

## Diné Áłchíní's Roles in Society

Children are born into this world through and by their parents' consensus and thought processes, planning, relationship and "Sihwiindzin" in hope. Hope on behalf of parents' is generally an expectation for a successful outcome in birth and a healthy newborn, an outcome that their baby would be physically and mentally intact with no birth defects. Traditional women when they conceive of a child would ordinarily have a Beauty Way Ceremony, so that growth and development of the baby within the nine month's period will be healthy and not pose any unnatural or detrimental outcomes. Midwives were generally responsible for care and delivery of children, sometimes with the aide of a medicine man.

Tradition tells us that there are four baskets used in Diné life's span, with the initial one being used at the time of conception in a Hózhóǫǫjí Ceremony, so that she will have a healthy life within the nine months of her fetus's growth and development. The second basket is used when the child has grown and takes her/his initial step in life, as it is followed through with another Hózhóǫǫjí Ceremony. In this ritual, the medicine man prints Kék'eh Hashchíín on the floor at the entrance of Hogan with natural earth sod and making its way in a Sunpath manner. Before the child is moccasin dressed, the medicine man prays and sings while anointing the moccasins by blessing the moccasins with Yellow Corn Pollen / Tádidiín, as the parents moccasin dresses the child. The ritual whereby identifies and blesses the child with the Corn Pollen Road in Sa'ah Naaghéi Bik'eh Hózhóón and the Holy Deities to a successful, healthy and a prosperous life in times to come. The third basket is introduced and used during a child's maturation / puberty stage Hózhóǫǫjí Ceremony; a female child through a Kinaaldá blessing ceremony; a male through a Táchééh blessing Ceremony. The ritual and process is an exiting of childhood and a transitional adaptation and acceptance into adulthood, where young adults are taught many forms of life's expectations: moral discipline, attitude and behavioral characteristics, spirituality, adulthood in marriage, parenthood, home, occupation, career skills, education and K'é in all respects. The fourth and final basket is used when a young adult decides to venture in married life. Traditionally, marriage came in the form of Ídikid, Á'ídikid where the male's family was responsible for planning and arranging a proposition.

Child rearing was an initial responsible on behalf of the parents, grandparents and, or guardians and in many cases through kin relations in Aunts, Uncles, and so forth. Child raising covers a broad area, a spectrum in which moral ethics, care, love, devotion and discipline plays a major role. It is initially identified from the time of conception and on into adulthood as: í'ootsá / awéé' bí'ootsá, ats'íís atsá hólo, azhchí, ályaa, awéé' bits'ée' k'égizh, atsiit'ááh'iildóoh, ayahtééh nááhaaznii', bits'ée' ályaa, awéé' bits'ée' hasht'e'niitá, awéé' ídii'na', azhchí, awééchi'í, na'at'oodí, k'é díiniid, awéé' ch'ideeldlo', awéé' naamaas, awéé' naa'na', awéé'

biwoo' haniísá, awéé' neezdá, awéé' néidziìh, awéé' nihidiiyá, awéé' dich'izhí, dichin yázhí, na'ach'ídí, ádilááhí, álchíní, nooséí, bizhiizyeh, bizhítsoh silíí', tséłkéí / tséłkééh, ch'íkéí / ch'íkééh dóó bizhi' bá'ályaa.

Discipline also covers a broad area in rearing children, in which the philosophical aspects apply as follows: K'é hwiindzin, H'ilí, ádił'ídlí, á'ahwiint'íí', ilhojooba', doo ájiniida, doo ájit'íida, doo hwee'ádiláahda, doo aajoodlohda, doo hoł hóyee'da, yikáih na'adá, tsodizin dóó sin bihool'aah, na'adilts'ood, na'ádintaah, neiltih and etc.

A child's developing mind is very sacred, sensitive, adaptable, yearning, intelligent, curious, open and sensitive and is like an audio / video recorder. Children are naturally sensitive to their environment, parents, people, where they instill everything they see and hear. They have to be taught the moral ethics of being bila'ashdla'ii and understand the meaning of right and wrong. Children are very curious. As an example; you can try to teach a young child with words, but they don't mean much of anything if a child is in his or her early stage of language learning and acquisition, and many times they will ignore words and find out for themselves as what the words actually mean by doing. Incidentally, a child can be told not to touch something that is hot, like a stove, but their curiosity forces them to do otherwise and touch the hot stove only find that hot /sido means ouch! and very probable, a scare.

In the early days and life of Diné people, discipline came in a very harsh manner. Children used to get a whipping with wagon whips and braided riding whips when they misbehaved, or when they sassed their parents, but children were very mindful and many learned their lessons in a hard way. Yikáih Na'adá came in the form of discipline, where children were ordered or forced out of bed at the earliest of morning and sent outside to exercise, as harshness came with it, especially in the cold weather in winter time. Yas taah ná'á'nah meant going out in the winter mornings and rolling around in the icy cold snow without clothing. This was done to mentally and physically strengthen children so that they can confront and withstand hardships in their future lives. While strengthening their beings, they were also instructed to pray and meet Grandfather, dawn deity in Haashch'ééyááłti'í to the east. Harsh came in the sense of discipline, where it was meaningfully appropriate for parents and grandparents in these ways, as most didn't complain, yet took in what was taught them as a teaching in Ádiihwii'nííł. Most parents and grandparents knew their limitations, especially when it came to teachings that come from within and around the fireplace and the Honeeshgish, because intuitively they knew that though they can discipline in certain harsh ways, they knew they were not suppose to hit or slap children with their hands or with the honeeshgish. The teaching in itself taught against domestic violence; hitting and abusing children inappropriately, especially hitting children on

the head especially when children are in their early developing stage. They would say, “When you abuse and hit children on the head, you will disrupt and offset their thinking capabilities and they will become what is known as “diigis”, or “Doo’áhalyáada ájiił’íih áłchíní bitsiits’iinji’ názníłts’ingo, doo bił íłíida, doo bił hoł hojooba’da, ba’at’e’ hólóogo ájiił’íih”.

“Áłchíní saad doo t’áa bóhólníihgo bee bich’i’ yájiłti’da, doo bitaa’ jidziihda, bintsáhákees baḡah dahojił’aah. Saad doo aaníinii doo bee bitaa’ jidziihda, bíni’jił’aah, éi doodai’ áłchíní ádejiil’íih t’óo baa’ihgo bináál yájiłti’go”.

Áłchíní ayóo nitsékees dóo hajooba’ iinizin, índa áadi hooghan haz’áagi bee hwiiná, bizaad dóo bidlo diits’a’go. Áłchíní wolyéii, áłchíní nilíinii éi ajéi, a’íih dóo íhózhó át’é. Hooghan haz’áagi doo

yá’át’eehgóo hoo’aahgo áłchíní t’éi bee hasht’e náhoo’níł, hózhó náhoodleel, háálá áłchíní éi tsodizin, nitsíhákees, nahat’á, iiná dóo sihasin yee bił hahodít’é.