

Family Spirit



Johns Hopkins receives dozens of requests from tribes each year seeking to replicate the *Family Spirit* Program. We are committed to helping and are seeking appropriate resources and partnerships to extend Family Spirit services to tribes who desire it.

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A Home-Visiting Program to promote healthy families in Native American communities

Family Spirit Program



The *Family Spirit* Home-Visiting Program is an evidence-based and culturally tailored home visiting intervention delivered by Native American paraprofessionals as a core strategy to support young, vulnerable Native parents and their offspring from pregnancy through early childhood. Parents gain knowledge and skills to promote healthy development for their preschool age children and develop positive lifestyles that carry

them into adulthood. *Family Spirit* was designed and rigorously evaluated by Johns Hopkins Center for American Indian Health in partnership with the Navajo, White Mountain Apache, and San Carlos Apache Tribes since 1995.

The Family Spirit Home-Visiting Program AIMS to:

- Increase parenting knowledge and skills;
- Address maternal psychosocial risks that could interfere with positive child-rearing (drug and alcohol use; depression; low education and employment; domestic violence);
- Promote optimal physical, cognitive, social/emotional development for children from 0 to 3;
- Prepare children for early school success;
- Ensure children get recommended well-child visits and health care;
- Link families to community services to address specific needs; and
- Promote parents' and children's lifeskills and behavioral outcomes across the lifespan.

Family Spirit is the largest, most rigorous, and only evidence-based home-visiting program ever designed specifically for vulnerable Native American families. Evidence from two consecutive randomized controlled trials has documented the following program outcomes: increased parenting knowledge and involvement; decreased maternal depression; increased home safety; and decreased internal and externalizing problems of infants at one year of age. It is also the first to provide clear evidence of the effectiveness of paraprofessionals as home-visitors. The use of Native paraprofessionals is essential in reservation communities where there are shortages of nurses and cultural barriers to non-Native home visitors. Approximately 1,000 Native families have received *Family Spirit* lessons and services since its inception. Johns Hopkins has successfully adapted the *Family Spirit* curriculum for IHS Early Head Start, the Seattle Indian Health Board, and Chinle Service Unit PHN program.

Family Spirit Package



Family Spirit consists of 48 lessons. The curriculum has 4 distinct sections including: 1. Training manual, 2. Home-visiting lessons, 3. Reference manual and 4. Bibliography.

The *Family Spirit* lessons are flexible, while designed to be taught one-on-one, they can also be used in group settings. Lessons can be administered in chronological order or on an independent basis offering the home visitor the opportunity to tailor the curriculum to the participant's needs.

Process and outcome evaluation measures are incorporated in the *Family Spirit* program to provide easy tracking of program progress. In addition, the evaluation includes maternal depression and child development screens to assist with special needs.