

**RESOLUTION OF THE  
WHITE MOUNTAIN APACHE TRIBE OF THE  
FORT APACHE INDIAN RESERVATION**

**WHEREAS**, young children spend a great deal of time with caregivers other than their mothers, and as a result children's health and well-being are influenced by the skills, knowledge, and resources of these alternative caregivers as well as their parents; and

**WHEREAS**, Shannon Sparks was part of the research team from the University of Arizona's Native American Research and Training Center that, under the direction of Dr. Jennie Joe, conducted the Apache Children's Potential Project (ACPP) study from 1995 to 1998 which documented resources and problems encountered by families with special needs children; and

**WHEREAS**, the Tribal Council is advised that in the ACPP study, informal child care on the White Mountain Apache Reservation was found to be extensive, with 88% of the families interviewed indicating they used some form of informal caregiving to provide child care for their children; and

**WHEREAS**, while it is known that informal child care, often by relatives, is common in this and many other Native American communities, little is known about the contexts in which formal vs. informal child care is used, which caregivers are preferred, and the benefits and challenges of such child care arrangements for the children, the caregivers, and the parents; and

**WHEREAS**, Shannon Sparks was successful in obtaining special funding from the Department of Health and Human Services Child Care Bureau and the National Science Foundation to establish a project on the White Mountain Apache Reservation to begin to document informal child care use and the benefits and challenges such child care presents; and

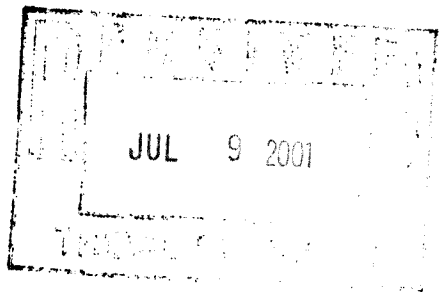
**WHEREAS**, the Tribal Council has reviewed the proposed study by Ms. Sparks and wishes to support and authorize Shannon Sparks to initiate the Informal Child Care Project as summarized in the attached proposal incorporated by reference herein.

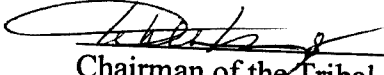
**BE IT RESOLVED** by the Tribal Council of the White Mountain Apache Tribe that it hereby authorizes Shannon Sparks and the Tribal Education Department and/or Child Care to initiate the Informal Child Care Project, subject to the terms and conditions of the study summary, including the limitation use and distribution of tribal data generated in the study.

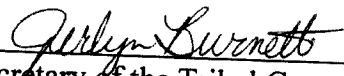
The foregoing resolution was on June 7, 2001 duly adopted by a vote of SEVEN for and ONE against by the Tribal Council of the White Mountain Apache Tribe, pursuant to authority vested in

**Resolution No. 06-2001-147**

it by Article IV, Section 1 (a), (h), (t), and (u) of the Constitution of the Tribe, ratified by the Tribe September 30, 1993, and approved by the Secretary of the Interior on November 12, 1993, pursuant to Section 16 of the Act of June 18, 1934 (48 Stat. 984).



  
Chairman of the Tribal Council

ACTING   
Secretary of the Tribal Council

# Research Proposal for the White Mountain Apache Tribal Council

## The Informal Child Care Project: “An Ethnographic Study of Informal Child Caregiving in White Mountain Apache Communities”

### Executive Summary

#### Introduction and Objectives:

This is an ethnographic research proposal submitted to the White Mountain Apache Tribal Council. This research is focused on informal child care for young children provided in community members' homes by family members, friends, and neighbors. Informal child caregivers are used quite extensively in this community; 88 percent of families interviewed from 1995 to 1998 as part of the Apache Children's Potential Project<sup>1</sup> indicated that they used some form of informal caregiving to provide child care for their children. The goal of this research is to provide a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of these informal caregivers, the benefits and challenges of such informal child care arrangements for the parents, their children, and the caregivers, and determine information and resources that could be made available to these individuals to help them in providing the best child care possible.

Specific objectives aimed at this goal are: (1) to explore which individuals in the community provide informal care for children, and the factors involved in parents' decisions about child care options; (2) to investigate the roles and responsibilities of informal caregivers, including their responsibilities when children in their care become sick; (3) to examine how parents use informal caregivers in conjunction with formal child care options, and how community programs such as 21<sup>st</sup> Century are used by parents as resources for free after-school and summer care; and (4) to explore community perceptions of different informal caregivers (such as grandparents, aunts and uncles, and siblings) and their use as child care providers.

#### Benefits to the Community:

The primary benefit to the community would be information regarding the extent of informal caregiving and the specific caregivers utilized in the community, and the perceived benefits and drawbacks of both informal and formal child care services. Information will also be available regarding problems various informal caregivers face in providing care to children, and what information, resources, or assistance informal caregivers would find useful in helping them provide optimal care.

As the Tribe determines, data from this research could be used to: (a) include informal caregivers in Tribal and community efforts to enhance early childhood education and school preparedness; (b) apply for funding to meet the expressed needs of informal caregivers, and develop information/resource centers for particular caregivers such as grandparents who may face unique challenges in serving as caregivers; (c) pursue continued funding for community programs such as 21<sup>st</sup> Century; and (d) indicate caregivers in addition to parents that are accessing health care for

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<sup>1</sup> This project was headed by Dr. Jennie Joe, director of the Native American Research and Training Center at the University of Arizona, and sponsored by Mr. Wesley Benito and the WMAT Education Department.

children and who thus should be included in the target audiences of existing health care education messages and services.

Small material benefits include a \$20 payment to participants for their time. Parents and caregivers will also be provided with materials suggesting fun and easy activities that can be done at home with babies and young children to help them develop language and prepare them for school.

The interview process is expected to be an interesting and positive experience for the participants. A primary concern of the investigator is to hear parents' and caregivers' perspectives and concerns regarding child care, and get their input on information or resources that would be helpful.

#### Methods:

The study is proposed to begin in May 2001. It is projected that data collection will be completed by March 2002. This project will consist of community-based formal and informal interviews and focused group discussions. Interviews will be conducted with approximately 45 primary caregivers (usually mothers) and at least one informal caregiver used by each to provide care to their young children. Individuals providing longer-term substitute care for children, as well as individuals who do not use informal caregivers for their children, will also be interviewed (approximately 20 individuals in each case).

Focused group discussions will also be conducted with community members to assess community attitudes towards informal caregivers and historical patterns of child care. Individuals associated with formal child care services, Headstart, and other early childhood programs will also be interviewed.

Participants will be identified through existing contacts in the community and Tribal early childhood programs. Interviews will only be conducted with the informed consent of the participant(s). Interviews will occur in participant's homes or other community locations preferred by participants.

#### Management of Information:

Data collected from this project will not be published without prior review by a representative of the WMAT Early Childhood Programs. For the project to be conducted and funded, the work must meet the requirements of a dissertation at the University of Arizona. These requirements involve a dissertation on the project to be published by the University library, and discussion of the project with supervisors at the University. Funding agencies (Child Care Bureau and NSF) also require summary reports and data reporting at research meetings.

#### Project Funding:

Funding for this project has been obtained from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Care Bureau in the amount of \$40,000 and the National Science Foundation (NSF) in the amount of \$12,000.

#### For more information, please contact:

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