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 Native American 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. The SHARE organization offers additional food and financial support for Native American families.

- **Kind and helpful people improve experiences.** Native American families liked the healthcare services they received. They shared that a lot of their providers were kind and helpful. This improved their experiences learning about and getting services.

- **Families use community connections when services can’t help them.** Community connections like friends and family help Native American families find trustworthy care for their children.

Community challenges:

- **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 and can have long wait times.** Getting access to healthcare services can cost a lot and take a long time. Native American families shared how it can take years for their children with developmental concerns to be evaluated by a doctor, so they end up having to wait a long time for treatment.

- **Quality of services and lack of follow-up.** Families were worried that not all services were of the same quality. They also shared that there was not enough follow-up with healthcare services.

- **COVID-19 made these problems worse.** These problems have been around for many years, but COVID-19 made them worse. Native American families were especially worried that their children didn’t learn enough during the pandemic.

The next phase of the Early Childhood Equity Movement is to spread lessons learned, then take action to help Native American 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