Montessori in Indigenous Communities
“Let us put our minds together and see what kind of life we can make for our children.”

Sitting Bull, Teton Sioux
late 19th Century
American Indians and Alaska Natives

2.9 million. American Indian/Alaska Natives in US
0.9 % of the populations
Add AI/AN with other races: 5.2 million
1.7% of population
42% are under the age of 25, 34% total populations
Median Age for AM and AN: 26, 37 for entire nation
States with highest proportion AI and AN:
   Alaska
   Oklahoma
   New Mexico
Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) is a body of knowledge and unique cultural insights of Inuit into the workings of nature, humans and animals. Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, then, has both practical and epistemological aspects that branch out from a fundamental principle that human beings are learning, rational beings with an infinite potential for problem-solving within the dictates of nature and technology. Similarly, Inuit intergenerational (from elder to youth) and experiential (learning through participation) knowledge has also been called "Inuit ecological knowledge" or "IEK"
New preschool a “place to grow” for Pond Inlet

“They’re learning at their own speed”

Charlotte Maktar spent many years struggling to finish high school while parenting her young children.

That is, until something recently clicked for the young Pond Inlet woman.

Maktar, 20, enrolled in a new Early Childhood Education diploma program last September, offered by Nunavut Arctic College at its campus in Pond Inlet.

“A couple of years ago, I tried to go back to high school but I found it too distracting,” said Maktar, mom to two children, aged six and two. “So I dropped out.”

“I was jobless, and then [a former teacher] told me this course was opening soon.”

The college’s new ECE program — Nunavut’s first two-year ECE diploma program offered outside of Iqaluit — welcomed 10 students last fall, taught by instructors Shiloh Minor and Jedidah Merkosak.

But the program’s reach is much broader.

As an extension of the program, the college opened the doors to the Piruvik preschool earlier this month out of a classroom at Ulaijuk Elementary School, welcoming 18 children aged two and a half to four years old.

Piruvik means “a place to grow.” The room, provided by the local DEA, is already colourful and busy, filled with furniture and play centres set up in each corner, with a clear focus on Inuit culture.

Children can do traditional activities, such as build their own qamutik, scrape seal skin with wooden ulus, sing or read in Inuktitut or prepare lunch at a kitchen area.

The new preschool program goes hand-in-hand with the ECE diploma, offering those students a space to do their practicum, and eventually, a potential job.

Maktar began her practicum at the preschool last week, teaching “practical life activities,” she explained, like how to pour a pitcher of water, wash a table and tidy up the kitchen area.

“It’s a whole lot easier to understand and...
Turtle Mountain Statistics, 2008 Census

Enrolled Members: 30,722; 16,500 living on or adjacent to the reservation.

Reservation population increases 20% every ten years.

The TM Tribe employs over 500 tribal members.

The Turtle Mountain Community College has approximately 700 students enrolled.

American Indians are the largest minority population in North Dakota.

About 37% of the population is under the age of 16.

Unemployment rate: 42%

71.5% have completed high school

11.7% had completed four or more years of

Complex social problems which continue to plague the community are

- substance abuse,
- domestic and child abuse,
- suicide,
- teenage pregnancy, and the growing concern of AIDS.
ENTERING

PINE RIDGE
INDIAN RESERVATION

LAND OF THE OGLALA SIOUX
DOX CHIEFS
RED CLOUD—BLACK CLAW—CRABY HORSE

NO HUNTING WITHOUT
Pine Ridge Statistics as of 2007

Unemployment rate of 80-90%
Per capita income of $4,000
8 Times the United States rate of diabetes
5 Times the United States rate of cervical cancer
Twice the rate of heart disease
8 Times the United States rate of Tuberculosis
Alcoholism rate estimated as high as 80%
1 in 4 infants born with fetal alcohol syndrome or effects
Suicide rate more than twice the national rate
Teen suicide rate 4 times the national rate
Infant mortality rate is three times the national rate
Life expectancy on Pine Ridge is the lowest in the United States and the 2nd lowest in the Western Hemisphere. Only Haiti has a lower rate.
Montessori American Indian Child Care Center

http://www.americanindianmontessori.net
The Clan System
The Bernie Kai-Kai Gobin Hatchery
“When you see a new trail, or a footprint you do not know, follow it to the point of knowing.”

Uncheedah,  
The grandmother of Ohiyesa