

HB 148 // Early Childhood Dept. Tribal Agreements **Tribal Remedy Framework bill sponsored by Rep. Derrick Lente**

HB 148 will ensure that the youngest Indigenous children can enjoy early childhood education and care programs that affirm and preserve their cultural and linguistic identities.

Strengthening tribal self-determination in early childhood education

Language and culture shape our children's early development and frame their understanding of themselves and the world. Indigenous children and their families have endured more than 130 years of forced assimilation intended to destroy their languages and cultures. This threat remains today: Once a Native child enrolls in a program that omits or suppresses tribal languages and cultures, the child will struggle to retain their Indigenous identity and sense of belonging.

Only by exercising their right to self-determination can Tribes prevent the assimilation of their youngest children. **HB 148 will ensure that Tribes can develop and deliver self-determined early childhood education and care programs, with state funding but without state interference.** It does so by providing for intergovernmental agreements between Tribes and the Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) and the use of tribally determined education standards.

Currently, many tribal organizations rely on limited private and federal funds because state funding is conditional on compliance with state-imposed standards. This poses obstacles for successful Indigenous early childhood education programs such as Native language immersion.

HB 148 will increase Native children's access to culturally and linguistically relevant early childhood education. It will enable Tribes to use Indigenous education standards for state-funded early childhood education programs.

HB 148 proposes to:

- Require ECECD to enter into an inter-governmental agreement with a Tribe, if a Tribe requests this, for funding tribal early childhood education programs.
- Enable Tribes to exercise self-determination in state-funded early childhood education programs, using their own culturally and linguistically relevant education standards.

"In education, discrimination and racial bias are forces of institutional racism that begin at pre-school. At stake are Indigenous Peoples' most precious assets — children and cultural integrity. Educational justice transforms all forms and levels of education to prepare our children with cultural integrity, dignity, and respect."

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