



Language is Medicine: A Language Nutrition Intervention to Prevent Developmental Delay in Diné Toddlers



A Research Colloquium presented by Dr. Joshuaa Allison-Burbank

Friday, February 3, 2:00-3:00 P.M.
HEDCO 142

Joshuaa D. Allison-Burbank, PhD, CCC-SLP is Diné and Acoma Pueblo. His clans are T'ógi, Parrot Clan (Acoma), Tó'áhani, and Yellow Corn (Acoma). Joshuaa is an Assistant Scientist at the Center on Indigenous Health at John's Hopkins University in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He is a licensed speech-language pathologist and previously worked at Northern Navajo Medical Center in Tsé Bitáí, Navajo Nation. He continues to provide developmental services to Navajo families enrolled in the Navajo Nation Early Intervention Program. His previous clinical work included being a Research Project Coordinator for the Culturally Responsive Early Literacy Instruction: American Indian/Alaska Native graduate training program at the University of Kansas. His research interests include community assessment, parent coaching, assessing the effects of stress on neurodevelopment, and the prevention of developmental delay in American Indian children.

Description: American Indian toddlers and preschoolers experience high rates of developmental delay (DD). DD in the early childhood period contributes to decreased school readiness, the need for special education, and increased risk for health issues such as childhood obesity and behavior problems. The +Language is Medicine team seeks to pilot a pre-/post-intervention study with at risk Diné toddlers, and their primary caregiver through culturally tailored language facilitation coaching sessions delivered by trained Family Health Coaches (FHC) from the community. Language nutrition refers to exposure rich in quality and quantity, delivered in the context of social interactions, and is an essential to building communication, cognitive and social-emotional skills in infants and toddlers. The language nutrition intervention was developed with significant community input and integrates cultural and traditional language references with evidence-based language acquisition strategies (e.g., Hanen & Enhanced Milieu Teaching). The specific aims of the research include: 1) Assessing the effectiveness of the intervention on at-risk toddlers' language and social/emotional development; 2) Assessing the feasibility of FHCs to reliably administer, score, and interpret standardized screenings and assessments with toddlers; and 3) Assessing acceptability and feasibility of the intervention through caregiver/parent feedback. This lecture will provide an overview of the formative process of this study including engagement with tribal IRBs and community advisory boards.

1 hour of Oregon Continuing Education Units will be available to speech-language pathologists and speech-language pathology assistants who attend this event.