



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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National Native organizations come together to release new *Native Children's Policy Agenda: Putting First Kids 1st*

Washington, DC – Native children form the backbone of future tribal success and someday will lead the charge to create thriving, vibrant communities which is why four national Native organizations – the National Congress of American Indians, the National Indian Child Welfare Association, the National Indian Education Association, and the National Indian Health Board – have come together to update the joint policy agenda for Native youth. The goal of this policy agenda is to set forth specific recommendations to improve the social, emotional, mental, physical, and economic health of children and youth, allowing them to achieve their learning and developmental potential. In short, this initiative calls on key stakeholders to put *First Kids 1st*.

This agenda is intended as a tool to assist tribal leaders and other policymakers in their work to create and implement a vision for a vibrant, healthy community. It is also intended to guide stakeholders as they prioritize legislation and policy issues that may affect Native children and youth. The partners have identified four overarching themes as guiding principles for improving children's lives and outcomes. Within each theme, the agenda sets forth tribal strategies and policy objectives to implement these principles.

Native Children's Policy Agenda: Putting First Kids 1st is the updated work of the 2008 National Children's Agenda, created by the same four organizations and generously supported by W.K. Kellogg Foundation. This joint work for Native youth is part of the "First Kids 1st" initiative, which was announced last year and focuses on changing federal, state, and tribal policy to create conditions in which American Indian and Alaska Native children can thrive.

About The National Congress of American Indians

Founded in 1944, the National Congress of American Indians advocates on behalf of tribal governments and communities, promoting strong tribal-federal government-to-government policies, and promoting a better understanding among the general public regarding American Indian and Alaska Native governments, people and rights. For more information visit www.ncai.org

About The National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA)

NICWA works to support the safety, health, and spiritual strength of Native children along the broad continuum of their lives. The organization promotes building tribal capacity to prevent child abuse and neglect through positive systems change at the state, federal, and tribal level. For more information visit www.nicwa.org

About The National Indian Education Association (NIEA)

NIEA is the Nation's most inclusive advocacy organization working to advance comprehensive education opportunities for American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. Formed by Native educators in 1969 to encourage a national discourse on education, NIEA adheres to the organization's founding principles- to bring educators together to explore ways to improve schools and the educational systems serving Native children; to promote the maintenance and continued development of language and cultural programs; and to develop and implement strategies for influencing local, state, and federal policy and decision makers. Through advocacy, capacity building, and education, NIEA helps Native students, and their communities, succeed. For more information visit www.niea.org

About The National Indian Health Board

The National Indian Health Board advocates on behalf of all Tribal Governments and American Indians/Alaska Natives in their efforts to provide quality health care. Visit www.nihb.org for more information.