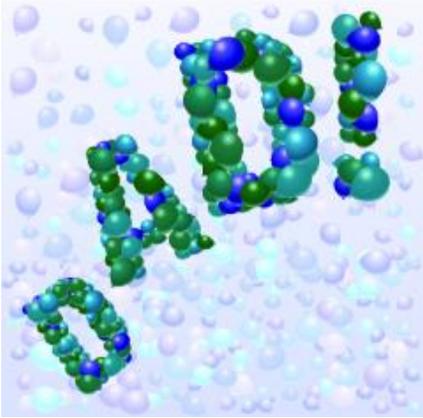


## FIS: Strengthening Families through Responsible Fatherhood



Fatherhood Is Sacred (FIS) is a Native-based program developed by the Native American Fatherhood and Families Association (NAFFA), a nonprofit organization based in Mesa, Ariz., in 2002. FIS is a 12-week program that runs two hours per class. However, our classes in Alaska run longer to allow for adequate dialogue and processing.

The main goal of FIS is to strengthen families through responsible fatherhood and to create happy and safe families. NAFFA sees fathers as one of the greatest untapped resources for addressing family dysfunction and broken homes rather than the cause of such issues. Our mission is to reach out to our brothers and provide an opportunity for them to feel safe and comfortable enough to risk being open to our teachings and apply them to their own lives.

NAFFA utilizes five core concepts in its curriculum to help fathers navigate the path to self-realization and new beginnings: **Creator, Choice, Teachable, Wisdom, and Service**. When deciding to change our lives for the better, the new road can pose challenges and be difficult to face, so the five concepts serve as a guide.

**Creator:** We establish a relationship in faith with our Creator who provides a solid foundation to start building on.

**Choice:** When our foundation is set, we start moving forward making choices for a healthy life.

**Teachable:** After making the right choices to change, which involves effort, we become teachable.

**Wisdom:** From all the knowledge gained after allowing ourselves to be teachable, we gain wisdom.

**Service:** We utilize our wisdom, experience, and lessons learned to help our people. We give it away in service to our people.

The FIS program in Juneau, Alaska, is open to the community and is not limited to Native fathers only. Class is held on Thursday evenings. Incentives are provided, including family activities that promote quality time and fun such as pizza and bowling parties, picnics, kayaking, etc. The program provides childcare and a meal to participants and their children, encouraging the sharing of mealtime together. Participants also receive a certificate for successful completion if they attend 80% of the sessions.

The FIS program is a genuine support group for fathers where both sensitive and heavy topics that pertain to men only are discussed. A real bond is created among the fathers during each session. All the men who attend want to be fathers, but some did not have the best role models when they were children, so they learn to break the cycle of old and embrace the new to contribute to making families healthy, happy, and safe.

*-- Justin McDonald and Janae Franklet  
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