

# ***Measuring and Supporting Child-Teacher Interactions: A State and Tribal Story***

April 20, 2022

Webinar Series on

Measuring and Supporting Policy Changes: Lessons Learned by  
CCDF Lead Agency–Research Partnerships

OPRE Report #2022-262

# Housekeeping

- The webinar is being recorded.
- The recording, slides, and transcript will be posted online. Links will be emailed to participants when the materials are ready.
- All participants are muted.
- Type your **questions** or **comments** into the chat box at any time. We will take clarifying questions at the end of each presentation with more discussion at the end of the webinar.

# Center for Supporting Research on CCDBG Implementation

Supported through the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) in the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and managed through a contract with the Urban Institute

*Alysia Blandon, OPRE Project Officer*

*Julia Isaacs, Project Director; Teresa Derrick-Mills, Deputy Project Director, Laura Wagner, Project Assistant*

**Goal:** Support CCDF Lead Agencies in building research and evaluation capacity

## Activities:

- [Building Child Care Research Capacity](#) through web events and written materials
- Supporting grant teams with CCDBG Implementation Research and Evaluation Planning and Implementation Grants

# Panelists



Brittany Suralta,  
Director for the  
Employment and  
Training Services  
Department at Cook  
Inlet Tribal Council



Connie Wirz, Senior  
Director, Clare Swan  
Early Learning  
Center at Cook Inlet  
Tribal Council



Hattie Harvey,  
Associate Professor  
of Psychology at  
the University of  
Alaska Anchorage



Thea Stevens, Infant  
Toddler Program  
Manager, Georgia  
Department of Early  
Care and Learning



Shayna Funke, Lead  
Policy and Business  
Operations Analyst,  
Georgia Department  
of Early Care and  
Learning

# Our Focus Today

**Motivation for, key ingredients of, key partnerships, research approaches, and lessons learned for two policy-researcher partnerships**

- 1. Fostering Culturally Responsive Teaching In Early Learning for Indigenous Children in Alaska**
- 2. Georgia's Lifting Infants and Toddlers through Language-rich Environments (LITTLE) Grants**

**As you listen, think about why the teams have different approaches to measuring and supporting child-teacher interactions**

# Fostering Culturally Responsive Teaching In Early Learning for Indigenous Children in Alaska





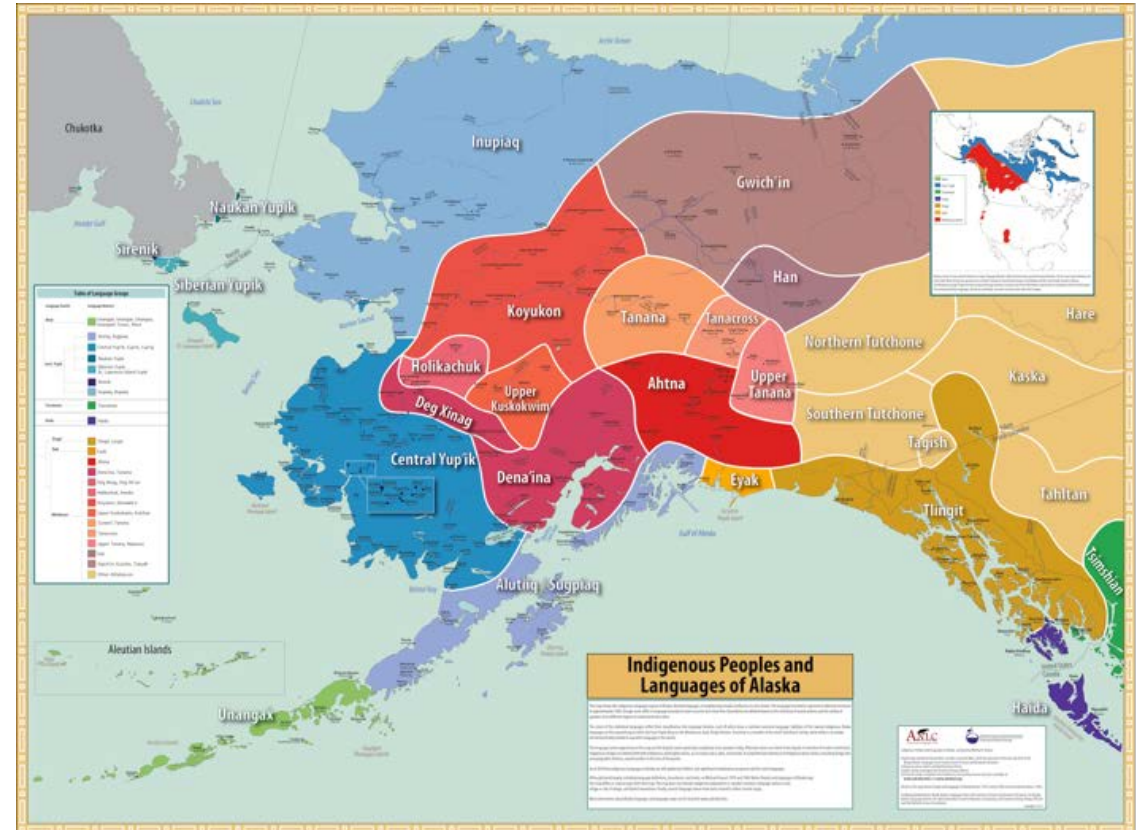
# Policy - Practice- Research Partnership



- **Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC)**
  - Tribal CCDF lead in Anchorage
  - 200+ providers
  - Works with AK on licensing & monitoring
- **Clare Swan Early Learning Center**
  - CITC's tribally-operated Early HS center
- **University of Alaska Anchorage**
  - Institute of Social and Economic Research
  - Department of Psychology
- **thread/Learn & Grow**

# Alaska Context

- 231 federally recognized tribes
- 21 Indigenous Alaska Native languages
- 100's of dialects, even more subdialects
- 5 Major Cultural Groups
- Anchorage is Alaska's biggest village





**“Time is passing  
by us on little  
children’s feet”  
Clare Swan**



# Tsilqu – Together As One

- Cultural Programming
- Curriculum designed around six seasons, traditional values, and Head Start framework
- Multigenerational relationships with families



# The Partnership: A Collaborative Inquiry Process

## → Research Question

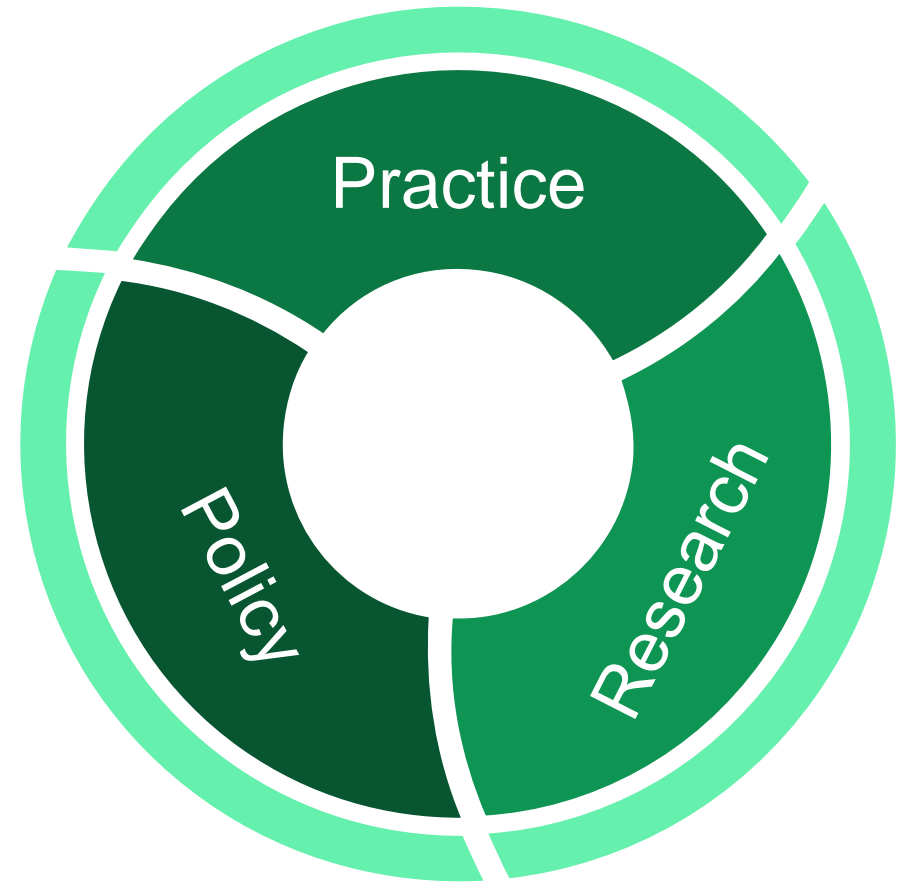
- What is, and how do we measure culturally responsive practice in an Alaskan and Indigenous early care and learning context?

## → Research Activity

- *Guidelines for Culturally Responsive, Reflective Practice in Birth - Five Settings*

## → Application & Dissemination

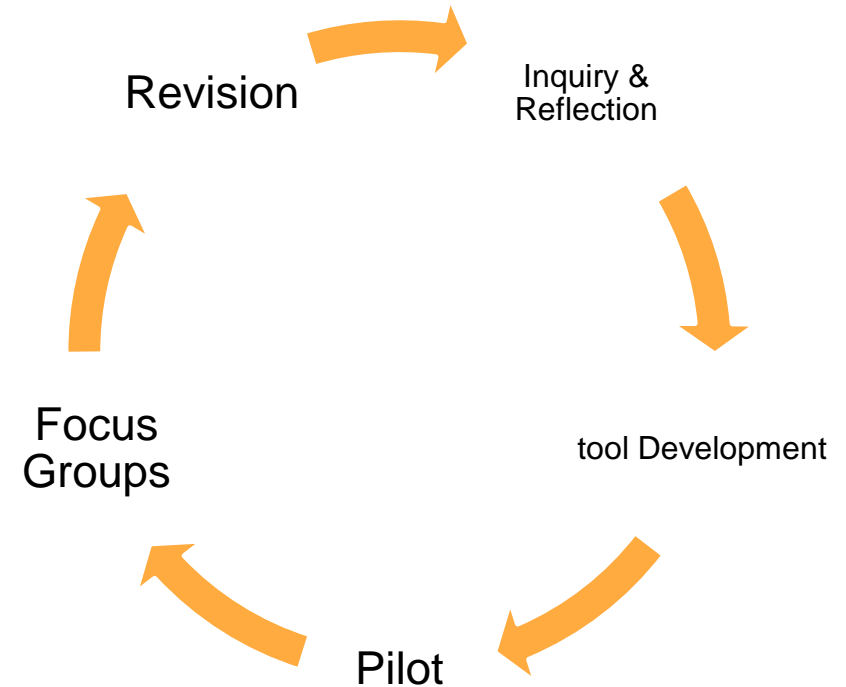
- For whom does the research benefit?
- What are the real-world applications for practice and policy?



# Research Activity: Co-Development Process

## Multiphase and Reiterative Project

- Community-based research approach
- Community advisory board discussions
- Document reviews
- Content reviews
- Pilot studies
- Focus groups





### 3 Focus Areas of the Guidelines

Culturally responsive early childhood educators **identify their own values and gain knowledge** about local ways of knowing and being

Culturally responsive early childhood educators **work closely with families** to build and promote home language and culture.

Culturally responsive early childhood educators **embed cultural values and traditional knowledge** in their curriculum planning





# Real-World Meaning: Application to Practice and Policy

- **Learn and Grow** is Alaska's Quality Rating Improvement System
- Hybrid Framework:
  - ◆ Levels 1 & 2 are fixed activity points
  - ◆ Levels 3, 4, & 5 are a combination of fixed activities and a choice menu
- *Guidelines for Culturally Responsive Reflective Practice in Birth to Five Settings* are on the choice menu for levels 3-5



# Reflection on Partnerships and Process

- Research Approach
- Practice & Policy
- Multigenerational Approach
- Partnership Relationships



# Questions and Funding Acknowledgement

## Questions?

## Acknowledgement

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# Georgia's Lifting Infants and Toddlers through Language-rich Environments (LITTLE) Grants

Thea Stevens, Infant Toddler Manager

Shayna Funke, Lead Policy and Business Operations Analyst



**Georgia Dept  
of Early Care  
and Learning**

BRIGHT FROM THE START



# Programs within DECAL

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- Georgia's Pre-K
- Licensing and regulation
- Quality Rated, Georgia's Quality Rating and Improvement System
- Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS), Georgia's subsidy program
- Nutrition services
- Head Start State Collaboration Office
- Inclusion services
- Infant and toddler supports
- Several quality initiatives, professional development programs, and grants





# What are LITTLE Grants?

*Lifting Infants and Toddlers Through Language-rich Environments*



LITTLE Cohort	Program Applicants	Awarded Programs	Continuation Year Programs	Classrooms Served	Teachers Served
Centers	153	85	56	283	557
Family Child Care Homes	87	60			



# About LITTLE: Grant Structure



Grant provides:

- Professional development sessions
- Weekly coaching sessions
- Data collection & evaluation
- Language and literacy classroom materials and supplies
- Stipends for participants

Center-based programs also receive:

- Funding for a peer coach
- Professional development or credential attainment
- Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)
- Monthly literacy forum with directors & peer coaches



# Origin of LITTLE

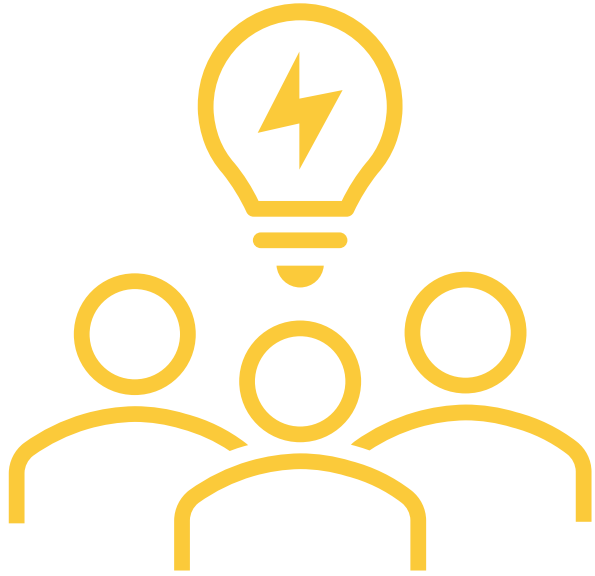
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- 2009 Georgia Quality Study
- In 2017, former Georgia Governor Nathan Deal set a goal that every child in Georgia should be reading on grade level by the end of the third grade
- The LITTLE Grant was created in response to data showing a need to increase the quality of infant and toddler care in Georgia
- This professional learning grant was funded by the Sandra Dunagan DEAL Center for Early Language & Literacy & the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA)
- The name was changed to the LITTLE grant in 2018



# Evaluating LITTLE: Policy-Research Partnership

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## **DECAL's internal research team**

- Works with programs to evaluate key initiatives like LITTLE
- Tracked and coordinated data

## **DECAL program leadership and infant/toddler specialists**

- Determined what they needed to know about LITTLE
- Provides professional development to programs and collect Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) data

## **LENA team**

- Developers of Language Environment Analysis (LENA) technology
- Trains participants on LENA devices and houses data collected

## **Child Trends researchers**

- Conducted formal analysis of data collected through LITTLE



# LITTLE Evaluation

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*Did child-teacher interactions improve as a result of participation in LITTLE?*

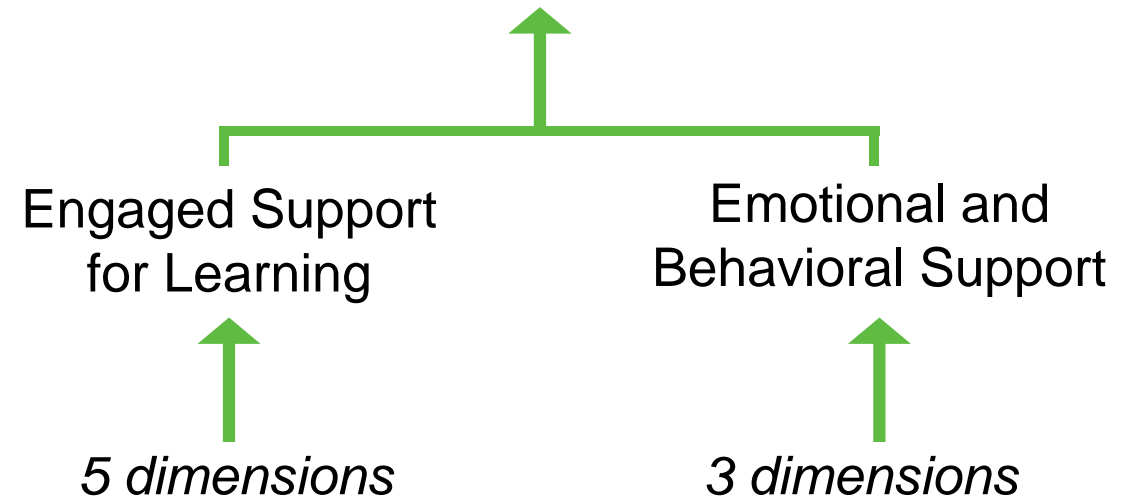
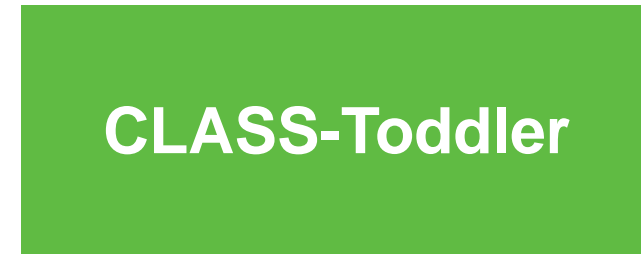
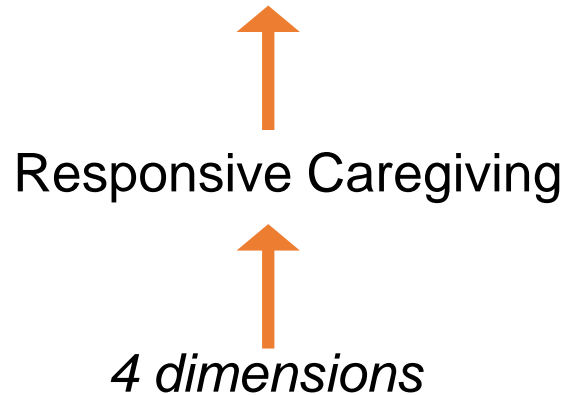
Child Trends evaluated data collected from the first two years of the LITTLE grants (2017-18, 2018-19)

- CLASS-Infant and CLASS-Toddler observations
- LENA Grow data points
- Participant demographics





Did the teacher-child interactions, as measured by the CLASS-Infant and CLASS-Toddler, improve over the course of the LITTLE grant years?



- ✓ Responsive Caregiving in infant classrooms increased significantly
- ✓ Engaged Support for Learning and Emotional and Behavioral Support in toddler classrooms increased significantly

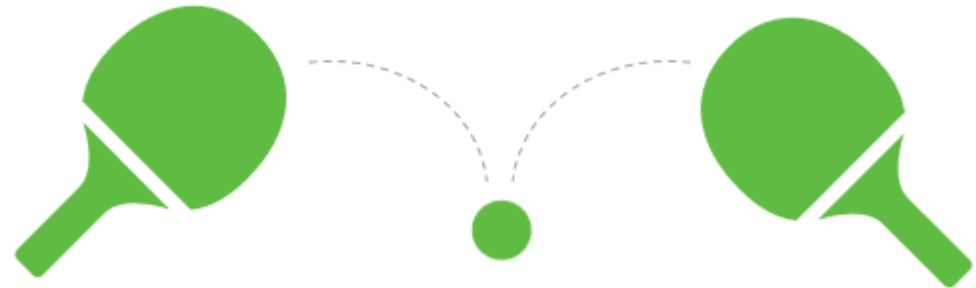


Did the number of words the adults spoke and the number of back-and-forth conversational turns between adults and children increase over the course of the LITTLE grant years?

**Adult Word Count**



**Conversational  
Turns**



No significant changes in the language environment.



# Lessons Learned

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## Research

- Challenging to track and analyze data collected for professional development purposes

## Policy

- Perception of the role of infant and toddler teachers
- Understanding of high-quality infant and toddler care

## Practice

- Extension of the LITTLE Grant to previous LITTLE participants
- LENA Start opportunity for DECAL staff & Family Peer Ambassadors to build school readiness & strengthen families with parent-group classes





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BRIGHT FROM THE START

# Questions?

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# Questions and Reflections

- We welcome your **questions, reflections,** or **comments**
  - Drop them in the chat, or
  - Use the Reactions button to raise hand to be unmuted
  - We would love to hear from all, especially CCDF Lead Agency staff!



# Resources

Check out the [OPRE website](#) for slides, audio recordings, and transcripts of webinars, (posted a few months after each webinar).

Check out the [Building Child Care Research Capacity](#) web page for slides from past webinars and other resources.

We are pleased to announce a new webinar series for CCDF Lead Agencies that we are beginning in June

- The first webinar will be on Developing Research Questions to Get Answers for Policy and Practice and will feature speakers from CCDF Lead Agencies

If you have questions, feel free to email me (Teresa Derrick-Mills) at [tderrick-mills@urban.org](mailto:tderrick-mills@urban.org).

# Resources Shared in Chat During Webinar

- [Building Child Care Research Capacity](#) web page
- [Center for Supporting Research on Child Care and Development Block Grant \(CCDBG\) Implementation](#) web page
- [\*Guidelines for Culturally Responsive Reflective Practice in Birth to Five Settings\*](#)
- [Conversational Turns](#)
- [\*Preliminary Analysis of Data Collected from Lifting Infants and Toddlers Through Language-rich Environments \(LITTLE\) Grants\*](#)