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

Community strengths:

- **Kind and helpful people improve experiences.** Spanish speaking families shared that a lot of their childcare and healthcare providers were kind and helpful. They helped them by being friendly and answering any questions they had. This improved their experiences learning about and getting services.

- **Community connections are helpful when services cannot reach families.** When families had trouble getting resources and services through the state and federal government, they would instead turn to family members, friends, and churches for help. These connections are useful to families who need access to food or who may need childcare support so they can work.

Community challenges:

- **Citizenship status and lack of interpreters make it hard for families to get services.** Families shared they have a tough time getting services because they didn’t know if services were limited to U.S. citizens. Also, many places did not have interpreters to help them communicate. They had a hard time filling out paperwork and understanding what 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.** Child care and healthcare services can be expensive, so cost is a big problem when they try to get services.

- **Quality of services and lack of follow-up.** Families were worried about the quality of telehealth services, especially with developmental diagnoses for their children. They also shared that there was not enough follow-up from healthcare providers.

- **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 offices were closed. Families also struggled with remote learning because the technology was new to them.

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