

## Early Childhood educators engage with the community

By TOCC Staff

Sells, AZ- “Discipline is not something you do to children, it’s something you develop within them.”—Dr. Becky Bailey. Keep reading for more about this idea.

Early childhood educators on the Tohono O’odham Nation are focused on learning and developing professionally—together as a “community of practice.” The group meets regularly for professional development sessions, and members choose to participate in different areas of learning or community engagement.

The Community of Practice, which is called “A’al-Ha-Maşcam (Children and their Learning),” invites the Tohono O’odham Nation’s parents and concerned citizens to join in the group activities that are introduced here.

### O’odham Language – Book Project

Educators who are fluent speakers of Tohono O’odham are working with the O’odham Language Center to translate Sam the Ant™ books.

Sam the Ant stories, by father-daughter team Enrique Feldman and Samantha Feldman (with illustrator Abraham Mendoza), take readers on adventures with an earnest ant named Sam and plucky companions Sandy the Ant and Drag the Dragonfly.

The group has the blessing of the authors to add an O’odham translation for these Spanish/English bilingual children’s books.

### Conscious Discipline

Dr. Becky Bailey is an author, educator, and the founder of Conscious Discipline, which is both a company and a movement for creating positive discipline in classrooms and families. Conscious Discipline is a trauma-informed, evidence-based system of social-emotional learning—all of which is to say that the methods work in difficult situations and create an atmosphere of caring.

Members of A’al-Ha-Maşcam will be meeting monthly to read and discuss Conscious Discipline: Building Resilient Classrooms by Dr. Bailey. Parents and other concerned citizens on the Tohono O’odham Nation are invited to join this group. Within the book’s pages, readers will find skills and strategies that are both scientifically backed and practically applied in daily classroom life. You will empower yourself to shift from “Do as I say” to “Be the change.”

### ECE Club

Tohono O’odham Community College sponsors a club for students studying Early Childhood Education. Club members engage in community events and support each other in their studies.

### Advocacy on the State Level

Every spring, the A’al-Ha-Maşcam Community of Practice meets with Arizona legislators to show how investments in early childhood make sense for Arizona. The Community of Practice works with the Arizona Early Childhood Alliance to prepare for and conduct this advocacy. There will be an Early Childhood Day at the Capitol in March 2022. (Depending on conditions, it will be in person or virtual.) Parents are needed and welcome to join.

### Contact Information

To join in any of the activities described here, please contact Community of Practice Coordinator Elsa Peterson at 520-479-2300 ext. 2412 or [epeterson@tocc.edu](mailto:epeterson@tocc.edu).

The A’al-Ha-Maşcam (Children and their Learning) Community of Practice



A group associated with Tohono O’odham Community College will be translating a Sam the Ant™ book into Tohono O’odham. To get involved or if you have questions, contact Community of Practice Coordinator Elsa Peterson at 520-479-2300 ext. 2412. Photo by M. Lee.

is hosted by Tohono O’odham Community College and funded by a “Great Expectations” grant from First Things First and the United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona. The Tohono O’odham Nation’s Head Start Program is a key partner in the community.

College courses in Early Childhood Education are ongoing. The next semester begins in January 2022. Visit “New Students” at [www.tocc.edu](http://www.tocc.edu) to apply.



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