



Nahat'á (planning) is fundamental to Diné thought. Diné k'ehgo nitsáhákees involves an understanding of holistic processes in order to achieve harmony, beauty, and balance, hózhó, akehi hozhoon. Nahat'á includes preventive measures or planning for solutions.

Nahat'á by families of children with special healthcare needs is especially important for the well-being of family members, especially children, and also the family as a whole.

The traditional thought is that families are responsible for our own decision-making and planning, and that we have a duty to acquire the knowledge and skills for the family's protection, for ná bináhaazláo, completeness and comprehensiveness, and for strength of body and mind, bee yis'ah góó oodáát.

Present-day conditions on the Navajo Nation challenge families in fulfilling our traditional leadership roles. The reservation environment is rural and harsh. Our Infrastructure of water, electricity, internet connectivity and even roads are not built up. We are the largest reservation in the United States at 27,413 sq. miles. Straddling Arizona, New Mexico and Utah, our population of over 180,000 has a 38% poverty rate and 42% unemployment rate. With our distinct language and culture, the reservation makes for an environment unique in almost every way from surrounding states.

In such an environment, our proud and independent Diné families engage in an ongoing struggle to plan sustainable wellness for ourselves, to access and navigate resources, and even to support one another in circumstances that are different from surrounding states, and which call for problem-solving approaches that are specific to our needs and challenges.

Family to Family Health Information Center

Navajo Family Voices is the first Family-to-Family Health Information Center (F2F HIC) on the Navajo Nation. Our program commenced on October 1, 2018.

Our goal is to help establish a sustainable and holistic information and support system that addresses the critical needs of Diné families of children with special healthcare needs, that will help empower fulfillment of our traditionally-mandated planning and family leadership roles.

Through a system of information gathering and sharing, mentoring, and trainings that incorporate Diné cultural practices and principles, we will support decision-making partnerships between Diné families of children and youth with special healthcare needs, and the professionals who serve them.

We are a program of Indian Country Grassroots Support, a nonprofit founded by retired Diné judges, peacemakers and law professors with deep tribal community roots and who have served as Diné community or governmental leaders and advocates.

NFV is family-staffed by family and traditional mentors, a Diné wellness coordinator, and a legal practitioner.

Our Collaborative Community

- **Diné Centered Research & Evaluation**
- **Diné Introspective**--Diné youth leaders
- **lina Baa Hozho**
- **Mountain States Regional Genetics Network**
- **New Mexico Children's Medical Services**
- **Parents Reaching Out**--NM F2F HIC
- **Raising Special Kids**--Arizona F2F HIC
- **Restoring Celebration for Family Wellness**
- **San Juan Collaborative for Health Equity**--Our sister program for community outreach
- **Shiprock Food Access Coalition**--Nutrition, farming, and healthy food access
- **UNM Tree Center**--Diné community engagement
- **Utah Parent Center**--UT F2F HIC

Our ability to plan for our families is intimately tied to the conditions on our reservation



K'é is the foundational familial principle that enfolds all creation



Ajooabá is the foundational principle of kindness and compassion



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**FAMILY
LEADERS**

As a single mother of children with special needs in the Ft. Defiance Agency on the Navajo Nation, I have been searching for solutions for my family the past 15 years. For many of those years I have been finding solutions on my own.

I know firsthand how important it is to have knowledge and be connected with other families. My deep wish to serve and know my community led me to become a volunteer First Responder in Naschitti Chapter and to participate in school committees.

When I was younger, I used to travel with my grandfather to the Chuska Mountains to collect natural herbs. We gave offerings of corn pollen to Mother Earth for providing us with blessings. My grandparents would say to me, keep going to school, you will talk for us in the English way, to help your Diné people.

What my grandparents were saying to me is, that my family depends on me. I am my family's leader, and I am the decision-maker with my children. I am also part of a community of family leaders.

-- Elvira Dennison, Family Mentor



Tribal Family to Family
Health Information
Center on the Navajo
Nation



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Áłchíní hózhóójí bá Nahat'á



NAVAJO FAMILY VOICES

Planning for Our Children in
a Blessing Manner

Families Supporting
Families of Children & Youth
with Special Needs on the
Navajo Nation

