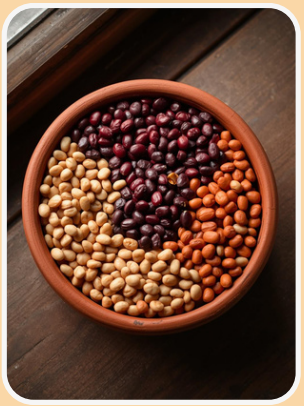
Traditional Indigenous Foods in Early Child Education Qualitative Findings

Purpose & Methods



The goal of this project is to develop a guide for incorporating traditional and Indigenous foods in early childhood care and education settings. To help shape the guide, we surveyed Indigenous childcare centers across Oklahoma to understand their successes and challenges in including traditional foods.

Methods: A phone-interview was conducted with 11 tribal-affiliated ECE leaders. The interview guide was approved through University of Oklahoma Health Science Campus Institutional Review Board, IRB 1497.

Findings



- Participants identified post-colonial traditional foods, such as fry bread, in addition to some pre-colonial traditional foods, such as corn, strawberries, nuts, hominy, sofkee/blue corn mush, squash, beans, and green beans. New recipes that include pre-colonial traditional ingredients would enhance cultural knowledge and dietary quality.
- There is a need for resource lists to support the procurement of traditionally sourced foods.
- Programs use books and storytelling to help children learn about traditional foods.
- Programs are receptive to including traditional foods when recipes align with Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines, are affordable, appealing to children, and easy to source.
- Traditional food practices vary widely across programs and among the families they serve.
- Some programs have already introduced traditional foods successfully, receiving strong support from families.

Program Needs



- Programs would like education that acknowledges the importance of ingredients unique to each tribe and nation.
- Consider providing recommendations for children's books by Indigenous authors that focus on traditional foods related to the featured ingredients.
- Programs would appreciate efforts to ensure that traditional foods can be reimbursed through CACFP.
- It's important to recognize that traditional foods vary among tribes and nations. Not all foods are relevant or appropriate for every community.

To find more information on this work visit:
onieproject.org/indigenous-foods-for-early-childhood-education