

# Stories of love, growth, and connection

Storybanking with Indigenous Parents and Caregivers in Minnesota



## Parents and caregivers experience pride and joy in parenting.

“Encouraging me to be the parent I want to be in this society felt amazing. Knowing how I parent runs in my culture’s teachings and being told I’m doing it “good” is the greatest feeling.”



“He wants us to label everything and repeat things to him and we will say it back in Ojibwe. Everything at home is labeled twice “blue and Ozhaawashkozi” ...Hearing him just try with Ojibwe and say these long winded words with confidence, and he just does it and even if it’s wrong he keeps trying. And when he gets it, it’s a really special milestone with him. Being a part of language nest has been so important and having it be functional language support. Without having these resources Ojibwe wouldn’t be a functional language.”

“Then [the children] will ask to sing songs. We practice Ojibwe songs like tobacco (asemaa) song, Miigwich Nokomis, and others. We also practice animal names in Ojibwe.”



“Most recently, we as a family participated in a sweat lodge. I think what gives me the most enjoyment is learning our culture, traditions, and being with the community. Especially with them. This is something that was missing from my childhood. So when we all are involved in cultural experiences, it fulfills me. So seeing them participate in the ceremonies or powwow we attend truly makes my heart happy.”



### Family, friends, and community members are a key support for Indigenous families in helping their children grow.

“My community has been very supportive with helping me care for my three great-grandchildren as far as school supplies, Christmas presents from school, food support, etc.”



“When [my son] passed away, the Midē family (Midē folks) help to run his services in the Midē tradition. Our community became more aware of our ways...If it wasn't for the Midē and our cultural ways, the fact that I was still his mom with stuff to do even in his death helped me get through that.”



### PDG-funded programs provided multiple types of support for families.

“Every time the kids come home, they've learned something new. From letters, numbers, colors, please and thank you. They learn to share and play kind with others. It makes me feel so good they're being taught these [cultural values] on an everyday basis. I notice something new every day. I believe the skills they are taught are fundamental to their development as a child. I love the fact that this school/program is more than just that. They are family to my grandchildren and I appreciate everyone and all the love and support they provide to my family.”



### Families feel more connected to their community through social gatherings supported by PDG.

“I was fortunate enough to create a traditional cradleboard for my baby at the Division of Indian Work through the Ninde Doula Program and Women of Traditional Birthing Program. It was a beautiful experience with the community and my family. My sister and my mom came along to help me complete my cradleboard. This was a traditional aspect I never thought I'd be able to partake in, but I am looking forward to wrapping my baby up in their moss bag and placing them in their cradleboard to observe the world as our babies once did.”



### Indigenous children experience healthy growth and development when family and community networks are supported by PDG programming.

“She also learned to become very independent and do most things on her own. The school helped her enter the 1st grade well ahead of other children and to be very independent at her new school as well.”



“This school year my son has made two friends. This has been challenging for him most of his life so this is a huge success for him. It has been a goal personally as well as socially at school.”



### Children are learning about their Indigenous culture and language through:

- Early learning programs
- Community events
- Their parents and elders in their family

“My family will smudge at home and one day one of my daughters asked why. I'm glad she asked because I never explained. Explaining to her the significance of smudging was special and only made her want to share said practice with friends and family.”



“Watching my children take high interest in Native traditions and culture...is a very special moment in my life. Watching them dance and want to sing makes me smile and feel good inside. Knowing that they will continue to keep our traditions alive is a very humbling feeling.”



“She is such an amazing child who values Indigenous cultures of all kinds and recognizes that her journey and spirit is connected to her community. My daughter loves seeing other dancers, singers, regalia, ceremonies, and gatherings, and this is due to the positive exposure and teachings from the Montessori.”



## Who shared a story with us?



65 stories were collected



84% of storytellers live in the 7-county Twin Cities metro area

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### Participants' tribal affiliations included:

- Red Lake Nation
- Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
- White Earth Nation
- Another tribe not listed including HoChunk and Lac Courte Oreilles

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### Storytellers were...



Partnered



Single



Helping to raise children of a relative or friend

## What is storybanking?

To answer questions about how Indigenous children and families are doing as a result of the PDG, Wilder Research conducted a story collection method, called storybanking, in which parents and caregivers were invited to share stories about what was important to them in their parenting/caregiving arc. This booklet is a short collection of the major themes and stories. To read more stories, please go to:

<https://www.wilder.org/wilder-research/research-library/preschool-development-grant-indigenous-evaluation>

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## For more information about storybanking

Contact Jessica Tokunaga,  
[jessica.tokunaga@wilder.org](mailto:jessica.tokunaga@wilder.org)

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<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/early/preschgr>

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