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 two virtual group chats (also called focus groups) with Bhutanese families last year. Families shared both community strengths and challenges in accessing services.

Community strengths:

• **Having available resources is a relief.** Families liked having access to services that help them with basic needs, like food or translation services. The Head Start program was helpful in offering childcare as well as information for other community services.

• **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.** Bhutanese families got support from resettlement agencies. They also got help from the Lutheran office, churches, doctors, teachers, and friends. This helped them connect with more resources. They also shared that a lot of their providers were kind and helpful. This improved their experiences learning about and getting services.

Community challenges:

• **Lack of translators made it hard for families to get services.** Families shared that they had a hard time getting services because many places did not have translators to help them communicate. They had a hard time filling out paperwork and understanding what different documents were saying.

• **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 expensive. Many Bhutanese families shared that cost was a big problem for them when they go to the doctor. When families income increase slightly, they lose healthcare benefits, then they only get care for emergencies due to costs.

• **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.

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

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