In 1990, the Office of Indian Education Programs (OIEP), now the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) in the U.S. Department of the Interior, developed a groundbreaking early childhood/parental involvement pilot program in six sites located at BIE-funded schools. The program was designed to provide culturally responsive education, resources and support for American Indian families with children from birth to five years of age. Since its inception, the Family and Child Education (FACE) program has expanded to 46 programs at BIE-funded schools in 10 states.

The FACE model is focused on high-quality instruction for adults and children, staff development, and evaluation. In collaboration with the BIE, the National Center for Families Learning and Parents as Teachers provide comprehensive pre-service and in-service professional development to FACE staff members and school administrators. BIE also funds ongoing program evaluation to ensure continual service improvement.

To date, the FACE program has served more than 42,690 individuals from 17,000 American Indian families. Parents have earned their GEDs, become employed, and learned how to support their children’s language and literacy development and school success. Children have received a host of educational services, been screened for early identification of developmental delays, learned about their culture and community, and thrived in school.

Program Results
A FACE Impact Study commissioned by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget found that at school entry, children with special needs who did not participate in FACE are twice as likely to require special education services and Individual Education Plans (IEPs) than are children who participated in the FACE program — 30% compared with 15%.

Other FACE program evaluations have found that:
• Children in grades K-3 who participated in FACE as preschoolers scored significantly higher on standardized reading and math tests than children who did not participate in FACE.
• Parents participating in FACE showed dramatic increases in supporting their child’s learning in the home, particularly in telling stories to their child, reading to their child, listening to their child read, and teaching their child.
• Children who attended FACE preschool entered at the 34th and moved to the 61st national percentile in the subsequent year. With two years of FACE Preschool, the achievement gap is not only closed for children on average, but these children score substantially above the national average.
• When compared to parents nationally, FACE parents are more involved in their child’s education. FACE parents participate in school events (93%), and help with homework (85%).
• Parents consistently identify improved parenting skills and increased understanding of their child’s development to be the most important program impacts.