

## FIRST PEOPLES' (AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE) EXPERIENCES OF RACISM

In this series, Best Starts for Kids (BSK) shares survey results about seven questions related to racism from the 2019 BSK Health Survey, along with reactions and insights from families who reviewed these survey results for their community. Across the 10 BIPOC communities included, families faced racism to varying degrees in every facet of life, and families said that racism is under-reported in the BSK Health Survey. Families were commonly subjected to racism in public and professional settings. Families from most communities agreed that acts of racism were common at their child's school, and most communities described racist occurrences in the healthcare system. For more information about the café findings, please see the full Community Café Collaborative report at: <https://bit.ly/3pMbzgf>

**52%**

of American Indian/Alaska Native parents said they experienced racism.

Among American Indian/Alaska Native parents who experienced racism:

53% while receiving medical care

52% at child's activities

48% at child's school

Other common settings included at **work**, in **public places**, and when **shopping**.

**120**

American Indian/Alaska Native parents took the survey in 2019.



### Major Takeaways, Insights, and Themes from Café Discussion:

“Microaggression” is not a well-known term, and many BIPOC may not recognize their experiences as such. For this reason, the group thought the survey data was not accurate. This community faces racism in all aspects of their lives and believes that more education should be done universally about their histories, cultures, and experiences.

In the First Peoples' café, families talked about blatant discrimination in schools such as students dressing in “native” attire and pretending to speak native languages or broken English, and sports teams using “native” mascots in exploitative ways. The group mentioned that schools often turned a blind eye overall to this racism. Authenticity and having to defend one's “Native-ness” were another topic of conversation that was brought up several times.



*“No. The statistics are not correct. It could be 100% of the people here. I think it's because people are so used to these types of encounters, it's not seen as racism. But still it's damaging even if you don't have the right words for it.”*

– First Peoples' Café participant

*“She was worried that her son would be teased if he grew out his hair. If it's not respecting the culture, it isn't respecting the child. Because now he has to put on a facade...students experiencing microaggression incidents in the classroom which led to one child choosing to cut their hair...we don't feel welcome enough.”*

– First Peoples' Café participant



Image credit: Maggie Gilham & Shannon Lindberg

**Notes:**

The café hosts for this community identified participants as First Peoples, so we have used First Peoples when describing café findings. American Indian or Alaska Native parents self-identified as American Indian or Alaska Native on the survey. Multiracial people are reflected in each category that they selected (e.g., a parent who selected American Indian/Alaska Native and Somali on the survey would have their responses counted in both American Indian/Alaska Native and Somali results). Photos generously provided by members of the First People's community.