efforts, or be volunteers or part of a partnering organization. Depending on the teaching model you choose and the outcomes you expect,

teachers who speak the tribal language may be in the classroom all day, or they may only come in for short periods of time. Some of the people teaching in tribal language programs we saw included:

- Regular, qualified classroom teaching staff (teacher/assistant teacher)
- Additional staff, often a third person in the classroom
- HS/EHS language or cultural coordinator
- Tribal language program staff
- Family or community volunteer

Note that OHS requirements do not mandate early childhood education training for a language teacher who is working with two qualified classroom staff.

SKILL BUILDING

Training is an important and ongoing part of a successful revitalization effort. This includes professional development for teachers, as well as training for families and others in the community to support children's language learning. Training should be offered over the course of several years in order to develop deep competency.

Every program we visited identified high-quality training and professional development as among the most important factors contributing to the success of their program, as well as one of the biggest remaining areas of need in order to improve their efforts. In addition, many programs benefited from long-term mentorship from experienced language revitalization leaders and practitioners.

The kinds of support your program needs will depend on a number of factors:

- What expertise and resources you have already identified in your community
- Who is providing language instruction and support to children and their families
- What language teaching method(s) you are using

Professional Development

Providing several years of extensive and expert professional development for language teachers is key to achieving your language revitalization goals. Each teacher's background and existing skills will determine additional training needed. Even in the rare communities with teachers in HS/EHS programs who also are fluent speakers, professional development was recognized as critical to improving the quality of instruction and increasing language proficiency among children, teachers and families.

At a minimum, your teachers will need to have or develop language skills and language teaching skills and be familiar with child development. They will also need ongoing training and support in whatever language teaching method your program is using.

Common topics for professional development include:

- Tribal language skills
- Tribal language literacy, if appropriate
- Language teaching methods
- Language development in young children
- Ways to teach young children
- Materials development
- Infusing tribal language into existing HS/EHS activities and requirements

Several programs recommend using strategies such as mentor-coaching to support teaching teams in improving and refining their skills. A mentor-coaching program can be set up as part of a program-wide professional development plan.

Training

It also is important to provide ongoing training opportunities for other staff, volunteers and families to build confidence and promote effective language teaching, learning and use. Administrators benefit from specific training and technical assistance that supports managing and improving language revitalization efforts and navigating the common challenges faced by language revitalization programs. Again, it important that these trainings are offered over the course of several years.

Training can take many forms and be provided by a variety of sources. It can take place on site; at training centers; in visits to other revitalization programs; and at conferences, workshops, and special language revitalization events and gatherings. Visiting existing language revitalization programs, in other communities or within your own community, is an excellent way to provide inspiration, ideas and the confidence that your language goals can be achieved.

When planning training, consider timing. Many programs report that having short trainings throughout the year works best. Teachers are able to immediately use what they have learned in their classrooms and are more likely to remember information if they hear it more than once. At the same time, language learners can benefit from intensive classes, such as week-long immersion courses for adults, which are often easiest to schedule during the summer or holiday breaks.

If you don't already have trainers in mind, you may find what you need in these places:

- Government agencies
- Private foundations
- Elementary and high schools
- College and university programs
- Online courses
- Nonprofit organizations
- Language institutes
- Other tribes and tribal organizations

Mentoring

One of the wonderful things about starting a language revitalization project is that you will be joining a strong, inspiring and supportive community that reaches across the country as well as around the world. Successful programs consistently mention the generous mentorship they received from others, both within their own communities and elsewhere. These relationships are long-lasting and help new programs navigate challenges and continue to advance.

Some programs have been able to visit existing programs in other communities. Others have arranged for members of those communities to visit their program and give feedback and guidance on their efforts. Attending conferences and workshops on language revitalization is an excellent way to find people you can learn from. You can also contact regional and national organizations like those mentioned in Chapter VIII. Where To Get Help. You can reach out directly to other tribes or programs to ask for advice and arrange for visits and other types of exchanges.

LANGUAGE TEACHING

Models of Instruction

The language teaching model you decide to use is based on the language goals you have set and will determine much of your strategy. There are many options available. Your choice of a model will be based on what makes sense for your program and community, including available expertise and resources. You may start with one model, and as your program gains experience and develops skills, transition to a different model. These questions can guide you:

- What language skills do we want our children to learn?

- What language skills do our potential language teachers have?

- How much time during our program day are we able to devote to the language?

Below is a short introduction to some of the basic approaches to language teaching used by the programs we visited. No matter which model you choose, keep in mind that language learners should be developing the ability to communicate in the language by having conversations, expressing thoughts and asking questions. Activities that focus on memorization, such as reciting numbers or naming objects on flash cards, do not develop these critical communicative language skills, nor do they build on how young children learn.

The model you select will guide your language training for teachers and also the way language is taught to children in the classroom.

Chapter V. Language Teaching Tips and Examples section has additional information about specific teaching activities that you may want to explore further.

LANGUAGE TEACHING MODELS

MODEL	GOAL	KEY ELEMENTS	REQUIREMENTS
Immersion	• Children develop strong conversational skills in the tribal language.	• All teachers use only the tribal language.	• Teachers must have strong skills in the tribal language.
Dual Language	• Children develop conversation skills in the tribal language over time, while also developing strong English skills.	• One teacher uses only the tribal language. • The other teacher uses only the dominant language (such as English). **OR** • Both teachers speak both languages to the children.	• One teacher must have strong tribal language skills. **AND** • One teacher must have strong English skills. **OR** • Both teachers have strong skills in both languages.
Structured Language Lessons	• Children develop limited language skills in their tribal language. • Depending on the instructional method, children may learn words and rote communication skills. • Children have limited opportunities to use the tribal language for communication.	• The tribal language is taught as a subject for a specific amount of time during the day or the week.	• Classroom teachers must be familiar with the tribal language included in the lesson so they can use it over time with the children.

IMMERSION

Immersion language teaching is a very successful model for developing strong language skills. It can be used for learners of any age, from infants to adults, and in casual and formal learning situations. While there are many different ways of doing immersion, they all involve using the tribal language in a normal, conversational way with learners, and generally avoiding use of the dominant language (such as English). In some programs, immersion is used at all times and for all interactions in the learning environment, including conversations between and among teachers, parents and non-teaching staff. Immersion is considered the best and fastest way to develop learners' language skills when the goal is language fluency.

Immersion requires that teachers be able to speak comfortably in the language on a wide range of topics. In some cases, these skills need to be built before an immersion strategy is adopted. For full-day immersion, teachers need to be able to talk in the tribal language about everything that happens in the classroom, from brushing teeth to math concepts in the block corner to exploration of the playground. This can be an immense challenge, even for teachers who speak the tribal language as a first language. Yet, the results are very rewarding.

If teachers are still at the early stages of building their language skills, it is not realistic to start with a full immersion approach. Full immersion can still be a long-term goal, but it is necessary to develop language skills among teaching staff first. However, there are ways for teachers in this situation to use immersion principles even as they are developing their own language skills. These methods are described in Chapter V. Language Teaching Tips and Examples section.

English in the Immersion Learning Environment. In an immersion setting, you will have to decide how to respond when children speak in English. It is important to have a clear, consistent and developmentally appropriate strategy for dealing with this situation. This strategy should promote and encourage use of the tribal language, while ensuring that children's physical, emotional and developmental needs are met. To achieve these goals, these practices will help:

- *Positive reinforcement.* Rather than correcting or ignoring children when they use English, guide them toward appropriate use of the tribal language. Respond to them in the tribal language.

- *Survival language.* Identify the survival words and phrases in the tribal language that children will need for basic communication and for building their language skills. These might include "I am hungry." "Where is the bathroom?" Make sure that children just entering the immersion program learn these words and phrases in the first few weeks.

- *Consistent language use among adults.* Make sure that adults are using the tribal language at all times in the classroom. Dedicate time and resources to training and practicing immersion teaching methods.

One popular immersion model for language revitalization is called a language nest, a "place for very young children to go to be nurtured and cared for by fluent speakers in the hopes that they too will grow up to be speakers of the language" (First Peoples' Cultural Council, 2014). In a language nest, there is a focus on context-rich, culturally grounded language learning that will develop fluent language speakers. The language nest model was adopted with great success by Māori and Hawai'ian language revitalization programs and has spread to many other indigenous communities. The Esther Martinez Native American Languages Preservation Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-394) defines a language nest. The act is available at https://www.congress.gov/bill/109th-congress/house-bill/4766/text/pl. The Administration for Native Americans (ANA) provides information about online resources, including a handbook and a toolkit, http://www.fpcc.ca/files/PDF/Language/Language_Nest/FPCC_LanguageNestHandbook_EmailVersion2.pdf. ANA has provided funding for language nests.

DUAL LANGUAGE

Another option is a dual language approach. In this model, at least one teacher is fluent in the tribal language. The other teacher is fluent in English. Ideally, this teacher must understand the tribal language and may also be fluent in it. In a dual language approach, the tribal language and English are used equally as languages of instruction and communication. Children develop fluency in both languages as well as literacy skills in English (and maybe also literacy skills in the tribal language).

There are several ways to implement the dual language approach, but all involve alternating between the two languages so that both are used equally in the classroom. Each language is used for the same amount of time, for similar kinds of activities and with the same intensity. Teachers may alternate between the languages on a daily or weekly basis, or spend half of every day using each of the languages. What is important is that an agreed-upon, written plan is in place.

Children learn to communicate with each teacher in the language that teacher speaks. This can be an excellent option when children do not already know English, and/or need support developing their English skills. The drawback to dual language is that children receive less exposure to the tribal language than in an immersion classroom.

STRUCTURED LANGUAGE LESSONS

The majority of the programs we visited are teaching the tribal language through short lessons. These lessons take a wide variety of forms but are generally less than half an hour. They take place at least a couple of times a week. Structured language lessons are appropriate for the developmental level of children in the program and focus on conversational and communicative language. These lessons may be a possible or feasible option for programs with limited time for language teaching or with teachers who are still developing their own tribal language skills. Initially, the lesson approach is implemented in programs in order to build language skills among children and teachers. Later, a transition can be made to a more intensive language teaching model.

Language lessons pose a few limitations. Unless there is a careful focus on teaching communicative language skills, children will tend to memorize simple rote phrases and vocabulary. In addition, even when lessons focus on conversational skills, learners will progress more slowly than in immersion or dual language models.

Programs have achieved optimal results with structured language lessons with these features:

- Developmental appropriateness for early childhood language learners
- Physical or hands-on activities
- Daily presentation, if possible
- Emphasis on communicative language skills rather than repetition

These features should be part of structured language lessons no matter how the lessons are implemented or who teaches them.

In some cases, language lessons used in Head Start or Early Head Start (HS/EHS) are adapted from lessons developed for older learners. Often these language teachers have little experience working with young children. In these cases, regular consultations between HS/EHS teachers and language teachers help ensure that language lessons are developmentally appropriate.

If the language lesson is taught by an outside teacher, it is important that the classroom teachers participate in the lesson along with the children. This has two benefits: it sends the children a strong message that the language is valued by their teachers, and it allows the classroom teacher to learn the language along with the children. Because language lessons are such a small part of the children's total daily language exposure, it is important that the classroom teachers reinforce the language by using it with the children throughout the day.

Like the programs we visited, you will probably use a blend of several methods and also develop some new strategies of your own. You may find that you need to adapt what others are doing to fit in with your community and program. Just keep in mind the importance of using the tribal language in conversations with children in order to develop their language skills.

Supporting Language Learning for Adult Learners

In addition to teaching language to the children in your program, you also will need a plan for developing language skills among your teachers and families. Some teaching methods described here work better with older learners, though there is interest in adapting them for younger children. There also are many resources about language revitalization with older learners, including books, journals and websites, as well as conferences and workshops around the country. If you would like to learn more in order to decide which resources are best for your program, consult the references provided in this section.

MASTER-APPRENTICE

The Master-Apprentice method of language revitalization, also sometimes called the Mentor/Apprentice method, uses the principles of language immersion, but in a private setting instead of a classroom. Fluent speakers, usually elders, team up with younger apprentices (adults or teens) to spend 10 to 20 hours per week together doing activities using only the tribal language to communicate. Teams receive training to help them get used to speaking only their tribal language. They are often paid for the time they spend together. Teams usually work together for several years.

There are many adaptations of this method, including working in groups of several master speakers and apprentices together, rather than in pairs, and spending more than 20 hours per week with each other. One team whose members do not live near each other uses Internet video chat services to practice the language together.

While the Master-Apprentice method is not a solution for teaching language in an early childhood setting, it has been used by many communities to develop the language skills of adult language teachers. It is an excellent option for communities that still have some elderly fluent speakers, but in which the language is not used in the home or in the community.

The original Master-Apprentice Program was developed by the Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival. You can read more about it on their website at http://www.aicls.org/#!map/cd7v.

TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE (TPR)

Commonly referred to as TPR, this method is based on how children naturally learn their first language. It was developed for language teachers in primary school classrooms and relies on immersion methods as well as movement-based instruction. Learners respond to the teacher's commands to develop their language skills. Images and other props are used to help learners understand the teacher's meaning as they learn the language. It also allows them the opportunity to listen to the language for a defined period before they are expected to understand or speak it. TPR can be adapted for young children. You can read more about TPR at http://www.context.org/iclib/ic06/asher.

ACCELERATED SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION (ASLA)

The ASLA method relies on using carefully chosen images paired with spoken language to teach language in a classroom setting, allowing teachers to delay or avoid using writing. This can be especially helpful in programs with few curriculum resources or no writing

system. ASLA was developed by S. Neyooxet Greymorning, Ph.D., who conducts training workshops on this method. Many communities use ASLA with older learners, but several HS/EHS programs are adapting it for use with young children. You can learn more at http://www.nsilc.org/index.htm.

WHERE ARE YOUR KEYS (WAYK)

Designed to rapidly develop language skills among learners in a fun, supportive and interactive setting, WAYK has been used successfully in the classroom with older learners. We are not aware of anyone using it to teach young children, but several programs use it to teach the tribal language to staff. WAYK is a full immersion method that relies heavily on a special series of hand gestures to help teachers and students communicate and manage the class. It teaches students how to be active learners and allows them to become teachers quickly. Workshops are offered to learn the WAYK method. Consult the WAYK website for more information: http://whereareyourkeys.org.

Many more methods and resources are listed at the Teaching Indigenous Languages website at http://www2.nau.edu/~jar/Methods.html and in the *Head Start Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness Resource Catalogue Volume Two: Native and Heritage Language Preservation, Revitalization, and Maintenance (Second Edition)*, http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/fcp/docs/resource-catalogue-main-book-4.pdf.

ASSESSMENT

It is important to check regularly on progress toward the tribal language goals your program has set for the children. If you are implementing one of the language models, you will want to know how the children are doing. A different but equally important assessment process can be undertaken if your program also has language goals for adult learners or for the larger community. Assessing progress on a regular basis gives you an opportunity to make changes if your strategies do not seem to be working. It also allows you to recognize and celebrate your achievements.

In early childhood programs, assessing progress does not mean testing. Rather, it means that teachers use ongoing, frequent observation and other appropriate means to assess children's language development. For example, if you have introduced vocabulary for the names of local animals, you can listen how children incorporate the names in their everyday conversations and in their play with animal figures. Also, you can observe how children use the tribal language to express themselves and how well they understand the language that others use with them. You also can observe the contexts in which children use the tribal language—with adult speakers or peers? During structured activities, on the playground or while looking at picture books? Careful observing will give you a sense of what children know and understand and where you need to offer more support. You also can ask families about how and when children are using the tribal language at home.

By observing children's tribal language usage and by engaging in conversations with them, you will have a sense of how they are progressing. Accordingly, you can adjust your teaching strategies for the group and for individuals. If there are bilingual children in the program, assessment of their progress must be done for all of the languages they are learning, including English. No matter the language, you can rely on observations of the children to help in your planning and curriculum development. Also, it may be appropriate for your program to focus on assessing teachers' language progress in order to make sure they are able to deliver high-quality language input to the children they teach.

Programs we visited also noted that assessment practices need to be directly relevant to your community's language goals, apart from your goals for the children in the early childhood program. Most likely, language testing may not be the most appropriate way to evaluate progress towards your broader goals. There are many other ways to assess progress, such as examining language attitudes and use within the community and assessing family support and engagement in language revitalization efforts.

Programs we visited have used various strategies to assess their community language goals, including these:

- Holding meetings with staff, families and partners
- Conducting surveys to solicit feedback on specific project goals, objectives and activities
- Re-assessing tribal language knowledge and attitudes in the community
- Assessing knowledge and practices of teachers

SUMMARY

IV. Developing a Strategy

Developing strategies for reaching your language goals is a complex process and takes time. It includes identifying language resources and selecting a model of instruction for the children. It also involves considering how you will support adult learners, including teachers, family members and others in the community. Ongoing assessment is part of an effective strategy because it allows you to make changes to better achieve your goals.

V. Implementing Language Revitalization

The programs we visited use a wide variety of methods, activities and tools to support their language teaching and to overcome challenges. Programs also stressed that language revitalization is more than simply teaching the language—it also entails helping children and their families become confident and comfortable speakers in a wide variety of situations. Some of their most widely used and successful strategies are described here, along with guidance on a number of common challenges. The strategies can fit in with any of the models and help programs build skills and confidence among teachers and learners:

- Use every bit of language you know, even if you don't understand it perfectly or you make mistakes.

- Don't worry about confusing children or giving them "too much" language.

- Move beyond giving commands and asking yes/no questions to having everyday, extended conversations.

- Make sure children hear the language in a wide variety of situations. Bathe them in the language!

- Use your language as much as you can. Children need to hear the language for many hours every day in order to develop strong language skills, so the more teachers are speaking to children in the language, the better.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

We heard common themes from the programs.

Anxiety

Feelings of anxiety and shame among language learners present significant barriers to language revitalization. In addition to historical trauma, learners may feel intimidated by the complexity of their tribal language or the writing system, if there is one. Personal or financial issues, such as lack of transportation to adult language classes or no Internet access, may cause anxiety or embarrassment and, therefore, pose barriers to language learning.

Although children are generally not shy about using the language, adults may be. In every program we visited, teachers, families and even first language speakers reported being anxious about using the language. Programs had several important messages for language teachers and learners:

- It is normal to be anxious when learning your tribal language. In addition to concerns about making mistakes, the many historical reasons described at the beginning of this report can be sources of stress.

- Encourage your adult students to make mistakes! Errors are an unavoidable part of learning anything new. When we make mistakes, it shows that, like young children, we are working as hard as we can and that we are trying to learn and progress. As one language revitalization teacher said, "We are all toddlers in our language!"

- Prepare language learners to expect to make mistakes. If they have realistic expectations, they will feel less self-doubt and be more willing to challenge themselves and support each other.

Dialects

Concerns and disputes related to different dialects of a language are a common issue for language revitalization programs. Programs may need to decide how to represent different dialects in the writing system, or in curricula and other language materials. They also may need to decide whether to use one dialect exclusively in a HS/EHS classroom or center or throughout a program. No matter your approach, it is likely that someone in the community will disagree with your decision.

Unfortunately, in some cases these disputes have been extremely destructive, even leading to people withdrawing support for the language revitalization effort. Some refer to this process as "language suicide." Others see it as an aspect of lateral oppression arising from historical trauma. This means that anger or frustration is turned toward others in the community. As with every aspect of revitalization, each community must decide how to address this issue if it arises. However, the experiences of other communities can provide ideas for resolving the issue.

First, it can be helpful to understand that traditionally, understanding different dialects of the tribal language was often part of being a competent speaker of the language and a member of the community. Although you might speak the language a little differently than people in the next village, you could still talk with them. For this reason, many revitalization programs consider understanding neighboring dialects of their language, and even nearby tribal languages, part of reclaiming the ways of their ancestors.

Most of the programs we visited have faced this issue and want to help other communities resolve it. One program director felt that tribal or language program leadership must "take a stand" about dialects and not let this issue derail the program or drive people away. In her case, the program honored all dialects of the language. Other programs allowed teachers to use whichever dialect they had learned, and young learners also were allowed to use a different dialect if that was what they heard at home. One elder speaker and teacher of her language said she simply "refuses to engage in complaining about dialects." Another language teacher said that her philosophy is to "feed solutions and starve problems." Finally, one Northwest tribal community that was struggling with this issue began to move past it after being told by a group of Pueblo elders, "You need to stop fighting about your language, or it will die."

Members of those programs have responded to dialect-related complaints with positive affirmations, such as these:

- Understanding multiple dialects is what the ancestors did.
- There are many ways to say things, and they are all good ways.
- Dialects add to the richness of our language.
- It is part of our traditional values to honor and respect all dialects.
- We invite families and the community to share what they know with us and with the children in our program.
- If people know another way to say something, they can and should use that.
- Everyone should just speak the way their elders do, and we will all understand each other.
- Thank you! Now I know another way to say that.

Literacy

Language is not the same as literacy. Language is the spoken or signed system used for communication. Literacy is a way of representing that language using a writing system. Some, but not all, languages have writing systems. For most of human history, very few people could read or write, but everyone spoke a language.

In language revitalization, each community, program and person may need to decide how and whether to include literacy as part of their language work. Some tribal communities have no written form of their language and choose not to develop a system. Other communities developed writing systems hundreds of years ago. They have millions of pages of newspapers, literature, legal documents and personal correspondence in their languages. These and other factors will influence decisions about whether and how to include Native language literacy in HS/EHS.

No matter your decision, it is important to understand the difference between learning to speak and understand a language and learning to read and write a language. Your

language and literacy teaching strategies need to be developmentally appropriate and reflect the characteristics of your language. Many programs reported that they focused first on spoken language skills to prepare children to read and write at a later time.

This does not mean that programs should not expose young language learners to the written language. Many programs include language labels throughout the classroom. They have posters and other signs in the tribal language. Children and adults can benefit from these written language aids and reminders.

Elder Speakers

Some communities are fortunate to have elders who are first language speakers who participate in language revitalization. They can teach and support both adult and child language learners and connect them to tribal culture, history, knowledge and traditions. Their involvement often adds to the prestige and acceptance of the program's language efforts by the community and tribal leadership.

If elder speakers seem hesitant to participate in language activities, it may be helpful to talk to them about their concerns or suggest other opportunities for them to use the language. Some speakers have had very negative experiences related to the language and may be uncomfortable using the language. Some are not comfortable in school settings because of their own school experiences. Others may not be confident in their language skills because they speak a less common dialect or because they have not spoken the language in a long time. As one elder told us, "I need some time to warm up!" Finally, some elders may have supported language revitalization in the past and felt that their efforts were wasted or not appreciated.

If you are fortunate enough to have language speakers who are willing to help in the program, you should consider whether they will need any preparation or training beforehand. In many cases, they will not have experience or training in teaching the language. In particular, you may need to explain what you expect from them in an immersion or dual language model. One of the most common challenges we heard is that elders may simply not notice when they start using English instead of the tribal language. In addition, they may think they are being rude by speaking the tribal language if there are people in the classroom who do not understand. In many tribal communities, it is disrespectful for younger people to give direction to elders, so it is important for programs to consider culturally appropriate ways to provide guidance to elders.

Technology

Technology is increasingly used by some communities in their language revitalization efforts. Technology can be a wonderful tool to support skilled language teachers and learners both in the early childhood program and at home. Although technology can support language revitalization, it should never be thought of as the primary strategy or solution for those efforts.

Children, especially very young children, learn language best through face-to-face human interaction, and so this must be the main focus of a language revitalization effort. Research has shown that children under 3 years of age do not learn language from recordings and instead require social interaction. Children ages 3–5 may experience limited language benefit from listening to recordings (Kuhl, 2007). For these reasons, technology is often a better tool for supporting older learners.

Only your community can decide whether and how to use technology among community members and in your program. Some tribal nations do not want their language to be written or recorded in any way. Others publish newspapers and books in their language. Some make recordings and other materials in the language freely available on the Internet or over the radio. Cultural norms and values, along with best practices for child development, must be taken into account when thinking about technology's role in your HS/EHS program.

Solo Language Efforts

In some programs, there may be only one teacher who is passionate about or ready to begin using the tribal language. These teachers often feel isolated or unsupported in their efforts. They say that they use the language with children much less than they would like to.

In these situations, knowing that other staff and program leadership support their efforts can make a big difference. Several teachers in this position told us that having just one other person in the program—it could be a cook or a disabilities specialist, a bus driver or a fiscal manager—who commits to using the language with the children makes a big difference. With that additional support, many of these teachers felt less overwhelmed and more confident. As a result, they used the language more consistently with the children. They also said that having the blessing of program leadership increased the chances that individual staff would team up to develop their own language revitalization strategy and

provide a model for other teachers to follow. Again, it is best for the program to have a plan so that all staff understand the language goals and can be supportive.

LANGUAGE TEACHING TIPS AND EXAMPLES

The programs we visited had developed a wide variety of approaches to language teaching. This section describes some of the most innovative and effective strategies, activities and tips that were shared with us. Examples of program practices are given.

Culturally Focused Environments

Tribal language cannot be separated from culture. Communities told us that their languages reflect the unique ways they see the world and contain the knowledge and values of their tribal communities.

By teaching language within a culturally focused environment, many programs find that they strengthen not only their language teaching, but also other aspects of the learning environment. Children benefit socially, emotionally and academically. Culturally focused environments benefit program staff and children in these ways:

- They signal that the tribal language and culture are valued.

- They remind adults and children to use the language.

- They prepare children to participate in cultural activities and traditional practices in the community.

TIPS FOR CREATING A CULTURALLY FOCUSED ENVIRONMENT

- Draw inspiration from and build your curriculum (or complement the existing one) around traditional stories, the local landscape and environment, and local issues and events.
- Fill your classroom with cultural practices, art, technology and knowledge.
- Take children out of the classroom whenever possible to interact with their community, natural environment and traditional spaces.

EXAMPLES

- *One classroom has a tipi where they use language and tell stories with the children. They report that children love being in the tipi and using the language there. A child with a language delay responded especially well, developing stronger skills in her tribal language than she had in English and gaining social confidence as well.*
- *Another program has a cultural playground that changes with the seasons, along with cultural artifacts in classrooms and in common spaces throughout the entire center.*
- *A number of immersion programs have designated a small space in the classroom where English is permitted. It can be as simple as a square marked by tape on the floor. This space can be used by adults to talk to classroom visitors who do not speak the tribal language, or by children who find that they are not able to say something important in the tribal language.*

Progress Toward Immersion

In many programs we visited, teachers do not yet have the language skills to implement dual language or immersion models. Several of these programs have had great success training teachers to use their limited language skills with children while still following some of the principles of immersion. This ensures that they are moving beyond teaching words and are developing children's speaking ability. Teachers can start using basic speaking skills with children even as they, the adults, are learning to use the language in more complex and varied ways. The important point is to talk in the language.

Programs have reported success with two strategies that incorporate immersion principles in a focused way. One strategy is for teachers to learn phrases that are common in the classroom and can be used with the children throughout the day. By using and responding

to phrases, the children learn common, important words in their tribal language. At the same time, they also begin to understand how to put those words together to form sentences or questions. This is an early and very important step in becoming a speaker of a language. Programs we visited often included these phrases:

- Where is your coat?
- Brush your teeth!
- Are you hungry?
- Do you have to go to the bathroom?
- Everyone line up!

A second strategy involving immersion principles is for teachers to learn the tribal language needed to do specific, common and simple activities with the children. Then they can do an immersion activity completely in the language. Some teachers "build out" by first learning a few sentences and then developing one or more of those sentences into the immersion activity.

Immersion language activities introduce both teachers and children to the concept of immersion in a very gentle and nonthreatening way. When they are able to conduct an activity entirely in the language, they often report feeling a great sense of accomplishment. Another advantage of these activities is that they often are routines the children follow at home with their families. In turn, the families can learn these sentences and support their children's language development at home. Programs have started with routines, such as these:

- Putting on shoes
- Brushing teeth
- Eating a meal
- Lining up
- Cleaning up
- Playing games

TIPS FOR PROGRESSING TOWARD AN IMMERSION APPROACH

There are many learning experiences that may be used to build out the language. During these activities, teachers are narrating in the tribal language what children are doing. This approach is referred to as "parallel talk" in CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System®) observations that are conducted in many Head Start programs. Jumping off points for using the tribal language include:

- Playing with blocks and describing the different shapes and colors
- Taking a nature walk and describing the weather and plants

Think about these questions as your program builds up to an immersion approach:

- What are some common activities in your classroom?
- What sentences or questions do you and the children use during that activity?
- How can you begin to use the tribal language in these activities? What words and concepts do you need to know?

EXAMPLES

- *Some teachers have started with just one activity and then over time learned how to do more and more of their classroom activities in the language. Eventually teachers and children have enough language skills to spend several hours using only the tribal language.*

- *In some programs, language teachers have excellent language skills but are not able to be with the children all day. In one case, teachers from a tribal language program come into class several times a week and speak the language with children as they play, read books or do other activities. The classroom teachers are able to learn and practice along with the children while the language teacher is there. The program staff continue to reinforce the language after the language teacher leaves.*

- *An HS/EHS center wanted to develop a revitalization program, but their community had no remaining speakers of their language. They secured outside funding to bring in an elder speaker (and trained teacher) from a neighboring community to help their teachers develop language and language teaching skills. The elder speaker spent time in the classrooms, talking with the children in her language. She taught weekly classes for HS/EHS teachers and mentored them as they began using their language conversationally with the children. She also taught classes for families and others in the community. Attendees included parents and teachers from the local public school who spoke the language with their Native American students.*

Use of Games and Songs

Many programs use games and songs with children to practice new language skills. They are easy to do as immersion activities. Games and songs that are fun and developmentally appropriate usually include physical movement and have repeating actions and words.

Games might include familiar English-language games that are translated into the tribal language; new games specifically developed for revitalization; and traditional games that have been adapted for the language revitalization classroom.

Songs are a fun way to reinforce communicative language skills. Traditional songs also provide an opportunity to teach important cultural values and knowledge. As with games, songs for the classroom can be drawn from a variety of sources:

- Traditional tribal songs
- Translations or adaptations of popular English-language songs the children already know
- Newly created songs in the tribal language

TIPS FOR USING GAMES AND SONGS

Does your community have traditional songs in your tribal language that you could use in HS/EHS?

- What songs would you like to translate or adapt into your language?
- Could anyone in your program or community write new songs in your language?

EXAMPLES

- *One program has taken the melody from popular songs from the radio, which are familiar to everyone in the community, and replaced the English with new lyrics in the tribal language.*
- *Another program used grant money to hire a traditional singer to write songs for the children to learn and perform.*
- *Teachers from a number of programs develop and share immersion games with each other. The games can be translated and adapted for different languages.*

Ways To Extend the Language

Teachers often ask for ideas about different ways to use the tribal language with children. Some excellent ideas are given below.

TIPS FOR EXTENDING THE LANGUAGE

You need to provide many opportunities for children to hear and practice their language. Be intentional as you use the tribal language with children.

- Repeat what the child says in English in the tribal language.

- Narrate in the tribal language what a child is doing (sometimes referred to as parallel talk in CLASS).
  - "I see you're drawing a picture of an animal with four legs. You're picking up a brown crayon. Now it looks like you're adding a long tail."
  - "You are working so hard to finish this puzzle. You are turning the piece around to make it fit."

- Use language during indoor and outdoor physical activities, including:
  - Playground activities: "Josie is watering the plants to help them grow. Lucy is getting more water in her bucket."
  - Games that include repetitive instructions and verbal responses from the children.
  - Playing with blocks, puppets and other props that stimulate use of vocabulary and reinforce cultural themes.

- Use fun games to assess and reinforce language learning, rather than asking children to repeat back after you in a drill fashion.

- Ask children to lead a game.

- Ask children to point to someone wearing clothing of a certain color.

- Instead of just counting to 10, ask children to count progressively higher (first child counts to 1, second to 2, third to 3, etc.).

The Logic of the Language

Remember that in order to become speakers, your language learners need to understand how the language works. This is called the grammar of the language. Every language has its own logic, or system, which may be very different from English. The language may have unfamiliar sounds, or put words in very different orders than English does. There are fun ways to draw learners' attention to this logic. Preschoolers may notice or verbalize a few grammatical concepts, but for the most part, they will not be able to do that until they are older. Programs we visited shared a few tips and examples.

TIPS FOR HIGHLIGHTING THE LOGIC OF THE LANGUAGE

You can draw attention to features of the tribal language that are similar to and different from English or another language they may know.

EXAMPLES FOR CHILDREN

- *During circle time, the children were using color words in short sentences in their language. They were talking about each other's clothing. The teacher pointed out that the word for "purple" in their language contained the words for "red" and "blue." This was an opportunity to draw their attention to how some words have other words inside them, so that they can start noticing this elsewhere in the language.*

EXAMPLES FOR ADULT LEARNERS

- *A language teacher uses "sentence templates" to teach adult language learners how sentences in their language are put together—what the parts of the sentence are, where they go, and how to use those templates to create new sentences using different words.*

- *She also teaches learners about "word families." These are groups of words, with slightly different meanings, that all share the same "root." An example in English would be the root word "hand," which has a word family containing handy, backhand, handle, handstand, handprint and many more.*

SUMMARY

V. Implementing Language Revitalization

To implement a language revitalization program in your community, you may need to address a number of challenges. Consider them opportunities to continue a dialogue with stakeholders that in the end will strengthen your program. Early childhood programs have found many creative and stimulating ways to support tribal language learning for the children. They have used culturally focused environments, games and songs, and lessons about the logic of the language. The tips and examples in this section can guide you.

VI. Building Support for Language Revitalization

There are many ways you can support and promote your language efforts, both while you are developing your strategy and after you begin to implement it. These include providing passionate and dedicated leadership; creating strong relationships with your families, tribal community and organizational partners; maintaining open communication within your program and in your community; and building knowledge about and interest in your language.

LEADERSHIP

In every successful program we visited, there is at least one person in a position of leadership who champions the language effort. This person exhibits these qualities and actions:

- Is passionate and dedicated to revitalizing their tribal language

- Inspires others in their community to support and participate in the revitalization effort

- Helps the effort survive the inevitable challenges

- Shows courage, determination and creative problem-solving

- Establishes a supportive and welcoming environment for all language learners

- Understands that the process takes many years

- Ensures that the revitalization plan and timetable are realistic

- Builds broad community support for their efforts

- Understands and is committed to a long-term approach to language revitalization

Families and teachers frequently mentioned how important this leader's inspiration and advocacy had been for the success of the program and for their own continued involvement.

COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION

Communication about the effort, especially on a community-wide level, is vital for supporting children's language development both within and outside of the program. Although it can be challenging and time-consuming, it is important to include a communication strategy in your language revitalization plan to update families, tribal

leadership and the community on your plans, activities and progress. Clear and regular communication will:

- Generate support for your efforts
- Raise the status of the language
- Draw in more participants

Many programs include in their communication plans some education about language loss and revitalization, such as:

- Reasons for language loss
- Benefits of language revitalization
- Expected outcomes of doing nothing
- Experiences of other tribal communities

They report that hearing about tribes with few or no speakers can be a wake-up call, leading to increased concern about language loss and support for revitalization. Similarly, a community that feels overwhelmed by the challenge of revitalizing its language may be inspired by learning what other communities have done and how far they have come. The Northwest Indian Language Institute has created an excellent fact sheet on the benefits of language revitalization available at: http://pages.uoregon.edu/nwili/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/forwebpageBenefitsL2_ECE10_17_14.pdf.

Programs also have found that they need to have a plan for communicating regularly with staff in their program—including classroom teachers, administrators and language teachers. They have discovered that when they communicate more with each other and with families and other stakeholders, they are better able to resolve problems and improve their language efforts.

You may also want to share information about support from the Office of Head Start (OHS) for language revitalization. OHS knows that learning the tribal language and culture contributes to children's school readiness and to their overall well-being. OHS fully supports teaching tribal language and culture in every classroom. However, programs still report that staff, families and communities mistakenly believe that OHS does not support or even allow the tribal language to be used in programs. Clearing up this misconception may be an important aspect of your communication efforts.

One common question is how CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System®) observations will be conducted in language immersion classrooms. CLASS observations are required as part of the OHS Aligned Monitoring System process, and they must

be conducted in the language of instruction in the classroom. Therefore, immersion classrooms will only be assessed by observers who speak that language. If no CLASS observer speaks the language of the classroom, the observation will not take place.

Make sure that your HS/EHS program and tribal community know that OHS supports teaching tribal language and culture. You may want to share the Information Memorandum clarifying this support (*Native Language Preservation, Revitalization, Restoration, and Maintenance in Head Start and Early Head Start Programs: ACF-IM-HS-15-02*, available at http:// eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/standards/im/2015/resour_im_002_031215.html). By sharing this information, you can help ease concerns and increase support for your language revitalization efforts.

ACCESS TO THE TRIBAL LANGUAGE

Programs have found that learners need to hear and use the language for many hours every day to develop strong language skills. It is a good idea to work with families and others in the community to increase language use with different people in a variety of places and at various times outside of the early childhood program. This helps reinforce the language children learn in the program and expands their opportunities to hear and speak the language. Below are a few suggestions we heard from the communities we visited:

- Put language on local radio or television. This is especially helpful for families who want to learn along with their children.

- If older children are learning the language in school, encourage them to teach and mentor younger children.

- If possible, coordinate what is being learned in HS/EHS with other language efforts in the community, including school and community classes.

- Raise the profile of language. The more people hear (and hear about) the language, the more likely they are to value it and learn it!
  - Talk about it.
  - Ask people about it.
  - Use it in public places.
  - Make it something people think about.

- Help people feel comfortable with the language. They may be hesitant to get involved because they think the language is very hard to learn or that they are not welcome to participate. Demystify the language and create a welcoming and supportive "culture of revitalization."

COLLABORATION

Programs emphasize the need to build strong relationships with families, individuals and organizations within and outside of the community. These can be formal or informal partnerships or even personal connections. Partnerships contribute to revitalization in a variety of ways. They can provide all of these resources:

- Language materials and expertise
- Volunteers
- Training for teachers and learners
- Mentorship and emotional support
- Financial resources (see Sustainability and Funding section)
- Facilities and other in-kind support
- Advocacy and encouragement

Family Engagement

Families are a crucial part of revitalization. Researchers report that children in revitalization programs do better when their parents are involved (Hinton, 2001b). This is supported by the experiences of the programs we visited. They found that children have the best success when their families support the program's language efforts and are learning the language too. Programs recommend creating opportunities for families to learn along with their children and communicating with them about activities and accomplishments throughout the year.

Families are usually excited about their children learning the language. They report that as their children learn their tribal language in the program, they begin using it with siblings and caregivers at home. When this happens, families are eager to know what their children are saying. If they have opportunities to learn along with their children, they are able to provide additional support for their growing language skills.

There are a variety of strategies and tools that can help families support what children are learning in the language program:

- Handouts sent home with children
- Newsletter articles

- Recordings distributed on CD or online

- Family-teacher meetings

- Community language classes (open to families and anyone in the community who wants to participate)

- Opportunities for family members to volunteer in the classroom

One of the most common requests from families is help with pronunciation. Access to recordings of the language can help build confidence in new speakers.

A popular way to involve families is to hold a weekly community or family language class at a convenient time for them. Several programs have found that providing a dinner or organizing a potluck, and offering child care during the class, allows families to attend more regularly. The adults can focus on language learning while their children are being cared for nearby.

Other Alliances

Programs describe a wide range of partnerships that support their revitalization efforts. Below is a sample of successful collaborations with community entities:

- **Tribe with a similar language.** Provides language, teacher training and curricular materials.

- **Tribe's human resources director.** Understands staffing needs. Respects hiring criteria that includes language qualifications and interest.

- **Elementary schools.** Work together to assess/transition children coming from immersion program into English-language classrooms. Support continued tribal language use.

- **Local media.** Includes language programming on radio or TV. Publicizes language events and opportunities.

- **Tribal community.** Helps to develop and sustain support for the program. Brings in volunteers and additional staff with language and cultural expertise.

- **Tribal (and other) colleges and universities.** Work with researchers to develop language materials, conduct trainings, and assess program's progress.

- **Nonprofit organization.** Provides training and encouragement for revitalization community.

SUSTAINABILITY AND FUNDING

Finding resources to create and sustain a language revitalization effort can be challenging. Programs look for funds and non-financial support within their communities and from outside funders and organizations. However, it often takes years before they find the resources they need to fully implement their vision. Programs also struggle to retain their highly qualified language teachers, especially if they are competing with other language revitalization schools or programs that offer higher salaries.

Keep in mind that your existing HS/EHS resources may be used to support language revitalization in a number of ways. Depending on your language goals and your program budget, your program can pay wages for a third person in the classroom who is a fluent speaker or a language teacher. This person does not have to meet the training requirements for teachers or assistant teachers. Training funds can also pay for language and language teaching training, as long as these trainings support your program's language goals.

Some programs receive financial support from other federal agencies, such as the Administration for Native Americans (ANA) or the Foster Grandparents program. AmeriCorps may provide funding to place fluent speakers in classrooms. There are also private foundations that offer smaller grants for language revitalization, such as the Endangered Language Fund and the Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival. Some tribal language programs have received funding support from the Kellogg Foundation. You can find out more in Chapter VIII. Where to Get Help.

Partnerships can also be significant sources of support for your efforts. Local school, college and university programs may have access to funds, materials and personnel to share with you. Developing a strong network of institutions with a shared vision can add stability to your program and broaden your impact.

It is also important to remember that you can start very small and gradually add to your program as you have more time, expertise and resources.

SUMMARY

VI. Building Support for Language Revitalization

Successful planning and implementation of a language revitalization program require a variety of support systems. Strong leadership provides guidance and commitment. Communication and collaboration with families, community members, organizations and other partners are important. Promoting language access throughout the community signals that language efforts are underway. As your language revitalization program grows, so will the sources of support.

VII. Conclusion

Tribal language revitalization is a complex and long-term process that can bring immense rewards to children, their families and communities. In this report, we have shared some of the experiences and recommendations of HS/EHS programs across the country. These practices and strategies range from setting language goals and action plans to implementing effective language teaching models, and from connecting language and culture to increasing access to the language throughout the tribal community.

This information, along with the many other resources that are available, can help you develop a plan that works for your program and community.

When we asked successful programs about general advice they would give to those who are struggling, or just starting out, we consistently heard four recommendations. We will leave them with you.

- Be idealistic.
- Be fearless.
- Be practical.
- Make mistakes and learn from them.

VIII.   Where To Get Help

ORGANIZATIONS

There are many organizations that focus on language revitalization. Some are regional organizations, while others have a national or international focus. They may offer training, workshops, conferences, funding or other resources to support language revitalization. The list below is a small sample of these organizations, but you are likely to find more once you start looking.

Regional Events and Organizations

- Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival: http://www.aicls.org
- American Indian Language Development Institute: http://aildi.arizona.edu
- Breath of Life Language Restoration Workshop: http://www.aicls.org/#!breath-of-life/cd1c
- Celebrating Salish Conference: http://kalispeltribe.com/our-tribe/language/celebrating-salish-conference
- Grassroots Indigenous Multimedia: https://www.facebook.com/GrassrootsIM
- Grotto Foundation: http://www.grottofoundation.org
- Lakota Language Consortium: http://lakhota.org/our-role-impact
- Language is Life Conference: http://www.aicls.org/#!lil/c223z
- Live Your Language Alliance: http://www.liveyourlanguagealliance.org
- Noongwa e-Anishinaabemjig: http://www.umich.edu/~ojibwe
- Northwest Indian Language Institute: http://pages.uoregon.edu/nwili
- Oklahoma Native Language Association: http://oknativelanguage.com

National Events and Organizations

- Administration for Native Americans: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ana
- American Indian Higher Education Consortium: http://www.aihec.org
- AmeriCorps: http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/americorps
- Committee on Endangered Languages and Their Preservation: http://www.linguisticsociety.org/about/who-we-are/committees/endangered-languages-and-their-preservation-celp
- Consortium of Indigenous Language Organizations: http://www.ilinative.org/cilo

- Indigenous Language Institute: http://www.indigenous-language.org
- Kellogg Foundation: http://www.wkkf.org/grants#pp=10&p=1&q=language
- National Breath of Life Archival Institute for Indigenous Languages: http://nationalbreathoflife.org
- National Indian Education Association: http://www.niea.org
- Office of English Language Acquisition (Department of Education): http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/index.html
- Office of Indian Education (Department of Education): http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/oie/index.html
- Teaching Indigenous Languages: http://www2.nau.edu/jar/TIL.html

International and Transnational Events and Organizations

- Anishinaabemowin Teg: http://www.anishinaabemowin-teg.org
- CILLDI: http://www.cilldi.ualberta.ca
- CoLang: http://www.linguisticsociety.org/content/colang-institute-collaborative-research
- Endangered Language Alliance: http://elalliance.org
- Endangered Language Fund: http://www.endangeredlanguagefund.org
- First Nations and Endangered Languages Program: http://fnel.arts.ubc.ca
- First Peoples' Cultural Council: http://www.fpcc.ca/language/Programs
- Foundation for Endangered Languages: http://www.ogmios.org/index.php
- Indigenous Languages and Technology: http://www.u.arizona.edu/~cashcash/ILAT.html
- International Centre for Language Revitalisation: http://languagerevive.org/home
- International Conference on Language Documentation and Conservation: http://www.icldc-hawaii.org
- Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages: http://livingtongues.org
- Our Language: http://www.ourlanguage.org
- Recovering Voices: http://recoveringvoices.si.edu
- Resource Network for Linguistic Diversity: http://www.rnld.org
- Stabilizing Indigenous Languages Symposium: http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/History.html

RESOURCES

There are many resources available to support language revitalization. The online resources mentioned in this document are listed below:

Office of Head Start Resources

- *Head Start Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness Resource Catalogue Volume Two: Native and Heritage Language Preservation, Revitalization, and Maintenance (Second Edition)*: http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/fcp/docs/resource-catalogue-main-book-4.pdf

- Making It Work!: http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/making-it-work

- *Native Language Preservation, Revitalization, Restoration, and Maintenance in Head Start and Early Head Start Programs: ACF-IM-HS-15-02*: http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/standards/im/2015/resour_im_002_031215.html

- *Office of Head Start Tribal Language Report 2012*: http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/states/aian/tlr

Assessing Language Vitality

- Resource Network for Linguistic Diversity: http://www.rnld.org/assessing_vitality

- UNESCO: http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/endangered-languages/language-vitality

Legislation

- *The Native American Languages Act of 1990* (Public Law 101-477): http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-104/pdf/STATUTE-104-Pg1152.pdf

Language Teaching and Bilingualism

- Accelerated Second Language Acquisition (ASLA): No single website is available, but for examples of ASLA, go to http://www.nsilc.org/index.htm, http://216.174.135.221/michif/language_assets/accelerated_second_language_acquisition_method.pdf, and https://akabe.wikispaces.com/Language+Teaching+Methods

- *Benefits of Indigenous language learning*: http://pages.uoregon.edu/nwili/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/forwebpageBenefitsL2_ECE10_17_14.pdf

- *Language Nest Handbook*: http://www.fpcc.ca/files/PDF/Language/Language_Nest/FPCC_LanguageNestHandbook_EmailVersion2.pdf

- Master-Apprentice: http://www.aicls.org/#!map/cd7v

- Multilingual environments improve communication: http://dsclab.uchicago.edu/documents/Fan,%20Liberman,%20Keysar,%20&%20Kinzler%20(2015).pdf

- *Raising Bilingual Children*: http://www.linguisticsociety.org/files/Bilingual_Child.pdf

- Teaching Indigenous Languages: http://www2.nau.edu/~jar/Methods.html

- Total Physical Response: http://www.context.org/iclib/ic06/asher

- Where Are Your Keys: http://whereareyourkeys.org

IX. References

Adelman, C. (1981). Saving the baby: Language study and the new reforms in general education. *ADFL Bulletin*, *13*(2), 3–19. doi:10.1632/adfl.13.2.13

Alter, M. P. (1970). *A modern case for German*. American Association of Teachers of German. Philadelphia, PA: ERIC ED. Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED058809.pdf

Bacon, H., Kidd, G., & Seaborg, J. (1982). The effectiveness of bilingual instruction with Cherokee Indian students. *Journal of American Indian Education, 21,* 34–43.

Bialystok, E., Craik, F. I. M., & Freedman, M. (2007). Bilingualism as a protection against the onset of symptoms of dementia. *Neuropsychologia, 45,* 459–464. doi:10.1016/j.neuropsychologia.2006.10.009

Bruck, M. (1982). Language impaired children's performance in an additive bilingual education program. *Applied Psycholinguistics, 3(1)*, 45–60.

Crystal, D. (2002). *Language death.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP.

Fan, S. P., Liberman, Z., Keysar, B., & Kinzler, K. D. (2015). The exposure advantage: Early exposure to a multilingual environment promotes effective communication. *Psychological Science, 26*(7), 1090–1097. doi:10.1177/0956797615574699 Retrieved from http://dsclab.uchicago.edu/documents/Fan,%20Liberman,%20Keysar,%20&%20Kinzler%20(2015).pdf

First Peoples' Cultural Council. (2014). *Language nest handbook for B.C. First Nations communities*. Retrieved from http://www.fpcc.ca/files/PDF/Language/Language_Nest/FPCC_LanguageNestHandbook_EmailVersion2.pdf

Fishman, J. A. (1991). *Reversing language shift: Theoretical and empirical foundations of assistance to threatened languages*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Florey, M. (2009). Supporting indigenous languages and indigenous knowledge: Developing community training approaches for the 21st century. In P. Bates, M. Chiba, S. Kube, & D. Nakashima (Eds.), *Learning and knowing in indigenous societies today* (pp. 25–37). Paris, France: UNESCO.

Goodkind, J. R., Ross-Toledo, K., John, S., Hall, J. L., Ross, L., Freeland, L., . . . Lee, C. (2011). Rebuilding trust: A community, multiagency, state, and university partnership to improve behavioral health care for American Indian youth, their families, and communities. *Journal of Community Psychology, 39*(4), 452–477. doi:10.1002/jcop.20446

Greene, J. P. (1998). *A meta-analysis of the effectiveness of bilingual education*. The Tomas Rivera Policy Institute. Retrieved from http://www.languagepolicy.net/archives/greene.htm

Hakuta, K. (2001). *The education of language minority students: Testimony to the United States Commission on Civil Rights on April 13, 2001*. Retrieved from http://web.stanford.edu/~hakuta/www/archives/syllabi/Docs/CivilRightsCommission.htm

Hinton, L. (1994). *Flutes of fire: The Indian languages of California*. Salt Lake City, UT: Publishers Press.

Hinton, L. (2001a). Federal language policy and indigenous languages in the United States. In L. Hinton & K. Hale (Eds.), *The green book of language revitalization* (pp. 39–44). Boston, MA: Brill.

Hinton, L. (2001b). Language revitalization: An overview. In L. Hinton & K. Hale (Eds.), *The green book of language revitalization* (pp. 3–18). Boston, MA: Brill.

Hofstadter, R., & Smith, W. (Eds.). (1961). *A documentary history of American higher education*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kativik School Board. (n.d.). *Kativik initiated research: The basis for informed decision making*. Retrieved from http://www.kativik.qc.ca/sites/kativik.qc.ca/files/documents/11/KSBIR_e.pdf

Kuhl, P. K. (2007). Is speech learning 'gated' by the social brain? *Developmental Science 10*(1), 110–120. Retrieved from http://www.ircs.upenn.edu/pinkel/lectures/kuhl/kuhlreading2.pdf

McCarty, T. L. (2009). Schooling, resistance, and American Indian languages. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language, 132*(1), 27–42. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/249929852_Schooling_resistance_and_American_Indian_languages

McCarty, T. L., & Dick, G. S. (1996). *Mother tongue literacy and language renewal: The case of the Navajo*. Paper presented at the 1996 World Conference on Literacy, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ. Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED422133.pdf

Mmari, K. N., Blum, R. W., & Teufel-Shone, N. (2009). What increases risk and protection for delinquent behaviors among American Indian youth? *Youth and Society, 41,* 382–413.

Paradis, J., Crago, M., & Genesee, F. (2003). Object clitics as a clinical marker of SLI in French: Evidence from French-English bilingual children. In B. Beachley et al. (Eds.), *BUCLD 27 Proceedings* (pp. 638–649). Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Press. Retrieved from https://www.ualberta.ca/~jparadis/BilSLI_pro_bucld.pdf

Paradis, J., Crago, M., Genesee, F., & Rice, M. (2003). French-English bilingual children with specific language impairment: How do they compare with their monolingual peers? *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research, 46,* 1–15. Retrieved from http://www.ualberta.ca/~jparadis/Johanne_Paradis_Homepage/Publications_files/PCGR_JSLHR.pdf

Rosier, P., & Holm, W. (1980). The Rock Point experience: A longitudinal study of a Navajo school program (Saad Naaki Bee Na'nitin). *Bilingual Education Series 8, Papers in Applied Linguistics*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics. Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED195363.pdf

Sachs, M. (1982). Literacy, learning, and foreign language study. *ADFL Bulletin, 13*(3), 13–15.