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 Portuguese speaking families last year. Families shared both community strengths and challenges in accessing services.

**Community strengths:**

- **Kind and helpful people improve experiences.** Portuguese speaking families were happy with the help they get from service providers. They shared that a lot of their providers were kind and helpful. This improved their experiences learning about and getting services.

**Community challenges:**

- **Citizenship status and lack of translators make it hard for families to get services.** Families shared they have a hard time getting services because they weren’t sure if services were limited to U.S. citizens. Also, many places do not have translators to help them communicate. They have 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, and who to talk to for help. They need to fill out many documents and applications. A lot of families have a tough time getting services because of these processes.

- **Services are costly.** Getting access to child care and healthcare services can be expensive. Many Portuguese speaking families shared that cost was a big problem for them when they go to the doctor or try to get child care for their children. Even with discounts, the out-of-pocket cost can still be too much for families. Because services are costly, they avoid the doctor unless it is an emergency and rely on friends and family for child care.

- **Concerned with 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.

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