

Early Childhood Equity Movement



In 2021 and 2022, The Endowment for Health, community members in New Hampshire, and Child Trends worked together on the Early Childhood Equity Movement (ECEM). The goal of the ECEM is to improve access to services, like early care and education, healthcare, and other family services (e.g., housing or SNAP/EBT) for diverse families in New Hampshire. We led one virtual group chat (also called focus group) with Arabic speaking families last year. Families shared both community strengths and challenges in accessing services.

Community strengths:

- **Agencies are helpful in getting services.** Dealing with unknown systems can be hard, especially in a new country. For the families who qualified, resettlement agencies like the International Institute of New England helped them find services. They were a great source of information about community resources like early education programs, cash and rent assistance, food stamps, health care, and more.
- **Kind and helpful people can improve experiences.** Arabic speaking families get support from resettlement agencies, who help them with application processes. They also get help from the teachers, doctors, case workers, and interpreters. They shared that they were happy with how kind and helpful staff members and providers were. This improved their experiences learning about and getting services.

Community challenges:

- **Lack of translators make it hard for families to get services.** Families shared that they have a hard time getting services because many places do not have translators to help them communicate. They have a hard time filling out paperwork and understanding different documents.
- **Getting services can be confusing and frustrating.** It can be hard for families to know what they need to do to get services. They need to fill out many documents and applications. It can be hard to know who to talk to for help during the process. A lot of families have a tough time getting services because of confusing and frustrating processes.
- **Services are costly.** Getting access to healthcare services can be costly. So, these families only go for emergencies, but then they have to wait a long time to see a doctor. Because of this, they avoid going to the emergency room or doctor's office unless they really must.
- **COVID-19 made these problems worse.** These problems have been around for many years, but COVID-19 made them worse. It made it harder for families to get help because agencies did not pick up the phone and the offices were closed. Families also had a tough time using online services because this technology was new to them. They worried that learning online made it harder for their children to focus or understand what they were trying to learn.

The next phase of the Early Childhood Equity Movement is to spread lessons learned, then take action to help Arabic speaking families. This movement is growing, and all are welcome to join – every person can help.

Sign up to receive updates about this work at:
endowmentforhealth.org/early-childhood-equity-movement

