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Co-creating Equity: Culturally Responsive Angolan New Mainer Pod Model Childcare for an Inclusive Health Community

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Project Areas of Need Addressed

- Diminished challenges culturally diverse parents experience to access equitable, inclusive, structurally competent ECE (Early Care and Education) settings.
- Removed barriers to systems, established and maintain ECE settings within culturally diverse populations.
- Offered culturally competent resources to reduce inequities in accessing ECE support systems.
- Increased confidence in people of diversity to enroll children in community ECE.

Specific Challenges

Decreased Access to Equitable, Nurturing, Culturally Responsive ECE.

- People of diversity reported leaving local ECE jobs due to concerns for lack of cultural responsiveness (inappropriate food, sleep choices, play).
- Expressed “American” ECE care system is not a match for how they nurture children.
- Lack of understanding of culturally appropriate development.

Led To

- Children of diversity with potential disabilities being overlooked or over referred.
- Not serving health of children as members of a whole community.

Maine’s UCEDD Supporting a Culturally Responsive Inclusive ECE Community



Outcomes

- Co-creative work with marginalized populations to identify obstacles to opening an ECE business.
- Thoughtful approaches for equitable access to ECE as a component of a healthy community.
- Targeted technical assistance built independence for people of diversity.
- Accessible materials increased independence, access and timely support for opening culturally responsive ECE settings.
- POD model (multiple small facility or family child care licenses under one roof) piloted as a culturally responsive framework for developing ECE businesses.
- Enhanced community and statewide agency collaboration for establishing and maintaining EC settings.
- Established norm of using cultural brokering and interpretation to increase access.

Partnership Information

With support from Maine’s UCEDD a unique team of equitable partners formed including members of the Lewiston Angolan community, MRTQ PDN (Maine’s early childhood training and technical assistance network), Cooperative Development Institute, and Coastal Enterprise Incorporated. The collaboration of co-creative partnership provided advocacy, connection, and ultimately the creation of the Happy Little Paradise Childcare Cooperative. Happy Little Paradise’s mission is to provide equitable, inclusive childcare options for the New Mainer Angolan community in Lewiston, Maine.



Azenaide and Katherine gathering responses at a Community of Practice.



Maria, Palmira, Hahuque and Luisa working with Maine Child Care Licensing to apply for their license.



Scan the QR code to view “Providing Child Care in the State of Maine”.



Maria, Hahuque, Marnie, Palmira and Elsa working through consultation to create a handbook of policies for the ECE setting.

