

## **Language is Medicine: A Language Nutrition Study to Prevent Developmental Delay Risk in Navajo Toddlers**

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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 obesity and behavior problems. The +Language is Medicine (+LiM) pilot is a pre-/post-intervention study with at risk Diné (Navajo) toddlers, and their primary caregiver (N = 25 child/caregiver dyads). They receive 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, 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). Funding for this study comes from the Anne E. Casey Foundation and the MacInnis Family Foundation.