

Native-American and Anglo-American Children
and Adolescents

Native-American

Elders to be honored
Learning through legends
Sharing—everything belongs to others
Immediate and extended family comes first
Humble/cooperative
Carefree—unconcerned with time
Expects few rules
Avoid looking in the eye
Dance is for religious expression
Family-centered
Question which culture for identification
Speak softly, at a slower rate
Avoid speaker or listener
Interject less
Use fewer "encouraging signs"
Auditory messages treated differently—delayed responses
Nonverbal communication
Cooperation
Group needs considered more
Present goals considered important
Encourage sharing
Privacy and non-interference valued
Great respect for elders
Patience and passive temperaments
Speak softer to make points

Anglo-American

The future lies with youth
Learning found in books and schools
Ownership rather than sharing
Think of oneself
Competitive
Structured—be aware of time
Expects rules for every contingency
Shows listening by looking directly in the eye
Dance is for expression of pleasure
Peer-centered
No question about cultural identification
Speak louder and faster
Address listener directly, often by name
Interrupt frequently
Use verbal encouragement
Use immediate response
Verbal skills highly prized
Competition
Personal goals considered
Plan for future
Acquisitiveness
Need to control and affect others
Elders not in the "real world"; respect for youth
Impatience; active
Speak louder to make points

To a Navajo, time is ever flowing; can't be broken. Exactness of time is of little importance.

To a non-Indian, time is of the utmost importance and must be used to its fullest extent.

To a Navajo, the future is uncertain. Nature, which is more important than man, may change anything. This life is what counts—there is no sense that life on earth is a preparation for another life.

Non-Indians prepare for the future. Such items as insurance, savings, and plans for trips and vacations show to what extent non-Indians hold this value.

Patience: Navajo. To have patience and to wait is considered a good quality.

Non-Indian. The man who is admired is the one who is quick to act.

Age: Navajo. Respect is for the elders. Experience is felt to bring knowledge. Age has priority though increasing power is going to those who speak English well. Knowledge is power.

Non-Indian. The great desire is to look younger and live longer. Much money is spent to pursue these efforts.

Family: Navajo. The Indian cultures consider many more individuals to be relatives than do non-Indians. Clan relationships are strong. The Navajo is wary of nonrelatives and foreigners.

Non-Indian. Biological family is of utmost importance, and relationships are limited within this group.

Wealth: Navajo. Wealth is to be consumed and used as security—always to be shared. Many Indians are suspicious of individuals who collect material possessions. Some tribes give love gifts and enjoy this practice.

Non-Indian. Non-Indian cultures have measured wealth in terms of material things. Many such possessions often constitute status symbols and are considered highly desirable.

Nature: Navajo. Humanity lives in perfect balance with nature. The earth is here to enjoy. Heed signals from nature—learn from animals. People are an integral part of this universe and must do their part to maintain harmony and balance among the parts of the cosmos.

Non-Indian. Culture here is a constant search for new ways for control and mastery of the elements around. Artificial lakes are made; natural waters are controlled; electricity is generated and controlled. Such accomplishments are looked upon with pride.

Cultural premises among the Navajos may be summarized as follows:

1. The universe is orderly.
2. There is a basic quest for harmony.
3. The universe, though personalized, is full of dangers.
4. Evil and good are complementary and both are ever present in all things, thus human nature is neither basically good nor evil.
5. Everything exists in two parts, male and female, which belong together and complete each other.
6. The future is uncertain—nature (which is more powerful than people) might change anything.
7. This life is what counts—there is no sense that life on earth is a preparation for another existence.
8. Time and place are symbols of recapitulation.
9. Events, not actors or quality, are primary.
10. Time is ever flowing, can't be broken.
11. Concept of life as one whole—Navajos have a hard time thinking in terms of social, economic, and political distinctions.
12. Like produces like . . . the part stands for the whole.